

Watershed Conditions Statement:

Snowpack Water Content makes Spring Flooding a Possibility

(WCS - 01/2013)

March 7, 2013 – The water content of the snow covering the Rideau watershed is at near-record levels which makes flooding this spring a real possibility.

Snow measurements were completed by RVCA water resource technicians on March 4th and have shown that the snowpack presently covering the Rideau River watershed is the second highest, in terms of its water content, for the time of year (equivalent to an average water depth of 126 mm), since the Conservation Authority snow surveys were begun in 1974.

There is enough water content in the snowpack to generate flooding conditions in flood vulnerable communities but whether or not flooding will actually occur this spring depends on weather patterns (temperatures, snowfall and rainfall) over the next few weeks.

At the present time, weather forecasters are predicting that temperatures will be around the freezing point into next week with some rain or wet snow on Sunday and Monday. A similar pattern of temperatures around freezing is indicated in the longer term (14 day) weather forecasts. Some consolidation and melting of the snowpack will occur and flows and water levels will increase although they aren't expected to reach flood stage within the next week.

Municipalities and residents in flood vulnerable communities are advised to acquaint themselves with the flood risks in their communities and be prepared to implement their local and personal flood emergency response plans in case doing so becomes necessary.

The RVCA flood forecasting and warning status is now at "flood awareness" recognizing the potential for flooding that the snowpack presents. Monitoring of weather forecasts and river conditions will continue in the daily planning cycle of the flood forecasting and warning program. Based on those daily observations and our estimates of how the river will respond to approaching weather, further Watershed Conditions Statements, Flood Watch or Flood Warning messages will be issued as warranted.

A **Flood Watch** message will be issued if the 5 day weather forecast calls for warming temperatures and/or rain sufficient to raise the water levels to flood stage in at least one flood vulnerable community. Flood stage (i.e. the water level at which flooding commences) is defined for each flood vulnerable community, usually based on the elevation of access routes serving the community.

A **Flood Warning** message will be issued at least 48 hours before the river is expected to reach flood stage in at least one flood vulnerable community.

Water levels may increase through the weekend and ice covers on local stream and rivers will become increasingly unstable posing potential safety risks. Caution should be exercised by everyone when near local streams and rivers. Parents should inform their children of the risks associated with increased flows and unstable ice conditions in area watercourses, and provide appropriate supervision.

Watershed residents wishing to receive RVCA flood messages directly through e-mail can contact Michelle Paton at michelle.paton@rvca.ca or check our messages on Twitter ([RideauValleyCA](https://twitter.com/RideauValleyCA)) or visit www.rvca.ca

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More Information:

Rideau Valley Conservation Authority
613-692-3571 or 1-800-267-3504 (within 613 area code)
contact: Patrick Larson, RVCA Senior Water Resources Technician at ext. 1110 or cell **613-799-9423**