

# Rideau Valley Conservation Authority

## FLOOD ADVISORY

*This Advisory supersedes the Watershed Conditions Bulletin issued by this office on March 7, 2008.*

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2008 — Above average peak flows and water levels are expected on all streams in the Rideau Valley when the snowpack melts. The severity of flooding conditions will be highly dependent on temperatures and precipitation over the next days and weeks. However, it is very likely that overbank flooding will occur on most watercourses, affecting access to residences, and potentially causing flood damages to buildings and their contents in some flood prone areas.

Owners of properties in identified flood risk areas or near water bodies are advised to make preparations for the possibility of the development of major to severe flooding conditions – with the objective of minimizing property damages and avoiding personal safety risks due to flooding when the bulk of the snowmelt finally occurs. The precautions that can and should be taken depend very much on the specific nature of the property and neighbourhood in question.

Municipal officials should at this time prepare for the possibility that the flood emergency response provisions of their municipal emergency management plans will need to be activated.

The snow storm that hit the region on March 8th added significantly to the amount of water held in the snowpack now covering the Rideau Watershed. On March 17th the average snow depth across the watershed was about 55 centimetres, with an average water content of 154 millimetres — more than double the historic mean values for mid-March.

In 34 years of snowpack monitoring by the RVCA, the mid-March snowpack was deeper and heavier on only one other occasion – in 1976, prior to the highest recorded peak flows on the Rideau as measured in Ottawa.

The current five-day weather forecast is calling for day-time temperatures in the low single digits for the next two days (Wednesday and Thursday) accompanied by as much as 20 millimetres of rain, and followed by a return to below zero temperatures on Friday. We are expecting that the incoming rain and any meltwater generated over the next two days will be mostly re-absorbed and stored in the snowpack, adding to its overall water content. A small increase in local streamflows may be observed towards the weekend, but water levels are not expected to rise dramatically until the next pulse of warm weather — sometime after April 1st according to current long range weather outlooks. The longer the onset of spring is delayed, the higher the likelihood of a quick melt generating high flood levels.

The RVCA continues in the daily planning cycle of its flood forecasting and warning program – weather forecasts, river flows and water levels and snowpack conditions are being routinely monitored; river discharge and associated water level predictions are prepared for known flood vulnerable communities. Additional flood advisory messages will be issued as required, based on those forecasts.

A flood warning message (as opposed to an advisory) will be issued if and when it has been determined that flood conditions will develop as result of incoming weather.

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More Information:

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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.

