

Watershed Conditions Statement - Water Safety

Bancroft District

Thursday, March 26, 2020

2:00 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 Monday, March 30, 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.

Forecasts call for rain showers for Southern Region Thursday into Friday in the amount of 10 to 15 mm. Daytime highs between 5 to 10°C and night-time temperatures below 0°C are also in the forecast.

Mainly sunny conditions are forecast for most of the province on Friday. Temperatures are forecast to range from 5 to 10°C for southern sections of Northeast and for all Southern Region with sub-zero °C for night-time lows.

Starting Saturday, a Colorado low will approach the Great Lakes region and persist into the weekend bringing widespread rainfall to Southern and Central Ontario. Rainfall amounts of up to 20mm or more are expected on both Saturday and Sunday, with total (2 day) amounts reaching 40 to 45mm in some locations.

Sunday into Monday will see continued rainfall for southeast Ontario in the amount of 10 to 15 mm. Both Saturday and Sunday will see daytime temperature highs between 5 to 10°C and night time temperatures above 0°C for much of the province. Cooler more seasonal weather is likely Monday and continuing next week.

Description of Current Conditions

Warmer temperatures and precipitation over the past couple of weeks have melted some of the snowpack, especially in the southern Region encompassing Bancroft District, resulting in increased water 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 the forecast 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 forecasted rainfall occur. As a result, stream flows are expected to rise in the forecast region with 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.

Due to uncertainty in path and timing of this approaching weather system, updates to this message will be provided as needed.

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.

Kris Windover, Minden Field Office, 705-286-5207
Luke Hillyer, Bancroft District, 613-202-1400

ontario.ca/mnrf
Disponible en français