

Subject: Re: BC Hydro: Campbell River operations update - dry conditions
From: "Watson, Stephen" <Steve.Watson@bchydro.com>
Date: 4/3/2019, 7:15 AM
To: Leona <lowiea@telus.net>

Hi Leona,

We have moved into conservation mode since mid to late March.

The Lower Campbell Reservoir/McIvor Lake yesterday was at about 175.85 m. It will go down to 175 m by the end of the week and hold there for a while.

Upper Campbell Reservoir/Buttle Lake is very low so we are matching the reservoirs.

We dropped the river flow to 69 m³/s on Mar 25. We are working with DFO.

I plan on issuing another system operations update next week.

Thanks,
Stephen

Sent from my iPhone

On Apr 2, 2019, at 9:21 PM, Leona <lowiea@telus.net> wrote:

I Stephen,

I was up at McIvor Lake today. It is very low. I see by your note below, the level in the lake was expected to lower for extra power generation.

Wondering what the surface level of McIvor is now please?

Thanks,

Leona

On 3/8/2019 11:24 AM, Watson, Stephen wrote:

Hello everyone,

We started the winter with wet and mild weather, but since the third week of January, it has done the polar opposite, pardon the pun, with the tap having been almost turned off. It has been cold and dry, with cumulative inflow since February 1 setting a record for this time of year for the lowest water inflow in the last 50 years. The result, coupled with the customer demand for electricity throughout the province, looks like less water abundance within the watershed come this spring and summer.

It was a big and quick transition in January from high water inflows that were around 500-600 cubic metres per second (m³/s), to about 12 m³/s that we've been seeing the past few weeks – these rates are similar to water inflows during a dry summer. The Upper Campbell Reservoir/Buttle Lake hit a high of 220.3 m, around our flood buffer zone, in January, and we were releasing extra water downstream for flood risk management for several weeks. Since then, with the dry weather and the provincial demand for electricity, the reservoir level has steadily dropped to about 215.05 today – a drop of over 5 metres. The reservoir has been dropping at a rate of about 10-15 centimeters per day. The reservoir level is currently at about a metre below average and dropping. Our water license has various ranges within the reservoir and the water level is within the preferred zone for this time of year, though it is projected to drop below that level around mid-March. Generally, reservoir levels could fluctuate from 212 metres to about 221 metres.

We have been running the John Hart generating station at full capacity at about 135 MW, or a river discharge rate of 124 m³/s. This is to assist in meeting the high Vancouver Island customer demand for electricity.

We have also been providing the 4 m³/s fish habitat base flow down Elk Falls Canyon. We are nearing the end of the seasonal steelhead migration and spawning flows within the canyon, with the last two of the five releases of 10 m³/s down the canyon taking place March 12-14 and March 19-21.

BC Hydro has a water supply forecast that's developed each year for the February to September period and updated on a monthly basis. It is updated monthly. This considers the year's precipitation and snowpack, as well as historical inflows over the same period. This is important information as we look ahead to possible projected summer reservoir levels. The February forecast to the September time period was 91% of normal, and for the March update, the water supply forecast considerably lowered to about 76% of normal. The forecast variation is about +/- 12% should it be dryer or wetter.

We are managing the watershed and the added consideration this year being provincial power generation, where water levels are below normal at several large hydroelectric facilities on the Peace and Columbia river systems. We anticipate running the Campbell River system at a higher capacity potentially into April should conditions stay cool and relatively dry around the province. We have updated government fish agencies and the Comptroller of Water Rights, and have applied for a variance to our license from the Comptroller to potentially move the Upper Campbell Reservoir/Buttle Lake level lower than the preferred zone into April by generating more power.

The snowpack is lower than normal, though it typically continues to accumulate until the end of April. Conditions can change. At this time, with the current water abundance in the watershed and our facilities continuing to help meet electricity demand in the province, the summer reservoir recreation levels look to be lower than normal. The weather pattern is forecast to change next week with more seasonal conditions.

BC Hydro may provide an update to the community in April.

Thanks,
Stephen

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