



A Guthrie man wades through floodwaters on SH 33 south of viaduct that crosses Cottonwood Creek in Guthrie. (State Staff Photo by Frank Garner)

Fast Flood Fools 'Expert'

By the State Staff
GUTHRIE—Veteran flood watcher Melvin Daniels, Guthrie fire chief the past 10 years, missed his timing on the latest rampage of muddy Cottonwood Creek. Daniels, who has been engaged in flood watching for 18 of his 22 years with the Guthrie Fire Department, predicted the Cottonwood would flood at 6 a.m. Tuesday. The flood forecaster center at Tulsa picked 10 a.m.

Both were wrong. The Cottonwood moved faster than usual this time and reached flood stage — 22

feet — at 2 a.m. at the Fifth Street Bridge.

Daniels' prediction on cresting time was just right — at 6 a.m.

"We can pretty well go with experience," the chief said. "Anytime we get a heavy rain, we start watching. Anything over 4 inches is bound to give us trouble."

Chief Daniels and 18 volunteer observers in the Kingfisher - Guthrie flash flood watershed started watching for flood possibility when heavy rain hit the Guthrie area early Monday. The torrential rain totaled over 7 inches.

The observers furnish information to the forecaster center at Tulsa and flooding time can be predicted fairly accurately.

The first flood on record at the Guthrie fire station was in April of 1897 when the Cottonwood rose to 3 feet above flood stage.

Daniels said the gauge formerly had flood stage at 22.5 feet but the Cottonwood "somehow filled up" and flood stage is now 22 feet.

There have been 14 floods recorded since that time, most of them in April and May.

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