



ISSUED: 4:30 p.m. FRIDAY, March 05, 2010

This message notes the current watershed conditions and what may be expected in the coming weeks as the annual spring thaw approaches. **THIS IS NOT A FLOOD ADVISORY OR WARNING.**

Despite the current above-seasonal temperatures, spring-thaw flooding is not expected to occur for at least another two weeks. At present, there is some melting of the snowpack during the daytime, but because overnight air temperatures continue to drop below freezing, the current weather is not resulting in significant snowmelt runoff. Instead, the snowpack is compacting and becoming denser.

The current average depth of snow-on-the-ground is 20-30 centimeters. The water content of the snowpack varies between 75-95 millimeters. The higher snow depths and water content values occur north of Lakefield. Throughout the region, the ground is frozen, and most lakes, rivers, streams, creeks and wetlands remain ice covered.

With the current above-seasonal temperatures, the average rate of run-off from the snowpack is about 2 millimeters per day south of Lakefield with even less run-off from the snowpack that is north of Lakefield. Therefore, despite the shrinking depth of snow-on-the-ground, the water content of the snowpack continues to remain high. The current water content of the snowpack is similar to the water content of the snowpack that was observed in 2008 at this time of year.

When the spring-thaw does arrive in this area, the rate of run-off will increase, and flooding of area lakes, rivers, streams, creeks and wetlands can be expected. However, the extent and severity of flooding will depend on how rapid the snow melts, the water content of the snow, the ground conditions (frozen or unfrozen), and whether rain-on-snow occurs. The worst case scenario is widespread rainfall on snow with above-average water content over an area that also has frozen and/or saturated soils.

Watershed residents that own or occupy low-lying residential and commercial buildings located in the vicinity of area lakes and rivers, and area municipalities, are encouraged to take appropriate precautions ahead of this year's spring-thaw event. Emergency supplies (including provisions for alternative accommodations) should be at the ready, sump pumps checked to ensure that they are working properly, snow and ice cleared from eaves troughs and around foundation walls, down-pipes directed away from buildings, and municipal catch basins, ditches and culverts cleared of snow, ice and debris.

Conservation Authority staff will continue to monitor the watershed conditions, and maintain regular communication with all area municipalities. Local municipalities are the first to respond to, and assist with, flood emergencies. To report high water or a flood in your area, or to speak with the Duty Officer, call the Conservation Authority's Flood Watch Hotline - 705-745-5791, ext. 228 - available on a 24-hour basis. If you experience a flood emergency, call 911.

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For further information contact:

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Flood Watch Hotline
Ph.: (705) 745-5791, ext. 228
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