



**LOWER TRENT**  
CONSERVATION

# PRESS RELEASE

*Working with Local Communities to Protect our Natural Environment*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 4, 2020

## Low Water Condition - Level I

After a very dry May, June and July, a series of intense storms have passed through the region and deposited significant rainfall during the month of August. Lower Trent Conservation has downgraded the Low Water Condition to Level I (minor drought) for the Lower Trent Conservation watershed, an area stretching from Grafton to Quinte West and from Lake Ontario to Rice Lake. This replaces the previous declaration of a Level II Low Water Condition made on August 7, 2020. This decision is based on the 3-month precipitation indicators in our local watershed and flow measurements in two of our nine streams that we monitor.

Under a Level I Low Water Condition, residents, businesses, industries, and municipalities are asked to voluntarily reduce their water use by 10%. Lower Trent Conservation encourages everyone to use water wisely and apply water conservation measures. Non-essential water uses should be suspended until natural water supplies recover. Those who hold a *Permit to Take Water* from the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change are asked to reduce their water taking by 10% as well.

Residents can help conserve water by using rain barrels to capture rain for watering lawns and gardens, limiting vehicle washing, etc. Lower Trent Conservation staff urge rural residents to be wary of their water use. Water is a precious resource – continued wise use of water is encouraged now and always. Municipalities that source water from Lake Ontario or the Bay of Quinte have access to a more sustainable water supply. The delivery of water to residents on these systems is not impacted by current conditions.

If water supply on private systems becomes low or dry, well owners are encouraged to review the Ontario Government's drought publication for managing wells (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/managing-your-water-well-times-water-shortage>). Those in need of bulk potable water supply should check with their local municipality for availability and information on private water haulers.

The June to August 3-month rainfall totals recorded by Environment Canada at Trenton was 178 millimetres, which is 77 percent of normal precipitation for this time of year (220 mm). The total precipitation for the month of August was 110 mm, which is 151% of the normal 72 mm. A 1-month or 3-month precipitation below 80 percent is the trigger for Level I Low Water. Monthly streamflows in most of our local creeks are above the 70% of the Lowest Average Summer Month (LASM) flows for these creeks, which is a trigger for Level I Low Water. However, Rawdon Creek (in Centre Hastings and Stirling-Rawdon) and Butler Creek (in Brighton) are exhibiting flows that trigger Level I Low Water Conditions (63% and 67% respectively). These two creeks provide a trigger for Level I Low Water Conditions but five of the nine creeks that are monitored are well above the LASM flows (>100%).

Droughts can cause many severe impacts on the environment and communities including:

- Water shortages for human consumption, industrial, business and agriculture use
- Decline of water quality
- Increase in wildfires
- Increases in insect infestations and plant disease

Following lower than average precipitation and low water levels in 1998, the Ontario government developed the Ontario Low Water Response program to ensure the province was prepared for future low water conditions. The response plan was developed to help coordinate and support local response in the event of a drought. There are three levels of Low Water Conditions with Level I being the least severe and Level III being the most severe.

Conservation Authority staff will continue to monitor conditions and report new information as it becomes available. To learn more about Ontario's Low Water Response program visit our website at [www.LTC.on.ca](http://www.LTC.on.ca). Residents can report any low water observations using the Low Water Reporting Form on our website.

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