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HIGH WATER SAFETY BULLETIN

Bulletin Number: 2011.4.S1
Issued at: March 3, 2011 at 3:30 pm
Issued by: Mark Helsten, Senior Water Resources Engineer

To: Municipal Flood Coordinators (via email and fax)

Message: High Water Conditions Expected

According to current forecasts, temperatures are rising above freezing Friday and rain may start around noon and continue into late Saturday. Temperatures are expected to remain above freezing overnight on Friday and possibly reach highs of +5 degrees Celsius on Saturday before returning to below freezing late on Saturday. Temperatures will remain below freezing into the first part of next week.

Predicted rainfall amounts vary from 30 to 60 mm between Friday at noon and Saturday evening, when it is expected that precipitation will change over to snow.

The UTRCA expects that the forecast precipitation and milder temperatures will combine to melt much of the snowpack. A March 1 snow survey indicated that the snowpack contains an average of 30-50 mm of water.

The resulting runoff will cause watershed streams, rivers and ponds to rise, flooding low lying areas. Currently we expect water levels to increase over the weekend with peaks developing Sunday. The UTRCA is closely monitoring flows and conditions and will provide an update on Friday.

Ice conditions on frozen water bodies are unsafe. People are warned to stay away from ditches, streams, rivers and ponds as the combination of unstable ice, slippery banks and fast-flowing cold water is very dangerous. Parents are urged to keep children away from floodplain areas. Flood control reservoirs are also very hazardous.

Information on river flows and reservoir levels can be found on the UTRCA's website at www.thamesriver.on.ca in the "Thames River Flows" section. The UTRCA's flood control reservoirs at Wildwood (Trout Creek near St. Marys), Pittock (Thames River in Woodstock), and Fanshawe (North Thames River in London) all retain more than 95% of flood storage capacity.

Update: Update as conditions warrant.

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