

Floods Fact Sheet¹

- The ***James River*** has helped Scottsville as a source of income, transportation, and enjoyment, but it also devastated the town with violent ***floods*** for more than 100 years.
- Because Scottsville is a ***low-lying town*** located on the banks of the James River, it is easily flooded when heavy rain or melting snow put more water in the river than it can handle.
- Floods in Scottsville continued to get worse over time because of many changes that humans made to the environment. These changes include:
 - ***building*** roads and parking lots, which can't absorb water like soil
 - ***cutting down trees***, which makes it easier for soil to be washed away, or ***eroded***, because it is not held together firmly.
 - ***silt*** (rock worn down into tiny pieces)***accumulation*** in the riverbed, which makes the river bed higher.
- ***Hurricanes*** also led to strong rains that flooded Scottsville. Hurricane Camille struck on August 1969 and Hurricane Agnes caused heavy floods in July 1972.
 - These two hurricanes damaged lots of buildings and crops in Scottsville and caused the town to lose lots of money.
- A ***dam*** was built in on ***Mink Creek*** in 1975. Mink Creek flows past Main Street and into the ***James River***.
 - A ***dam*** is a concrete structure that stops water from flowing freely in rivers and streams. It holds water back in a reservoir (a man-made lake) so it can't overflow when water levels are higher, usually because of rain or melted snow.
- A ***levee*** was constructed in 1985 and helped to protect the town from floods. Scottsville hasn't flooded since the levee was built!
 - A ***levee*** is a man-made embankment built along the edge of a river to keep the river from overflowing its banks. *It is similar to a dam, but levees only restrict water when water flow is high.*²
- ***Mayor Raymon Thacker*** convinced the federal government to pay for building the dam and the levee in Scottsville.
- The end of devastating floods in Scottsville has helped to ***improve the town's economy*** because people are more likely to visit the town and buy land there.

¹ Information on this sheet is adapted from the exhibit text developed by Lauren Turek and Julie Schiff.

² Source: http://www.infrastructureinstitute.org/education/tutorial/t_dam.html

Game Questions
Station 6: Floods

List one way the James River has helped Scottsville to prosper.

Why was Scottsville especially prone to floods?

Name two human factors that have made flooding worse over time.

What are two natural causes of floods?

How does a dam stop flooding?

How does building a dam on Mink Creek stop the James River from flooding?

What manmade structure was built in 1985 and ended floods in Scottsville?

What is the main difference between a dam and a levee?

Who lobbied the federal government to pay for the dam and levee in Scottsville?

How has the levee improved life for Scottsville residents and visitors?




A

Record Setting Floods in Scottsville

Scottsville's 10 Worst Floods

Source: Scottsville Museum, <http://scottsvillemuseum.com/floods/home.html>

1. June 22, 1972	34.02 ft.	6. August 16, 1940	25.84 ft.
2. October 1, 1870	30.70 ft.	7. March 19, 1936	25.46 ft.
3. August 20, 1969	30.00 ft.	8. March 1913	25.16 ft.
4. November 1877	27.90 ft.	9. October 6, 1972	23.21 ft.
5. September 19, 1944	26.00 ft.	10. September 6, 1935	23.06 ft.

Flood Date	Water Height	Comparable Objects	
6/22/1972	34.02 ft.	RV Camper (34 ft)	
8/20/1969	30.00 ft.	3 story building (approx. 30 ft)	
9/19/1944	26.00 ft.	Small moving truck (26 ft)	

B

Preserve and protect history

Natural disasters like floods cause lots of damage to homes and communities. Think about what objects or buildings you would want to protect if a flood or other natural disaster damaged your town.

I would want to protect _____

because _____

What steps could you take to make sure these items are safe *before* something happens to them?