BC Environment
River Forecast Centre

Water Supply and Streamflow Conditions:
Issued: June 12, 2008

Following an unseasonably cold April and cool first two weeks of May, snowmelt began in earnest over the Victoria Day weekend in mid-May. Five days of well above normal temperatures during May 16-20 triggered rapid snowmelt and produced rapidly rising water levels in rivers throughout B.C. High water levels and flooding occurred on many rivers and streams, particularly in the south and central Interior, in the Mt. Currie - Pemberton area, and elsewhere. Following the hot spell, near or slightly above normal temperatures for the remainder of May maintained the progress of snowmelt. Light and/or scattered rain showers during late May augmented the snowmelt, and helped keep river levels high.

Snow conditions at the end of the spring season are highly variable within and among basins. In general, low elevation snow has all melted, and mid elevation snow is either substantially depleted or entirely melted in many areas. Substantial high elevation snow remains, and will continue to melt through the remainder of June and into July. In some basins (Okanagan, Similkameen, Nicola, mid Fraser) it is largely only high elevation snow that remains. In others (upper Fraser, lower Fraser, Peace, West Kootenay, and Vancouver Island) significant mid and high elevation snow remains.

Outlook

The spring 2008 snow conditions will produce near normal or slightly above normal runoff volumes in major rivers as the snow melts from now through to July. The Peace River basin, rivers on Vancouver Island, and many coastal rivers, are likely to experience above normal spring and summer runoff volumes. The snow conditions this year provide a very positive outlook for water-supply conditions for most of the province, for community water-supply, instream flows, and groundwater and aquifer recharge.

The Okanagan and Similkameen continue to be forecast for below normal spring and summer runoff (85-90% of normal). These arid basins have potential to experience water-supply challenges this year, particularly if late spring and summer weather should become hot and dry.