

April 9, 2008

“STAY CLEAR! STAY SAFE” This Easter
OPP and OPG Warn that warmer weather means faster and higher water

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and Ontario Power Generation (OPG) are reminding people to use extreme care around Ontario waterways this Easter Weekend, particularly on rivers and lakes that are near hydroelectric stations and dams.

“Our message is: Stay Clear! Stay Safe!” said Al Reid, Plant Group Manager for OPG’s Central Hydro Plant Group in North Bay, which covers the Northern and South Central part of the province.

“Easter is the first long weekend so people start to think about being outdoors. Fishing and boating season is right around the corner and this is the perfect time to go over water safety plans with your friends and family,” he said.

OPP Sergeant Dave Moffatt added: “While there may still be ice and snow in some areas, warm weather will be here soon and that means more kids are anxious to play outside after a hard winter. Parents should teach their children proper water safety rules and never let them play unsupervised.”

Moffatt added that riverbanks may be slippery, so “the best advice is to Stay Clear! Stay Safe!”

Hydroelectric facilities in Central Hydro Plant Group are all remotely controlled by operators at the North Bay control centre, many kilometres away. To manage water flows, these operators open or close dams or start or stop generators as needed. This causes frequent and rapid changes in the water flow and levels often creating strong undertows, turbulence and sudden, powerful gushes of water moving downstream in what was once calm looking surface water.

All waterways where an OPG dam or hydroelectric station is located have well-positioned warning signs, buoys, fences, booms and barriers.

“They are there for the public’s safety and to let everyone know that the areas around the signs are dangerous, so Stay Clear! Stay Safe!,” added Jeff West, OPG’s Health and Safety Advisor for Central Hydro Plant Group.

OPG offers the public a number of educational materials on water safety around dams and hydroelectric stations including a brochure, a DVD for adults and an educational interactive computer game for children. The OPP and OPG also have a television ad that warns people to stay clear, and stay safe near hydroelectric dams and stations. You can view the ad, or request free educational materials by visiting www.opg.com.

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For more information contact:

OPG MEDIA CONTACT

Media Desk -- 1-877-592-4008 or 416-592-4008

OPP MEDIA CONTACT

Sgt Dave Moffatt
Marine Programs
Ontario Provincial Police
Off: 705 329-6125
Cell: 705 644-1097