



Low Stream Flow Conditions in Northeast B.C.

The BC Oil and Gas Commission (Commission) is advising operators of low stream flow conditions to ensure field practices are consistent with protection of the water supply. Following the end of the snowmelt freshet in June, river levels in parts of northeast B.C. have been falling steadily, and at some locations are unusually low.

At the end of winter, snowpacks were well below normal in eastern portions of the region. The April 1 snowpack at Fort St. John was 69 per cent of normal, while Fort Nelson was 61 per cent per cent of normal. At the end of the snowmelt period, over the June 3-7 period, a significant storm system pushed through, bringing heavy rain to some areas, particularly the western foothills of the Northern Rocky Mountains. However, since then conditions have been drier than normal. The climate stations at Fort St. John and Fort Nelson have recorded 45-50 mm of rain over the last 45 days. This is less than one-half of the rainfall that would normally be expected over this period of time.

As a result of the low snowpack and below normal rainfall over the last six weeks, the levels of some rivers in northeast B.C. are low, generally in the eastern portions of the region:

- The Kiskatinaw River is currently near 0.35 m³/s. This is the second or third lowest flow for this date in 54 years of record, and is slightly lower than the flow on this date in 2010.
- The Moberly River is currently near 3.75 m³/s. This is the second lowest flow for this date in 32 years of record, and is lower than the flow on this date in 2010.
- The Fontas River is currently near 12.4 m³/s, which appears to be the lowest flow recorded for this date in 20 years of measurement.

Rivers in the mountainous and western portions of the region have near normal discharge, and do not have stream flow concerns at this time. These include the Pine River, Beatton River, Graham River, Halfway River, Sikanni Chief River and the Muskwa River.

There are currently no short-term water use approvals in the Moberly River basin, and no approvals for water withdrawals from streams or lakes in the Kiskatinaw River basin. The Commission will not issue further approvals in these two watersheds until river levels improve.

At this time, the Commission requests all oil and gas operators holding valid approvals for short-term use of water ensure withdrawals are prudent, and all requirements to maintain stream flows downstream of diversion points are achieved.

The Commission is monitoring river conditions carefully throughout northeast B.C., and will issue further bulletins or directives to protect water supplies should conditions warrant.

For more information, please contact:

Allan Chapman

Hydrologist

BC Oil and Gas Commission

250-419-4435

Allan.Chapman@bcogc.ca