



OTTAWA RIVER WATER LEVELS

OTTAWA/GATINEAU, Tuesday April 18, 2017 –The Ottawa River Regulating Committee cautions that recent rainfall combined with snowmelt has caused the levels and flows on the Ottawa River to rise rapidly in several areas. Flows and levels are expected to continue to rise this week and possibly reach conditions observed during the freshet of 1998, principally from Pembroke down to Grenville/Hawkesbury.

This year, the month of April has been particularly wet with cumulative precipitation by mid-April exceeding the amount normally received for the entire month. This precipitation combined with the ongoing snowmelt has caused levels and flows to rise rapidly since Sunday evening. Consequently, the middle and lower portions of the basin are experiencing well above average conditions, with levels and flows not seen in the previous 10 to 20 years depending on location. Accounting for forecast precipitation over the next few days, additional increases are expected in most locations along the main stem of the river between Pembroke and Grenville/Hawkesbury, with levels possibly reaching conditions observed in 1998, which were 59.97 m at Britannia/Lac Deschênes, 43.96 m at Hull Marina/Pointe Gatineau, and 42.74 m at Thurso. Levels and flows near Pointe Gatineau are now close to levels observed in 1998 and are expected to increase depending on further precipitation. Additional increases elsewhere in the basin will vary with location. The extent of flooding will depend on the amount of precipitation received over the next few days. Officials of the Committee would like to remind residents and communities located in areas that are flood-prone to continue to monitor river conditions.

While the principal storage reservoirs in the watershed are containing the majority of the snowmelt from the north, there is limited capacity to deal with the contribution from the middle (central) and lower (southern) portions of the drainage basin as most dams in this area are run-of-the-river facilities, which means that they have no significant capacity to hold or store water. During this critical period, the Committee will take all possible actions to limit the amount of flooding and will continuously monitor conditions at all points along the river. Further bulletins will be issued if the situation changes.

Residents who would like to report flooding or require help should communicate with responsible provincial agencies, that is in Ontario, your Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry local district office or Conservation Authority (<https://www.ontario.ca/law-and-safety/flood-forecasting-and-warning-program>); and in Québec, the Sécurité civile of the Ministère de la Sécurité publique at 1-866-776-8345. Your municipality is responsible for on-the-ground flood response.

Current information on Ottawa River levels and flow discharges at the major reservoirs in the system may be obtained by consulting our website at <http://www.ottawariver.ca>. A general three-day forecast is also provided at key locations within the basin.

Residents in Ottawa-Gatineau can obtain current information on Ottawa River levels by calling (613) 995-3443 for a message in English and (613) 995-3455 for a message in French. Persons living outside the Ottawa-Gatineau region should dial 1-800-778-1246 to receive an English message and 1-800-778-1243 for a message in French. Information is given for levels at Lake Timiskaming, Mattawa, Pembroke, Lake Coulonge, Chats Lake, Ottawa (Britannia), Gatineau (Hull wharf), Grenville and Maniwaki.

The Ottawa River Regulating Committee consists of the following agencies that operate dams in the Ottawa River system: Public Works and Government Services Canada, Ontario Power Generation, Hydro-Québec and the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques du Québec.

For additional information, please contact Manon Lalonde (613) 996-8639, or Michael Sarich (613) 996-8643 of the Ottawa River Regulation Secretariat.

Ottawa River Regulating Committee