



## **The Smithburg Flood of 1950**

### **Event Details**

- Date: June 1950
- Time: 6:30 PM
- Precipitation: Over 13.8 inches in 5 hours
- Facts: 123 homes destroyed, 1,292 homes damaged (USGS)
- Flood Type: Summer Thunderstorm
- Fatalities: 31
- Main Impacted Streams: South Fork Hughes River (6 fatalities), Middle Island Creek (19 fatalities)
- Location: Ritchie and Doddridge Counties, WV
- Communities Impacted Most: Smithburg, Berea

### **Mitigation Efforts**

- Stream gauge installed on Middle Island Creek (covering 61.29% of fatalities)
- No mitigation measures in place for 35.48% of fatalities
- Structural protection (3.2% of fatalities) from a dam on the North Fork Hughes River

### **Risk and Impact Analysis**

- Flood Zone Classification:
  - 38.7% Zone A
  - 61.3% Zone AE
- Cause of Death:
  - 27 by drowning
  - 1 related to pre-existing medical conditions
  - 2 due to utility-related causes
- Fatality Locations:
  - 25 in structures
  - 3 in vehicles
  - 2 in water

### **Demographics of Victims**

- Age Groups:
  - 11 children (Ages 0–12)
  - 1 teenager (Ages 12–18)
  - 4 young adults (Ages 19–39)
  - 13 middle-aged adults (Ages 40–70)
  - 2 elderly (Ages 70+)
- Gender Distribution:



- 19 female
- 12 male
- Mass Casualty Events (74.2% of fatalities):
  - Bailey Home: A birthday party at the Bailey residence near Middle Island Creek was overtaken by floodwaters, sweeping away 13 people
  - Cooper Family: Warned to evacuate, the Coopers chose to stay and move furniture to higher ground. All six family members were swept away with their home
  - Koontz Household: In Berea, Mrs. Koontz had two guests over during the storm. Her grandchildren tried to assist a neighbor, but all perished in the flood

**Multimedia & Sources**

- [USGS Water-Supply Paper 1137-I](#)
- [Charleston Daily Mail, June 27, 1950](#)
- [Doddridge County Heritage Guild – 1950 Flood \(Images\)](#)