

Department of Water Resources / National Weather Service

Joint Operations Center
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"Warning Stage" changed to "Monitor Stage" in Joint River Forecasts

BACKGROUND:

The Department of Water Resources and National Weather Service have produced joint river forecasts for many years. These forecasts include the terms "warning stage," "flood stage," and "danger stage." The National Weather Service issues many types of statements and warnings including a "Flood Warning." Other agencies, the media, and public have expressed confusion from time to time over the meaning of the terms "warning stage" and "Flood Warning." "Warning stage" signifies a need to begin levee patrols, move equipment and livestock out of low-lying areas, and prepare for flood stages that may follow. A "Flood Warning" means that flooding is imminent or already occurring. In short, "warning stage" is not synonymous with a "Flood Warning."

ACTION TAKEN:

To eliminate this confusion, DWR and NWS staffs have decided to change the term "warning stage" to "monitor stage."

MONITOR STAGE DEFINITIONS

Non-Leveed Stream - The Stage at which initial action must be taken by concerned interests (livestock warning, removal of equipment from lowest overflow areas, or simply general surveillance of the situation). This level may produce overbank flows sufficient to cause minor flooding of low-lying lands and local roads.

Leveed Stream - The Stage at which patrol of flood control project levees by the responsible levee maintaining agency becomes mandatory, or the Stage at which flow occurs into bypass areas from project overflow weirs.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: We will revise all affected documents, forecasting routines, and forecast location signage to reflect this change prior to October 1, 2000.

CONTACT: If you have any questions please write or call Gary Hester of the Department of Water Resources at (916) 574-2613, or Robert Hartman of the National Weather Service, California-Nevada River Forecast Center at (916) 979-3056.

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