

### Flood Warning/Watch Downgraded

12Jan2009 3:00PM

#### High Streamflow Advisory: East Vancouver Island, including:

- **Puntledge River (Courtenay)**
- **Tsolum River (Courtenay)**
- **Nanaimo River**
- **Ash River**

The Flood Warnings and Flood Watches in place for portions of Vancouver Island are downgraded to a High Streamflow Advisory. Significant rainfall on Vancouver Island largely ended near midnight, with most rivers rising to peak levels between 1AM and 8AM this morning. The freezing elevation has dropped from overnight, but it remains near 1500 metres and some snowmelt is continuing.

All gauged rivers on Vancouver Island are now falling, with many dropping below warning level. Rivers in the Courtenay area remain high, with the Puntledge River and Browns River in the area affected by releases from the Comox Lake reservoir. Now that the flood peaks are receding, BC Hydro is increasing releases from the Comox Lake reservoir to increase storage capacity in the reservoir.

The **Tsolum River at Courtenay** has dropped 1 metre from its peak level, and is currently at a discharge of 146 cubic metres per second ( $\text{m}^3/\text{s}$ ). This is slightly below the 2-year return period discharge.

The **Puntledge River at Courtenay** peaked at  $540 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$  at midnight, fell to  $180 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$  at 8AM, and has risen again to  $280 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$  as of 1PM as a result of releases from the Comox Lake reservoir. This is near a 2 year return period level.

The **Browns River at Courtenay**: The water level gauge appears to have suffered damage; however, BC Hydro reports the current discharge as  $50 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$ . This is well below warning level.

The **Oyster River** (between Courtenay and Campbell River) has dropped 0.5 metre from its peak level, and has a current discharge of  $170 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$  at 1AM. This is now below warning level.

The **Cruikshank River** (Courtenay area) is falling and has a current discharge of  $180 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$ . This is now below warning level.

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A **High Streamflow Advisory** means that river levels are rising or expected to rise rapidly, but that no major flooding is expected. Minor flooding in low-lying areas is possible.

A **Flood Watch** means that river levels are rising and will approach or may exceed bankfull. Flooding of areas adjacent to affected rivers may occur.

A **Flood Warning** means that river levels have exceeded bankfull or will exceed bankfull imminently, and that flooding of areas adjacent to the rivers affected will result.

# BC Environment

## River Forecast Centre

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The **Nanaimo River** is falling but remains high. It has dropped 0.9 metre from its peak level, and has a current discharge of 510 m<sup>3</sup>/s, which is at the 2-year return period level.

The **Englishman River** (Parksville) is falling and has a current discharge of 125 m<sup>3</sup>/s. This is well below warning level.

The **Chemainus River** is falling and has a current discharge of 170 m<sup>3</sup>/s. This is well below warning level.

The **Cowichan River** (Duncan) is falling but remains high. It has dropped 0.15 metre from its peak level, and has a current discharge of 230 m<sup>3</sup>/s, below warning level.

The **Ash River** (north of Port Alberni) is falling but remains high. It has dropped to a current discharge of 290 m<sup>3</sup>/s, which is near a 3-4 year return period.

Rivers (with the exception of the Puntledge and Browns rivers, affected by Comox Lake releases) will continue receding today, Wednesday and into Thursday. Water levels will remain high, however, as the accumulated rainfall and snowmelt drains from their respective basin areas. The forecast from Environment Canada is for only light and/or scattered rain today and tomorrow, with temperatures cooling. However, another warm and wet frontal system is forecast to push across Vancouver Island again Thursday PM and Friday, which may cause rivers to rise again on Friday.

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