BC Environment
River Forecast Centre

Water Supply and Streamflow Conditions
Issued: September 1, 2009

With the exception of the northwest corner of the province, over the past 5 days a high pressure ridge brought sun and above normal temperatures for most areas of BC. In the southern Interior, the only precipitation was recorded early Saturday morning in the Tulameen/Similkameen valley, and again last night in a larger area including Kamloops, the southern Okanagan, and the Kettle valley. As a result, river levels have continued to decline or remained stable over the past week. Areas of concern are:

- **Extremely Dry** (near or below previously recorded low for the date)
  - Lower Thompson River (Spences) and tributaries (Upper Nicola and Coldwater rivers)
  - South Thompson and tributaries (upper Salmon River (Falkland), Shuswap River (Lumby and Enderby), and Chase Creek)
  - Vaseux, Mission, and Whiteman creeks in the Okanagan
  - Oyster and Cruikshank rivers on Vancouver Island
- **Dry to Very Dry** (10-25 year return period low flow)
  - South Thompson – lower Salmon River near Salmon Arm, Seymour and Eagle rivers; North Thompson and tributaries; Horsefly River; Camp and Trepanier creeks, and likely other ungauged rivers in the Okanagan; West Kettle and Kettle rivers; Tulameen River; eastern Vancouver Island

Areas of Low Flow Concern:
Thompson Basin: The only precipitation recorded in the basin during the past week were showers near Kamloops (3-6 mm) and in the Nicola valley (<2 mm) overnight. All of the gauged streams continue to be below or well below their median flows to date.

- The upper Nicola River and Coldwater River (Brookmere and Merritt) continue to be at or near record low flows.
- The mainstem of the lower Thompson River at Spences Bridge is also at a record low flow.
- The Salmon River at Falkland, Chase Creek, and Shuswap River near Lumby and Enderby remain at or near record low flow for the date.
- Other rivers in the South Thompson basin (Eagle River, Seymour River, lower Salmon River near Salmon Arm) are at 10-20 year return period low flows.
- The North Thompson River at McLure and Blue River are between 10 and 25-year return period low flows.

Upper and Mid-Fraser Basin: No significant precipitation was recorded in the region over the past week.

- The upper Fraser River mainstem and its tributaries have remained stable at 5-10 year return period low flows.
- The Horsefly River has dropped to below a 20-year return period low flow.

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Similkameen River Basin: A drought was declared in May 2009 for Osoyoos Lake by the International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control, based on a forecast of well below normal runoff for the Similkameen River. The precipitation received in the basin on August 28-29th (1-7 mm and again August 31st (7-16 mm) has stabilized water levels on the Tulameen and Similkameen rivers.

- The Tulameen River continues to be at 10-25-year return period low flows.
- The lower Similkameen River is stable at a 5-year return period low flow.

Okanagan River and Kettle River Basin: The south Okanagan basin received some light rainfall overnight (1-4 mm), and some upslope areas of the western Monashee Mountains received more. However, water levels on most of the gauged streams in the Okanagan continue to have low flow concerns.

- Vaseux Creek (in the southern Okanagan, east of Oliver), Mission Creek (Kelowna) and Whiteman Creek (northwest Okanagan) continue to be at or near record low flows.
- Camp and Trepanier creeks (west Okanagan valley) continue to be below a 10-year return period low flow.
- The Kettle and West Kettle rivers are at 10-year return period low flows.

South Coast: No significant precipitation was recorded on the south coast for the past week. However, there have been no major changes in river levels for most streams, with the exception of:

- The Clowhom Rivers has improved from its near record low flow last week to between median and the lower quartile flow for the date.
- The Chilliwack River above Slesse Creek has dropped to below a 10-year return period low flow.

Vancouver Island: With the exception of some showers on west and north Vancouver Island, there was no significant precipitation recorded during the past week. River levels remain unchanged from the previous week.

- The Cruikshank River (Comox Lake) and Oyster River are near or at new record low flows.
- The Browns and Chemainus rivers are at 10-20 year return period low flows.
- Regulated rivers such as the Englishman, Nanaimo and Cowichan rivers have higher flows relative to other rivers, and are near their median flows for the date as a result of releases from storage.

Outlook:

The current weather forecast for the central and southern Interior is for above normal temperatures to continue until Wednesday. Environment Canada has issued a Severe Thunderstorm Watch for the southern Interior, which has the potential to bring locally high amounts of precipitation this afternoon and evening. More convective precipitation is forecast for Wednesday, spreading northward into the central Interior. By Thursday, the high pressure

system will have moved to the east and will be replaced by an upper trough which will bring some clouds, showers, and cooler temperatures slightly below normal. Cloudy, cool conditions with the potential for showers will continue over the long weekend. On the South Coast, temperatures have already dropped to near normal and by Thursday will be even cooler (upper teens) with rain on Friday, and clouds and showers over the remainder of the long weekend. River levels throughout southern BC are expected to remain stable or increase, depending on the location and amount of precipitation received. However, given their current low levels, they are still expected to remain below normal in comparison to previous years to date.