

ROANOKE WEATHER



Current Conditions: Partly Cloudy
Temperature: 79°F
Wind: From the S at 9 mph
Relative Humidity: 40%



WED
Rain/Thunder
46°F...65°F



THU
Partly Cloudy/Wind
44°F...56°F



FRI
Mostly Sunny
42°F...55°F

The
Weather
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[Air Quality](#) ▶

Monday, October 17, 2011

Radford high-water sign to be unveiled

By [Kevin Myatt](#)

The Roanoke Times

How high a river has gotten before is often a solid clue to how high it will get in the future.

The National Weather Service and U.S. Geological Survey sponsor a project to mark high-water levels along rivers across the United States in an effort to promote public awareness of river flooding.

On Tuesday, a high-water mark sign will be unveiled at Bisset Park in Radford, marking the 35.96-foot water level — 22 feet above flood stage — of the New River in August 1940.

The Radford sign and another on the Little River in the Snowville-Graysontown area of Pulaski County — also from the 1940 flood — are being donated by Anthony Phillips, a Snowville native who is now a meteorologist in Indiana.

Peter Corrigan, hydrologist at the National Weather Service in Blacksburg, and Ken Goodyear, parks and recreation director for the city of Radford, will join Phillips in making brief remarks at the unveiling ceremony, set for 10 a.m. Tuesday.

"My interest in this project goes back to some research I worked on when I was an undergrad at Virginia Tech," Phillips said. "During the summer of 2009, I surveyed perennial, intermittent and ephemeral streams in Pulaski County to determine flash flood risk areas along neighboring roadways.

"It was during these surveys that I became aware of the High Water Mark project. Several states in the Midwest and South already have several high water mark signs. Virginia only has one, which is located near Suffolk in the far southeastern part of the state."

Like many extreme flooding events in Southwest Virginia's history, the August 1940 flood was caused by the remnants of a tropical system — the Georgia-South Carolina Hurricane of 1940 — becoming stalled over our region's mountainous terrain.

The August 1940 flood still ranks as the fourth-biggest flood on record along the Roanoke River in Roanoke, with a crest of 18.25 feet, about 5 feet below the record November 1985 flood. More than 17 inches of rain fell at Copper Hill in Floyd County in the 1940 deluge, and August 1940 remains Roanoke's wettest month in the past century with 16.71 inches.

Phillips personally observed the Little River near his hometown of Snowville crest at 11 feet during the remnants of Hurricane Jeanne in September 2004. The 1940 flood went more than 5 feet higher than that on a river that typically is only about a foot deep.

"The New River at Radford reached 35.96 feet," Phillips said, referring to the 1940 flood. "Considering that the stage of the river at this time of year is usually around 2.1 feet, that was a lot of water."

Weather Journal runs on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

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