

BC Environment

River Forecast Centre

Central Coast Update – Flood Warning: Bella Coola River 25Sep2010 6:30PM

The Flood Warning for the Central Coast is continuing. This is in effect for the Bella Coola, Salloomt and Atnarko rivers, other tributaries of the Bella Coola River, and other rivers and streams on the Central Coast.

The intense frontal system has just started to move southward from the Central Coast region. Total precipitation amounts for the past 24 hours range from 193 to 224 mm since the start of the event at noon Friday. Extensive flooding has been reported, and Highway 20 has been closed due to washouts and rock slides. For the latest road information, go to <http://www.drivebc.ca/>.

The most recent water level reading on the Bella Coola River (WSC 08FB007) at 5:40PM is 5.29 m, which is estimated to be a flow of $880 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$. This level is at a 50-year return period, and is the highest recorded flow at this station in 45 years of record. The previous recorded peak flow was $828 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$ in 1968. The Salloomt River (WSC 08FB004) has continued to hover near a 10-year return period flow of $135 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$. Water level has ranged between 2.2 and 2.3 m since 8:30AM this morning. The last water level reading on the Atnarko River (WSC 08FB006) at 9:40AM was 3.6 m with a flow of approximately $340 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1}$, which is the highest recorded flow in 45 years of record. There have been no subsequent data transmissions from this station and it is suspected to have been damaged by the record flow.

Rainfall intensities at some climate stations in the Bella Coola valley have eased slightly as the system moves to the south. The Environment Canada forecast for this evening is for showers (at times heavy), and an additional rainfall total of 10-20 mm. By Sunday morning, the weather will be cloudy with a 40% chance of showers. By late Sunday evening, another system is forecast to arrive bringing an additional 40 mm of total precipitation for overnight Sunday and Monday. This next system is not expected to stall over the Central Coast region. River levels are expected to continue to rise or remain near their peaks until this evening, before beginning to recede overnight.

The River Forecast Centre will continue to monitor conditions and will provide an update Sunday morning, or earlier if conditions warrant.

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.