BC Environment
River Forecast Centre

Water Supply and Streamflow Conditions:
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The River Forecast Centre says cool weather and rainfall in June in the southern half of the province has eased some of the water supply concerns that developed this spring in many communities.

Rivers in the southern Interior and on Vancouver Island are generally flowing at normal rates for this time of year. However, throughout much of northern B.C., streamflow conditions generally vary from below-normal to significantly below-normal.

The Ministry encourages British Columbians to conserve water this summer to protect water sources and help manage water demands.

Synopsis:

Rainfall during June has eased the water supply challenges earlier this year in many areas of B.C. as a result of the low winter snowpack and unusually warm winter temperatures. Natural streamflow conditions are now generally normal throughout most of southern B.C. A notable exception to this situation is the Fraser River, which is generally well below normal all along the river. In northern B.C., streamflow conditions vary from below normal to much-below normal. In some areas, current streamflow conditions are close to historical recorded minimums.

The Drought Level for the Southern Interior and Vancouver Island is generally Level 1 (normal). The Drought Level for the Central Interior is generally Level 2 (dry). The Drought Level for northern rivers is generally Level 3 (very dry).

Weather:

June rainfall amounts were near normal in most areas of B.C. The Fort St. John area was a notable exception with June rainfall well below normal. The Cranbrook, Penticton and Terrace areas experienced above-normal June precipitation.

Current Snowpack:

Very little of the seasonal snowpack in B.C. remains to melt.

Streamflow Conditions:

In Northern B.C., river levels range from below normal to much-below-normal at present. In particular, the Stikine, Nass and Skeena Rivers are near record low levels for this time of year.

The Bulkley River is flowing at a below-normal rate at present.

The Peace River basin is also experiencing near record low streamflow levels. These conditions are primarily the result of the low seasonal snowpack accumulation this past winter, coupled with above-normal winter temperatures.

Flows along the Fraser River are generally much-below normal for this time of year. The Nechako and Quesnel Rivers are flowing at below-normal rates. The Chilcotin River is flowing at a normal rate at present.

In the Thompson River area, most streams are flowing at normal rates for this time of year. The exception is the North Thompson River, which is below normal at present. In the Okanagan area, most streams are normal for this time of year. The precipitation experienced in May and June has increased streamflow throughout the area.

In the Kootenay and Columbia areas, streamflow conditions are near normal for this time of year.

On Vancouver Island, some streams are still at above-normal levels as a result of significantly above-normal spring precipitation. Typically, streamflow levels in all parts of B.C. can be expected to recede during the summer months unless rainfall is above normal.

Water Supply Conditions:

Taking into account the existing streamflow and precipitation conditions, the Peace, Skeena and Nass River basins have now been classified as Drought Level 3 (very dry conditions). These conditions are expected to persist throughout the summer unless above normal rainfall occurs. Water conservation is urged. Water restrictions at the local level should be considered where appropriate, and drought management plans should be reviewed and implemented.

The upper Fraser and middle Fraser River areas, as well as the mid-coastal areas have been classified as Drought Level 2 (dry conditions). These conditions are expected to persist throughout the summer unless above-normal rainfall occurs. Voluntary conservation, as well as planning at the local level using tools such as drought management plans, should be considered.

All other areas of B.C. are now classified as Drought Level 1, or normal for this time of year.