



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wildwood Recovers from Tropical Storm Debby

Wildwood officials are continuing to assess and respond to damage caused by Tropical Storm Debby, which brought torrents of rain before making landfall Monday morning in Florida's Big Bend region as a Category 1 hurricane.

"Overall, we were very fortunate," said City Manager Jason McHugh, who brought a declaration of local emergency to the commission on Friday in preparation for the storm. "But we did have some neighborhoods that experienced flooding, and we are working with our emergency management partners to assist those residents."

The Woodlane Meadows development between Powell Road and Main Street was one area affected, with water flowing over neighborhood streets, overtaking sections of many yards, and entering two or more houses. City staff have reached out to homeowners to confirm interior damage details.

"Our team has been on the scene since receiving the first reports yesterday morning," said Public Works Director Jeremy Hockenbury, explaining the city requested assistance from Sumter County to secure additional resources.

By noon Monday, crews had begun pumping water from the flooded area. A larger pump was secured overnight and will speed removal of water, which was down four inches by 7 a.m. Tuesday. Huey Street from St. Clair Street to Powell Road is closed temporarily to through traffic to facilitate the effort.

Hockenbury noted that the Woodlane Meadows neighborhood is not an area that has experienced significant flooding in recent years during heavy rain, while other areas of the city that typically do accumulate water fared well compared to past storms.

As they aid residents of affected homes, officials are analyzing what occurred, including new development on adjacent land, and where improvements are needed.

"We are scrutinizing the processes involved with recent changes in that part of the city to determine exactly what caused this issue," McHugh said. "As we examine every step of those procedures, we will take whatever actions are necessary to prevent this from happening again in the future."

Lake Deaton Park also experienced flooding and remains closed while waters recede to protect the safety of those who enjoy the popular boating and fishing spot.

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