



FLOOD WARNING for Lake Nipissing Shoreline (Callander and North Bay), La Vase River downstream of Lakeshore Dr, Parks Creek

Watershed Conditions Statement – Water Safety for the remainder of the watershed

Message Number: 2026-16

Issued: May 15, 2026, at 9:30 AM EDT

From: NBMCA Duty Officer, Angela Mills

FLOOD WARNING: notifies that flooding is imminent or already occurring in specific watercourses or municipalities. Municipalities and individuals should take action to deal with flood conditions. This may include road closures and evacuations.

Water Safety: indicates that high flows, unsafe banks, melting ice or other factors could be dangerous for users such as anglers, boaters, swimmers, children or pets. Flooding is not expected.

If you need assistance responding to a flood emergency, please contact your municipality. If you live in an unincorporated township, please contact the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) – North Bay District.

A **FLOOD WARNING** remains in effect for the Lake Nipissing Shoreline, La Vase River downstream of Lakeshore Dr, Parks Creek. The **FLOOD WARNING** for the Mattawa River downstream of Hurdman Dam has ended. A **Watershed Conditions Statement – Water Safety** has been issued for the North Bay-Mattawa watershed.

This Message is an update to the previous Message Number 2026-15 dated May 12, 2026.

Current Conditions:

Water level on Lake Nipissing at North Bay has peaked and is slowly declining. Daily average water level has decreased by 11 cm and is currently 5 cm above the maximum non-damage elevation. High water on Lake Nipissing directly impacts water levels in the La Vase River downstream of Lakeshore Dr and Parks Creek. The Parks Creek Backflood Control Structure is operational, keeping water levels lowered in the Parks Creek watershed. Eva Wardlaw Conservation Area is closed to the public while operations remain ongoing.

Upstream flows on the Ottawa River, which directly impacts water level in the lower reaches of the Mattawa River, have also been decreasing. Daily average water level has receded by 68 cm. Minor flooding may remain in the most low-lying and flood-prone areas. Mattawa Island Conservation Area remains closed due to flooding.

Water levels in other local watersheds have responded to recent rain and are normal to high for this time of year. Significant flooding has occurred through the spring freshet and floating or submerged debris is likely throughout the watershed and presents a hazard to boats.

Current water levels can be viewed by searching Station Names "Ottawa River", "Mattawa River", "Chippewa Creek", "La Vase River", "Wasi River", and "Lake Nipissing" at https://wateroffice.ec.gc.ca/search/real_time_e.html

Forecasted Conditions:

Minimal precipitation is forecast for the next four days. A rain event is forecast for Tuesday (May 19). Moderate winds are forecast to be predominantly from the southwest for the next two days.

The water level of Lake Nipissing has been declining, but conditions in North Bay and Callander may be influenced by wind effect, especially when winds are from the west or southwest. Public Services and Procurement Canada is forecasting water level on Lake Nipissing to continue to decline, however, this does not account for the potential impact of winds and the watershed is vulnerable to future precipitation events. The changes to water levels on Lake Nipissing depend on the amount of water flowing in from rivers, precipitation, and the amount of water flowing out through the control dams to the downstream French River. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-services->

[procurement/services/infrastructure-buildings/bridges-docks-dams/frenchriver-dam.html](https://www.nbmca.ca/procurement/services/infrastructure-buildings/bridges-docks-dams/frenchriver-dam.html)

As water levels decline on Lake Nipissing, water level in Parks Creek will slowly be increased over the coming week so that water level in the creek is comparable to water level in the lake in preparation for the operations at the Parks Creek Backflood Control Structure to wind down and stop log removal.

Spring runoff in the northern part of the watershed has been slowly receding but remains high. With recent rain, the water level in the Mattawa area is expected to stabilize before continuing to decline next week. Significant volume of water is yet to pass through the watershed and flows are expected to remain generally high and the watershed remains vulnerable to future heavy rainfall events, per the Ottawa River Regulating Committee. The Ottawa River water levels are managed by dams and reservoirs operated by provincial and federal governments. See the Ottawa River Regulation Planning Board website for latest data and forecasts <https://ottawariver.ca/>

Historic Flood Conditions:

Total precipitation March 1 to April 15 are at 50-year highs. Precipitation in March was 200% of normal and precipitation in April was 253% of normal.

