
RVCA News Release

LEVEL I DROUGHT WATCH CONTINUES IN RIDEAU WATERSHED

MANOTICK, September 28, 2005 —As of September 21, the entire Rideau River watershed was considered by the Water Response Team to continue to be in a Level I Drought condition based on the past month's precipitation and on the condition of local streams, wetlands and reservoir lakes. It was also recognized that the middle and upper portions of the watershed have experienced more severe drought conditions. As part of this effort, "drought awareness" information has been made available on the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority's website at www.rideauvalley.on.ca <<http://www.rideauvalley.on.ca/>> .

Generally, the impacts of the drought in 2005 have not been as severe as those in 2001. There have been few reported incidents of private wells failing in the rural area and municipal water systems managers have not experienced unusual problems with the quantity or quality of water at their raw water intakes. On the other hand, agricultural producers in parts of the watershed have suffered reduced crop yields and additional costs to maintain their livestock on water and feed brought onto the farm.

At Level I Drought, efforts are made to make the general public aware of the situation and to obtain a voluntary reduction in water use so as to reduce the demands on an increasingly limited water supply. At Level II Drought, the Ministry of the Environment would be expected to issue letters to persons and businesses holding permits to take water, requesting a voluntarily reduction in water withdrawals by 20%.

It is important for water managers to be aware of the impacts that drought conditions can have throughout the watershed, as they plan further actions in response to the current pattern of dry weather, or develop strategies for coping with future drought situations.

The Water Response Team consists of representatives of the various municipal, provincial and federal government agencies that have regulatory or operational responsibility in the management of water in the natural environment and in water supply systems, within the Rideau River watershed. The team will continue to monitor conditions until conditions improve significantly. The rainfall of the past weekend will have been beneficial, and its impact on the water reserves throughout the watershed is presently being evaluated.

Any individuals or businesses in the Rideau Valley watershed who have experienced unusual problems, hardships or expenses due to the low water/drought situation are encouraged to contact the Water Response Team through the RVCA's LandOwner Resource Centre at 1-613-692-2390 or 1-800-267-3504.

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