Possible flooding tops Supervisors' agenda

BY APRIL KELLEY

Flooding was on the top of everyone's minds during the Board of Supervisors meeting Monday, June 27.

Humboldt County Emergency Management Coordinator Kyle Bissell provided an update for the Supervisors on the current situation regarding the rising river levels.

"The good news is that the east fork of the Des Moines River will be cresting today. It's still going to crest at 22.3 feet which is well above flood stage but is still a little lighter flooding," Bissell said.

This means that the flooding north of Humboldt in Livermore and those areas will begin to dry out as the east fork recedes.

Those on the west fork of the Des Moines River are not as fortunate as it is on the rise.

Bissell stated there will be record flooding on west fork, cresting at 17 feet on Wednesday, June 26 at approximately 7 a.m.

"That amount includes what we already have on the ground up north and is funneling its way down, plus 24 hours in advance any rain that will hit within that basin," Bissell said.

Bissell admits it's not an exact science and any change in the amount of rain received could change those calculations up or down.

Due to the flooding, MidAmerican is planning to shut off gas and power to the flooded areas. At this time they are planning to turn off homes on West River Drive.

"Those people who are impacted have been notified from MidAmerican Energy and we will be discussing what we are going to do for those people," Bissell said.

Bissell told the Supervisors that the critical infrastructure is looking good.

"The water treatment plant is not in danger. The lift stations are not in danger. So that is very very good news," Bissell said.

Bissell told the Supervisors that they aren't really sure what to expect as they have never seen 17 feet of water.

"We've seen 15.4 in 1969 but we've never seen 17 feet of water," Bissell said.

Jim Gronbach has been assisting the EMA by doing level shots. Basically using a laser level to measure how far up the water will rise in an area.

From those calculations, they have begun to build a sand dike on the south part of town to help protect those roads by the recycling center.

Other areas of the county will be hit as well. Dakota City Park has closed its campground and the road going down there is closed as well.

Rose Mill Park is discussing moving the campers from that campground as well.

Bradgate has a temporary dam in place to attempt to hold back water.

"The trestle bridge for the Three Rivers Trail is holding back a ton of logs and it's actually causing the water to spread out, acting as a temporary dam," Bissell said.

The Army Corp of Engineers may be coming out to make sure that bridge is safe.

"We have a lot of people coming in and a lot of resources coming in and that's awesome. We have been sandbagging like crazy over the weekend," Bissell said.

Bissell said they will have a press conference at noon to update community leaders and the press.

Supervisor Bruce Reimers said "We can't thank the people enough for the help, filling sandbags."

Engineer Ben Loots was able to rig a sanding truck with a funnel to use it to fill sandbags faster and more efficiently.

"We hope to get that truck back out there and groups are volunteering to come help with that," Bissell said.

He also warned about the extreme heat occurring over the next couple of days as people work to protect their homes from the water.

He concluded by warning people to stay away from the river, water over streets and anywhere that appears flooded.

Secondary Roads

Humboldt County Engineer Ben Loots updated the Supervisors on the work going on with secondary roads.

In the midst of the flooding in some parts of the county, other roads are continuing to be repaved.

He presented voucher number three for Croell, Inc. for payment for the work done on P66 and C26. The work is 83 percent complete on one leg, 44 percent on another and 8 percent on the last.

Several roads are under water and have been closed. Loots encouraged anyone with questions to contact the city or law enforcement.

Loots requested the contract be approved for the Dakota City building to Berte and Sons. The project will be completed by Dec. 15 of this year.

Board of Adjustment Meeting

Kent Tigges questioned the Supervisors regarding the Board of Adjustment (BOA) meeting held on Monday, June 17.

While the BOA meeting included introducing the new board members, the main focus appeared to be the issue surrounding the Cole Anderson Quarry south of Rutland.

Tigges wondered why Jon Beaty attended the meeting instead of the outside council previously hired to represent the County in the matter.

"I'm wondering who the attorney of record is on this quarry situation. There is litigation or a hearing scheduled for July 12 and the Board of Adjustments comes out of the meeting scheduling a meeting for July 1," Tigges said.

Tigges stated that he had been talking to one of the members of the Board of Adjustments and they were unaware of the July 12 hearing. He questioned if the lawyers were communicating and who was in charge of the case.

Humboldt County Zoning Administrator Randy Krecklow told the Supervisors that the Board of Adjustments had held the meeting Tigges spoke about on the June 17 meeting.

"As you know, we have a full Board of Adjustments and by ordinance requirements they have adopted a meeting and hearing procedure to conduct their affairs," Krecklow said.

The procedures they follow was created following the ordinance in place and the ISU Extension guidelines sheet on decorum during meetings.

During their first meeting after drafting their procedures, the board made the decision to treat Anderson's original application as the application being decided on now.

