



'The wettest day ever': At least 6 people missing, homes destroyed after record-breaking Southeast Alaska rainstorm

Jessica Flores, USA TODAY

Evacuations and search and rescue efforts were underway Wednesday after a record-breaking rainstorm swept across Southeast Alaska, triggering mudslides and widespread flooding.

Multiple precipitation records were broken Tuesday across the region, including a single-day rainfall record from 1946, according to the National Weather Service in Juneau.

"[Tuesday] was the wettest day ever recorded at our weather stations at the airports of Skagway, Haines and in Juneau," Meteorologist Aaron Jacobs told USA TODAY, adding that some areas have seen 30 to 40 inches of snow.

Haines, a community of about 2,000 people located in the northern part of the Alaska Panhandle, has been among the most devastated cities. Six people were missing and four houses destroyed as of 5:30 p.m. AST Wednesday, according to [the Alaska Department of Public Safety](#).



National Weather Service Juneau A record rainstorm across Southeast Alaska caused flooding, mudslides and destruction.



*This photo is from Haines this morning. The result of flooding from the current storm.
(Photo taken by my pal Erik Stevens)*



Same road, different angle. Coast guard just landed a helicopter downtown for a medivac

The U.S. Coast Guard in Alaska [dispatched a helicopter](#) and boat to Haines after several reports of mudslides. Search and rescue efforts were suspended Wednesday night amid ongoing rains and set to resume in the morning.

Mayor Douglas Olerud declared a [weather emergency](#) early Wednesday after several roads were washed out, blocked or flooded.

Olerud told USA TODAY on Wednesday the rainfall has so far caused about "a few million dollars" worth of damage to roads and infrastructure.

"It's been a long day," Olerud tearfully said over the phone.

"I've lived here my whole life except for going to college and working down South for a couple of years. This is the largest national disaster that I've seen in town."

More photos from Seaba Hali:



On Twitter, [Alaska Gov. Mike Dunleavy](#) pledged the state's support.

"My emergency response team and I are monitoring the natural disaster unfolding in Haines & the broader Southeast," Dunleavy said. "The State EOC is coordinating operations and search & rescue teams have been mobilized.

Olerud said state and local crews have been working all day to prevent roads and homes from destruction. Residents have been pitching in with shovels and any equipment in their backyards, he said.

"When you live in a small community and everyone comes together and pitches in like that, it makes it a special place to live," he said.

A flash flood watch was in effect through Thursday morning for Haines and a flash flood warning for Juneau until Wednesday night, according to the NWS.