

# Angry San Jose residents say they were not warned about severity of floods

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A rescue crew takes residents from a flooded neighborhood in San Jose, California, February 21, 2017. Chest-deep in water, some rescuers steered boats carrying dozens of people, some with babies and pets, in an area inundated by water from an overflowing creek. AP Photo

SAN JOSE, Calif. — For two weeks, heavy rains caused water levels to rise at Anderson Reservoir in Northern California.

A reservoir is a man-made lake. It can be used to store rain water during dry weather. During heavy rains, it can help control flooding. But all reservoirs have their limits.

Officials warned that Anderson Reservoir was reaching its limit and could soon overflow.

That's what happened last weekend. Large amounts of water rushed into the Coyote Creek. The creek runs through the heart of San Jose, a city of over a million people. It caused severe flooding.

"This is a once-in-a-100-year flood event," said National Weather Service meteorologist Roger Gass.

## **Creek Overflows Into Hundreds Of Homes**

By last Tuesday, the creek was overflowing in many places. Neighborhoods were overwhelmed and hundreds of homes were flooded. This forced 14,000 people to leave their homes. They were still out of their homes the next day.

It was the worst flooding to hit San Jose in 100 years. Residents are angry that they were not given more warning that this disaster was about to happen. Even city officials admitted that they were caught off guard by how bad the flooding was. They promised to investigate what went wrong.

“There is no question that we’ll need to do things differently next time,” said San Jose's Mayor Sam Liccardo.

## **Officials Had Wrong Information**

Officials knew that the Coyote Creek could overflow. But they found out that the information they had was incorrect. They thought it could hold more water.

Many people had to be rescued by boat during the floods. Some said they were surprised they did not get warnings about how bad the flooding would be.

“They didn’t say it was going to go up as high as it did,” said Louis Silva. His possessions were swallowed up in the flood.

Silva said officials should have worked harder to let people know how urgent the situation was. “It hurt everyone. When Mother Nature shows up, she shows up.”

## **Preparing For The Flood Didn't Help Much**

Dawn Rogers lives in an area where people were told they must leave to be safe. She decided to stay home anyway. Rogers watched firefighters take a boat down the street to rescue people in flooded homes.

“It was scary,” Rogers said. “Being in a drought for all these years, you don’t ever think you’re in danger of a flood.” California has experienced very dry weather for several years.

Rob Souza thought he was prepared. He spent eight hours Monday building 3-foot walls of sandbags. He hoped they would protect his newly renovated cottage and his two-story home.

By Tuesday morning, rising waters burst through the first sandbag wall. The flood wrecked his cottage.

## **Residents Seek Shelter At Community Centers And Schools**

Evacuation centers were set up at two community centers, where more than 300 residents stayed overnight. Two high schools were converted into overnight shelters with dry clothes, food and cots.

Coyote Creek slithers northwest from Anderson Reservoir to the city of San Jose. It flooded neighborhood after neighborhood. The creek's waters reached a height of 13.6 feet at one point last week. The height shattered a previous record from 1922.

City officials worked hard to make it safe for residents to return home. Mayor Liccardo warned people that the flood water could be contaminated by fuel, oil and possible sewage. These are all possible health risks.

**Quiz**

- 1 Read the sentence from the section "Creek Overflows Into Hundreds Of Homes."

*It was the worst flooding to hit San Jose in 100 years.*

Which sentence from the article BEST supports the statement above?

- (A) Officials warned that Anderson Reservoir was reaching its limit and could soon overflow.
- (B) This forced 14,000 people to leave their homes.
- (C) "Being in a drought for all these years, you don't ever think you're in danger of a flood."
- (D) The height shattered a previous record from 1922.
- 2 Which paragraph in the section "Officials Had Wrong Information" BEST explains what happened as the result of officials' wrong information about the creek?
- 3 Which two of the following are MAIN ideas from the article?

1. *San Jose was in a drought for years before the flooding.*
2. *The city of San Jose was surprised by the worst flooding in a century.*
3. *Many San Jose residents are upset that officials did not give better warnings about the flood.*
4. *City leaders are concerned about the safety of San Jose residents because harmful chemicals might be in the flood water.*

- (A) 1 and 2
- (B) 1 and 4
- (C) 2 and 3
- (D) 3 and 4

- 4 Which sentence from the article would be MOST important to include in a summary of the article?
- (A) The creek runs through the heart of San Jose, a city of over a million people.
  - (B) Even city officials admitted that they were caught off guard by how bad the flooding was.
  - (C) Dawn Rogers lives in an area where people were told they must leave to be safe.
  - (D) Two high schools were converted into overnight shelters with dry clothes, food and cots.