

FLOOD WATCH

Message Number: 2023-04
Issued: April 10, 2023, at 10:00 AM EDT
From: NBMCA Duty Officer, Angela Mills

FLOOD WATCH notifies that the potential for flooding exists within specific watercourses and municipalities. Municipalities, emergency services and individual landowners in flood-prone areas should prepare.

If you have a flood emergency, please contact your municipality. If you live in an unincorporated township, please contact the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry – North Bay District.

This is an update to the previous Message Number 2023-03. **FLOOD WATCH** is now in effect for the entire North Bay-Mattawa watershed.

Current Conditions:

The existing snowpack water content is very high in the North Bay – Mattawa watershed with an average of 201 mm of water equivalent (measured on April 6, 2023). The snowpack water equivalence increased to 238 mm at the North Bay Golf and Country Club, its highest recorded level. The snowpack water equivalence at the Chisholm and Corbeil sites are close to their highest recorded levels at 183 and 181 mm, respectively. Snow depths range between 51 and 60 cm in the NBMCA watershed.

Significant snowpack remains across the North Bay – Mattawa watershed, and soil and lakes are frozen. Water levels in area streams and Lake Nipissing are currently at or near normal for this time of year. Of note, water level on Chippewa Creek has been fluctuating by approximately 20 cm, in response to alternating daytime melting and nighttime freezing (based on day and night air temperatures). Water levels on Wasi River increased by 31 cm and La Vase River increased by 23 cm since April 4, 2023. Lake Nipissing water levels are regulated by dams operated by the federal government. Lake Nipissing water level at North Bay has increased 6 cm since April 4 and remains well below flood criteria. Water levels on the Ottawa River are managed by upstream dams and reservoirs that are operated by provincial and federal governments. The Ottawa River water level at Mattawa has remained consistent in the past week and is low for this time of year, through the operations of dams and reservoirs in preparation for spring freshet.

Forecasted Conditions:

Forecasted temperatures from Monday (April 10) through the remainder of the week are expected to remain above freezing, with daytime highs reaching around 20 °C and overnight low temperatures around 5 °C. There is minimal precipitation forecasted for the coming week.

Historic Flood Conditions:

For comparison, when flooding occurred in the watershed around April 18, 2019, the snowpack water content was 123 mm (measured April 15, 2019). Daytime temperatures were between 3 and 12 °C, with overnight temperatures above freezing. Actual precipitation measured on April 18, 2019 was 31.8 mm.

Risk:

The snowpack water content across the North Bay-Mattawa watershed is very high and there has been limited melt through March and early April. The sudden shift in weather to very warm temperatures is expected to trigger significant snowmelt.

Since the soil is currently frozen, water from snowmelt cannot be absorbed and instead flows to local watercourses. With the anticipated significant snowmelt, water levels in creeks, rivers, and lakes are expected to rise.

Urban watercourses, such as Chippewa Creek, Parks Creek, and Pinewood Parkway Creek in the City of North Bay, will respond more quickly to the snowmelt than rural watercourses. Localized flooding is likely as the snowmelt progresses.

The levels and flows in the Ottawa River are currently close to normal but are expected to start rising with the snowmelt. Rising levels along the main stem of the Ottawa River from Mattawa to Montreal over the coming week could create possible flooding in low-lying areas, which are the areas that are regularly flooded during the spring freshet period, per the Ottawa River Regulating Committee (<https://ottawariver.ca/latest-news/>).

The water level in Lake Nipissing is expected to rise due to snowmelt; however, there is minimal rainfall forecasted through April 17. Lake-based flooding around Lake Nipissing is not expected at this time. Localized flooding may occur in low lying areas around other watershed lakes, as the snowmelt progresses.

All residents, especially those in low lying areas, are encouraged to monitor the conditions that are developing. Banks adjacent to rivers and creeks are very slippery at this time and when combined with cold open water, pose a serious hazard. The public is encouraged to keep children and pets away from watercourses and off waterbodies.

Municipalities are encouraged to monitor water crossings to ensure the continual movement of water through culverts and bridges. A close watch on local conditions and updated forecasts and warnings from Environment Canada is also recommended.

Staff at the North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority will continue to monitor weather and watershed conditions and update this message based on the changing weather and streamflow conditions.


This message will be in effect until (or updated before) Monday, April 17, 2023 at 4:00 PM EDT.

The general public is advised of these messages through the www.nbmca.ca website with the flood status icon and a link to information about current conditions. NBMCA also circulates these messages to local media and social media, posting on Twitter (@theNBMCA), Instagram (nbmcainfo), and Facebook (NBMCA).

The public is invited to share photos of watershed conditions on social media using #NBMCAFlood.

Terminology: Notification Levels

WATERSHED CONDITIONS STATEMENT: general notices of potential flooding or other conditions that pose a safety risk. There are two kinds of statements:



The diagram shows a yellow box labeled "Water Safety Statement" with a downward-pointing arrow. Below it are four colored boxes: green, yellow, orange, and red.

Water Safety: indicates that high flows, unsafe banks, melting ice or other factors could be dangerous for users such as anglers, boaters, swimmers, children or pets. Flooding is not expected.

Flood Outlook Statement



Flood Outlook: gives early notice of the potential for flooding based on weather forecasts calling for heavy rain, snow melt, high wind or other conditions that could lead to high runoff, cause ice jams, lakeshore flooding or erosion.

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FLOOD WARNING

Flood Warning



FLOOD WARNING: notifies that flooding is imminent or already occurring in specific watercourses or municipalities. Municipalities and individuals should take action to deal with flood conditions. This may include road closures and evacuations.

MAP: North Bay – Mattawa Watershed

