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MAKE THIS EASTER WEEKEND A SAFE ONE ON AND NEAR THE WATER
Water levels expected to be near normal this year following 2010 drought

Ontario Power Generation (OPG) is reminding people to Stay Clear and Stay Stay Safe this Easter Weekend. Winter's last gasp means spring freshet is delayed in some regions, which means faster than normal water can be expected near OPG's dams.

"The water this time of year is very cold and riverbanks are slippery. The best thing to do is keep a safe distance and make sure your Easter Weekend is a safe one," said OPG's John Murphy, Executive Vice President – Hydro.

Murphy noted that the company was expecting most lakes and rivers it manages will see normal water levels this year.

"We've got good snow pack in some regions, others had more than 30 cms of snow on the weekend and we're getting good rainfall too. The information we've seen so far indicates that 2011 will be a normal year for precipitation. This is a sharp contrast to 2010 when we had record droughts resulting in many reservoirs having lower than normal water levels," he said.

Murphy explained that each year OPG lowers the levels in the reservoirs and lakes feeding into its power dams. This is done in anticipation of spring rains and snow melts.

"People coming up to their cottage or camp may see some low water at this time of year but if we get normal freshet and rain then levels will be back to normal averages," Murphy added. He also noted that many lakes managed by OPG are in fact reservoirs that were created for power generation.

OPG manages the water levels and flows on many rivers and lakes based on water management plans approved by the Ministry of Natural Resources.. These plans are established after consultation with stakeholders, and factor in such things as water levels and water flows for fish and wildlife, recreational and commercial use, and downstream users such as water treatment plants and power generation.

“It’s always a balancing act. We manage what nature provides us and try to make sure everyone gets their share of this valuable resource,” Murphy said.

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