



Louisiana suffers hurricane-like flooding, displacing tens of thousands

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Eleven years to the month after Hurricane Katrina ravaged the Gulf Coast states, especially Louisiana, [severe rainstorms have submerged large swaths of the state](http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/it-turns-your-heart-upside-down-flooding-crisis-louisiana-far-n632921) (<http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/it-turns-your-heart-upside-down-flooding-crisis-louisiana-far-n632921>) under up to two-and-a-half feet of water. The damage so far includes 13 lives lost and 40,000 homes damaged or destroyed. Rescue personnel referred to as the “Cajun Navy” helped roughly 30,000 people escape the floods.

The good news is that the state and parishes have done an admirable job dealing with the flooding so far with a solid assist from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).



(http://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/RTX2LNNS_louisiana_flooding-e1471533487490.jpg)

Megan Schexnayder and David McNeely (R) sit on the porch of a home which is surrounded by floodwaters in Sorrento, Louisiana, August 17, 2016. REUTERS/Edmund D. Fountain.

Yet, problems may arise from short term threats and the longer term recovery efforts. In the near future, additional rain will hamper current efforts to dig out, increase the damage count, and further strain resources. Meteorologists are calling for more rain this weekend. Hopefully, the rain will be light, at worst.

In the long term, local exigencies will have the biggest impact on recovery. Few recall the issues that arose in Princeville, North Carolina, after Hurricane Floyd hit in 1999. The immediate response proved sound, but the consequences brought on by the flooding [caused major issues](http://www.heraldtribune.com/article/20050213/NEWS/502130769) (<http://www.heraldtribune.com/article/20050213/NEWS/502130769>) for those impacted, leading FEMA to incorporate local voices more into recovery planning.

The challenges facing Louisiana are numerous. On the horizon, it will have to find housing for the thousands of families whose homes are uninhabitable, with some families needing long-term housing while their homes are cleaned or rebuilt. In some areas, the stock of temporary housing is already limited, which will make housing victims a serious challenge. Government buildings such as schools and medical facilities have also suffered damage, which will affect the start of the school year and medical treatment for the populations impacted. Many roads also will require repairs. Providing food and water to the tens of thousands of people also will require strong coordination by relief providers. The [American Red Cross is estimating that their response efforts](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2016/08/17) (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2016/08/17>)

[/louisiana-flood-victims-face-long-road-back-to-normal-i-lost-everything/?utm_term=.9755f7fec2f2](#)) will cost more than \$30 million.

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With summer still in swing, any stagnant water will carry a greater risk of mosquito borne illnesses such as Zika and other bacterial or parasitic pathogens. Because the flooding also wiped out the habitats of animals, citizens are at an increased risk from poisonous snakes, spiders, and other dangerous critters. This risk is heightened during the cleanup of housing where those animals could have found shelter during the flooding.

One longer term issue that typically occurs is when vehicles damaged by flooding are introduced into the secondary market. Many of these cars and trucks likely won't contain warnings that they suffered flooding damage. Consumers should be made aware of such issues before buying a used car that a year earlier was submerged in water.

Let's hope Louisiana gets a rain break and the lack of FEMA activity over the last seven-and-a-half years have given it time to truly fix the organizational problems discovered after Hurricane Katrina.

Learn more: [Our dangerous reality](#)

(<http://www.aei.org/publication/our-dangerous-reality/>) | [Flawed homeowner's flood insurance policies subsidize recklessness](#)

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