

City of Franklin

Historical Floods

Flooding of August 13-18, 1940, was the result of four significant rainfall events within a three-week period. During this historical flood for the region, the Blackwater River crested at 21.9 feet, approximately 10 feet above flood stage for the City of Franklin. One of the primary causes of this flood event was an unnamed tropical cyclone that meandered across the southeast United States for four days before dissipating on August 15. Rains began in earnest in Virginia on August 13 as the storm entered the state from the west. Deluges flooded locations statewide with 4.76 inches of rainfall being measured in Hampton Roads. The Meherrin River at nearby Emporia reached a flood of record stage on August 17 when the river crested at 31.5 feet, 8.5 feet above flood stage. A total of 16 deaths in Virginia and neighboring states are directly attributed to this flood event.

In September of 1999, Hurricane Floyd was responsible for wind and flood damage in the Hampton Roads region. Several trees were uprooted as wind speeds were recorded between 50 and 80 mph across the region. This event brought over 10 inches of rain to Chesapeake, and approximately 13 inches to the Southampton County/City of Franklin area, and occurred just two weeks after Tropical Storm Dennis had saturated the area with 6.2 inches of rain. In western Tidewater, primary routes out-of-service due to flooding included U.S. Highway 58 near Franklin and Interstate 95 south of Petersburg to Emporia. Riverine flooding was extensive and prolonged throughout the Chowan River Basin with the Blackwater, Meherrin and Nottoway Rivers all exceeding flood stage. Water levels within the City of Franklin were estimated to be more than four feet above the previous flood of record, which occurred in August 1940, making it the new flood of record. Gage height indicated that the water reached a height of 26.27 feet on September 18, 1999. By early morning on September 16, the Blackwater River had made its way to Main Street bringing four to five feet of water to even the higher elevations of Downtown Franklin, and floodwaters continued to rise at a rate of approximately six inches per hour. Approximately 100 homes and 182 businesses were totally destroyed as a result of the flooding. Floodwaters did not begin to recede until September 21, and home and business owners were not able return to their properties and begin to evaluate their losses until September 28. The flooding was a 500-year flood of record for parts of the basin. Also, there were enormous agricultural/crop losses due to the flooding.

On October 17, 1999, a flash flood, which resulted from very heavy rainfall associated with Hurricane Irene, ranged from five to nine inches in the City of Franklin and Southampton County. The precipitation resulted in numerous flooded roads and road closures due to high water. Specific problem areas in Franklin included: a ditch along Armory Drive near the Wal-Mart Shopping Plaza where fast-moving water and drainage issues caused some road erosion; and flooding near the library caused problems along Second Avenue.

Several streets in Franklin flooded as a result of precipitation associated with Tropical Storm Ernesto

during the first four days of September, 2006. Ernesto strengthened throughout the day on Thursday, August 31 with maximum sustained winds HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS HAMPTON ROADS HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN JANUARY 2017 4:23 Downtown Franklin during the October, 2006 flood. Source: City of Franklin photo reaching 70 mph. The Tropical Storm made landfall in Brunswick County, North Carolina near Long Beach at 1130 PM on Thursday, August 31. Ernesto moved north across the Coastal Plain of North Carolina on Friday, September 1, reaching southeastern Virginia as a Tropical Depression during the late afternoon on Friday. The system became extratropical late Friday evening as it moved across eastern Virginia. The Blackwater River crested at 15.61 feet according to stream gage data.

Between October 7 and 10, 2006, a strong low pressure

system off the North Carolina coast coupled with an upper level cutoff low to dump intense rainfall across portions of southeastern Virginia and western Tidewater. Rainfall amounts in excess of 10 inches resulted in numerous road closures and moderate to major river flooding from late Friday, October 6th through Saturday, October 7th. In Franklin, the Blackwater River flooded much of downtown Franklin. Numerous businesses and residences sustained water damage, with estimates of property damage totaling approximately \$4 million and crop damage estimated at \$700,000. The Blackwater River crested October 10, 2006 at 22.77 feet.

In August 2011, Hurricane Irene moved northward over the Outer Banks of North Carolina and just off the Virginia coast, producing heavy rains which caused widespread flooding across most of south central and southeast Virginia Saturday morning, August 27th into early Sunday morning, August 28th. Storm total rainfall generally ranged from six to as much as 12 inches. Very heavy rainfall ranged from five to nine inches in the City of Franklin and Southampton County. The precipitation resulted in numerous flooded roads and road closures due to high water.