

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACT: Heather Dawson
788-4221 ext 18

AVALANCHE CAUSES BIG WOOD FLOODING

(Hailey, Idaho) Two avalanches plummeting from Della Mountain at Hailey's western boundary caused unprecedented winter flooding of the Big Wood River. Spilling into the river in the early morning hours of January 28, the avalanches created two snow dams which diverted fast flowing waters onto residential neighborhood streets. Under the direction of City Engineer Tom Hellen, city crews opened a channel below the area to allow the water to flow back into the Big Wood River below the affected area. The high snow banks along the streets kept most of the flood water channeled onto the streets, but water rose to approximately 18 inches and encroached into some residential crawl spaces and garages throughout the day.

The Big Wood waters eventually found their own channel through the snow dams and water began receding from the streets overnight. On Tuesday morning city plow crews plowed the affected streets, which were then fully passable.

Snow on Della Mountain remains highly unstable, and further avalanches are expected. The City of Hailey has posted the park and recreation trails underneath Della Mountain to prohibit pedestrians from using that dangerous avalanche area. Particularly dangerous are icy areas adjacent to the river, where the flooded waters froze before finding their way back into the Big Wood channel.



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