

KOA Campground under polluted water

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
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Water fanning out over the KOA Campground the last few days is different.

“It’s nasty and really polluted,” said campground co-owner Gwen McDiarmid on Monday. “Usually it’s crystal clear and you can see the ground underneath when it floods. This water is muddy and brown.”

Two channels of the Platte River, that flow on either side of the campground, burst over their banks last weekend.

Because of its location, the campground is in a precarious situation every time the river floods.

Torrential rain that devastated parts of Colorado earlier this month is to blame for the rising river that also contains debris.

In addition to the KOA Campground south of Gothenburg, a home on Willow Island Road, owned by Kenny and Susan Lenz, is also surrounded by river runoff.

Floodwater streams over Willow Island Road by the Lenz residence and an access road that runs west and parallels Interstate 80 from the southwest quadrant.

Trees in the I-80 interchange stand in water that has filled highway ditches and property south to Banner Road and into neighboring cornfields.

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At Brady, preliminary figures show the river peaked at 10.7 feet Monday. Flood stage is 7.5 feet and the old record was 9.6 feet set in 1973.



The Platte River at Cozad surpassed flood stage (6.5 feet) at 7.3 feet Tuesday. Gothenburg does not have an official river gauge.

National Weather Service meteorologist Bill Taylor said Tuesday that river levels have started to fall but will remain elevated through early next week. He added that Monday's rain could keep levels up longer.

In Gothenburg, the storm produced more than an inch of rain and kept storm sewers busy but there weren't any problems with flooding in town.

City administrator Bruce Clymer said he's been concerned about river flooding.

"With what was coming down from Brady, I can't imagine it wasn't worse for us," he said. "I'm keeping my fingers crossed."

Taylor said a cold front predicted to move in Friday night brings a possibility of thunderstorms into the area.

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