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Fargo well prepared with sandbags if needed

FARGO – If spring flood waters top 37 feet here, the city would need about 101,000 sandbags, a fraction of the total sandbags left over from the 2011 flood.

By: [Wendy Reuer](#), INFORUM

FARGO – If spring flood waters top 37 feet here, the city would need about 101,000 sandbags, a fraction of the total sandbags left over from the 2011 flood.

The city has 750,000 filled sandbags left over from 2011. Fargo Enterprise Director Bruce Grubb said Monday that the city had the sandbags professionally preserved and stored at Fargo's compost site. As of last week, it appears the sandbags are still intact and usable if needed.

"Other than some frozen bags on top, they all look like they're in really good condition," Grubb said at Monday's City Commission meeting.

A flood outlook released Feb. 21 by the National Weather Service predicted the Red River in Fargo has a 79 percent of chance of topping major flood stage of 30 feet. There is a 50 percent chance the river will exceed 33.2 feet, a 25 percent chance it will top 35.1 feet and a 5 percent chance of surpassing 37.8 feet.

After spending about \$100 million in flood protection since 1997, much of the city is protected to about 38 feet or more.

"We're better off today than we were in the past, because of the improvements that have been made," Mayor Dennis Walaker said.

In the event of major flooding, temporary dikes would be needed on Second and Elm streets, and a temporary levee may also be used along Drain 27 in the Copperfield Court area, but city staff is already working to identify vendors who would have the materials ready, City Administrator Pat Zavoral said.

If flooding reached 42 feet, more than a foot above the record 2009 crest, Fargo would need about 1.1 million sandbags, City Engineer April Walker said.

"We know where our areas of concern are. We'll continue to monitor the National Weather Service predictions," Walker said.

Walaker – who is known for his keen folksy flood predictions – said he will likely take the annual trip to the southern origins of the Red River and its tributaries next week.

"I have never seen anything in Cass County that disturbs me at all, but I haven't been south of 46," Walaker said Monday. "We'll wait and see, that's the only thing. ... It's still March. And if we have a decent melt, all bets are off."

Readers can reach Forum reporter Wendy Reuer at (701) 241-5530

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