

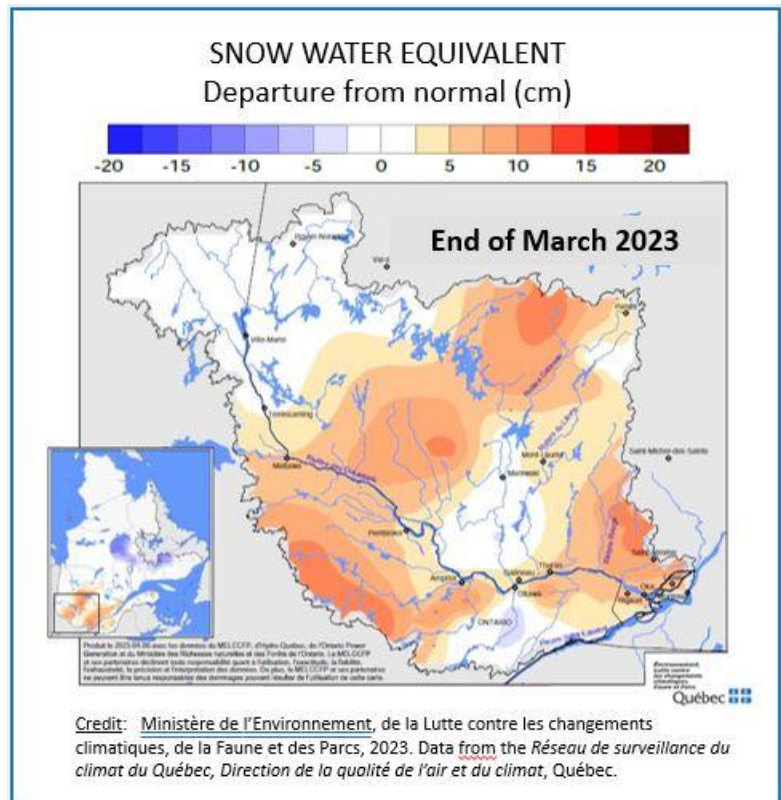


RISING OTTAWA RIVER WATER LEVELS

OTTAWA/GATINEAU, Friday April 7, 2023 — The Ottawa River Regulating Committee would like to inform watershed residents that levels and flows along the Ottawa River are expected to begin increasing over the next few days as a result of the onset of the spring freshet period in the Ottawa River basin. The levels and flows in the Ottawa River are currently close to normal, but are expected to start rising sometime during the weekend. With the snow pack being above normal for this time of year in several areas within the Ottawa River basin, flows and levels along the main stem of the Ottawa River are expected to rise above average values over the next few weeks. *While it is not possible to forecast peak flow conditions at this time, please note that meteorological events with above-normal temperatures or above-normal precipitation within the spring timeframe (next 6 to 8 weeks) can increase the risk of exceeding minor flood levels along the main stem of the Ottawa River (from Mattawa down to the Montreal Region).* The Regulating Committee will be closely monitoring the effects of precipitation and temperature increases throughout the spring freshet period as they may cause levels and flows to change rapidly. **Further bulletins will be published if levels are expected to exceed minor flood levels.**

River Conditions Forecast / Flooding Risk*: A large weather system from Colorado brought 15 to 50 mm of precipitation over much of the Ottawa River basin last Wednesday, with part of the precipitation falling as rain in the southern part of the basin. No significant precipitation is forecast over the next few days. With daytime temperatures above zero expected to continue over the next few days, runoff from recent precipitation will combine with the gradual snowmelt in the central and southern portions of the basin. Spring runoff into the Ottawa River should increase, causing levels to rise on the Ottawa River between Mattawa and the Montreal region starting this weekend.

March brought slightly below normal temperatures and an increase in the snowpack in some parts of the basin. As seen in the figure, the snow water content (that is the amount of water held in the snow cover) at the end of March and early April was near normal in the northwestern part of the basin and along the Gatineau River, but higher than normal elsewhere. However, snow water content 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.



Rising levels along the main stem of the Ottawa River over the coming week could create possible flooding in low-lying areas, which are the areas that are regularly flooded during the spring freshet period. Also, depending on weather conditions to come, water levels could reach minor flooding levels over the next few weeks due to the high snowpack in several areas at the present time. Minor flooding is when parts of some streets, lawns and parks (in flood vulnerable areas) are beginning to flood, with no or few buildings being affected by water levels.

Reservoir Regulation Strategy: Increases in water levels along the main stem of the Ottawa River in the spring are caused by an increase of inflows. The principal storage reservoirs in the northern part of the watershed will store a large portion of runoff from this portion of the basin, thereby reducing flows in downstream areas. However, dams located in the central and southern portions of the basin are essentially “run of the river” facilities with no significant storage capacity. These facilities are not able to reduce flows and the levels associated with increased spring runoff. During this critical freshet period, the Regulating Committee takes 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 local 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 Ministère de la Sécurité publique through the Centre des opérations gouvernementales and the Regional Directorates of Sécurité civile collaborates with municipalities to protect residents. Monitoring of flood conditions can be viewed at <https://geoegl.msp.gouv.qc.ca/adnv2/>.

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: You can call 1-888-621-0059 to hear a recorded message describing the river conditions forecast.

Twitter: Follow us to be notified when press releases are issued, when we begin daily updates of the River Conditions Forecast message or the four-day forecasts at reference locations on our website, or when news bulletins are posted on our website.

twitter.com/ORRPB (English)

twitter.com/CPRRO (French)

About the Ottawa River Regulating Committee: The group consists of the following agencies that are responsible for the collaborative flow management of the principal reservoirs within the Ottawa River watershed: Hydro-Québec, Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs du Québec, Ontario Power

Generation, and Public Services and Procurement Canada. In Ontario, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, as an associate member of the Regulating Committee, contributes important hydrometeorological information and plays a key role in disseminating information in Ontario.

Frequency of Press Releases: The Regulating Committee issues a press release when the spring freshet season is starting on the Ottawa River. It issues other press releases, as needed, when it anticipates that river conditions on the main stem of the Ottawa River may exceed significant flood levels.

***Subject Area:** The focus of the “River Conditions / Flood Risk” report is on the main stem of the Ottawa River (from the Lake Timiskaming outlet down to the Montreal region). River conditions in tributaries of the Ottawa River, including the Abitibi-Timiskaming area, may differ.

For additional information, please communicate with the Ottawa River Regulation Secretariat using the ‘Contact us’ form on the website or leave a message at 819-303-5886 or 1-888-621-0059.

Ottawa River Regulating Committee