

BC Environment

River Forecast Centre

Central Coast Update – Flood Warning: Bella Coola River 26Sep2010 12:00PM

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 that stalled over the Central Coast on Friday and Saturday has shifted to the south. Heavy rainfall changed to showers in the early evening, and the showers ended around midnight. Total precipitation amounts in the Bella Coola valley for the event ranged from 180-240 mm over 36 hours. 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/>.

With the rainfall ending last night, river levels began to fall. The Salloomt River (WSC 08FB004) dropped from its peak of 2.25 m in the mid-afternoon, to 2.0 m by 11 PM. The most recent water level reading at the Salloomt River is 1.67 m, with a flow of $72 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$. This is below the 2-year return period flow of $84 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$. The data from the Bella Coola River above Burnt Bridge (WSC 08FB007) indicates that it reached its peak of 5.29 m early Saturday evening. At this water level the flow is estimated to be $915 \text{ m}^3\text{s}^{-1}$, which is a new peak record at this gauge. The data shows the water level receding slowly overnight, and local reports from the area confirm that the Bella Coola River is continuing to recede this morning.

The current weather in Bella Coola is sunny with cloudy periods. However, this reprieve from the rainfall will be brief. Environment Canada is forecasting the arrival of another frontal system this evening, bringing additional rain overnight tonight and Monday. Precipitation amounts are 25-30 mm tonight, and 40 mm tomorrow. Soil conditions on the Central Coast are saturated from the past 2 days of rain. River levels will begin to rise again quickly in response to this next system.

The River Forecast Centre will continue to monitor conditions and will provide an update this evening, 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.