

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations

BC River Forecast Centre

Flood Watch: Bulkley River and tributaries

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The BC River Forecast Centre upgrading the advisory to a **Flood Watch** for the Bulkley River and tributaries.

Snowpacks through the Bulkley River watershed are elevated due to on-going accumulation through April, and a delay in the onset of spring melt into May. May 1st snowpack was 143% of normal through the Bulkley River basin. Snow is still abundant at higher elevations, and on-going melt will continue to feed runoff to rivers in the region.

An upper low pressure system has been moving through the region since early Tuesday. Environment Canada has forecast this system to deliver 20-30mm of precipitation. As of 12:00pm, Tuesday May 17th, 28 mm of precipitation has been recorded in the past 24hr at the Houston Fire Weather Station, and 15mm with ongoing intense precipitation at the Nadina Fire Weather Station.

The Bulkley River has been rising sharply in response to this rainfall and on-going snow melt. Current water level at the Bulkley River at Quick Water Survey of Canada station (08EE004) is 1.75m and rising at 2.5 cm/hr. Current discharge is 480 m³/s. At the Bulkley River near Smithers (WSC 08EE005) current water level is 4.43m, and rising at 2cm/hr. Current discharge is 580 m³/s.

Modelling forecasts for the Bulkley River are predicting the Bulkley River at Quick to reach the 2-year discharge (520 m³/s) by Wednesday, and a 5-year discharge by Thursday. At the Bulkley River near Smithers, water level is expected to reach a flood level of 4.9-5.0m by late-Wednesday or early Thursday. Flood conditions may occur throughout the Bulkley River and its tributaries.

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.