

Flooding Update from WV VOAD (WV Voluntary Organizations Assisting in Disaster)

Good news:

We have come a long way since June 23. As of Thanksgiving, we had moved the last person we knew of out of tents and into more secure housing. As of Christmas, everyone had some source of heat. Our Long-Term Recovery Committees are working hard to manage resources, address cases and be good stewards of the gifts so many have given to the people in WV in need.

The current issues:

There are still families who are sharing too small spaces with other families, living in campers, trailers and homes that will not be sufficient long term. We have homes that have been “fixed” that now have mold reoccurrence and will have to be remediated again. HVAC systems are going in a number of rebuild homes, but there is so much more to do.

By far the biggest issue right now is volunteers. We need consistent groups of volunteers from all organizations to keep up the pace and to continue the work. There are several years of work ahead. Volunteer groups are more plentiful in the warmer months, but there is much work that can be done now.

From the Presbytery of WV:

We hosted three retreats for Flood Relief Workers in January with the leadership of two of our National Presbyterian Disaster Assistant Team members, Dr. Susan Mattocks and Karen Smith. These resiliency retreats were a gift to those workers as they rested, learned new skills and shared the burdens of the stories they have been carrying from the flood. The congregations at Summersville, Old Stone and First Charleston were gracious to allow us space to hold the retreats.

As you well know, WVMAW is our thriving and busy long-term recovery arm. They have been industriously working on flood recovery since the first day. Their work is prolific, and they have an astounding number of groups scheduled for spring and summer. They are working on opening new hospitality spaces for these groups and continue to look for solid skilled construction coordinators, as well as congregations that are near the flood areas that are willing to help host groups. To help or to schedule your group, please call Joan Stewart at 304-846-2294.