



For Immediate Release

RE: Flood Monitoring and Mitigation Measures

Whitewater Region, Ontario – April 17, 2023

The Township's Municipal Emergency Control Group has been meeting regularly as we monitor the flood conditions. Staff are also attending the Renfrew County Emergency Management Community of Practice Spring Freshet 2023 meetings that including the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF), Ontario Power Generation (OPG), the Ontario River Regulation Planning Board (ORRPB), Renfrew County and neighboring municipalities.

Situation Awareness

On April 14, 2023, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry – Pembroke District issued a Watershed Conditions Statement - Flood Outlook to be in effect for Renfrew County until Wednesday, April 19, 2023. A Flood Outlook gives early notice of the potential for flooding based on weather forecasts and updates to the MNRF Water Conditions Statement at the link noted below.

Since the Renfrew County Emergency Management Community of Practice Spring Freshet meeting held on Thursday, April 13, the situation has evolved on the Ottawa River. The temperatures observed continue to be higher than what was in the weather forecast, and as a result, the ORRPB is adjusting runoff volume from snowmelt upwards in flow forecasts along the Ottawa River.

The river conditions forecast for this coming week (week of April 17) is as follows:

- Record high temperatures over the last week are causing the heavy snowpack to melt very rapidly in the uncontrolled tributaries of the Ottawa River including the Black, Coulonge and Petawawa Rivers.
- Accounting for the combined effect of the rapid snowmelt and the on-going rain event, the ORRPB Committee now anticipates that levels will exceed the thresholds for the start of flooding at Lake Coulonge starting Wednesday April 19. Levels are expected to remain stable thereafter.

Above normal temperatures and rain events may increase river flows and levels. The effects of this rain on flows and water levels are still uncertain, but the rain will add water to the river at a time when several uncontrolled tributaries are close to their peak and when flows and levels on the main stem of the Ottawa River are still very close to the start of major flood levels.

The ORRPB Regulating Committee anticipates that levels could exceed the start of major flood levels along the Ottawa River starting Wednesday, April 19, 2023. Levels are expected to stabilize thereafter, for several days. The maximum levels to be reached this week are expected to be well below the historical high of 2019.

Mitigation Measures

Residents should take appropriate precautions to protect their property, such as ensuring sump pumps are functional, securing items that may float away, and all downspouts attached property and clearing of any potential obstacles.

Sand and sandbags will be made available at the following locations to safeguard lower-lying portions of flood-prone areas:

- Sunset Trail, McWitt Trail and Sandpoint Trail
- Greeway Drive at Coulonge Lake Trail
- Hilltop Drive

A central location for greater mass efforts will be considered based on forecasted flooding.

The Township's Fire and Public Works Department will be monitoring roads for flooding and potential closures. Municipal511.ca (<https://www.municipal511.ca/>) is updated with situations as they become known. The Township will communicate with relief organizations in preparation for a requirement for response.

Information Gathering

For safety, all residents should monitor weather conditions, check for updated messaging and exercise caution near fast moving water.

Ontario River Regulation Planning Board (ORRPB)

- <https://ottawariver.ca/>

Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR)

- <https://www.livestockapplications.gov.on.ca/webapps/swmc/flood-forecasting-and-warning-program/#ontarioFloodMap>

Ontario Power Generation (OPG)

- <https://www.opg.com/powering-ontario/our-generation/hydro/river-system-data/>

Municipal 511

- <https://www.municipal511.ca/>

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