



## UPDATE ON FLOOD RISKS ALONG THE OTTAWA RIVER (Mattawa to the Montreal Region)

**OTTAWA/GATINEAU, Friday April 28, 2023** — The Ottawa River Regulating Committee warns that levels and flows along the main stem of the Ottawa River will remain high and are susceptible to further rise over the coming week in all locations due to significant rainfall that is forecast for this weekend. Minor flood levels will likely be exceeded in multiple locations between Mattawa and the Montreal region. Major flood levels may be exceeded in flood prone areas, depending on the amount and location of the received precipitation. Areas of primary concern are identified and described in more detail below. Water levels are currently expected to remain **well below** historical flood levels of 2019 on the main stem of the Ottawa River. **Additional bulletins will be published if flood risk is expected to increase.**

**River Conditions Forecast / Flooding Risk\*:** The rapid melt of the snowpack in the uncontrolled portion of the basin raised levels to a peak during the April 21-23 period from Lake Coulange down to the Montreal Region. Spring runoff from recent (April 22 -23) rain on the western and northern portions of the basin combined with snowmelt water is slowing the rate of decrease in all locations. Weather systems from the American Midwest and the Gulf of Mexico are expected to bring 30 to 60 mm of precipitation over much of the basin this weekend and early next week. Thunderstorms may produce additional precipitation locally. Runoff from this precipitation event will bring additional water volumes to the Ottawa River, at a time when levels have already exceeded or are near major flood thresholds in several locations. The major flood threshold is defined as the level at which one or several streets are beginning to flood, with several houses/buildings or neighbourhoods being affected. **The precipitation amounts and trajectory of the April 29 – May 1 rain events are uncertain at this time.**

Based on the **latest weather forecast and the best information available at this time**, the following conditions are expected along the main stem of the Ottawa River **over the coming week<sup>(+)</sup>** :

(+) Forecast levels over a four-day period are provided on our [website](#) and updated daily as conditions could change quickly. Wind and wave effects are not included.

- **MATTAWA – PEMBROKE:** Levels are expected to cause minor flooding. Should the weather systems bring precipitation amounts much higher than forecasted, levels may reach the major flood threshold.

Elsewhere, levels are expected to rise again early next week.

- **ILES-AUX-ALLUMETTES / WHITEWATER REGION / LAKE COULANGE:** Levels could reach peak levels observed last week and **possibly exceed them by 20 to 25 cm.**
- **MCNAB-BRAESIDE / ARNPRIOR / CHATS LAKE:** Levels could reach peak levels observed last week and **possibly exceed them by 10 to 15 cm.**
- **CONSTANCE BAY / AYLMER / LAKE DESCHENES:** Levels could reach peak levels observed last week and **possibly exceed them by 10 to 15 cm.**

- **GATINEAU (HULL) TO THE MONTREAL REGION:** Levels could reach peak levels observed last week and **possibly exceed them by 15 to 20 cm in Gatineau (Hull marina) and 10 to 15 cm in Thurso** .

**If you have a flood emergency, please contact your municipality.**

**Reservoir Regulation Strategy:** Higher than normal spring runoff amounts were retained over the last two weeks in principal reservoirs in order to keep water levels in the downstream regions as low as possible during the rapid melt of the snowpack. Now that the snowmelt is largely complete, an increasing amount of spring runoff is being released from the principal reservoirs, which is slowing the rate of level decrease. Higher discharge from the principal reservoirs ensures adequate storage capacity is maintained in the reservoirs until all remaining snow in the northern portion of the watershed has melted. It is important to note that reservoirs must retain some storage capacity should weather conditions become wetter in the coming weeks. If wet conditions did occur and the reservoirs were already full, the river levels downstream could reach levels much higher than those currently forecast. 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 or 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 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 collaborate with municipalities to protect residents. Monitoring of flood conditions can be viewed at <https://vigilance.geo.msp.gouv.qc.ca/carte> .

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### 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](http://www.ottawariver.ca) (English)

[www.rivieredesoutaouais.ca/](http://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](https://twitter.com/ORRPB)(English)

[twitter.com/CPRRO](https://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.*

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**Ottawa River Regulating Committee**