

Watershed Conditions Statement – Flood Outlook

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From: NBMCA Duty Officer, Angela Mills

Watershed Conditions Statement – Flood Outlook gives early notice of the potential for flooding based on weather forecasts calling for heavy rain, snow melt, high wind or other conditions that could lead to high runoff, cause ice jams, lakeshore flooding or erosion.

If you have a flood emergency, please contact your municipality. If you live in an unincorporated township, please contact the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) – North Bay District.

A **Watershed Conditions Statement – Water Safety** is in place for the North Bay-Mattawa watershed.

Current Conditions:

Water levels on area lakes and rivers are generally at or slightly below normal for this time of year. Moisture content in the snowpack is an average of 139 mm (as of Mar 2), with two of three stations recording above normal conditions for this time of year.

Current water levels can be viewed by searching Station Names “Ottawa River”, “Mattawa River”, “Chippewa Creek”, “La Vase River”, “Wasi River”, and “Lake Nipissing” at https://wateroffice.ec.gc.ca/search/real_time_e.html

Forecasted Conditions:

A rain event of potentially 15 to 25 mm is forecast for Saturday (Mar 7), and a second rain event on Tuesday. Daytime temperatures are forecast to remain above freezing through the coming week with a high of 11 °C on Saturday and overnight lows near 0 °C. The rain and mild temperatures will trigger snowmelt.

The water level of Lake Nipissing continues to be drawn down. The changes to water levels on Lake Nipissing depend on the amount of water flowing in from rivers, precipitation, snowmelt, and the amount of water flowing out through the control dams to the downstream French River.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-services-procurement/services/infrastructure-buildings/bridges-docks-dams/frenchriver-dam.html>

The water level of the Ottawa River at Mattawa is expected to remain stable, per the Ottawa River Regulating Committee. The Ottawa River water levels are managed by dams and reservoirs operated by provincial and federal governments. The Ottawa River Regulation Planning Board posts current data and forecasts on their website <https://ottawariver.ca/>

Historic Flood Conditions:

For comparison, when flooding occurred in the watershed around April 18, 2019, the snowpack water content was 123 mm (measured April 15, 2019). Daytime temperatures were between 3 and 12 °C, with overnight temperatures above freezing. Actual precipitation measured on April 18, 2019 was 31.8 mm. When combined with snowmelt, the daily average water level on Chippewa Creek, in North Bay, increased by 57.6 cm in that one day.

Risk:

A Watershed Conditions Statement – Flood Outlook has been issued for the North Bay-Mattawa watershed. Widespread flooding is not expected, however, water levels and flows in local streams and rivers, especially those in urban areas could change rapidly with the forecast rain and snowmelt. Flooding and ponding may occur in flood-prone low-lying areas.

All residents, especially those in low lying areas, are encouraged to monitor the conditions that are developing. Banks adjacent to rivers and creeks are very slippery at this time and when combined with cold open water, pose a serious hazard. The public is encouraged to keep children and pets away from watercourses and off waterbodies.

Municipalities are encouraged to monitor water crossings for debris that may affect the movement of water through culverts and bridges. A close watch on local conditions and updated forecasts and warnings from Environment Canada is also recommended.

Staff at the North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority will continue to monitor weather and watershed conditions and update this message based on the changing weather and streamflow conditions.

This message will be in effect until (or updated before) Thursday, March 12 at 4:00 PM EDT.

The general public is advised of these messages through the www.nbmca.ca website with the flood status icon and a link to information about current conditions. NBMCA also circulates these messages to local media and social media, posting on Twitter (@theNBMCA), Instagram (nbmcainfo), and Facebook (NBMCA).

The public is invited to share photos of watershed conditions on social media using #NBMCAFlood.

Terminology: Notification Levels

WATERSHED CONDITIONS STATEMENT: general notices of potential flooding or other conditions that pose a safety risk. There are two kinds of statements:

**Water Safety:** indicates that high flows, unsafe banks, melting ice or other factors could be dangerous for users such as anglers, boaters, swimmers, children, or pets. Flooding is not expected.

**Flood Outlook:** gives early notice of the potential for flooding based on weather forecasts calling for heavy rain, snow melt, high wind or other conditions that could lead to high runoff, cause ice jams, lakeshore flooding or erosion.

FLOOD WATCH

**FLOOD WATCH:** notifies that the potential for flooding exists within specific watercourses and municipalities. Municipalities, emergency services and individual landowners in flood-prone areas should prepare.

FLOOD WARNING

**FLOOD WARNING:** notifies that flooding is imminent or already occurring in specific watercourses or municipalities. Municipalities and individuals should take action to deal with flood conditions. This may include road closures and evacuations.

MAP: North Bay – Mattawa Watershed

