

Rain too much for lowest areas

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SPECIAL TO THE STANDARD-SPEAKER FLOODING A FACTOR IN CRASHES - Water runoff was likely to blame for at least two crashes Friday morning on Route 93 in Hudsondale. The first, shown at left, occurred around 7:30 a.m. about two miles south of Beaver Meadows. The second happened about an hour later in nearly the same location. Bill Bachart stood outside his Hudsondale home at 10 a.m., watching as motorists approached orange and white safety barrels warning them to reduce speeds. "There was an accident here An SUV rolled over," Bachart said. "No sooner did the ambulance leave and there was another accident. Another SUV rolled over." APTS and Citizens Fire Company No. 1 responded to the crashes along with state police at Hazleton, who did not provide further details by Friday night.



A fast-moving stream ran the length of Club 40 Road, where deposits of rocks and stones made travel tricky. Mountain runoff created small waterfalls in the forest near Stockton and water pooled at the base of trees.

Water, water everywhere.

Water spilled over roads, poured over riverbanks and appeared in places where water shouldn't be.

Like St. Gabriel's Cemetery in Hazleton, where tombstones jutted from deep puddles, and at Edgewood in the Pines in Drums, where geese floated on golf greens inundated by a raging Nescopeck Creek.

The steady rain that fell Thursday into Friday kept fire companies busy pumping out flooded basements and crews tending to watery roads.

Randy Cahalan, manager of the Hazleton City Authority, said unofficial authority estimates show 5 inches of rain fell during the storm.

The water would have been a blessing - if only reservoirs weren't at capacity before the precipitation arrived, he said.

"We wish we could've held more," Cahalan said.

Volunteers from Citizens Fire Company No. 1 in Weatherly were among the firefighters called out Friday to help pump out basements.

"We've only had three or four (pump details) today," foreman Tim Rossman said as he helped pump water from Weatherly News.

Although the fire company was busy, Rossman said he was relieved that the Black Creek - the stream that cuts through the borough - hadn't flooded.

"It's high now, but it doesn't seem to be getting any higher," he said.

Nescopeck Creek, however, was a different story.

In Drums, Sleepy Hollow Road was closed to traffic because the waterway overflowed its banks. Water passed inches from the top of a bridge there and covered the road in sweeping currents.

In St. Johns, the creek crept dangerously close to some homes and reached the top of a parked car's tires.

A few miles away, the Nescopeck's waters covered the parking lot at the former Angela Park.

Deep water covered Stockton Road near the Greater Hazleton Rails-to-Trails where Pennsylvania Department of Transportation employee Mark Yeager unclogged a drain.

"Between the rain and the snow melt, the pipes can't handle it," Yeager said.

Frank Vito, Hazleton's Streets Department foreman, said no major problems were reported in the city on Friday.

"The only problem we had was (Thursday) night at Buttonwood and Wyoming streets," he said. Rainfall was too heavy for inlets to handle, Vito said.

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