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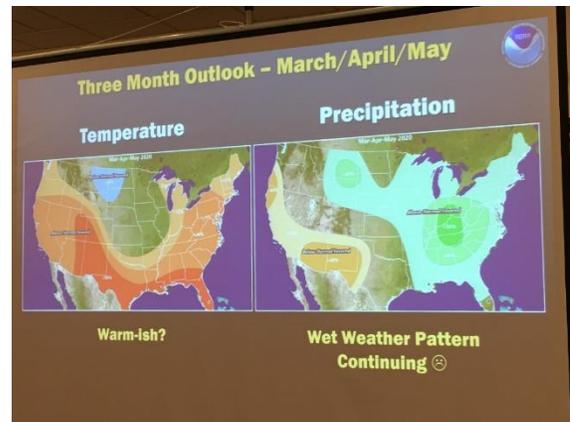
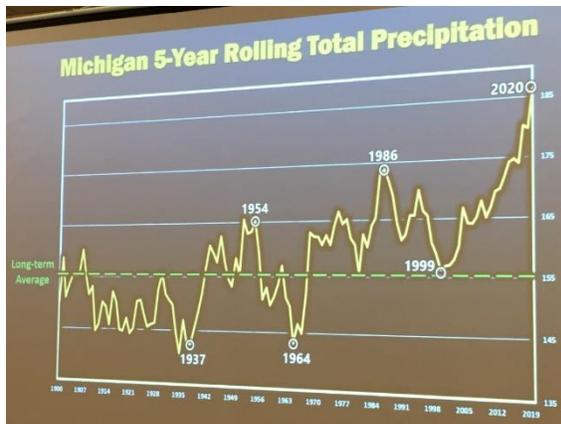
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Washtenaw Flood Risk Expected To Be Greater In 2020

**Ann Arbor, MI.** In the wake of record rainfall in 2019 and early 2020, Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner, Evan N. Pratt, P.E., warns that “All forecasts point to a wet 2020.” Pratt further noted that “NOAA data shows extreme levels of current and forecasted soil saturation for much of Michigan including some of Washtenaw County. If we think of the surface layer of the earth as a big sponge, it has been full since last October”.



In addition to the soil surface layer being saturated, groundwater and surface waters are high throughout the state – not just the Great Lakes. According to Pratt “At the annual meeting of the Michigan Flood Plain and Stormwater Managers Association, representatives from both NOAA the USGS indicated that not only are Great Lakes levels higher than normal for late winter and early spring, but so are inland lakes and nearly every gauge on Michigan’s rivers and streams”.

This time of year is normally when water bodies are at their lowest levels. The fact that surface water and groundwater levels are up along with surface soil saturation as we come into spring rains is Pratt’s main concern. “The Water Resources Office has Emergency



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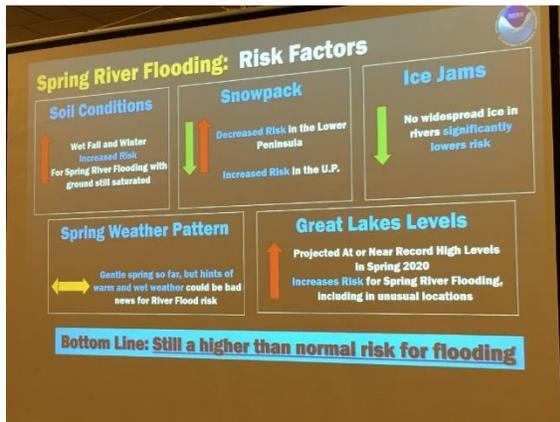
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Response plans and protocols, but 2019 stretched us very thin, and we can only help people on legally established County Drains or Lake Levels”.

“While damage to homes due to flooding was not an issue in 2019, the agricultural Southeast part of the County was largely untillable – that was a big impact for people. We are hearing more of the same for 2020 from all weather agencies and expect that areas of occasional or frequent flooding will experience a tough year.” Pratt added that “Crews have ramped up preventative maintenance such as removing woody debris and other debris obstructing flows.”



When asked if there were any tips for residents Pratt advised “...It helps us to hear about obstructions from property owners on County Drains any time, but before a major rain allows us to deal with problems at the lowest cost. Most people on a County Drain will see a charge on their December tax bill for any work in the prior 18 months”.

Finally, Pratt noted that while Washtenaw County has closed except for essential operations, “While 2020 presents major challenges, for people on our drains keeping the water flowing is essential, especially this time of year. We are checking voicemails and emails daily. As always, residents need to **call 9-1-1 for an emergency**, otherwise, we will get to everyone. While we are short staffed and prioritizing ‘worst first’ through the Covid-19 emergency, we are following up with everyone who reports a problem.”

To report an issue on a County Drain call 734-222-6860 or enter a service request online at <https://www.washtenaw.org/196/Report-an-Issue>

*The mission of the Office of the Water Resources Commissioner is to provide for the health, safety and welfare of Washtenaw County citizens and the protection of surface water and the environment and to promote the long term environmental and economic sustainability of Washtenaw County by providing storm water management, flood control, development review and water quality programs. Visit [www.washtenaw.org/drains](http://www.washtenaw.org/drains).*

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