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Storm causes little damage in Upstate

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SENECA — What was left of Hurricane Ida drenched Oconee and Pickens counties on Tuesday and Wednesday, but did little in the way of significant flooding or damage, officials say.

"We've had a few creeks come out of their banks a little bit, but they receded pretty quickly," said Oconee County Emergency Services Director Rodney Burdette on Wednesday. "We've had a couple trees down around the county, but not many — so far, so good."

The downed trees were not concentrated in any particular area, as there were reports of them in Westminster, Walhalla and Fair Play. Burdette said the next challenge now that the rain is gone is to keep a watchful eye on the potential for gusty winds to uproot trees from the now soggy soil.

"We'll have to wait and see what the winds do. The ground is really wet," Burdette said. "If we make it to about 2 a.m., and the wind's not too terribly bad, we could possibly be out of the woods."

Bryan McAvoy of the National Weather Service said predictions for precipitation have been on target. Much of Pickens and Oconee saw from 4 to 5 inches of rain from Tuesday morning through Wednesday.

"Seneca's highest total for the event was 4.04 inches, and that's been pretty consistent across the region," McAvoy said.

Walhalla experienced 4.98 inches of rain, while West Union saw 4.82, and farther east, Clemson saw 4.05 inches.

"The winds in the western part of the Upstate shouldn't be too terribly strong," McAvoy said of the next 24 hours. "We could still have some gusts of 25 or even 30 miles per hour, but the strongest winds should slow down overnight."

McAvoy said Oconee and Pickens counties generally avoided the power outages that more populated areas in Anderson and Greenville experienced.

Meanwhile, the rains have caused the area's lakes to swell. Lake Keowee is at 96.5 feet of full pond, and Jocassee stands at just under 96. According to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Lake Hartwell's elevation of mean sea level was 660 feet, some five feet above the lake's average, though hydrological data does not yet indicate a need for an alteration in outflows.



JESSICA NELMS | STAFF

Park Ranger Chris Hoxit keeps a watchful eye on the water levels of the Chauga River in Chau-Ram Park on Wednesday afternoon.

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