

# Frequently Asked Questions about Lake Ontario and Bay of Quinte Water Levels

---

## Water Level Information

### Where can I find current and forecast Lake Ontario water level information?

The federal government monitors Lake Ontario water levels and provides forecasts for future conditions. This information is available at <http://www.waterlevels.gc.ca/C&A/recent-forecast-eng.html>

Forecasts are typically prepared each month. Based on provisional information from the federal government (May 17, 2017) it appears Lake Ontario and the Bay of Quinte may peak within a week, as long as there is minimal rainfall in the Lake Ontario basin. Areas on the shoreline of the Bay of Quinte and Lake Ontario could still see increasing water levels of up to 30 centimetres on shorelines due to winds and wave action. Once the levels do peak it will still take some time for them to recede as they gradually decline over the summer and into the fall.

### What factors influence the Lake Ontario water levels?

Lake Ontario experiences fluctuations in water levels these fluctuations are explained at <http://www.waterlevels.gc.ca/C&A/fluctuations-eng.html> . There are natural factors that affect Lake Ontario water levels as explained at <http://www.waterlevels.gc.ca/C&A/natural-factors-eng.html> .

The current high water levels are the result of more water coming into Lake Ontario than could be drained out of the St. Lawrence River. A number of different factors including unstable ice cover over the winter months, above average snowpack in the Ottawa River watershed and significantly above normal rainfall across the entire watershed in the spring contributed to the above average water levels in Lake Ontario.

Quinte Conservation does not control Lake Ontario water levels.

## Protection from High Water Levels

### What should I do if I want to protect my property from erosion during high water?

Contact a Quinte Conservation Regulations Officer by calling (613) 968-3434 ext. 129 or email [regulations@quinteconservation.ca](mailto:regulations@quinteconservation.ca) . The Regulations Officer will arrange a site visit with you to discuss your options for protecting your shoreline property.

For more information about Quinte Conservation's Permits and Planning visit [http://quinteconservation.ca/site/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=29&Itemid=43](http://quinteconservation.ca/site/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=29&Itemid=43) .

## **How can I protect my home from water damage during high water?**

During high water levels the groundwater levels can also become elevated. To prevent damage to property below the ground floor, ensure sump pumps are in working order and elevate items from the basement floor.

If lake levels and wave action approach a residence, a sandbag berm can be installed. A brochure is available on how to build a sandbag berm [http://quinteconservation.ca/site/images/stories/water/docs/how\\_to\\_sandbag.pdf](http://quinteconservation.ca/site/images/stories/water/docs/how_to_sandbag.pdf) or you can watch a video by visiting Quinte Conservation's YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zha8ypMvYRc&list=PLXMeFEnFdIaX0uUF-o1UCCOTEdqjWSXGw> .

Contact your local hardware store to see if they have sandbags, plastic poly and a pump available for purchase.

Contact your municipality to see if they have sand available to fill sandbags.

## **What do I do with my sandbags once the water recedes?**

Placing or dumping sand from used sandbags or other sources into the water or along the shoreline is not permitted. Landowners can choose to dispose of the sand or use the sand on high ground on their property.

For sand disposal, landowners should contact their municipality for more information.

For sand placement, sand can be placed 15 metres away from the 1 in 100 year floodplain on higher ground. If you do not know where the 1 in 100 year floodplain is you can (1) place the sand 15 metres away from the highest water level experienced in 2017 on your property or (2) contact a Quinte Conservation Regulations Officer by calling (613) 968-3434 ext. 129 or email [regulations@quinteconservation.ca](mailto:regulations@quinteconservation.ca) to arrange a site visit to your property to mark the 1 in 100 year floodplain and setback for fill placement. Sand should be placed or covered to prevent washing of material into the waterbody during rain events.

## **What are long-term solutions to protect my property from erosion damage?**

All work along shorelines require a permit from Quinte Conservation and may require a permit from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. Contact a Quinte Conservation Regulations Officer by calling (613) 968-3434 ext. 129 or email [regulations@quinteconservation.ca](mailto:regulations@quinteconservation.ca) . The Regulations Officer will arrange a site visit with you to discuss your options for protecting your shoreline property.

For more information about Quinte Conservation's Permits and Planning visit [http://quinteconservation.ca/site/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=29&Itemid=43](http://quinteconservation.ca/site/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=29&Itemid=43) .

Examples of typical shoreline stabilization measures are:

- Re-grading the shoreline and placement of large diameter stone, or
- Replacing or repairing existing shore protection infrastructure

A low-cost solution could include shoreline naturalization which reduces shoreline erosion by slowing the movement of surface runoff and stabilizing the soil. Shoreline naturalization can be combined with other stabilization measures. Bay of Quinte shoreline landowners may qualify for financial assistance for shoreline naturalization projects, visit [http://www.bgrap.ca/cms\\_lib/hep%20brochure2017R.pdf](http://www.bgrap.ca/cms_lib/hep%20brochure2017R.pdf) for more information.

### **What are long-term solutions to protect my home from high water levels?**

Implementing long-term solutions to protect your home from high water levels will require a permit from Quinte Conservation. Contact a Quinte Conservation Regulations Officer by calling (613) 968-3434 ext. 129 or email [regulations@quinteconservation.ca](mailto:regulations@quinteconservation.ca) . The Regulations Officer will arrange a site visit with you to discuss your options for protecting your shoreline home.

For more information about Quinte Conservation's Permits and Planning visit [http://quinteconservation.ca/site/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=29&Itemid=43](http://quinteconservation.ca/site/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=29&Itemid=43) .

Common methods to flood-proof your home are:

- Moving or raising your home, or
- Constructing a flood berm

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Quinte Conservation**

Quinte Conservation has developed a flood warning service for its municipalities and residents within their watershed and the shoreline of Lake Ontario. The purpose of this service is to reduce the risk to life and damage to property by providing local agencies and the public with notice, information and advice so that they can respond to potential flooding and flood emergencies.

Quinte Conservation's messages for Lake Ontario flooding are based on the federal government water current and forecast water levels, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry's storm surge model, the Bay of Quinte and Lake Ontario floodplain mapping and any local information from member municipalities.

## Municipalities

Under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (Ontario Regulation 380/04), municipalities have the primary responsibility and authority for response to flooding and flood emergencies, and also for the welfare of residents and protection of property.

Upon receiving a Flood Watch or Flood Warning municipalities shall:

1. Notify appropriate municipal officials, departments, and agencies in accordance with their municipal emergency plan.
2. Determine the appropriate response to a flood threat and, if warranted, deploy municipal resources to protect life and property.
3. If required, declare a flood emergency and implement their emergency response plan.
4. Request provincial assistance under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, if municipal resources are inadequate to respond to the emergency.
5. Maintain liaison with Conservation Authority Flood Coordinators.

## Resources

- [http://quinteconservation.ca/site/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=350&Itemid=66](http://quinteconservation.ca/site/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=350&Itemid=66) – Quinte Conservation Flood Information
- <http://www.tides-marees.gc.ca/C&A/bulletin-eng.html> - Environment and Climate Change Canada Great Lakes and Montreal Harbour Monthly Water Level Bulletin
- <http://www.ontario.ca/flooding> - MNRF's Internet Flood Information page, including portions of this flood message and subsequent updates, as warranted.
- [http://ijc.org/en/\\_islrb](http://ijc.org/en/_islrb) - International Lake Ontario - St. Lawrence River Board