

Transcribed Excerpts from "Iowa Under Siege" Newspaper Articles, June 10, 2008

Excerpt 1

Portions of Iowa City may see worse flooding than in 1993 and could approach the 500-year flood boundary because of a barrier placed in the Iowa River for a long-delayed University of Iowa construction project.

With that news, and word that Coralville Lake was predicted to go over the spillway for just the second time in its 50-year history by the time you read this, some Iowa City residents began evacuating their homes Monday.

"It's pretty critical," Iowa City Manager Michael Lombardo said.

... They say a barrier known as a cofferdam installed in the river near the Iowa Memorial Union is elevating water levels upstream as far as where the Iowa River meets Clear Creek.

As a result, flooding would be worse than in 1993 in those areas when Coralville Lake releases in excess of 25,000 cubic feet per second.

Typically it would take a release of 29,000 cubic feet per second to produce that kind of flooding, hydraulic models the UI provided the city on Sunday show.

... Lombardo said the flow could be even higher in Iowa City if heavy rain hits locally, leading to his warning of possible 500-year flood levels. In 1993, the city reached 100-year flood levels but not 500-year, he said.

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Excerpt 2

The UI project with the cofferdam, connecting the university's east and west chilled water plants, was supposed to be finished by now but has been delayed about a year for a variety of reasons, including bad weather and high water on the river.

Current water levels make removing the cofferdam too dangerous, said Ken Lloyd, the UI's associate utility director. "It's essentially impossible to take it out now," he said.

Worsening the situation, the Corps of Engineers predicted Coralville Lake would go over its spillway at 712 feet above sea level around midnight last night. At 10 p.m., it was at 711.36 feet. The only time the lake went over the spillway was in the devastating Flood of 1993 when the lake reached nearly 717 feet above sea level.

... The prediction led at least a few homeowners on low-lying sections of Normandy Drive — where the river was within 20 feet of many homes — to evacuate Monday.

(Page 6A, Columns 1-3)

Cofferdam Photo Caption (pg. 6A)

Water flows around the cofferdam parting the Iowa River just north of the West Iowa Avenue bridge in Iowa City on Monday. Water levels are higher than projected upstream of the dam because of the restricted flow. The cofferdam was installed by the University of Iowa so crews could install two 36-inch pipes connecting the east and west chilled water plants at the university.