

News Release

LITTLE CHANCE OF FLOODING THIS SPRING

RIDEAU VALLEY, March 26, 2009 — The lack of snow in the last half of the winter and the forecast of average amounts of rain/snow over the next few weeks means that there is little chance of overbank flooding this spring in the Rideau Valley watershed.

The average depth of snow on March 15 is normally about 20 cm with a water equivalent of about 60 mm (the liquid water that would result from melting that depth and firmness of snow). This year, the mid-March snow depth was zero. There has been only seven other times in the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority's (RVCA) 34-year-history of snow measurements when the mid-March reading was zero. The most recent no-snow March was two years ago. That spring, the peak flow was 167 cubic metres per second (at the Carleton University gauge), one of the lowest spring freshets ever recorded.

Flooding could still occur if we receive a heavy rain. With snow in the wooded and sheltered areas melting slowly, flows in many of the tributary streams are slightly above normal. The ground is still frozen and will likely remain so because of the cold night temperatures. With no snow to absorb it, a heavy rain could flow very quickly over the frozen ground and into the streams which could cause flooding. But this is unlikely based on the average rain/snow predictions for the next week or so.

Should any of the showers turn into a significant rain event and it appears that flooding might occur, RVCA will send bulletins to the media, municipal and provincial partners and directly to shoreline residents by email. You can get on the list by sending your email address to diane.downey@rvca.ca.

The probability of a significant flood decreases with every day that the snow melts and the water runs harmlessly away. RVCA continues to keep an eye on watershed conditions with the goal of protecting life and property within the Rideau Valley.

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More information:

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