

BC Environment

River Forecast Centre

Water Supply and Streamflow Conditions:

Issued: November 9, 2007

The weather across British Columbia during the late summer and early fall was variable, but generally had below normal rainfall in the southern one-third of the province. As a result, river levels in those areas were below normal from mid-July to late September. Beginning in early October, autumn weather settled in. October was generally damp, with above normal precipitation across much of the province resulting from two or three Pacific frontal storms. The rainfall, combined with cool, autumn weather and reduced evaporation demand, has resulted in significant improvement in stream flow conditions across the province. Most gauged rivers are at or above long-term median flows for early November.

The winter snowpack has begun to accumulate in the mountains throughout the province. In general, areas above about 2,000 metres elevation have snow accumulations. In some areas, particularly the Upper Fraser, Upper Columbia, and northern portions of the Thompson, the early season snow accumulations are significant, and are above their levels from this date last winter.

The wet October and recovery of rivers to seasonally normal or above normal water levels, followed by the early accumulation of significant mountain snowpack is positive, providing a favourable outlook for stream flow conditions in 2008. In addition, British Columbia is currently being affected by a mild to moderate La Niña, related to persistence in the pattern of colder than normal eastern equatorial Pacific sea-surface temperatures over the past 3 months. Historically, La Niña conditions have favoured cool and wet (i.e., snowy) winters in British Columbia. There are no water-supply concerns at this time, and there are not anticipated to be concerns developing over the winter period.

The first major Pacific frontal storm of the “coastal fall flood season” pushed onto the Central Coast over the October 21-24 period, producing high flows (near 3-4 year return period levels) in the Bella Coola River and Salloomt River at Hagensborg. Flooding occurred in the Hagensborg area following an avulsion on the Salloomt River channel. The forecasting of fall-winter floods along coastal areas of B.C. will be the focus of activity of the River Forecast Centre until late January, when the “coastal fall flood season” usually ends.