



A News Release
from the
**Cataraqui Region
Conservation Authority**

November 2, 2016

Severe Drought Conditions Persist in Cataraqui Region

Kingston – The Cataraqui Region, and much of eastern Ontario, has been in a severe drought condition since early August. Since then, we have received sporadic rainfall, but not enough to make much of a difference in the drought conditions across the region. Looking at the last number of months, our precipitation for 2016 is still around 100 mm less than an average year, and if we look at the “water year” (Oct. 1 to Sept. 30), we were almost 200 mm below average for the last year.

However, the rain that fell from October 16th to 22nd, appears to have made a difference for the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) watersheds. Streamflows have risen to near normal for this time of year, and some groundwater well levels have also risen to near expected levels for this time of year.

Across the CRCA, the rain that fell over that week was between 90 and 120 mm, essentially a month’s worth of rain, or more, over the course of a few days. One of the key aspects of the rainfall that has helped with the drought conditions is that the rain fell steadily over a number of days, allowing water to percolate down into the soil and rock, and help to replenish the groundwater levels.

While the CRCA watersheds have seen improvement, adjacent conservation authorities have not necessarily seen as much of an improvement (particularly west and north), as they appear to have received less rainfall than the Cataraqui Region.

While stream levels, and groundwater levels, appear to have vastly improved since the summer with the recent rain, they have started falling again, quite sharply. At this point, CRCA staff, and the Water Response Team (WRT), is not yet sure whether the improvements will allow a move from Severe drought condition to a Moderate drought condition, or beyond. We are still trying to gather information about the conditions, about dry wells, and about stream flows. Until enough data has been gathered to confirm we can upgrade the drought level, the WRT will maintain the Severe drought condition.

Based on anecdotal information so far, there are still areas with dry wells, or problems with supply, across the region (concentrated in the western part of the CRCA), including some wells that have gone dry after the rainfalls in August. There is a concern for wells that remain dry into the cold weather, as they may not recover until the spring. *We would appreciate hearing any details about your wells, whether still dry, recovered, etc., at the contact info below.*

The Water Response Team continues to recommend water conservation across the CRCA, and eastern Ontario, given the continuing dry conditions, and the potential for dry conditions to continue through the fall months. The most recent long term forecast is for the warm dry weather to continue into winter, with the expectation for “normal” winter conditions.

Low water conditions are determined by the Cataraqui Region Water Response Team (WRT) convened by the CRCA. Membership includes water managers, major water users, public health, agriculture, school boards, marina operators, golf courses, government agencies, dam operators and others.



CATARAQUI REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
1641 Perth Road, P.O. Box 160 Glenburnie, ON K0H 1S0
Phone: 613-546-4228 Toll-free: 1-877-956-CRCA (2722)
Email: info@crca.ca Website: www.crc.ca

The Water Response Team recommends water conservation across the jurisdiction, for all water users, residential and commercial, especially those areas that are supplied by a ground water well or shore well. The team is asking residents and businesses of the region to be wary of water usage, and try to conserve water anywhere they can; this includes the outside watering of plants and lawns, and washing driveways, sidewalks, cars, etc. Permit to Take Water holders are also encouraged to reduce water takings during this exceptionally dry time. Those residents relying on wells and shore wells should be concerned that, as the drought continues, their water supply may run dry, and should plan for what to do when their primary source of water runs dry.

The CRCA WRT declared a Minor drought condition on May 26th, upgraded that condition to Moderate on July 5th, and upgraded to a Severe drought condition on August 10th.

The CRCA has numerous water conservation web links on their website at <http://crca.ca/education/publications-resources/resources-for-wise-water-use/>. The CRCA will continue to monitor conditions, and will provide updates as conditions change.

In order that we can track impacts of the drought conditions in the watershed, we request that any individuals or businesses in the Cataraqui Region who may be experiencing difficulties with their wells (groundwater and shore), or are seeing other signs of watershed stress due to the dry conditions, please contact the Conservation Authority by calling 613-546-4228 or 1-877-956-CRCA(2722), ext. 241, or fill in the survey on our website www.crc.ca/drought.

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For more information call:

Sean Watt, Water Resources Engineer
Toll-free

(613) 546-4228 ext. 241
1-877-956-CRCA (2722) ext. 241