

NWS Abstract for Connecticut Association of Flood Managers (CAFM) Conference, Oct 30 2019
Westbrook CT

Category: Historic Flooding/Disaster Planning and Recovery

The Housatonic and Connecticut River Ice Jams of January 2018

This presentation will review the weather patterns and conditions that resulted in ice jams on the Housatonic and Connecticut Rivers in Connecticut, and will also describe the timeline on how long the ice jams lasted and what finally caused them to end.

From late December 2017 into early January 2018, a prolonged stretch of unseasonably cold weather gripped the State of Connecticut and New England as a whole. This cold spell resulted in a rapid and significant accumulation of ice on rivers and streams. Also during this timeframe, an intense Nor'easter brought a significant snow pack to the region. During January 12-13, heavy rainfall accompanied record warmth, and much of the snowpack was eradicated. This combination of rain and snowmelt produced significant rises on rivers and streams, breaking up river ice and sending it downstream. Ice jams occurred at numerous locations across New England. In Connecticut, the two most notable ice jam events occurred along the Housatonic and Connecticut Rivers.

The 2018 ice jam event will then be compared to the more extensive river ice development that occurred in January and February 2015. National Weather Service (NWS) weather and water related forecast and warning products will be presented, focusing in particular on products related to ice jam flood threats.

Presenter Bios

Nicole Belk is the Senior Service Hydrologist at the National Weather Service (NWS) Weather Forecast Office in Boston/Norton MA. She oversees the NWS Boston hydrology program, providing water related data, forecasts and warnings across much of southern New England. Nicole has been working for the NWS for 25 years, and has been a CFM since April 2007. She has a Bachelor of Science in Meteorology from Penn State University.

Britt Westergard is the Senior Service Hydrologist at the National Weather Service (NWS) Forecast Office in Albany, NY where she manages the hydrology program for eastern New York and western New England. Britt has over 17 years of experience as a hydrologist with the federal government. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Geological Sciences from the State University of New York at Binghamton.