

# Rideau Valley Conservation Authority Watershed Conditions Bulletin

*The Rideau Valley Conservation Authority issues the Long Range Outlook bulletin at the beginning of March each year to provide an indication of the potential for flooding when the spring freshet occurs. Historically, freshet occurs between mid-March and mid-April in the Rideau Valley.*

RIDEAU VALLEY WATERSHED: March 4, 2010 — The Rideau Valley Conservation Authority is presently expecting **below average spring flow conditions** this year in the Rideau River watershed. This is based on present snow conditions in the watershed, weather forecasts of continuing above freezing daily temperatures and the assumption that there will be normal precipitation amounts over the next several weeks.

The Conservation Authority snow measurements were most recently completed on Monday, March 1 when it was found that the overall watershed water equivalent of the snowpack was slightly above the long-term average. This would normally mean that peak flows would be expected to be close to average when the freshet happens in late March or early April. However, no new snow has fallen and melting has been occurring over the past week. Therefore, the snowpack is being actively reduced and will continue to be depleted with more warm days forecast for the next week. This means that there is the potential for there to be little snow to contribute to the eventual spring freshet flows. There is still the possibility for higher flows should there be a significant amount of precipitation and rapid warming.

**The continuing warm temperatures have caused gradual increases in water levels in area ditches and streams and, in many cases, the breakup of ice cover. Everyone is advised to be cautious around watercourses and parents particularly need to supervise their children and make them aware of the danger of unstable ice and increasing flows.**

The RVCA is now in the daily planning cycle of its flood forecasting and warning program – weather forecasts and river flows and water levels are being routinely monitored. Flood advisory or warning messages will be issued as required based on those forecasts.

The RVCA recommends at this time each year that everyone living near a watercourse should inform themselves of the flood risks in their area and should review their own plans for minimizing flood-related property damages and inconveniences. Municipal officials should review their flood response plans at this time and the usual preparations should be made to respond to emergency situations as required. The role of the Conservation Authority is to provide early warning of a developing flood situation and continuous monitoring and analysis throughout the event, with a view to providing timely and useful information to municipal and provincial emergency response personnel on the expected severity and duration of the event.

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More information:

Rideau Valley Conservation Authority

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*"Rideau Valley Conservation Authority is a partnership of municipalities within the Rideau Valley watershed created under the Conservation Authorities Act to deliver a range of programs in watershed management and natural resource conservation."*