

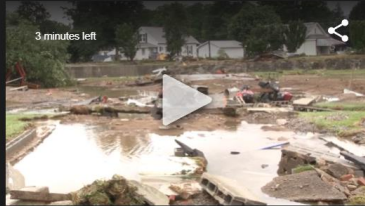
# Thousand Year Flood?

NEWS

## Former Mayor of White Sulphur Springs reflects on Thousand Year Flood as the five year anniversary approaches

by: Claudia Sessa  
Posted: May 5, 2021 / 04:13 PM EDT  
Updated: May 5, 2021 / 11:17 PM EDT

[WVNSTV 2021](#)



TOP STORIES BECKLEY

## White Sulphur Springs remembers 2016 as flooding strikes southern WV

by: Rivers Upchurch  
Posted: Jul 27, 2022 / 07:35 PM EDT  
Updated: Jul 27, 2022 / 07:35 PM EDT

[WVNSTV 2022](#)



Inside Appalachia: WV's 1,000 Year Flood

### “Inside Appalachia: WV’s 1000 Year Flood” – WV Public Broadcasting



Some websites like [MH3WV](#) clarify it as a 1,000-year rainfall event according to the NWS

“The National Weather Service called the June 2016 flooding in southern West Virginia an exceptional meteorological event, a vicious line-up of storms that came in simultaneously from the northeast and the southeast. Almost 8 inches of rain fell in some spots in just 12 to 18 hours. That amount of rain in such a short time period is something expected once in 1,000 years, according to the NWS.

# Thousand Year Flood?



## The Thousand-Year Flood: White Sulphur Springs Revisited

681 views · 1 year ago



June 23, 2021 marks five years since torrential rainfall caused catastrophic flooding and killed 23 people in southern West ...

CC

3:35



Lucky people were rescued.

9:16

## 2016 West Virginia 1000 year flood Official Tribute...Live at Ground Zero White Sulphur Springs

22K views · 6 years ago



By Tyler Hagemo at Cutting Edge Skating School.



## FB Viral Video of 2016 West Virginia 1000 Year Flood-Ground Zero Live Footage

1.4K views · 6 years ago



Hardest hit part of WV 1000 year flood-The bodies of three more victims of West Virginia's historic flooding were found overnight, .



## Inside Appalachia: WV's 1,000 Year Flood

174K views · 6 years ago



The National Weather Service called the June 2016 flooding in southern West Virginia an exceptional meteorological event, ...

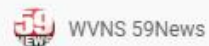


John Wyatt Rainelle, WV | Keith Thompson Beckley, WV | Alan Rose Evacuation Volunteer | Heather... 7 moments



## The Thousand Year Flood Revisited - Part 7

19 views · 3 years ago



The Greenbrier Resort and the PGA Tour event.

CC

1:50

# 1,000-Year Flood?

*A Thousand-year Downpour or Rainfall is different than a Thousand-year Flood*

## **What is a 1,000-year flood?**

The term “1,000-year flood” means that, statistically speaking, a flood of that magnitude (or greater) has a 1 in 1,000 chance of occurring in any given year. In terms of probability, the 1,000-year flood has a 0.1% chance of happening in any given year. These statistical values are based on observed data.

## **How can a 1,000-year rainfall not result in a 1,000-year flood?**

It comes down to a number of factors, including the pattern of movement of the rainstorm in each particular watershed, the conditions of the soil and plant matter in the watershed, and the timing of the rainstorm in one watershed versus other watersheds. For example, if the ground is already saturated before a rainstorm, much of the rain will run off into streams, but if the ground is dry, it will soak up more of the rain and the runoff will be less significant.

Source: [USGS](#) |  
[NOAA](#)  
[Climate.gov](#) |  
[NWS Blacksburg](#)

*In the immediate aftermath of the June 2016 flood, **USGS** and the **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)** initiated a cooperative study to evaluate the flood’s magnitude, extent, and probability of occurrence.*

# 1,000-Year Flood?

THE FLOOD IN JUNE 2016 WAS NOT A RARE, “1 IN 1,000 YEAR EVENT.” ALTHOUGH THE AMOUNT OF RAIN THAT FELL WAS UNUSUAL, RAINFALL AND FLOODING ARE DIFFERENT.

**FINDING 3:** THE FLOOD IN JUNE 2016 WAS NOT A RARE, “1 IN 1,000 YEAR EVENT.” ALTHOUGH THE AMOUNT OF RAIN THAT FELL WAS UNUSUAL, RAINFALL AND FLOODING ARE DIFFERENT.

- Individual watershed and storm characteristics help explain how a rainfall event with one frequency can cause a flood event with a different frequency. These characteristics include the duration and intensity of the rainfall, the spatial extent of the rainfall, and the size, slope, and shape of the watershed.
- The thunderstorms of June 23 and 24, 2016 produced different amounts of rainfall across the region. The National Weather Service estimated that the rainfall received by the hardest hit areas has a 1-in-1,000 chance of happening each year. However, many people took this to mean the flooding is a “thousand-year” event.
- Most of the June 2016 peak flows examined by USGS were found to be much more likely than a “1,000 year event.” In fact, the most extreme flooding was found to have 0.2% chance of happening in any given year (1 in 500) to a 5% chance (1 in 20).

TABLE 1. The annual chance of the flows recorded during the 2016 storm. The 100 year flood has a 1% chance of happening each year. Everything in this table with a value greater than 1% could happen more frequently.

