



**HISTORIC FLOOD RISK ON THE OTTAWA RIVER**  
**Abitibi-Timiskaming region and Mattawa down to Lac Deschenes**

**OTTAWA/GATINEAU, Thursday May 9, 2019** — The Ottawa River Regulating Committee warns that most reservoirs in the Abitibi-Timiskaming region are now filled and that excess waters from these areas are now flowing through the downstream river system. With significant rainfall of 25 to 45 mm forecast to begin today over much of the watershed, **water levels on the Ottawa River between Mattawa and Lac Deschenes are expected to continue to increase over the next few days and reach a peak that may exceed previous historic record levels.**

Based on the current forecast the following conditions are expected along the Ottawa River:

- **MATTAWA** : levels could exceed the historic high of 1960;
- **PEMBROKE** : levels could exceed the historic high of 1960;
- **LAC COULONGE** : levels could exceed the previous historic high of April 29, 2019;
- **CHATS LAKE** : levels could exceed the previous historic high of April 30, 2019;
- **LAC DESCHENES** : levels could exceed the previous historic high of April 30, 2019;
- **GATINEAU (HULL) TO THE MONTREAL REGION** : levels are expected to increase but should remain below the May 1, 2019 peak levels;
- **ABITIBI-TIMISKAMING REGION**: elevated water levels and flows with flooding are expected
  - Lac des Quinze and Kipawa Reservoir – contact the *Centre des opérations gouvernementales du gouvernement du Québec* at 1-866-650-1666, cog@msp.gouv.qc.ca, for information;
  - Lake Timiskaming – refer to the following press release:  
<https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/water-level-warning-for-lake-timiskaming-second-notice-818291296.html> .

**River Conditions Forecast / Flooding Risk:** A low pressure system from the American Midwest is expected to bring 25 to 45 mm of precipitation over much of the basin today and tomorrow. Thunderstorms may produce additional precipitation in some areas. Runoff from this precipitation is expected to bring additional water volumes to the Ottawa River, at a time when levels are already exceeding major flood levels in all areas and when snow melt runoff in the Abitibi-Timiskaming area is at its maximum. **Sharp increases in water levels and flows on and near the reservoirs listed above and downstream of Lake Timiskaming from Mattawa to Lac Coulonge are expected. This weather system is highly volatile and therefore the actual increase in levels will depend on amounts of precipitation received, temperatures and rate of snowmelt.** People living along the Ottawa River in the sectors listed in the bullets above are advised to closely follow changing conditions and to take necessary measures. The Regulating Committee will be reassessing forecast conditions and providing hydrological condition updates on its website daily at <http://www.ottawariver.ca/forecast.php>. If you think that your property may be at risk of flooding, please contact your municipality.

**The Regulating Committee also cautions residents from all areas of the Ottawa River basin that water levels and flows will remain high and will also be susceptible to any significant additional precipitation for the next two weeks as a minimum.**

**Reservoir Regulation Strategy:** In the Abitibi-Timiskaming region, the reservoirs that are full can no longer store additional runoff and must allow excess water to flow through. Other reservoirs located further to the north will be rapidly filling over the next two weeks as snow melt runoff is accelerating.

Dams located in the central and southern portions of the basin are essentially “run of the river” with no significant storage capacity. As such, they cannot reduce the flows and levels associated with increased spring runoff. During this critical freshet period, the Regulating Committee will undertake actions to limit the amount of flooding and will continuously monitor conditions at all points along the river.

The Ottawa River Regulating Committee works closely at all times with provincial agencies responsible for issuing flood related messages. In Ontario, Conservation Authorities and District Offices of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry issue flood related messages and information to municipalities and other key agencies involved in flood preparedness and response. Current flood related messages can be viewed on-line on the individual conservation authority websites and on the provincial flood webpage: <https://www.ontario.ca/flooding>. In Quebec, the Centre des opérations gouvernementales du Québec and the Sécurité civile collaborate with municipalities to protect residents. Monitoring of flood conditions can be viewed at <https://geoegl.msp.gouv.qc.ca/adnv2>.

---

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Website:** Current and forecast conditions on the Ottawa River along with conditions at the major reservoirs in the system may be obtained by consulting our website. A general four-day forecast is also provided at key locations within the basin during the spring freshet period.

[www.ottawariver.ca](http://www.ottawariver.ca) (English)

[www.rivieredesoutaouais.ca](http://www.rivieredesoutaouais.ca) (French)

**Telephone:** The river conditions forecast and information on current river levels may be obtained for the following locations: Lake Timiskaming, Mattawa, Pembroke, Lake Coulonge, Chats Lake, Ottawa (Britannia), Gatineau (Hull wharf), Grenville and Maniwaki, by calling the following numbers:

Ottawa-Gatineau

(613) 995-3443 English

(613) 995-3455 French

Outside the Ottawa-Gatineau  
region

1-800-778-1246 English

1-800-778-1243 French

**Twitter :** Follow us to be notified when news releases are issued, when we begin daily updates or the general four-day forecasts on our website, or when special bulletins are posted on our website.

[www.twitter.com/ORRPB](http://www.twitter.com/ORRPB) (English)

[www.twitter.com/CPRRO](http://www.twitter.com/CPRRO) (French)

The Ottawa River Regulating Committee consists of the following agencies that are responsible for the integrated flow management of the principal reservoirs within the Ottawa River watershed: Hydro-Québec, Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques du Québec, Ontario Power Generation, and Public Services and Procurement Canada. In Ontario, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, through its associate membership with the Regulating Committee, contributes important hydrometeorological information and plays a key role in disseminating information in Ontario. The Regulating Committee issues a press release when the spring freshet season is starting on the Ottawa River and when it anticipates that river conditions on the main stem of the Ottawa River (between the Lake Timiskaming outlet down to the Montreal region) could exceed significant flood levels.

For additional information, please contact Manon Lalonde (613) 996-8639 or Michael Sarich (613) 996-8643 of the Ottawa River Regulation Secretariat, or write to [secretariat@ottawariver.ca](mailto:secretariat@ottawariver.ca) (English) or to [bureau@ottawariver.ca](mailto:bureau@ottawariver.ca) (French).

*Ottawa River Regulating Committee*