

Watershed Conditions Statement - Water Safety

Bancroft District

Monday, March 30, 2020
7:30 pm

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry – Bancroft District is advising area residents that a **Watershed Conditions Statement - Water Safety** is in effect in the District until Friday, April 03, 2020

Residents in Bancroft District should note there are increasingly high flows through water control structures to keep water levels within targets for this time of year. These flows are being managed to mitigate, as much as possible, the impacts from the expected melt and rainfall. Due to the high flows and recent warm temperatures, ice formation on lakes can be very unsafe.

The ministry is closely monitoring the weather and developing watershed conditions. Further updates will be issued as appropriate.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Description of Weather System

Description of Weather Situation: This message is being sent on the basis of information received from MNRF-Surface Water Monitoring Centre, MNRF-Aviation Forest Fire and Emergency Management Services, Trent Severn Waterway (TSW) and Environment Canada.

The weather system that produced much of the precipitation across Ontario over the weekend is moving eastward, and out of the province.

The system entering the province will have continued temperatures, at or slightly below the mid single digit mark. Some areas of the province will see scattered showers or flurries over the next several days. However, the five day forecast contains little to no significant precipitation.

Description of Current Conditions

The impact of recent warm temperatures and rainfall has reduced the snow pack considerably in the lower portions of the province especially in the southern Region, encompassing Bancroft District. Above freezing temperatures and precipitation are likely to further degrade the snowpack and produce continued runoff, increasing levels and flows. Mid-March snow surveys indicate significant snowpack remains in our watersheds and approximately 30 to 150 mm of water equivalent remain in southcentral Ontario and slightly higher in northeastern Ontario.

Snowpack has ripened in some areas making it less capable to absorb rainfall. The Frozen Ground model indicates that many of the stations in Southern Region are no longer frozen ground meaning that they are saturated with ongoing melt and freshet. This condition of the soil leads to quicker and enhanced runoff should rainfall occur. Stream flows are expected to rise throughout Bancroft District, resulting in increased water levels and flows with the possibility of flooding in low lying areas.

Ice cover in the rivers and streams may breakup as a result of warm temperatures and higher flows, increasing the risk of ice jams and associated overbank flooding.

We are experiencing an earlier start to the spring freshet in 2020. Almost exactly a month sooner than the spring freshet in 2019.

A close watch on local forecasts and conditions is recommended.

The MNRF and TSW continue to closely monitor local lakes and rivers as this event progresses. The MNRF is in regular communication with partner agencies and water control structure operators, including Conservation Authorities, Ontario Power Generation (OPG), Bracebridge Generation and TSW.

DEFINITIONS

- **WATERSHED CONDITIONS STATEMENT – WATER SAFETY:** indicates that high flows, melting ice or other factors could be dangerous for such users as boaters, anglers and swimmers but flooding is not expected.
- **WATERSHED CONDITIONS STATEMENT – FLOOD OUTLOOK:** gives early notice of the potential for flooding based on weather forecasts calling for heavy rain, snow melt, high winds or other conditions

- **FLOOD WATCH:** potential for flooding exists within specific watercourses and municipalities
- **FLOOD WARNING:** flooding is imminent or occurring within specific watercourses and municipalities.

LEARN MORE

- Surface Water Monitoring Centre public webpage www.ontario.ca/flooding
- Environment Canada bulletins: www.weather.gc.ca
- A close watch on local conditions and weather forecasts from Environment Canada is recommended.

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