Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
BC River Forecast Centre

UPDATE - Flood Watch: Bulkley River near Smithers
Issued: 31May2011 2:30 PM

The BC River Forecast Centre is **downgrading** the **Flood Warning** to a **Flood Watch** for:

- the Bulkley River through Quick, Smithers and downstream of Smithers

The BC River Forecast Centre is **ending** the **Flood Warning** for:

- the Bulkley River and tributaries near Houston.

River levels on the Bulkley River crested on Saturday in response to heavy rainfall on Friday, and on-going snowmelt. The Bulkley River at Houston (WSC 08EE003) is presently at 3.5 m, and has dropped 0.4 m since Saturday. The Bukley River at Quick (08EE004) is currently at a 10-year level at 2.43 m, and has dropped 0.27 m since Saturday. The Bulkley River near Smithers (08EE005) is at 5.20 m, and has dropped 0.25 m since Saturday.

Snow melt rates have been high within the region. At the Lu Lake automated snow pillow (near Houston), snow melt has been approximately 20mm/day for the past several days, and 61% of this year's snowpack has melted from that site (current snow water equivalent of the remaining snowpack is 169 mm). In the south-west region of the Bulkley River watershed, the Tsai Creek ASP has been recording 30-40 mm/day of snowmelt, with significant amounts of snow water still available (1371 mm). Overview flights conducted by regional flood management staff indicate that snow line has been rising and is currently in the 1200-1300 m range. Snowpacks in the south-east portion of the Bulkley River (around Houston and tributaries) is dwindling. In the western portion of the Bulkley River watershed (west of Telkwa and Smithers) there is a greater amount of high elevation terrain, and significant snowpacks are still present.

Environment Canada is forecasting continued warm weather with chances of convective showers through the next few days.

At Houston, river levels are expected to continue to recede, as the region appears to be past the critical stage for the available snow within the watershed.

Significant upper elevation snowpack in the western portion of the Bulkley River watershed may pose an on-going risk to further rises in the Bulkley River through Quick, Smithers and downstream. Whether additional rises occur will depend on weather and temperature conditions, and the rate at which snow melts.

The River Forecast Centre will continue to monitor conditions and will provide an update as 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.