



Town of Iroquois Falls

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Media Release Update on Declaration of Emergency

Monday, November 20th, 2023

On May 26, 2023, an emergency was declared, due to unprecedented high-water levels at Nellie Lake, in accordance with the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, s.4.(1). In response to this, the Town of Iroquois Falls worked closely with the Porcupine Health Unit, The MNRF and The Provincial Emergency Operations Center to provide short- and long-term resolutions.

To support the assessment of water damage to property and infrastructure, and to limit increased damage as the cooler temperatures approached, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) implemented plans to reduce Nellie Lake water levels. Pumping contractors arrived on site August 29th, 2023, to begin the process of reducing water levels.

On Friday, November 17th, 2023, there was approximately a 60 cm reduction in the water levels since pumping began late summer. Based on the advice from the MNRFs engineering team and the pumping contractor, the pumping operations at Nellie Lake have been discontinued. The MNRF has begun to see very low water levels on other parts of the lake and want to ensure that the lake is safe for winter recreational activities. The MNRF intend to keep the pumps in place for a short period, to ensure they can respond to any usual or unexpected increases before the lake freezes. Following this, it will take 7-10 days for the contractor to remove the pumping equipment.

In terms of Phase 2, which is the excavation of the channel, the survey work has been completed and procurement for services are in place. The MNRF are waiting on the final engineering design from their consultant, however work is still expected to take place this winter and the community will be engaged through the environmental approvals process.

The Porcupine Health Unit (PHU) is lifting the precautionary boil water advisory at Nellie Lake as a result of the stoppage in water pumping. Even though the boil water advisory is no longer in place, please be reminded that all surface water from lakes and streams needs to be treated before use. Water testing will continue to be available through the Ontario Public Health Laboratory and should be part of the regular maintenance of your well, especially if you notice any changes, colours, or odours in your drinking water.

Sewage system impacts may not be immediate and could appear weeks or months later. Continue to complete regular maintenance on your system and watch for signs of sewage system failure, such as:

- Household drains slow down,
- Toilets back up,
- Sewage smells in the yard,
- Grass over the bed is unusually green, and
- Sewage ponding on the surface of the leaching bed.

Helpful information can be found in the SepticSmart! booklet ([Septic systems | ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca/septic-smart)). The PHU will continue to be available to assist residents on these potential issues and are available by calling 1-800-461-1818 Monday to Friday.

The Disaster Recovery Assistance Program has been activated and residents have until **March 13, 2024**, to apply for assistance through this program. To determine if you are eligible for the assistance through the program you may visit the Government of Ontario site at [Ontario.ca/page/apply-recovery-assistance](https://ontario.ca/page/apply-recovery-assistance). Residents can also send an email to disasterassistance@ontario.ca or call 1-877-822-0116 for more information.

The Town of Iroquois Falls wishes to express our sincere gratitude to all members of the community, the Porcupine Health Unit, our Ministry partners and the Provincial Emergency Operations Center for their continued support and collaboration. We will continue to monitor this situation, as we work together towards short and long-term resolutions.

Tory Delaurier, Mayor of Iroquois Falls

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