

Tudor and Cashel respond to CVCA water level report

By Mike Riley

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In a posting on their township website and Facebook page on June 22, Tudor and Cashel Township addressed a low water (drought) response program report issued by the Crowe Valley Conservation Authority outlining the various water levels, and that currently the township was around, but not quite at a level one, and that they hoped they continued to get precipitation to keep them out of that level. They also recommended that their residents be mindful of water usage and consumption throughout the summer.

According to the low water (drought) response program report, the staff at the CVCA are monitoring the water conditions and at this time say that the CVCA watershed has not entered into a Level 1 drought status, but the region is hovering close to it. With the dry conditions and the only recent precipitation, they are asking residents within the watershed to be "water wise" and reduce water usage voluntarily if they are able to. They say this will be especially important if the anticipated precipitation over the next week to 10 days does not materialize. CVCA staff will make a decision at the end of June whether to move the area into a Level 1 status after looking at this month's data and determining if the water levels at that time merit making this move.

The CVCA low water (drought) response program's purpose is to approach water management in a coordinated way at the provincial and local levels of government.

While the Ontario government gives guidance through policies and guidelines, central information storage, analysis and support in emergency situations, the CVCA, on the local level, monitors water levels, collects data and delivers programs to help out the Crowe Valley Watershed Water Response Team, which coordinates water management agency activities and releases information, analysis and response to water events, especially in the case of a severe drought. It is made up of representatives from a variety of sectors within the Crowe Valley watershed.

The CVCA water levels are listed as level one to three. Level one is instituted if a watershed has its 18-month rainfall go below 80 per cent of average, its three-month rainfall goes below 80 per cent, a watershed has a monthly average stream flow that falls below 100 per cent in the spring or 70 per cent of the minimum summer month flow. If that happens, users will be asked to reduce their water use by 10 per cent.

For a level two declaration, a watershed must have its 18-month rainfall go below 60 per cent of average, have its three-month precipitation fall below 60 per cent of average, a watershed has its monthly average stream flow fall below 70 per cent in the spring and 50 per cent of the minimum summer month flow. If Level two is declared users will be asked to reduce their water use by 20 per cent.

For Level three, a watershed must have its 18-month rainfall go below 40 per cent of average, its three-month rainfall fall below 40 per cent of average, a watershed has one month rainfall fall below 40 per cent, its monthly average stream flow falls below 50 per cent in the spring and 30 per cent of the minimum summer month flow. If that happens, users will be required to reduce their water use by an additional 20 per cent, and the province will put water usage criteria into place.

Nancy Carrol, the clerk and treasurer, said the township's role in these measures is also through communication and they will be encouraging residents to make changes in their water usage practices and encourage water conservation.

"Tudor and Cashel will suggest making small efforts such as fixing a dripping faucet or shutting an outdoor hose off when it is not in use," she says.

"These types of measures can save significant amounts of water over an extended period of time."