

Watershed Conditions Statement - Water Safety

Bracebridge Minden Parry Sound District

Thursday, August 10, 2023

3:00 pm

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry – Bracebridge Minden Parry Sound District is advising area residents that a Watershed Conditions Statement – Water Safety Bulletin is in effect in the district until Thursday, August 17, 2023. This message will affect residents within the MNRF Bracebridge Minden Parry Sound District for portions of the District of Muskoka and County of Haliburton within **Muskoka River Watershed**.

Water levels and river flows are generally higher than normal for this time of year due to recent rainfall.

Boaters are advised to be cautious if traveling on local waterways. Boat traffic during high water conditions can cause damage to shorelines and to shoreline property with vessel wakes.

High water levels and fast river flows can be hazardous to boaters, swimmers or people on or close to the water. The banks and shorelines adjacent to water bodies can be extremely slippery and unstable. Residents and visitors should exercise caution while around waterbodies and maintain close supervision of children and pets.

Lower-lying portions of known flood-prone areas may be impacted to various degrees as lake/river levels are anticipated to remain high for the next several days.

MNRF also advises extreme caution when using forest access roads for outdoor activities as they may become inundated with water, are prone to washouts, and may become impassible due to localized flooding.

Residents that have been affected by high water and flow conditions in the past should continue take necessary action to protect/secure any vulnerable property in proximity to

rivers and lakes and closely monitor developing conditions and regularly check for updated messages.

The ministry is closely monitoring the weather and developing watershed conditions.

Further updates will be issued as appropriate.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Description of Weather System

Recent thunderstorms and significant rainfall has resulted in higher than normal water levels and river flows for this time of year.

Weather forecasts on August 10, 2023, call for thunderstorms with up to 30mm of local rainfall accumulation. Additional rainfall is forecasted for August 12, 13 and 15 with 30-60% probability at this time.

Description of Current Conditions

Lake water levels and river flows are generally in the higher portion of their normal ranges for this time of year and are expected to rise further with additional forecasted precipitation – especially along the South Branch and Lower Muskoka River including Kawagama Lake, Lake of Bays, Lake Muskoka, Lake Rosseau and Joseph and the Musquash River.

The watersheds are cascading systems - each waterbody feeds into the next downstream. Runoff from rain cascades and compounds through the entire system affecting water levels in each waterbody. It will take a number of days for the high water levels and flows to work through the entire system. Downstream water bodies may experience a delay in the full impact of the upstream inputs.

MNRF is closely monitoring the weather and developing watershed conditions. Further updates will be issued as appropriate.

DEFINITIONS

- **WATERSHED CONDITIONS STATEMENT – WATER SAFETY:** indicates that high flows, melting ice or other factors could be dangerous for such users as boaters, anglers and swimmers but flooding is not expected.
- **WATERSHED CONDITIONS STATEMENT – FLOOD OUTLOOK:** gives early notice of the potential for flooding based on weather forecasts calling for heavy rain, snow melt, high winds or other conditions
- **SHORELINE CONDITIONS STATEMENT – WATER SAFETY:** indicates that **along the Great Lakes shorelines high water**, melting ice or other factors could be dangerous but flooding is not expected.

- **SHORELINE CONDITIONS STATEMENT – FLOOD OUTLOOK:** gives early notice of the potential for flooding **along the Great Lakes shorelines** based on weather and lake conditions, and water safety information.
- **FLOOD WATCH:** potential for flooding exists within specific watercourses and municipalities
- **FLOOD WARNING:** flooding is imminent or occurring within specific watercourses and municipalities.

LEARN MORE

- Surface Water Monitoring Centre public webpage www.ontario.ca/page/surface-water-monitoring-centre
- Environment Canada bulletins: www.weather.gc.ca
- A close watch on local conditions and weather forecasts from Environment Canada is recommended.
- Parks Canada maintains the Ontario Waterways Water Management InfoNet on the Trent-Severn Waterway website at <https://parks.canada.ca/lhnhhs/on/trentsevern/info/infonet/point-gestion-eau-water-management-updates>

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