

# Rideau Valley Conservation Authority Watershed Conditions Statement – Drought Condition Update

## **Drought Condition Downgraded to Minor**

(WCS - 1/2017)

**January 17, 2017** – The drought status in the Rideau River watershed is being downgraded to “Minor” because the recent warm temperatures and precipitation have caused flows to increase significantly in watershed streams.

Rain and snowmelt have caused flows in some streams to approach and, in some cases, exceed the long term historical average flows. Kemptville Creek had low flows of .028 cubic metres per second (cms), 1.5% of average, in mid-October. Occasional thaws with rain since then have caused flows to increase in all streams and fluctuate around the average. Kemptville Creek flows have been consistently elevated since December 27 and reached three times the average on January 9<sup>th</sup> with a flow of 15.6 cms.

This is a significant contrast to the Tay River as measured in Perth, which had flows close to the average through July and August but declined through the fall as outflows from Bobs Lake fell and is presently about 60% of average. The flow measured at the outlet of Bobs Lake at Bolingbroke presently is about 35% of average for the time of year.

It remains to be seen if the present flows will be sustained. The Tay has continued to have low flows despite the weather. Also, it is unknown how much recharge of groundwater is occurring. In some areas of the watershed, there is minimal frost in the soil and recharge should be ongoing. In other areas, there has been greater freezing that has restricted recharge and, therefore, there is the possibility that the supply of water in wells may still be precarious.

For these reasons, the drought designation of “Minor” will be held through the winter. RVCA staff will continue to monitor conditions and the status will be re-evaluated after the spring freshet.

Levels in the Rideau Canal reservoir lakes, Bobs, Wolfe, Upper Rideau and Big Rideau, are presently above the long term averages and the rule curve targets. Measurements on other lakes are not routinely available so we are unable to say what the water levels are. However, snowmobilers who use the lakes should assume that those rocks and shoals that were exposed with the low water levels could still be hazards and they should travel with caution.

All watershed residents are encouraged to continue to conserve water.

Relevant information sources are as follows:

- Ministry of Environment and Climate Change: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/managing-your-water-well-times-water-shortage>
- Ontario’s Low Water Response program: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/low-water-response-program>
- RVCA website: [www.rvca.ca](http://www.rvca.ca)
- Hourly and daily streamflows and water levels: <http://his.rvca.ca/rvcafwl/>

In order that we can track impacts of the drought conditions in the watershed, we request that any individuals or businesses in the Rideau Watershed who may be experiencing difficulties with their wells please contact the Conservation Authority by calling 613-692-3571 or 1-800-267-3504, ext. 1128 or by

email (instructions at [http://www.rvca.ca/low\\_water/index.html](http://www.rvca.ca/low_water/index.html) ). There is also the Drought Impacts Map application on the RVCA website under Watershed Conditions.

Conservation Authority staff continue to monitor conditions and communicate with water managers throughout the watershed through the Rideau Valley Low Water Response Team. An update to this message will be issued as conditions warrant.

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More Information:

contact: Patrick Larson, RVCA Senior Water Resources Technician  
Rideau Valley Conservation Authority  
613-692-3571 or 1-800-267-3504  
ext. 1210 or cell 613-799-9423

*"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."*