



FLOOD WARNING for Lake Nipissing Shoreline (Callander and North Bay), La Vase River downstream of Lakeshore Dr, Parks Creek, and Mattawa River downstream from Hurdman Dam (updated)

Message Number: 2026-15

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From: NBMCA Duty Officer, Angela Mills

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.

If you need assistance responding to 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 **FLOOD WARNING** remains in effect for the Lake Nipissing Shoreline, La Vase River downstream of Lakeshore Dr, Parks Creek, and the Mattawa River downstream of Hurdman Dam.

This Message is an update to the previous Message Number 2026-14 dated May 7, 2026.

Current Conditions:

There has been limited precipitation over the past two weeks. Water level on Lake Nipissing at North Bay has peaked and is slowly declining. Daily average water level has decreased by 10 cm and is currently 5 cm above the maximum non-damage elevation. High water on Lake Nipissing directly impacts water

levels in the La Vase River downstream of Lakeshore Dr and Parks Creek. The Parks Creek Backflood Control Structure is operational, keeping water levels lowered in the Parks Creek watershed. Eva Wardlaw Conservation Area is closed to the public while operations remain ongoing.

Upstream flows on the Ottawa River, which directly impacts water level in the lower reaches of the Mattawa River, have also been decreasing. Water level in Mattawa peaked 6 cm above the major flood threshold of 154.8 m. Daily average water level has receded by 51 cm. Mattawa Island Conservation Area remains closed due to flooding.

Water levels in other local watersheds have returned to normal 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:

Weather forecasts anticipate approximately 30 mm of rain tomorrow (May 13) followed by several days of no precipitation. Moderate winds are forecast to be predominantly from the north and east for the next two days.

The water level of Lake Nipissing has been declining, but conditions in North Bay and Callander may be influenced by wind effect, especially when winds are from the west or southwest. Public Services and Procurement Canada is forecasting water level on Lake Nipissing to continue to decline, however, this does not account for the potential impact of winds and the watershed is vulnerable to future precipitation events. The changes to water levels on Lake Nipissing depend on the amount of water flowing in from rivers, precipitation, 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>

As water levels decline on Lake Nipissing, water level in Parks Creek will slowly be increased over the coming week so that water level in the creek is comparable to water level in the lake in preparation for the operations at the Parks Creek Backflood Control Structure to wind down and stop log removal.

Sustained high flows on the Ottawa River are anticipated as snowmelt and rain continues in the northern areas of its watershed, sending more spring runoff downstream, however these flows are slowly decreasing. In Mattawa, water levels are forecast to continue to decline, per the Ottawa River Regulating Committee. The Ottawa River water levels are managed by dams and reservoirs operated by provincial and federal governments. See the Ottawa River Regulation Planning Board website for current data and forecasts <https://ottawariver.ca/>

Historic Flood Conditions:

Total precipitation March 1 to April 15 are at 50-year highs. Precipitation in March was 200% of normal and precipitation in April was 253% of normal.

For comparison, when river-based flooding occurred at Mattawa in May 2019, the water level on the Ottawa River at Mattawa reached a maximum level of 155.635 m, which is 77 cm higher than the observed peak on April 30. Flow from the Otto Holden dam in May 2019 was around 35% greater at their maximum than present. Comparing historic annual maximum daily average water level, conditions in Mattawa for April 30, 2026, was the tied for sixth (same as 1922) highest since 1918; 2019 was the fourth highest.

Additionally, when lake-based flooding occurred on Lake Nipissing in May 2019, the water level on Lake Nipissing at North Bay reached a maximum daily average level of 196.579 m, which is about 31 cm higher than the present level. The water level was higher than current levels for the period between May 3 and June 20, 2019. Current water level is approximately equal to the 2024 peak elevation. Comparing historic annual maximum daily average water level, conditions for Lake Nipissing in North Bay for May 5, 2026, were the sixth highest since 1933 (three years missing); 2019 was the fourth highest.

Risk:

A Flood Warning continues for the Mattawa River downstream of Hurdman Dam. High flow on the Ottawa River directly impacts water level of the Mattawa River. Water levels are forecast to continue to slowly decrease over the next few days, however, forecast rain may slow this decline.

A Flood Warning continues for the Lake Nipissing shoreline in North Bay and Callander and includes the La Vase River downstream of Lakeshore Dr and

Parks Creek. Water level has been decreasing on Lake Nipissing, however, west winds enhance water level on the eastern side of Lake Nipissing and in Callander Bay. High winds over open water combined with high water level water will increase wave action and increase risk for shoreline erosion and damage. Operations are ongoing with the Parks Creek Backflood Control Structure to prevent high water levels on Lake Nipissing from impeding drainage from Parks Creek and surrounding urban areas.

With soils near saturation, especially in the northern parts of the Lake Nipissing and Upper Ottawa River watersheds, water levels could respond rapidly to significant rainfall.

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 fast moving cold open water, pose a serious hazard. The public is encouraged to keep children and pets away from watercourses and 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) Friday, May 15, 2026, at 4:00 PM EDT.

See also the Ministry of Natural Resources – North Bay District local bulletins for areas outside the North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority, including for the Ottawa River <https://www.lioapplications.lrc.gov.on.ca/webapps/swmc/flood-forecasting-and-warning-program/>

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

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MAP: North Bay – Mattawa Watershed