STREAM GAGE LOCATION	ANNUAL CHANCE
GREENBRIER RIVER AT ALDERSON	1.2%
GREENBRIER RIVER AT HILLDALE	1.6%
WILLIAMS RIVER AT DYER	0.5%
GAULEY RIVER AT CAMDEN-ON-GAULEY	1.3%
CRANBERRY RIVER NEAR RICHWOOD	5.0%
GAULEY RIVER NEAR CRAIGSVILLE	0.9%
MEADOW RIVER AT NALLEN	0.2%
ANGLINS CREEK NEAR NALLEN	2.4%
PETERS CREEK NEAR LOCKWOOD	4.8%
ELK RIVER BELOW WEBSTER SPRINGS	1.4%

**Most of the June 2016 peak flows examined by USGS were found to be much more likely than a “1,000 year event.”** In fact, the most extreme flooding was found to have 0.2% chance of happening in any given year (1 in 500) to a 5% chance (1 in 20).

Source: [FEMA](#)

# 1,000-Year Flood?

THE LATEST DATA SHOW THAT THE LEVEL OF FLOODING THAT OCCURRED IN 2016 COULD HAPPEN **MORE FREQUENTLY** THAN PREVIOUSLY THOUGHT. IN MANY AREAS, THAT EVENT HAS AT LEAST A 1% CHANCE OF HAPPENING EACH YEAR IN THE FUTURE.

**FINDING 4:** THE LATEST DATA SHOW THAT THE LEVEL OF FLOODING THAT OCCURRED IN 2016 COULD HAPPEN MORE FREQUENTLY THAN PREVIOUSLY THOUGHT. IN MANY AREAS, THAT EVENT HAS AT LEAST A 1% CHANCE OF HAPPENING EACH YEAR IN THE FUTURE.

FEMA uses the best available data and analyzing data (such as streamflow records). The 2016 West Virginia floods were the most effective since the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. In general, the odds of a 100-year flood occurring are 1 in 100. Given the length of the record, the Discovery process for the 2016 floods is between FEMA and the USGS.

USGS Study: Three annual exceedance probability (AEP) curves calculated using the Expected Moments Algorithm (EMA) method were used to compare 100-year (AEP 0.0100) annual peak stream flows at 12 streamflow-gaging stations, measured from initiation of the period of record (POR) at each streamflow-gaging station through 1990, 2015, and 2016.

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For all but one of the gages analyzed, what used to have a 1% chance of happening each year, now has a greater chance of happening each year. In other words, what was considered the “100 year flow (1%)” could now be called the “21 year flow (4.8%)” for the gage at the Meadow River (watershed for Rainelle) at Nallen or the “77 year flow (1.3%)” for the Greenbrier River at Alderson (watershed for White Sulphur Springs).

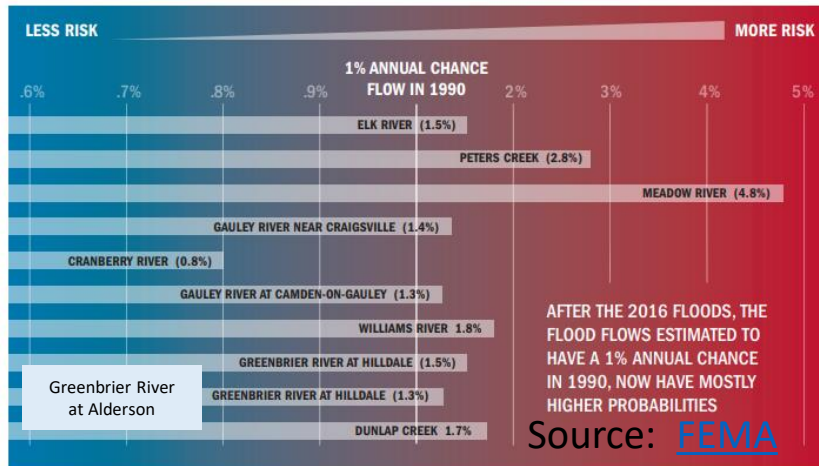


FIGURE 11: This chart shows how the probability of a 100-year-flow at each stream gage based on 1990 data has changed when information from 2016 is included. For all but one of the gages analyzed, what used to have a 1% chance of happening each year, now has a greater chance of happening each year. In other words, what was considered the “100 year flow” could now be called the “21 year flow” for the gage at the Meadow River at Nallen or the “77 year flow” for the Greenbrier River at Alderson.

03190000 Meadow River at Nallen, West Virginia

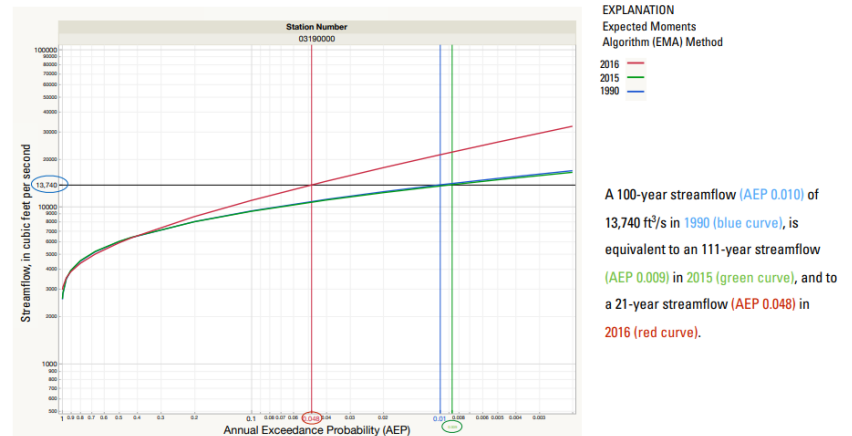


Figure 1-8. Annual exceedance probabilities in relation to streamflow for U.S. Geological Survey streamflow-gaging station 03190000, Meadow River at Nallen, West Virginia, for the period of record through 1990, 2015, and 2016.

Source: [USGS Report](#) | [AEP Meadow River](#) | [Pubs Site](#)