

BC Environment

River Forecast Centre

Water Supply and Streamflow Conditions:

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Following the accumulation of above normal snowpacks throughout much of the province over the past winter, and a cool and damp spring, many rivers in the province are currently experiencing normal to above normal streamflow conditions for this time of year. The exceptions to this are in the Okanagan, Kettle and Nicola basins, and in the central and south-eastern interior, where normal to below-normal snowpack accumulation and/or drier than normal weather during June and July has produced normal to below normal streamflow conditions.

As of May 1st, winter snow water accumulations were above normal for most areas of the province (Fraser, Nechako, Thompson, Peace, Skeena, Kootenay, Columbia, South Coast). Coupled with generally cooler weather during the spring and above-normal precipitation during June and July, streamflow throughout the northern and south coast, Vancouver Island and the northern Interior is currently normal to above normal.

The Okanagan, Kettle and Similkameen basins experienced below normal snow accumulation this winter; therefore, despite normal to above normal precipitation in June and July, streamflow in this region ranges from normal to below normal, with several rivers at or approaching the 5-year return period low flow level. The south-eastern region of the province has received below-normal precipitation over the summer and has experienced an extremely hot and dry July, with precipitation in Cranbrook, Castlegar, and Sparwood only 48%, 19% and 5% of normal, respectively. Consequently, streamflow in this region is currently below normal and generally near a 5-year return period low flow level. Despite above normal snow accumulation, the central interior has also experienced a relatively dry summer, with Prince George, Quesnel and Williams Lake receiving only 56%, 48% and 21% of July normal precipitation, respectively. As a result, streamflow throughout this region is decreasing and currently at or below normal.

There are currently no identified areas of water supply concern in British Columbia. However, the weather during the next few weeks will play a critical role in how water supply and streamflow conditions develop in watersheds throughout the province, particularly in the dry southern interior. Conditions can change quickly, particularly if the weather is warmer and drier than normal.

Water supply and streamflow conditions are being monitored closely by the B.C. River Forecast Centre. For further information and updates on information, please refer to the centre's webpage at: http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/rfc/river_forecast/water_supply.htm.

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