

TEXAS FLOODING

HEAVY RAINS PAUSE SEARCH FOR VICTIMS



ERIC GAY, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rain falls over a makeshift memorial for flood victims Sunday along the Guadalupe River in Kerrville, Texas.

Evacuations ordered amid new threat of high waters

GABRIELA AOUN
Associated Press

KERRVILLE, Texas — More heavy rains in Texas on Sunday temporarily paused a weeklong search for victims of catastrophic flooding along the Guadalupe River and led to high-water rescues elsewhere as officials warned that the downpours could again cause waterways to surge.

It was the first time a new round of severe weather had paused the search since the July 4 floods, which killed at least 132 people. Authorities believe more than 160 people may still be missing in Kerr County alone, and 10 more in neighboring areas.

In Kerrville, where local officials have come under scrutiny over the failure to adequately warn residents about the rising water in the early-morning hours of July 4, authorities went door-to-door to some homes after midnight early Sunday to alert people that flooding was again possible. Authorities also pushed phone alerts to those in the area.

During the pause in searches, Ingram Fire Department officials ordered crews to immediately evacuate the Guadalupe River corridor in Kerr County, warning the po-

tential for a flash flood is high.

Late Sunday afternoon, the Kerr County Sheriff's Office announced that search teams in the western part of that county could resume their efforts. The Ingram Fire Department would resume their search-and-rescue efforts Monday morning, said agency spokesman Brian Lochte.

Latest flooding damages dozens of homes

Gov. Greg Abbott said on X that the state was making rescues in San Saba, Lampasas and Schleicher counties and that evacuations were taking place in a handful of others. Texas Task Force 1, a joint state and federal urban search and rescue team, had rescued dozens of people in the Lampasas area, Abbott said.

The latest round of flooding damaged about 100 homes and knocked down untold lengths of cattle fencing, said Ashley Johnson, CEO of the Hill Country Community Action Association, a San Saba-based nonprofit.

"Anything you can imagine in a rural community was damaged," she said. "Our

blessing is it was daylight and we knew it was coming."

With more rain on the way, county officials ordered everyone living in flood-prone areas near the San Saba River to evacuate. Johnson said people were being moved to the San Saba Civic Center, which has become a safe, high place for people to receive aid and shelter.

"Everyone is in some way personally affected by this," she said. "Everyone is just doing what they can to help their neighbors."

Wide-ranging weather system brings heavy rains

The weather system brought multiple rounds of heavy rains and slow-moving storms across a widespread area, pushing rivers and streams over their banks. Heading into the afternoon and evening, the heaviest rains were expected along the I-35 corridor and east, said meteorologist Patricia Sanchez from the National Weather Service's Fort Worth office.

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Weather forecast changes may benefit Trump appointees

Cabinet members have ties to companies that stand to gain from privatizing

BRIAN SLODYSKO AND MICHAEL BIESECKER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — As commerce secretary, Howard Lutnick oversees the U.S. government's vast efforts to monitor and predict the weather.

The billionaire also ran a financial firm, which he recently left in the control of his adult sons, that stands to benefit if President Donald Trump's administration follows through on a decadelong Republican effort to privatize government weather

forecasting.

Deadly flooding in Texas has put a spotlight on budget cuts and staff reductions at the National Weather Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, agencies housed within the Commerce Department that provide the public with free climate and weather data that can be crucial during natural disasters.

What's drawn less attention is how the downsizing appears to be part of an effort to privatize the work of such agencies. In several instances, the companies poised to step into the void have deep ties to people tapped by Trump to run weather-related agencies.

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JULIO CORTEZ, ASSOCIATED PRESS

A wall is missing on a building at Camp Mystic along the banks of the Guadalupe River on July 5 in Hunt, Texas.