



## How Low Water Levels Affect You

In recent years, southwestern and eastern Ontario have experienced extended periods of low rainfall and high temperatures. These weather conditions have resulted in some of the lowest lake and river levels and driest soils recorded for several decades.

Low water affects people using water from any source including:

- Municipal sources
- Private wells
- Lakes, rivers or ponds

All uses (home, industrial, agricultural, recreational etc.) are affected by low water conditions. These include:

- Watering crops, livestock
- Drinking water
- Other domestic uses
- Business/industrial
- Fire fighting
- Boating/fishing/swimming
- And many more



## For More Information see:

### Ontario Low Water Response:

- Response plan  
[www.mnr.gov.on.ca/MNR/water/publications/OLWR\\_2003.pdf](http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/MNR/water/publications/OLWR_2003.pdf)
- Low water conditions reports, information and maps  
[www.mnr.gov.on.ca/mnr/water/p774.html](http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/mnr/water/p774.html)

### Best Management Practices:

- Water conservation tips in and around the home  
[www.ene.gov.on.ca/cons/3780-e.pdf](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/cons/3780-e.pdf)
- Managing your water well in times of shortage  
[www.ene.gov.on.ca/cons/3784e.pdf](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/cons/3784e.pdf)
- How to prepare for irrigation during water shortages  
[www.omaf.gov.on.ca](http://www.omaf.gov.on.ca)
- Water conservation tips for industry  
[www.ene.gov.on.ca/cons/3781-e.pdf](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/cons/3781-e.pdf)



# Ontario Low Water Response



*Working together  
to manage low water*



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Ontario

Building Strong Communities



## Water Use and Supply in Ontario

Fresh water is a natural resource crucial to the economic and environmental well being of Ontario. Water supports almost all aspects of human activity including health, industrial development and recreation.

Historically, periods of dry weather and low water levels or drought were relatively uncommon in Ontario occurring once every 10-15 years. However, recent studies on changing weather patterns indicate that low water levels may become more common, as the province's demand for water steadily increases.

This pamphlet is designed to provide an introduction to the Ontario Low Water Response plan.

## Water Response Teams

Ontario Low Water Response (OLWR) is a strategy for local water users and those with an interest in water use to have input into the environmental, economic and social well being of their community. Water Response Teams are established in areas experiencing low water conditions so the local community can carry out actions to reduce and better manage water use. OLWR is intended to ensure that the province is prepared in case of low water conditions. The province provides overall direction while creating a partnership between provincial and local authorities to form a response to drought events.

By joining a Water Response Team you can help shape how your area will respond to low water situations. Your local Water Response Team can be reached by contacting your Conservation Authority or local Ministry of Natural Resources district office.



## Monitoring Low Water

In order to recognize and measure the severity of a low water condition, precipitation, stream flow and water levels are monitored regularly by conservation authorities and the Ministry of Natural Resources. Conditions are described as one of three increasingly severe levels of low water (see chart below). Water Response Teams will decide on an appropriate response that may include the actions suggested in the chart below. Other measures and conservation practices may be initiated.

|           | CONDITION:   | ACTION:  |
|-----------|--|--|
| Level I   | The potential for water supply problems is identified.                                       | Water users will be asked to voluntarily reduce their water consumption by 10%.  |
| Level II  | Minor water supply issues are encountered. There is the potential for major supply problems. | Water users will be asked to voluntarily reduce their water use by 20% or greater.   |
| Level III | Supply no longer meets demand. Social and economic impacts are experienced.                  | Voluntary measures have not produced the necessary response. Restrictions proposed by the Water Response Team and approved by the Government of Ontario will be put into action. |



## Your Participation is Important

Water Response Teams promote response plans and request all water users share the limited water. Municipal water use bylaws may be enacted at any stage of low water. Notices about reducing or better managing water use are typically posted in local newspapers, on Conservation Authority web sites and on local radio stations. Notices may also be mailed to residents by municipalities or to large water users by the Ministry of the Environment. The whole community is asked to participate in the actions requested by the local Water Response Team.

**All water users are faced with a challenge when water supplies become scarce. Working together with the Water Response Team, the stress on our water resources can be reduced.**

**Please join your community in protecting your water source.**