For comparison, when river-based flooding occurred at Mattawa in May 2019, the water level on the Ottawa River at Mattawa reached a maximum level of 155.635 m, which is 77 cm higher than the observed peak on April 30, 2026. Comparing historic annual maximum daily average water level, peak 2026 level in Mattawa, was the tied for sixth highest (same as 1922) since 1918; 2019 was the fourth highest.

Additionally, when lake-based flooding occurred on Lake Nipissing in May 2019, the water level on Lake Nipissing at North Bay reached a maximum daily average level of 196.579 m, which is about 20.3 cm higher than the observed peak on May 5, 2026. Current water level is approximately equal to the 2024 peak elevation. Comparing historic annual maximum daily average water level, peak 2026 level for Lake Nipissing in North Bay was the sixth highest since 1933 (three years missing); 2019 was the fourth highest.

Risk:

A Flood Warning continues for the Lake Nipissing shoreline in North Bay and Callander and includes the La Vase River downstream of Lakeshore Dr and Parks Creek. Water level has been decreasing on Lake Nipissing; however, west and southwest winds enhance water level on the eastern side of Lake Nipissing and in Callander Bay. High winds over open water combined with high water level water will increase wave action and increase risk for shoreline erosion and damage. Operations are ongoing with the Parks Creek Backflood Control Structure to prevent high water levels on Lake Nipissing from impeding drainage from Parks Creek and surrounding urban areas. As Lake Nipissing water levels continue to decline, water levels in Parks Creek will gradually be increased over the next week to match those of the lake in preparation for the operations at the Parks Creek Backflood Control Structure to wind down and stop log removal.

Debris from spring floods may be floating or be submerged in area lakes and rivers, creating a hazard for boats.

With soils near saturation, especially in the northern parts of the Lake Nipissing and Upper Ottawa River watersheds, water levels could respond rapidly to significant rainfall. In Mattawa, water levels may fluctuate in response to upstream dam operations, however, water level is expected to continue trending downwards.

All residents, especially those in low-lying areas, are encouraged to monitor the conditions that are developing. Banks adjacent to rivers and creeks are very slippery at this time and when combined with fast moving cold open water, pose a serious hazard. The public is encouraged to keep children and pets away from watercourses and waterbodies.

Municipalities are encouraged to monitor water crossings for debris that may affect the movement of water through culverts and bridges. A close watch on local conditions and updated forecasts and warnings from Environment Canada is also recommended.


Staff at the North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority will continue to monitor weather and watershed conditions and update this message based on the changing weather and streamflow conditions.


This message will be in effect until (or updated before) Tuesday, May 19, 2026, at 4:00 PM EDT.

See also the Ministry of Natural Resources – North Bay District local bulletins for areas outside the North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority, including for the Ottawa River <https://www.lioapplications.lrc.gov.on.ca/webapps/swmc/flood-forecasting-and-warning-program/>


Terminology: Notification Levels

WATERSHED CONDITIONS STATEMENT: general notices of potential flooding or other conditions that pose a safety risk. There are two kinds of statements:


 **Water Safety:** indicates that high flows, unsafe banks, melting ice or other factors could be dangerous for users such as anglers, boaters, swimmers, children or pets. Flooding is not expected.

 **Flood Outlook:** gives early notice of the potential for flooding based on weather forecasts calling for heavy rain, snow melt, high wind or other conditions that could lead to high runoff, cause ice jams, lakeshore flooding or erosion.

FLOOD WATCH

 **FLOOD WATCH:** notifies that the potential for flooding exists within specific watercourses and municipalities. Municipalities, emergency services and individual landowners in flood-prone areas should prepare.

FLOOD WARNING

 **FLOOD WARNING:** notifies that flooding is imminent or already occurring in specific watercourses or municipalities. Municipalities and individuals should take action to deal with flood conditions. This may include road closures and evacuations.

MAP: North Bay – Mattawa Watershed

