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By Tuesday Night Cattail Creek Had Risen Almost To Top Of Sign On Left



One Of Three Badly Damaged Areas Of Roadway Along Bolens Creek



Flooded Fields In Cane River Section Were Part Of Crop Damage In Yancey County

## Over \$500,000 Damage As Rain And Floods Hit Yancey

By Carolyn Yuziuk

Two days and nights of relentless, driving rain took its toll of roads and bridges in Yancey County on Monday and Tuesday of this week. The wind and rain, dismal forerunners of Hurricane Agnes which was moving up from the Florida Panhandle toward the Carolina Coast, began in earnest Monday, June 19.

Streams, creeks and rivers in Yancey swelled to overflowing by nightfall, but still the rain continued. Those who went to sleep hoping for a better day, woke up Tuesday morning to the same wet and dreary landscape. Before the day was over, the rain and flooding had wreaked havoc on many areas of our county.

The Mountain Wilderness Campground moved out occupants of its park as it flooded on Tuesday. Much damage was reported.

Yancey Railroad had one of its bridges completely washed out, according to Charles Laws, general manager of the railroad. This bridge was the Dawson Bridge at the mouth of Silvers Branch at Micaville. Laws said the railroad also partially lost 2 bridges, both over Aylers Creek in the South Toe section. The rain waters washed away ground under sections of track all along the line. A rough estimate of the damage was about \$60,000,00.

Many residents of Cane River Valley were evacuated on Tuesday night as Bakers Creek Dam threatened to burst with the swollen waters of the lake above. According to Sheriff Kermit Banks, several thousand people in Yancey and Mitchell Counties could have been affected if the dam had not held. The danger appears to have subsided with the cessation of rain on Wednesday.

Widespread road damage was reported by the State Highway Department. A spokesman said that a portion of Highway 80 at White Oak Creek was washed out by highwaters on

Tuesday. Bolens Creek Road is completely washed out in two sections along the creek, and an official estimated that it will be two days before the road can be reopened. Cattail Creek Road was blocked by washout, but has been reopened after repairs were made by the highway crew. A bridge on Highway 197 above Mountain Wilderness is damaged beyond repair and will have to be completely reconstructed.

Several secondary roads will be closed for a day or two, it was reported, and almost all gravel roads in Yancey County have sustained damage. Georges Fork Road is blocked at its upper end, as is Bill Allen Branch near Burnsville. The swollen waters of Bill Allen Branch brought to the memory of old timers along that road a previous flood period many years ago which had carried huge trees and cattle down the normally peaceable little stream.

The home of Mrs. Frances Low on Pensacola Road appeared to be threatened by rising waters, and she was taken by the Rescue Squad to the home of friends in Burnsville.

Ed Holcombe of the ASCS, Ned Jester of the Soil Conservation Service, Wilbur Howard from the Farmers Home Administration and Hugh Pate, the Extension Service Horticultural Aide, met early Wednesday morning to discuss the extensive crop damage in certain areas of Yancey County. They went out Wednesday afternoon to assess the damage firsthand, and report that an estimated \$100,000.00 worth of crops have been destroyed. This figure, says Ned Jester, is for crops alone. An inestimable amount of damage was done to lands in the county.

People all over Yancey County will be working hard during the next few weeks to restore their homes and lands to normalcy. The "June Flood" of '72 was perhaps not as ravaging as in the long-ago days we have heard about, but it will be remembered and retold in years to come.



Garbage Cans Float In Flooded Picnic Area Of Mt. Wilderness Campgrounds

## Mt. Wilderness Takes Severe Blow

Approximately 50 campers had to be evacuated from the Mountain Wilderness Campground and recreational area in Pensacola when heavy rains caused a river through the area to flood most of the grounds. Owner Ray Miller estimates that it will take \$15,000 to \$20,000 to return the area to its previous condition.

The Mountain Wilderness area will be closed until Friday, said Miller, but added that the Bluegrass Festival planned for Friday and Saturday will be held as scheduled. The festival will be held in the Wilderness Hall, which along with the recreation building, was not damaged.

Evacuation of campers by Sheriff Kermit Banks, Manager Frank Fagan, the CAP, Emergency Radio Patrol and other volunteers began Tuesday afternoon when waters of the Upper Cane River, which runs through Mountain Wilderness, began to overflow and flood the park. Horses had to be let out of the corral and barns, and planes were moved to the center of the airfield.

Sheriff Kermit Banks said most campers had been evacuated by 10:00 p.m. By that time electricity to the area had been cut off by a pole falling across the power lines.

An almost tragic accident occurred when Mountain Wil-

derness employee Glenn Williams helped some campers across the river to safety—and could not get back across by the same route. He tried crossing on the dam above the lake and was swept away by the current. Williams said he was carried along under water for about 50 yards before he could surface. The long raincoat and heavy boots he was wearing weighed him down and became tangled in his feet and arms, making it impossible for him to swim. He kept being hit by debris and his body was thrown against trees as he was carried along. He finally lodged against a tree and managed to climb above the water.

calls for help were then heard, and he was thrown a rope and pulled to safety—about 200 yards from the dam from which he had been swept.

About 25% of the lake at Mountain Wilderness is filled in with rocks and debris, said Ray Miller. And there will be extremely good fishing along Cane River, courtesy of Mountain Wilderness! Miller had just filled the lake with \$2,000 worth of trout.

Photos By  
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