

Rideau Valley Conservation Authority Watershed Conditions Statement:

Low Water Conditions – Update

(WCS - 3/2012)

May 7, 2012 - The Level 1 Low Water Condition that was initially declared for the Rideau River watershed on April 5 has continued through the entire month of April and continues now into early May.

Rainfall over the last two weeks of April and the first week of May have improved the situation in the Rideau watershed, but not enough to end the Level 1 Low Water Condition. Water levels in lakes and streams did increase following the heaviest rain on April 23 getting closer to normal for the time of year but levels have declined since.

Precipitation on the watershed for April was about 75% of normal. Precipitation over the three months ending on April 30 has been about 64% of normal for that period.

The Rideau Valley Water Response Team (RVWRT) met on April 30. The purpose of the RVWRT is to facilitate communication amongst water resource managers at the local, provincial and federal levels during periods of limited water supply, and to plan coordinated action, if and as required.

Municipal water supplies that take water from groundwater sources have not yet experienced difficulties, nor are they expected to under Level 1 drought.

Municipal water supplies that rely on surface water sources (Perth and Smiths Falls) report that their water demand is presently being met, but raw water quality at their intakes is affected when the contribution to streamflow from upstream reservoir lakes is diminished. Municipal water managers are paying close attention to conditions at their intakes, and adjusting their treatment processes accordingly.

With very little natural runoff occurring this spring, Parks Canada - Rideau Canal National Heritage Site officials report that the Canal's reservoirs in the Upper Rideau watershed have not yet been filled. Currently, the challenge for Parks Canada staff is to balance the need to raise reservoir levels in order to sustain downstream flows throughout the summer against the need to maintain present flow releases so as to support the downstream aquatic ecosystem and municipal water supplies.

Conservation Authority staff continue to monitor conditions and will report new information as it becomes available. The Water Response Team will receive weekly updates from the RVCA and will meet again if and when the streamflow and precipitation criteria for Level 2 are met.

The RVCA encourages all water users to continue to apply wise use and water conservation practices.

To learn more about Ontario's Low Water Response program visit:

http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/Water/2ColumnSubPage/STEL02_164583.html.

Also, visit the RVCA website for local conditions.

Any individuals or business in the Rideau Watershed who may be experiencing unusual problems or hardships due to low water are encouraged to contact the Conservation Authority by calling 613-692-3571 or 1-800-267-3504, ext. 1128 or 1132.

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More Information:

Rideau Valley Conservation Authority
contact: Diane Downey, RVCA Director of Community Relations
613-692-3571 or 1-800-267-3504,
ext. 1126

"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."