

- News**
- Local News
- In Depth
- Covering NY
- Covering America
- Covering the World
- Election Source 2004
- Daybreak
- News Team
- Your Stories
- Good News
- Weird News
- Gas Prices
- Contact Us
- Links and Reminders
- Closings and Delays
- Links and Reminders
- Rick's Recipes
- Pet Savers
- Out and About
- Connect With Kids
- Contests
- Contact Us
- Career Guide
- Job Opportunities
- Guest Book
- Ask The Pro
- Auto Guide
- Legal Answers
- Health Guide
- Outdoor Guide
- Home Guide
- Wedding Guide
- Program Schedule
- ABC Programs
- ABC News
- Clear Channel

Ice Jams

Last Update: 1/21/2004 4:34:47 PM

1/21/04:

Canal Corporation hydrologists spent their day inspecting ice jams along the Seneca and Oswego rivers. The jams are blocking water flow to Lake Ontario, creating minor flooding upstream. The biggest problem seems to be Cross Lake. What's different this time is flooding so early in the year.

Cross Lake has problems at the end of the winter, when snow melts and rain falls. Water rose a few inches above normal last December and it's only gotten worse. It's hard to tell with the snowpack where the snow ends and the water begins on Cross Lake and the problem doesn't start here, but at ice jams on the Seneca and Oswego rivers. The biggest jam formed two and a half weeks ago, backing up water throughout the canal system.

Canal Corporation wouldn't allow its hydrologists to talk to NewsChannel 9, but he did talk to Ted Endreny at the College of Environmental Science and Forestry. Ted Endreny, hydrologist: "I don't think the New York State Barge Canal will do any management on this because if they were to manage it, it might cause a downstream jam which would then hold them liable as a man made jam. Right now it's a national ice jam."

We usually see ice jams at the end of the winter when ice starts breaking up and then catches on something and clogs downstream. What's happening in central New York rivers is a freeze-up jam. Water runs slowly enough under extreme cold temperatures that it freezes solid.

Whatever the reason, ice jams can be trouble. Homeowners along the Canal will be meeting Wednesday night at the Baldwinsville Public Library to talk about the jams and high water. The meeting starts at 7:00.

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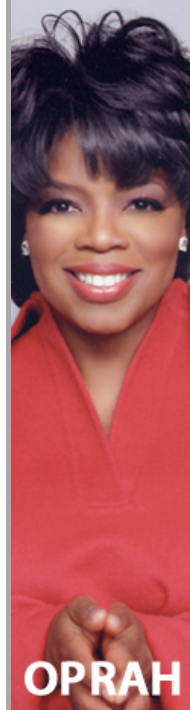
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