

More terrible than *Ivan*: the Spring 2005 Flood

by Management Asst. Bill Halainen

On the weekend of April 2 and 3, 2005 the third worst flood on the Delaware River since 1900 inundated the park. The river gauge at Montague NJ reached a height of just under 32 ft., as compared with the 35-plus-ft. record of the historic 1955 flood. The volume of water in the river was even more impressive, rising from an average 30,000 cubic ft. per second (cfs) to a peak flow of 220,000 cfs.



NPS photo by Mike Fernald

This was the second flood of such severity in six months; rains from Hurricane *Ivan* flooded the park in September 2004. Flood waters this spring extended well beyond high water marks of last September, covering sections of almost all primary park roads, (particularly Route 209 in Pennsylvania), and flooding boat and canoe launches, beaches, restrooms, bathhouses, and numerous basements. Trees fell throughout the park, blocking roads. All of the islands in the Delaware were wholly submerged; river campsites were destroyed. Virtually all park roads and facilities were closed for days.

When the waters finally receded, the damage became evident: massive deposits of mud and debris; the swim beach at Depew wholly swept away; most unimproved roads severely eroded by fast-moving creek waters; and dozens of buildings, most notably Kittatinny Point Visitor Center NJ, with structural and utility damage. Overall, the flood caused \$3 million in damage, over and above the \$4 million in damage from *Ivan*. The park will repair and reopen facilities as quickly as possible, but it is likely that work will have to continue through the summer.

(Above) As waters rose around their home, Mrs. Aun, a resident of the park for 50 years, and her companion decided to take their first canoe trip on the Delaware. Their skippers are Rangers Hnat and Croll. **Note the water reaching up to the road sign.**
