

Frustration rises along with Dry Run Creek

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CEDAR FALLS — Marianna Delafield has lived in the Starbeck Circle area all her life and has never seen anything like the flash flooding of Dry Run Creek that's vexing the neighborhood this year.

Delafield and her neighbors want city action to prevent further flooding of homes, streets and back yards. Developmental Services Director Jim Krieg pins the blame on the year's record rainfall, saying Mother Nature is the only one who can help.

"Every time a raindrop falls, we're standing out there to see if the creek comes up," Delafield said.

A torrential rainstorm on July 8 sent Dry Run Creek over its banks and rushing through back yards, homes and streets in the area, which is south of University Avenue and east of Hudson Road.

Delafield, of 1921 Brookside Drive, said the creek has flooded at least four times this year, but the last storm was the worst. Several inches of water poured into her basement.

"The basement is a walk-in and it came in through the

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Marianna Delafield
Dry Run Creek area resident

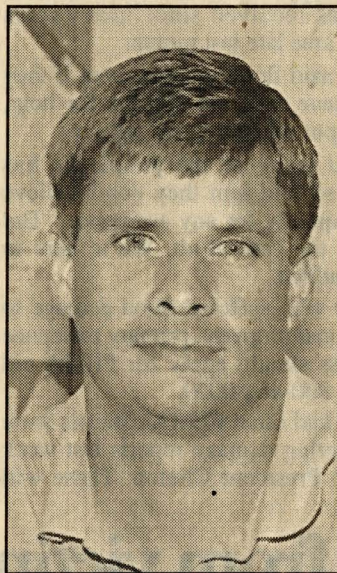
doors. It just rolled in," she said. "We had sandbags, but it came in through those," she said.

Gardens and yards also took a beating.

"The water has ruined my strawberries and the flower bed. Probably the areas that haven't been weeded are in better condition because the

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■ Phones quiet for now at counseling agency/C2



Mike Webster

soil isn't washing away," she said.

Delafield thinks the water is draining from farm tiles to the south.

"Corn shafts, manure, corn cobs — those fields must be getting pretty clean because we're pulling that stuff out of the bushes," she said.

Krieg said what residents don't real-

ize is the magnitude of the Dry Run Creek watershed. They live near the fork of two branches that drain more than 9,100 acres of land, he said.

Mike Webster, conservationist with the Black Hawk County Soil and Water Conservation District, said terracing part of the farmland south of Cedar Falls would reduce

some of the downstream flash flooding.

Terraces are small dams built in the side of a hill that intercept runoff water that empties into tile outlets connected to an underground drainage system. The water soaks into the soil fast enough to avoid crop damage and releases through the tile intake at a much slower rate, Webster said.

"Our terraces are designed for a 10-year frequency storm and a 24-hour rainfall. That amounts to roughly 4 1/2 inches in 24 hours and then it is released within 48 hours," he said.

Webster said cost-sharing programs and loans are available to help farmers install terrace systems, but with statewide flooding everyone is going to be asking for that money. A project involving farms in the Dry Run Creek watershed probably won't happen this fall.

"It is going to be a project that is completed hopefully over five years. It is going to take time and it is going to require a lot of money from the farmer and matching funds," he said.

But Webster said even terraces can't stop all the problems considering the amount of rain that has fallen this year.

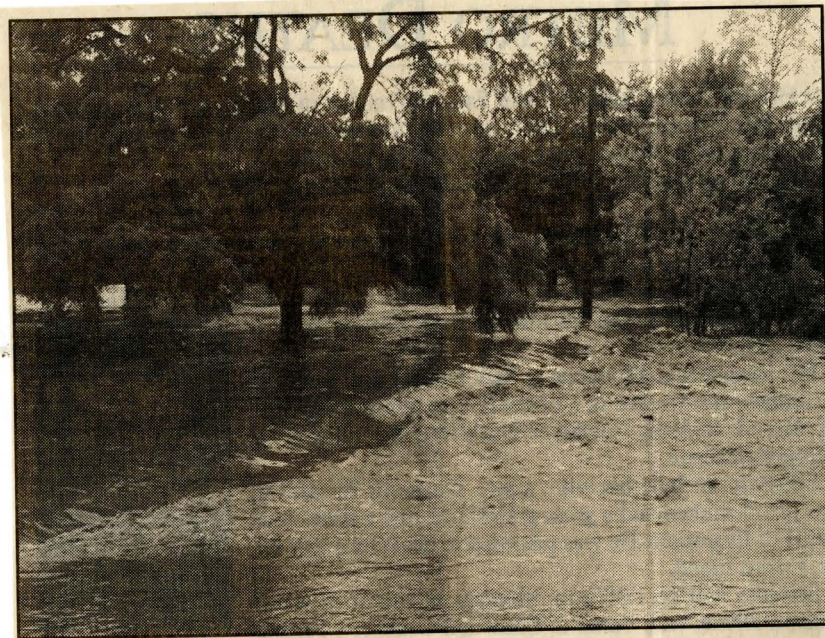
A farmer who owns land three miles west of the UNI-Dome said his terraces couldn't even hold the water dumped by the July 8 rainstorm. Water spilled over the terraces before it could even drain into intake tiles.

George Isley said the piggy-back rainstorms don't provide enough time for water to drain from control basins.

"But it's nothing compared to what it would be if the terraces weren't there to stop (the water) in its tracks and make it go underground," he said.

The City Council's five-year

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Courtesy photo

Heavy rains have sent water gushing out of Dry Run Creek in Cedar Falls, inundating back yards along the Brookside Drive area.

Dry Run / Keeps on rising

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capital improvements program includes \$1.1 million for storm sewer improvements around town. Another \$900,000 was set aside for future flood and drainage control projects.

Krieg said the weather probably will halt any flood protection or drainage projects planned for this fiscal year.

"It is so wet out there and contractors are so busy with work, and so far behind that we are not going to get good prices," he said. "Their ability to go into those extremely wet areas

is tough, even if we have dry weather because a lot of them are some very low-lying areas," he said.

Prioritizing projects is the other issue. Some of the problems plaguing neighborhoods may never happen again.

"We're looking at multi-millions of dollars to be able to address problems like we've experienced the last two months, problems that might never happen for the next 50 to 100 years," Krieg said. "So, you have to look at the cost effectiveness of putting millions of dollars in those areas."