

Natural Hazards

Flooding

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) defines a flood as a “general and temporary condition of partial or complete inundation of 2 or more acres of normally dry land area or of 2 or more properties”. Often times, this is the result of rising water in a existing waterway, such as a creek, river, pond, or lake during and after a heavy rainfall event. Several factors determine the severity of floods, including rainfall intensity, rainfall duration, topography, ground cover, and frequency of inundation.

Over time, Bradford County has certainly proved to be vulnerable to flooding, both in the urban and rural areas. For instance, the City of Starke is dissected by Alligator Creek, a body of water about 6 miles long that flows into Lake Rowell. Heavy rainfall events, such as Hurricane Irma in 2017, have produced flooding in the incorporated areas of Starke, damaging homes and displacing residents.

West of the City of Starke, Alligator Creek finds its way into Lake Rowell, where the water then feeds into Sampson Lake and Crosby Lake. These lakes are particularly susceptible to flooding and impact the many residents that call them home. The Bradford County Sheriff’s Office Emergency Management Division tracks the levels of Sampson Lake via Suwannee River Water Management District’s gauges in order to determine the likelihood of flooding. Over the years, several flood mitigation projects have been performed in an attempt to reduce the hazard posed.