

NEWS RELEASE

HUTTON MARSH WATER LEVELS AT THE MOTTS MILLS DAM

ELIZABETHTOWN-KITLEY, OCTOBER 4, 2011 — October 4, 2011, ELIZABETHTOWN-KITLEY — The water level in the Hutton Marsh wetland, above the Motts Mills Dam dropped another 30 centimetres (12 inches) during the week of September 26, due to vandalism that has been ongoing at the site since mid-August. On September 30, 2011 the water level in the Marsh was a full metre lower than “normal” for the 60 year period since the dam was constructed in 1952.

A number of people - local landowners, as well as non-resident visitors to the small conservation area at the dam’s location just off County Road 1 – have contacted RVCA to express concerns about the consequences of the recent vandalism, which include:

- altered wetland habitat above the dam and loss of a traditional waterfowl hunting area and viewing area
- excess water on farm fields and in wetlands and beaver ponds downstream of the dam
- the need for adjustments to livestock fencing and watering systems on the perimeter of the Marsh

After consulting with the Ministry of Natural Resources, and other partners, the RVCA has decided to replace some of the damaged stop logs and gradually raise the water level in the Marsh over the next few weeks, dependent on the availability of runoff from the upstream catchment area.

However, only three of the five stop logs that can be used in each stop log bay will be left in the dam over the fall and winter. This will ensure that sufficient spillway capacity is available for any major rainfall or snowmelt events without the need for further stop logs adjustments. This interim operating policy will be followed until such time as the dam’s structural stability can be confirmed and measures to improve operator safety at the structure can be implemented. The controlled water level in the Marsh will be 43 centimetres (17 inches) lower than “normal” during this interim period. RVCA’s field operations staff will begin inserting stop logs in the dam later this week.

Since its construction in 1952, the Motts Mills Dam has played an important role in maintaining an artificially controlled water level on about 300 hectares of the Hutton Marsh, which is classified as a Provincially Significant Wetland, and has been well-known in the past as excellent waterfowl habitat. Over time, certain vegetation species in the wetland have become dominant, and the amount of open water area in it has diminished, so the diversity of habitat types and wildlife within the wetland has also diminished. As a result, there has been ongoing interest in developing a plan to restore the wetland.

Simultaneously, the condition of the 60 year old Motts Mills Dam has been deteriorating for several years, and it is in need of major rehabilitation.

RVCA continues to work collaboratively with Ducks Unlimited Canada, the Leeds-Grenville Stewardship Council, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the Township of Elizabethtown-Kitley to develop a long-term plan for Dam rehabilitation and wetland restoration and management. Consultations with directly impacted landowners will proceed when the preferred approach to wetland management and dam rehabilitation has been identified and has the expressed support of all the organizations willing to participate in its implementation.

The local OPP detachment and the RVCA’s Conservation Areas regulations enforcement staff have been made aware of the recent vandalism. If you observe any suspicious activities at the site, please contact the local OPP office at 613-345-1790 as well as the RVCA. The RVCA is committed to protecting its public property and will prosecute offenders.

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For further information, please contact:

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