

BC Environment

River Forecast Centre

Water Supply and Streamflow Conditions:

Issued: October 10, 2007

British Columbia has transitioned into fall weather patterns, with temperatures and precipitation generally near normal for September and early October for most of the province. Vancouver Island and the South Coast were somewhat wetter than normal, as a result of two significant frontal storms over the last two weeks. This follows the generally drier than normal weather (in the south and central Interior) during July and August. A period of cool weather in late September and early October, where the freezing elevation through the south and central interior fell to approximately 1300 metres, has allowed snow to begin to accumulate on the ground in many areas.

Streamflow conditions across the province remain variable. Most rivers in northern B.C. and along the South Coast and Central Coast are generally above long-term median flows for early October. There are no water-supply concerns in these areas.

Rivers in the south and central Interior, however, continue to experience below normal streamflow conditions for the date, although conditions have improved during September and early October. These include the Thompson, Nicola, Okanagan, Columbia and Kootenay basins, and eastern portions of the lower Fraser Valley. In many 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). Flow conditions are substantially better than they were in early October 2006, when much of the central interior was experiencing drought. This is particularly so for the North Thompson and South Thompson rivers.

The Nicola River (above Nicola Lake), and the Tulameen River (at Princeton) remain at notable low flows for early October (near 10-year return period low flow levels). Flow on the Kettle River (near Westbridge and Grand Forks) has improved over the past few weeks, following some frontal rain, but is still well below normal for the date. It is currently at a level it would experience only one year in 10.

The cooler weather and reduced hours of daylight of autumn has resulted in reduced evaporation loss of water, allowing river flow conditions to stabilize. Rainfall along the South Coast and south and central Interior has improved streamflow conditions in those areas. In addition, most of British Columbia has transitioned over the past few weeks into seasonally normal weather patterns, of cool temperatures and periods of precipitation resulting from frontal storms. Snow is beginning to accumulate in the mountains. As a result, we do not anticipate the development of significant water-supply issues in B.C. for the remainder of the fall season.

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.