

BC Environment

River Forecast Centre

Water Supply and Streamflow Conditions:

Issued: September 7, 2007

Weather during July and August was highly variable, with relatively brief periods of warmth and sun scattered amongst periods of cool and damp conditions. In general, the northern two-thirds of the province and most of the coast received near normal or above normal rainfall over the last two months, while the southern one-third of the province (Thompson, Nicola, Okanagan, Columbia, Kootenay) received below normal rainfall. The southeast corner of the province has been the driest, receiving less than half the normal July and August rainfall.

As a result of the summer weather, streamflow conditions across the province are variable. Most rivers in northern B.C. and along the coast are generally at or above long-term median flows for early September. There are no water-supply concerns in these areas.

Rivers in the south and central Interior, however, are generally experiencing below normal streamflow conditions for the date. These include the Thompson, Nicola, Okanagan, Columbia and Kootenay basins, and eastern portions of the lower Fraser Valley. In most cases, gauged rivers are near five-year return period low flow levels (i.e., at levels they would experience one year in five, on average).

The Nicola River (above Nicola Lake), and Coldstream Creek and Whiteman Creek (both in the Okanagan) are all at notable low flows for early September (near 10-year return period low flow levels). The Kettle River (near Westbridge and Grand Forks) is experiencing extremely low flow conditions for the date. It is currently at a level it would experience only one year in 20.

The cooler weather and reduced hours of daylight in autumn usually result in reduced evaporation loss of water, allowing river flow conditions to stabilize. However, rainfall in southern portions of the province during the next few weeks will be necessary to bring streamflows in the region to near normal levels.

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: www.env.gov.bc.ca/rfc/river_forecast/water_supply.htm.