LOCAL NEWS

KPN Helps Veteran during Floods; Montgomery County Inundated

By Ruben Borjas, Jr



KPN Founder, Ed Ponikvar points to the utility greenbelt where water pooled before racing down toward the home of Sandra Timm, yellow shirt, Thursday morning causing damage. The remains of the trench hurried built by Ponikvar's team to divert flood waters from Timm's house

Knowledge Point Network, U.S.A., the local charity dedicated to the suicide prevention of Combat Veterans with PTSD and their children, jumped into action this past Thursday when a Veteran supporter of the organization experienced water coming into her house from bad water drainage situation in her Elkins Lake neighborhood in Huntsville. And it is an important lesson for the new

multi-tiered subdivisions coming online in Montgomery County to consider the importance of drainage possibilities when constructing homes in such areas.

KPN Founder, Ed Ponikvar, was called early last Thursday morning, about a friend of KPN who was desperate for help having floodwaters pressing against the exterior walls and doors of her home, and seeping through the walls. Ponikvar immediately called members of his team, who brought shovels and sandbags to deflect the waters away from the house. They were able to dig channels to help divert the waters built up against the house, and lessening the damage already caused.

“This was worse than Harvey,” said homeowner Sandra Timm, a retired U.S. Army nurse, who now works for the prison system. “There have been other homes that flooded due to the same problem.”

It had been noted that on the greenbelt above the property, that a simple ditch could have been cut to allow the excess water to be sent out to a nearby street. Ponikvar also noted the incredible amount of sand sedimentation that was displaced by the floodwaters between Elkins and Azalea Lakes, in some places 3 - 4 feet high, mostly likely sourced from nearby home construction, that overlapped the street to the height of a large speed bump.

Montgomery County was heavily affected by the floodwaters, as well were counties on the East Fork of the San Jacinto River. Many homes experienced flooding, some up to the rooftops or above, and many cars were lost. From below the Lake Conroe Dam, to McDade Estates, down to River Plantation, and areas once thought safe from flooding; officials as well as insurance companies will have to do major rethinks when it comes to flood zones, further complicating the situation when resources are already strained. In addition, cash strapped homeowners will have to compete with potential home buyers moving into areas not affected by the flooding, or consider moving to other parts of the region. Still further, the actions of the San Jacinto River Authority will have to be addressed in the mitigation of flooding downstream of the Lake Conroe Dam.

The flooding not only hit homeowners, but businesses as well, most notably Vernon’s Kuntry Katfish, located on SH 105. With the forced release of water from the Lake Conroe Dam, the overwhelmed West Fork of the San Jacinto River forced water out of its banks, thus flooding the countryside and the catfish restaurant for the second time since 2017.

“My neighborhood of Forest Hills was hit pretty hard from the flood,” said Thad Davis. “In the next couple of weeks we will have a lot of cleanup to do, and could use a lot of help.”

Forest Hills lies east of I-45, and one-half mile west of San Jacinto in a low lying area, while River Plantation borders the river to its south. One resident was critical of the San Jacinto River Authority in not releasing water prior to the recent rain event.

“I want to be clear about the problem in River Plantation. It is not the rainwater that falls that flooded it out,” said homeowner, Jerry O’Neal. “If they would have released water before the storms, nobody would have got flooded in Conroe and surrounding communities.”

Lake Houston was releasing water prior to the last week’s flood event due to previous rains, but Lake Conroe, as of April 30th, at 3pm, was still 1.61 ft. above full pool at 201 ft., releasing at a rate of less than 10,000 cubic feet per second, when the heavy rain event had already been forecast. The SJRA’s Facebook page was filled with resident after resident questioning the river authorities' lack of action. From accusations of the City of Houston controlling the lake’s water releases, to those above the dam complaining that releasing too little water caused lake flooding and lost and damaged boats, etc.

“We have people coming to check out the fryers and other electronics this week,” said Mary Bowers in speaking on the condition of her restaurant. “And we anticipate getting the dining room back up and running in the next week or two.”

Thankfully the water level wasn’t as bad as during Hurricane Harvey, and the store may be able to open sooner rather than later. Ms Mary’s son Buster set the standard for recovering from the last flood, having had the store gutted and cleaned out just a few days after the waters receded. Thankfully there is talk this time to possibly mitigate flood chances in the future at the restaurant, since being flooded twice in a matter of 7 years is too much.

Vernon's Go Fund Me Page:

https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-revive-vernons-flooded-restaurant

San Jacinto River Authority: https://www.sjra.net/

Knowledge Point Network: KPNUSA.com

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