

Deadliest Floods in West Virginia History, Ranked by Fatalities

Original research by Dr. Steven Kite, WVU Emeritus Professor of Geology and Geography.

Supplemental WVU research by Kurt Donaldson and Whitney Belcher

Date	Main Location(s)	Description	Fatalities	Rainfall / Time	WV Damage (2025\$)	Mitigation
26 Feb 1972	Buffalo Creek, Logan County	Coal waste dam failure	123	3.7 in., 3-day rainfall; Dam failure at 8am	\$727,268,480	None
9 Aug 1916	Cabin Creek, Seng Creek, Fifteen Mile Creek, Big Coal River	Cloudburst floods	74	5.9 in., began around midnight	\$139,133,000	None
4-7 Nov 1985	Cheat, Potomac, Shenandoah, Greenbrier, Elk, Buckhannon, Tygart, Monongahela, Upper Gauley rivers; Marlinton, Cabins, Seneca Rocks, Moorefield	Tropical low tracked over eastern WV after Hurricane Juan passed thru Western KY; Many debris flows in Potomac Highlands, Cheat runoff nearly unprecedented in Ohio River basin;	49	3.9-11.8 in. rain in 48 hr. over large area, overnight and early morning hours	\$1,971,200,000	Moorefield Bank Levee, Cabins, Moorefield, Springfield, Buchannon, Parsons, Gladwin, Albright, Franklin, Marlinton stream gauges
22 Jun 1901	Elkhorn Creek, Dry Fork; Jaeger, Keystone, North Fork, Algoma	Cloudburst	44	5.8 in., overnight rainfall	\$2,560,000	Beartown, Litwar stream gauges
30 Sep 1870	Shenandoah River; Harpers Ferry / Virginius Island	Water rose rapidly trapping residents on Virginius Island	42	Over 7.9 in. in 48 hrs;	\$116,480,000	None – island not inhabited today
24-26 Jun 1950	Hughes, West Fork & Little Kanawha rivers, Middle Island & Gnat Run.; Berea, West Union, Weston, Smithburg, Doddridge & Ritchie Co.	Torrential rains & flash floods	31	6.9 to 7.9 in. in 5 hrs, over 13.8 total; major flooding occurred in overnight hours	\$125,440,000	North Fork Hughes River dam in Cairo, West Union stream gauge
4-5 Aug 1943	Little Kanawha R. basin, incl. small	Severe flash floods	23	As much as 15 in. in 2 hrs.; rapid rise in early morning hours	\$22,798,080	None

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	tributaries; Girta, Tanner, Copen, Heaters					
23 Jun 2016	Greenbrier, Elk, Gauley river basins, and numerous smaller streams, including Howard Creek.	Flash floods from repeated lines of intense convective storms along a stationary front	23	3.9-7.9 in. in 12-24 hr period; flooding during morning hours	\$1,408,000,000	Sutton dam, Anthony, White Sulphur Springs, Caldwell, Rainelle, Elkview stream gauges
19 Jul 1961	Magazine Hollow, Elk Two-Mile; Rutledge, Twomile, Riverview (Charleston)	Cloudburst during wettest July in history causes flash floods and debris flows.	22	5.7 in. in 4 hr. ;hit around sunset into the night	\$40,634,880	Elk River, Elk Two mile creek, and Kanawha River stream gauges in Charleston, culvert on Garrison Ave. (Magazine Hollow), 3 Elk Two- mile dams
19 Jul 1888	Caldwell Run, Wheeling Creek; Wheeling, Elm Grove, Triadelphia, Clinton	Most appalling cloudburst ever known in this section of WV for nearly 2 hr	20	Unofficial estimates of 5.9-7.9 in.	\$18,624,000	Ohio River, Wheeling creek stream gauges, Wheeling Creek No.7 dam
18 Jul 1889	Tygart, Tucker, Pond, Left Fork Sandy Creek, Nesselroad Run; Parkersburg, Morristown, Wiseburg, Lockhart	Triggered by evening cloudburst	19	Tygart Crk. rose 22ft. in 1hr; Tucker Crk. At Morristown rose 20ft. in < 2 hr; 19.5 in. rainfall in 2hr. 10 min at Rockport (WV record)	\$21,337,600	Little Tygart Creek at Mineral Wells, Ohio River at Parkersburg stream gauges
10-11 Jul 1932	Paint and Armstrong Creek; Glen Huddy, Gallagher, Collinsdale	Flash floods	18	Nighttime	\$55,171,840	None