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Posted May 22, 2008



Al Dykes' home at 9558 E. Leavenworth Road is surrounded by the high waters of the Wenatchee River on Tuesday. The house is located across the river from Leavenworth and was designed with flooding in mind. (World photo/Kelly Gillin)

LEAVENWORTH — Al Dykes sat in his Dodge van in his driveway while the Wenatchee River raged through his house. Nothing really new or surprising for Dykes, who has weathered several floods in the house.

The residence at 9558 E. Leavenworth Road was made to let the water through, said Dykes, who was waiting Tuesday to meet with a contractor. He couldn't get to the house without putting on waders. The contractor he was waiting to meet will build him a garage with an upstairs apartment on higher ground, where he can stay when high water comes through.

"This happens every year or two," said Dykes, who also owns a house in Seattle. He said he came to Leavenworth on Monday to check on the house but stayed in a local hotel.

☒ "Last year was the worst. The water was a foot from the main floor level," he said. Dykes said the house was built about 11 years ago for a previous owner. The owner was

able to get permits to build on the 100-year flood plain because of its unique design. He said it probably wouldn't be allowed today because of the river's recent history of flooding. Dykes purchased the house about six years ago.

The house is built on three separate stone and concrete foundations. The lower portion is garage and storage, but even there, possessions are stored up high. The three foundations are connected by large swinging doors that allow floodwaters to pass in and out through the structures harmlessly, he said.

The four-bedroom house is built about 10 feet above ground level. Three separate buildings are connected by breezeways that bridge the foundations.

"The original owner called the house 'A River Runs Through It,' " Dykes said. "The house has its pluses and minuses."

Clearly, the 3 feet of water running through the lower section of the house was one of the minuses. So was cleaning the garage and yard of silt that would come after the river recedes, he said.

"But the pluses outweigh the minuses," he said. "It has fantastic views. And it's very isolated. No one else is out here."

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