

News Release

For immediate release
March 6, 2020



Watershed Conditions Statement – Water Safety Issued for Inland Lakes and Streams

Kingston - Cataraqi Conservation has issued a Watershed Conditions Statement – Water Safety today in advance of warm temperatures and rainfall forecasted for March 8 through 10.

Expected rainfall amounts are uncertain, but forecasts are calling for 10-40 mm. Some forecasts are calling for higher amounts. Temperatures are expected to rise above zero March 8, peaking at 7 or 8 degrees Celsius March 9 then falling back to about zero March 11.

The most recent snow survey on February 28 indicated that on average across the region the water content in the snow pack was above average at about 60 mm of snow water equivalent (how much water is stored in the snow). A good portion of the snowpack has since melted, but a significant portion remains in many areas. Creek levels and flows are already elevated due to recent snow melt runoff and rainfall events; the ground remains frozen. The forecasted temperatures and rainfall are expected to cause further water level and flow increases.

Water Managers, who operate dams on inland lakes in the region, are passing 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. As a result, water levels on inland lakes and streams may rise for several days.

Cataraqi Conservation is urging caution around all dams (inflow and outflow channels) and fast flowing watercourses. Respect the hazards in these areas by obeying all warning signs, keeping away from booms, buoys, and barriers. Stay well back from the water's edge above and below dams and hydroelectric stations. Creek banks and lake shorelines may be slippery, increasing the chance of falling in.

Also, due to the high flows, ice formation on lakes can be very unsafe. Cataraqi Conservation does not measure ice thickness for advising the public about ice conditions for recreational activities. Ice conditions can vary considerably from one waterbody to the next and within a single waterbody.

Widespread flooding is NOT expected at this time. However, localized inundation of low-lying areas is likely. If you witness flooding and/or require assistance your first point of contact is the local municipality.

Staff will continue to monitor conditions and forecasts and will update statements as needed. This Watershed Conditions Statement will remain in effect until (or updated before) Thursday, March 19, 2020 at 11:59 PM.

Cataraqi Conservation

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For up to date flooding information, please visit our flood forecasting and information page at www.crca.ca/flood.

As part of our flood forecasting and warning program staff are collecting information to help track flood events. If you experiencing flooding impacts on your property or business please fill in a brief questionnaire at the following link: <https://crca.ca/watershed-management/watershed-information/flood/>.

See below for watershed conditions terminology:

Normal: No flood conditions exist

Watershed Conditions Statement – Water Safety: High flows, unsafe banks, melting ice or other factors that could be dangerous for recreational users such as anglers, canoeists, hikers, children, pets, etc. Flooding is not expected.

Watershed Conditions Statement – Flood Outlook: Early notice of the potential for flooding based on weather forecasts calling for heavy rain, snow melt, high wind or other conditions that could lead to high runoff, cause ice jams, lakeshore flooding or erosion.

Flood Watch: Flooding is possible in specific watercourse or municipalities. Municipalities, emergency services and individual landowners in flood-prone areas should prepare.

Flood Warning: Flooding is imminent or already occurring in specific watercourses or municipalities. Municipalities and individuals should take action to deal with flood conditions. This may include road closures and evacuations.

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