

St. John's River Flooding



HUNDREDS OF PUTNAM COUNTY HOMES STILL WITHOUT POWER AFTER MATTHEW

By Cecilia Mazanec and Daniela Hurtado

🕒 October 10, 2016 📁 Weather

1

From their front porch earlier today, Larry Murrow and his wife watched four workers fix the power lines across the street.

The couple sat calmly on their cushioned seats, despite the fact that their Palatka home was the only house on their street without power after Hurricane Matthew brought destruction to many of Florida's eastern communities.

Murrow, 69, said the hurricane has been difficult for both residents and electrical workers.

"They're frustrated, and we're frustrated," he said. "They're doing everything they can to get power back on, I promise you that."

Many in Putnam County are like the Murrows: waiting to have their lights turned back on.

As of this morning, 2,500 Putnam County accounts were without power, said Paul Flateau, a captain with Putnam County Emergency Services.



Workers fix a power line outside the Palatka home of Larry Murrow. Murrow said he hasn't had power since Friday. (Cecilia Mazanec/WUFT News)

But by 4 p.m., that number had been reduced to 570, according to Florida Power and Light's website.

The county is still assessing damages while it works to clean up and restore power, Flateau said.

Meanwhile, citizens are asked to place their debris along the road in advance of the pick-up that's set to start Wednesday, he said.

The Red Cross has 12 trucks in the area that began distributing food in highly impacted areas today, Flateau said. The arrival of the trucks will be announced by loudspeakers as they drive along the road.

If a citizen has a neighbor who is elderly or immobile, he or she should "assist them in whatever way possible so they get the food and water that's being distributed," he said.

However, one of Flateau's main concerns has been the effect of the storm on the St. Johns River, which runs through the eastern part of Putnam. Flooding caused a great deal of the property damage in the county, he said.

"We had many, many homes that were completely washed out," he said.

From his Palatka home earlier today, Len Freeman said he feels fortunate his home had only minimal damage despite being across the street from the river.

“We see a foot and a half to 2 feet of tide daily,” the 70-year-old said. “But in this event, we were several feet above the mean high, which means we probably have a historical event here.”

Freeman, who worked for the water management district for 20 years, said he hasn’t been worried about the high water levels because the river has many acres of overflow space for rising water.

“But in this storm, it took up a lot ... of space because we saw water right here in our front yard higher than we’d ever seen in 35 years,” he said.



A walkway of a dock near Palatka resident Len Freeman's front yard is submerged in the St. Johns River. Freeman said he's never seen water levels as high as those in the river during the past weekend. (Cecilia Mazanec/WUFT News)

Though the county is working quickly to fix problems caused by the storm, much work still needs to be done, Flateau said.

“We always want to maintain a positive outlook,” he said, “but we want people to understand that there’s a lot of

people still suffering.”

Citizens should try to drink bottled water until the well water can be tested, Flateau said. He also wants citizens to be cautious when dealing with generators and gas.

He said citizens can call 386-329-1904 or visit putnam-fl.com to get the latest information on what’s going on.

“Just because the weather’s beautiful out here today doesn’t mean that the emergency’s over,” Flateau said.

“There’s a lot of people still suffering, so we’re trying to address all those issues.”

1

0 Comments WUFT

 michaelstone428




 Recommend  Share

Sort by Best



Start the discussion...

Be the first to comment.

 Subscribe  Add Disqus to your site [Add Disqus](#) [Add](#)  Privacy

Find Out Florida

You have questions. We'll find answers.

What do you wonder about North Central Florida that you want us to investigate?

140 characters left

Your contact info

We'll be in touch if we find an answer.

Name	Email address	Phone number (optional)
------	---------------	-------------------------

Please don't publish my name

Sign up for The Point, our daily newsletter keeping you informed of important stories across our slice of Florida.

Submit