Krecklow went on to explain that the meeting on Monday had been to introduce the BOA to the public and then to hold the meeting in order decide if they would then hold a hearing.

The BOA went into closed session before returning to make several motions, the first of which was to have the hearing on July 1 at 2:00 p.m.

The second was to provide information to Anderson and his lawyer regarding any updated documents they would need.

Krecklow informed the Supervisors that the hearing and the court case on July 17 are different things.

The hearing on Monday, July 1 has to do with the permission to use the land in accordance with zoning.

The hearing on July 17 in front of a judge concerns the injunction placed against Anderson to cease any mining at the quarry.

While they seem similar, they actually deal with different aspects and therefore would involve several lawyers.

Krecklow encouraged anyone with direct involvement in the quarry attend either meeting or both. He also told the Supervisors that anyone could appeal the decision, so it is important to be informed.

Krecklow also informed the Supervisors that he is attempting to push MIDAS to finally get their comprehensive plan completed.

"It has been an extremely slow process for many reasons primarily with MIDAS having enough people for the number of things they are working on," Krecklow said.

Krecklow recommended that he and the supervisors come up with a date for the plan to be completed and a date for the new ordinance to be completed.

"I don't mean to put that pressure on them but you remember our moratorium on those energy things is basically related to those items," Krecklow said.

Supervisor Chair Dave Lee is on the Board of MIDAS and has an upcoming meeting. He has offered to talk to them during that meeting and see how they might be able to get moving forward without an ultimatum.

European corn borer could be making a comeback

BY KENT THOMPSON

A pest that most corn farmers haven't had to worry about since the late 1990s appears to be making a comeback.

European corn borer (ECB) has largely been controlled thanks to Bacillus thuringiensis corn (better known as Bt Corn), which was first introduced in 1996. But field-evolved resistance is showing up in several Canadian provinces and most recently, in Connecticut.

In an effort to address the issue and train crop scouts on what to look for, entomology experts with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach and the United States Department of Agriculture are teaming up to offer a special field day Wednesday, July 17, west of Ames.

A day-long educational program will be held at the Field Extension Education Laboratory, located at 1928 240th St. near Boone.

Expert insight

Erin Hodgson, professor and extension entomologist at Iowa State, and Ashley Dean, extension education specialist, will lead participants through educational sessions that include an industry update, as well as hands-on trapping and detection, and first- and second-generation scouting.

They will be joined by Tom Sappington, Brad Coates and Craig Abel – all entomologists with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service.

"This educational event will explain how to detect European corn borer, why it's showing up again and what agronomists and crop consultants can do to help safeguard the industry," said Hodgson. "It's been so long since it was an issue that many people may have forgotten what it looks like, or that it even still exists."

Before the development of Bt seeds, ECB was estimated to have cost U.S. farmers over a billion dollars annually in yield losses and control efforts, earning it the title "the billion-dollar bug."

It is estimated that just one corn borer can cause 3-5 percent yield loss, and multiple borers can wipe out a crop. Hodgson and Dean want to remind farmers and those who advise them of what to look for and how to do their part to prevent an infestation from starting.

Their best advice is to plant pyramid Bt hybrids to ensure multiple toxins are contributing to ECB control. They also advise farmers to conserve beneficial insects and shred or bury corn residue to reduce the survival of overwintering larvae within fields.

Hodgson and Dean provide further information in an Integrated Crop Management news article they co-authored in May 2024 called Blast from the Past: European Corn Borer is Back on the Radar.

Registration details

The field day is free to attend and lunch and continuing education credits will be provided. Registration is required by July 10 and can be done online at https://go.iastate.edu/YUV5EL

Participants need only to register for one session, as both sessions feature the same topics. For assistance with registration or questions about the program, contact Erin Hodgson at ewh@iastate.edu or 515-294-2847. Ashley Dean can be reached at adean@iastate.edu or 515-447-3766.

European. Corn Borer
European corn borer larva feed inside corn stalks and can weaken plants. Submitted photo.

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COUNTY HELP WANTED

Humboldt County Secondary Roads has openings for a full-time road maintenance employee at the Bode and Hardy Maintenance Facilities.

CDL is preferred but not required to apply. The chosen applicant must obtain a Class A CDL with air brakes learners permit before starting work with the County. County will provide assistance with acquiring full CDL if needed.

Starting pay will be $26.25/hr. with $1.00 increases at six and twelve months with satisfactory performance review. Humboldt County's benefit package includes health and life insurance along with paid vacation, sick leave and holidays (10.5).

Application form and job description are available online at **www.humboldtcounty.iowa.gov**, click on job openings, or at the Humboldt County Engineer's Office, 2221 220th Street, Humboldt, Iowa.

Applications will be accepted until filled. Humboldt County is an equal opportunity employer.

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