

Chehalis River Basin

Early Flood Warning Program

Why Now?

Following a devastating flood in December 2007, Chehalis River Basin stakeholders intensified efforts to mitigate flood risk in one of the most flood-impacted watersheds in the state of Washington by forming the **Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority**. The Authority quickly determined that improvements were needed to the existing early flood forecast and warning program for the Chehalis River Basin. The region required a more reliable information network than what had become a “word of mouth” warning process.

The Players

On behalf of the Flood Authority, WEST Consultants worked with community groups, Indian tribes, and local governments within the basin to assess their current flood preparedness practices and needs. In addition, flood forecasting and related programs of the National Weather Service (NWS), the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Washington State Departments of Ecology and Transportation were reviewed.

The findings led to a plan for improving the identification of flood threats, agency coordination, and communication with the public. The plan included an Internet-based data collection, visualization, and dissemination tool plus additional rainfall, temperature and river monitoring stations to fill gaps in existing observation networks in the Chehalis River Basin.



The Program

A publicly accessible, Internet-based flood data site called Contrail is now available. Rain, stream, reservoir, wind, temperature, and other weather information are collected, displayed, and used in near real-time. Users can access current conditions in the basin along with the latest National Weather Service river forecasts, local road closures from the Washington Department of Transportation and other flood preparedness information from federal, state, and local sources.

Flood inundation maps show the public, as well as government officials where flooding is to be expected at each forecasted river stage. The website provides REAL TIME access to flooding data, putting the information in local context, allowing residents to be better prepared.

All information can be displayed on Internet-enabled computers and mobile devices such as smart phones and tablets.

Ten new automated rain gages, ten new temperature sensors, and two additional stream gages have been added to existing flood threat detection networks. Data from more than 100 weather and river sensors in the Chehalis River Basin and nearby areas are now available.

Visit the website at:

Address: contrail.onerain.com

Username: public

Password: public

Note: Username and password are both lowercase.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I find weather forecasts for my neighborhood?

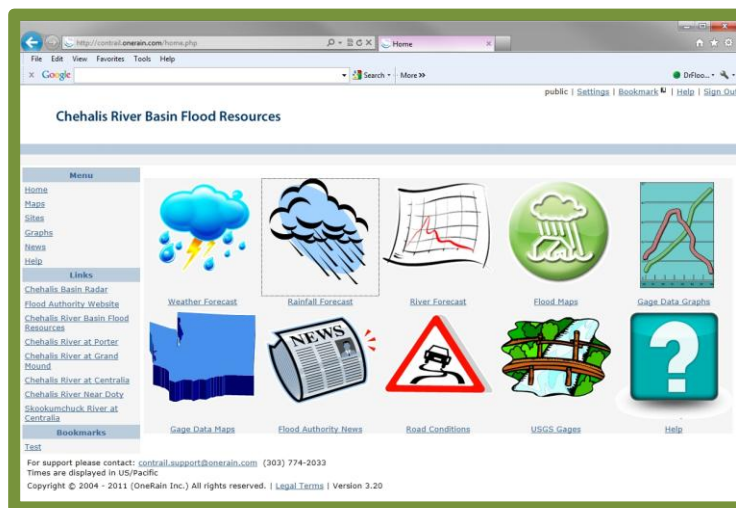
Once at the home page, click on the Weather Forecast (thunder cloud) icon. That will link you to the National Weather Service Forecast page for the Seattle area. Click on the map to show the latest forecast for your area.

How do I find rain forecasts for my neighborhood?

At the home page, click on the Rainfall Forecast (rain cloud) icon to bring up 10 day forecast maps from the Northwest River Forecast Center. The first column of maps shows precipitation. The following columns show maximum temperature (daily high temperature), minimum temperature (daily low temperature), and the daily freezing level.

How do I find river forecasts for my neighborhood?

From the home page, click on the River Forecast (graph with red line) icon which will take you to the National Weather Service Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service. Click on the gage icon closest to your neighborhood (i.e. Grand Mound, Chehalis-Mellon, etc.). This will bring up the most recent river hydrograph for that area so you can see the river's level in your area.



How do I find a flood map for my neighborhood?

Follow the Flood Maps link (the circular green icon) from the home page and select your region from the Map pull down menu at the top of the flood basin map. For example, select Grand Mound and then click on the grid closest to your area. Select 15, for example, set the second rainfall pull down map to “Action Stage 12” which will show the river at its “first alert” level. If, after checking the river forecasts, you know the river in your area is at 18 feet; select Major Flood 18 from the pull down menu and the map will show where the water is going to be during the forecasted flood stage.

What other information can be found on this website?

The Chehalis Flood Authority Early Warning website includes links to the Chehalis Flood Authority, Chehalis River Basin Flood Resources, and WSDOT's travel advisory websites, as well as the latest Doppler radar readings, maps, and location information for the gages being used to generate data.

Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority

<http://lewiscountywa.gov/chehalis-river-basin-flood-authority>

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