

Island Lake experiencing high water levels after summer floods

By Jasen Obermeyer

This summer was certainly one for the record books, with cooler than normal days, and almost never-ending rain. Due to this, Orangeville and Dufferin County as a whole experienced two significant rainfall events that raised the water levels at Island Lake Conservation Area.

The conservation area experienced the complete opposite from last year's very low water levels which at one point caused the northern section of the lake to be off-limits to motorboats. This year, the conservation received the highest water levels in June since record-keeping began in 2005.

Courtney Alexander, Credit Valley Conservation's (CVC) water resource specialist, says that during the June 23 flooding, the water levels reached a record peak of 412.27 metres above sea level. During that major rainfall, it resulted in water levels reaching 10 centimetres above normal, "which may sound like a small amount, but that's a lot of water going over that time."

During the second heavy rainfall on August 1, Island Lake's water levels reached 412.19 metres above sea level.

Mr. Alexander says they saw a gradual decline on the crest of the dam by June 28, while the second rainfall saw a decline by August 4.

He says that despite closing the conservation area for a few days during the "100-year flood" incidents, "this was just precautionary," and "no area of our conservation parks or the area the public would use was under threat."

Mr. Alexander says they weren't aware of the precipitation depths they would get, due to "insufficient warning from weather forecasters," as well as the intensity of the rainfall occurring over "a short time."

He says that the water levels fluctuate quickly "because we have a constant outflow," and depend on the amount, or lack, of precipitation.

At the time of the interview, Island Lake's water level was 411.18 metres, down a full metre from the crest. Mr. Alexander says that at this time last year they were in drought conditions, and now the water levels are "higher than last year, but certainly within the range that's ideal for lake activities."