Rain brings more damage

Bridge collapses in Pickens; more storms on the way

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The rain has hit the Upstate hard yet again this week — first in the city, then in the mountains — and more is expected.

On Wednesday, three-quarters of the normal rainfall during a typical August month fell in Pickens County in one day — more than 3.5 inches — washing out another bridge, over Six Mile Creek, that will remain closed until further notice.

That came a day after Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport saw just under half of a normal August total rainfall with 1.99 inches during a six-hour early-morning span.

While Greenville was spared, with mostly drizzle Wednesday, Pickens and the mountainous areas of Greenville County were drenched under a storm system that moved

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Rain washed out a bridge over Six Mile Creek on Jones Mill Road in Pickens County on Tuesday. KEN OSBURN/STAFF

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slowly, said Lauren Visin, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Greer.

On Jones Mill Road north of Clemson, a bridge over Six Mile Creek collapsed following the rain.

The bridge dropped between 4 and 5 feet after debris lifted from the rising creek lodged into the bridge supports, the state Department of Transportation said.

The heavy rains have also threatened smaller dams on private properties.

On Wednesday, the state Department of Health and Environmental Control investigated complaints of a small, unregulated dam on Short Branch Road and Terry Creek in Travelers Rest and determined that it might fail, DHEC spokesman Jim Beasley said.

Authorities warned residents to remove anything of value in case of a failure, Beasley said.

The agency, he said, has seen more complaints lately regarding smaller dams, which typically hold back small bodies of water like farm ponds.

"While we are not adjusting our inspection process in response to rainfall, we have seen an increase in calls related to concerns with dams," Beasley said. "We make visits to the dam sites and follow up as appropriate for each situation."

The Greenville County Emergency Management Division issued an alert for residents to expect more flooding from rising waterways and take precautions.

Emergency management warns not to wait for someone to tell you to leave your home if floodwaters rise and to be careful traveling through flooded passages, because a mere six inches of moving water can cause you to fall.

On average in August, Pickens County would typically see 4.94 inches of rain total. The record for August rain in Pickens County is 5.18 inches.

More of the same is expected today and perhaps for the next few days, Visin said.

"Our air mass remains pretty saturated, and the pattern is pretty similar," she said. "I know the showery weather is not the most fun to deal with in the middle of summer, but we see the potential for some more flooding. We're going to have to watch out for that because these storms don't look like they're going to be moving too quickly."

The sunny weekend to begin the month showed promise for a break in a rainy pattern that has persisted since December, but the first days of August are picking up where July left off.

About 14.5 inches of rain fell in July in Greenville, more than than in any other year since records were first kept in 1884.

The Upstate has already exceeded the amount of rain typically seen in an entire year and is on pace to break all-time records for annual totals set back in 1901.