



RISING OTTAWA RIVER WATER LEVELS

OTTAWA/GATINEAU, Sunday, March 29, 2020 — The Ottawa River Regulating Committee would like to inform watershed residents that levels and flows along the Ottawa River have begun increasing with the onset of the spring freshet period. It cautions residents along the shores of the Ottawa River from Mattawa down to the Montreal region that during the spring period water levels can rise rapidly and cause minor flooding in low-lying areas. Based on the current snow cover and the weather forecast, the Regulating Committee anticipates that the levels and flows on the main stem of the Ottawa River will remain within the normal range of fluctuations associated with the spring freshet period.

River Conditions Forecast / Flooding Risk: Spring runoff in the southern and central portions of the Ottawa River basin is increasing due to warming temperatures and ongoing rainfall over the watershed. Throughout the freshet period, the combination of heavy rainfall and snowmelt may result in rapid increases in water levels and flows on the main stem of the Ottawa River from Mattawa down to the Montreal region. With warming temperatures and forecast precipitation, increases in flows and levels are expected to continue and may cause minor flooding in low-lying areas over the coming weeks depending on the temperatures and precipitation amounts received. Low-lying areas are those that are flooded regularly during the spring freshet period.

At this time, the snow cover varies significantly across the basin with higher than average snow quantities in the northern portion of the basin, and close to or below average in the western and southern portions of the basin. However, the snow cover is only one of several factors impacting the magnitude of the spring freshet, which largely depends on weather conditions that can only be known a few days in advance. For this reason, the Regulating Committee will be closely monitoring precipitation amounts and temperature increases throughout the spring freshet period as they may cause levels and flows to change rapidly. **Further bulletins will be published if flood risks increase.**

Reservoir Regulation Strategy: Increases in water levels in the spring are caused by increases in flows. The principal storage reservoirs in the northern part of the watershed will store a large portion of runoff from these areas, thereby reducing flows in downstream basin areas. However, dams located in the central and southern portions of the basin are essentially “run of the river” with no significant storage capacity. As such, they do not significantly reduce the flows (and hence the levels) associated with increased spring runoff. During this critical freshet period, the Regulating Committee will take all possible actions to mitigate the amount of flooding and will continuously monitor conditions at all points along the river.

The Regulating Committee works closely at all times with provincial agencies responsible for issuing flood-related messages. In Ontario, Conservation Authorities and District Offices of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry issue flood-related messages and information to municipalities, Indigenous communities and other key agencies involved in flood preparedness and response. Current flood-related messages can be viewed on-line on the individual conservation authority websites and on

the provincial flood webpage: <https://www.ontario.ca/flooding>. In Quebec, the Centre des opérations gouvernementales du Québec and the Sécurité civile collaborate with municipalities to protect residents. Monitoring of flood conditions can be viewed at <https://geoegl.msp.gouv.qc.ca/adnv2>.

If you think that your property may be at risk of flooding, **please contact your municipality**.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Website: Current and forecast conditions on the Ottawa River along with conditions at the principal reservoirs in the system may be obtained by consulting our website. A general [four-day forecast](#) is also provided at key locations within the basin during the spring freshet period.

www.ottawariver.ca (English)

www.rivieredesoutaouais.ca (French)

Telephone: The river conditions forecast and information on current river levels may be obtained for the following locations: Lake Timiskaming, Mattawa, Pembroke, Lake Coulonge, Chats Lake, Ottawa (Britannia), Gatineau (Hull wharf), Grenville and Maniwaki, by calling the following numbers:

Ottawa-Gatineau
(819) 994-9049 English
(819) 994-8171 French

Outside the Ottawa-Gatineau region
1-800-778-1246 English
1-800-778-1243 French

Twitter: Follow us to be notified when news releases are issued, when we begin daily updates or the general four-day forecasts on our website, or when special bulletins are posted on our website.

www.twitter.com/ORRPB (English)

www.twitter.com/CPRRO (French)

The Ottawa River Regulating Committee consists of the following agencies that are responsible for the cooperative flow management of the principal reservoirs within the Ottawa River watershed: Hydro-Québec, Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques du Québec, Ontario Power Generation, and Public Services and Procurement Canada. In Ontario, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, through its associate membership with the Regulating Committee, contributes important hydrometeorological information and plays a key role in disseminating information in Ontario. The Regulating Committee issues a press release when the spring freshet season is starting on the Ottawa River and when it anticipates that river conditions on the main stem of the Ottawa River (between the Lake Timiskaming outlet down to the Montreal region) could exceed significant flood levels.

Covid-19: For important information by the Planning Board, please refer to a bulletin posted on March 20th on our website [Latest News](#) page.

For additional information, please communicate with the Ottawa River Regulation Secretariat using the 'Contact us' form on the website, or leave a message at any of the telephone numbers listed above.

Ottawa River Regulating Committee