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**INTERNATIONAL RAINY LAKE BOARD OF CONTROL (IRLBC)**  
**INTERNATIONAL RAINY RIVER WATER POLLUTION BOARD (IRRWPB)**  
**NEWSLETTER**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2007**

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This newsletter provides a summary of the activities of the International Rainy Lake Board of Control (IRLBC) and the International Rainy River Water Pollution Board (IRRWPB) during the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter (January-March) of 2007.

***Basin Conditions and Regulation***

Water levels, inflows and outflows for Namakan and Rainy lakes are shown on the attached graphs. The dry conditions experienced in the latter half of 2006 persisted into 2007 but were slightly improved. Inflows to Namakan Lake for the January through March period averaged 10 percentile (had been 6 percentile in October-December), while inflows to Rainy Lake averaged a little less than 5 percentile (had set a new minimum of record since 1911 in October-December).

Namakan Lake started the quarter at 36% of its IJC operating band and declined to 23% of band by mid-March. With precipitation actually above normal for the last half of March, and with the beginning of an early snowmelt, the lake level began to rise in late March, ending the quarter at 42% of band. Outflows averaged about 50 m<sup>3</sup>/s through the quarter. The IRLBC had directed the dam operators to target the lower portion of the operating band (rather than the middle portion) in December due to the low level of Rainy Lake; this directive was rescinded in late March.

Rainy Lake started the quarter 40 cm (16 in) below its Lower Rule Curve (LRC) and 10 cm (4 in) below its Drought Line (DL). Due to its low level, outflow had been reduced in December from 100 to 65 m<sup>3</sup>/s (following consultations with resource agencies, municipalities and others) and was held at 65 m<sup>3</sup>/s through March. With this reduced outflow, the lake level remained relatively constant from mid-December through mid-March. With the lake level steady but the operating curves continuing to decline, Rainy was back above its DL on February 27 and above its LRC on March 17. As with Namakan, due to March precipitation and a beginning snowmelt, the lake level then started to rise, ending the quarter at 45% of band. If the outflow had remained at 100 m<sup>3</sup>/s, the lake would have ended the quarter 26 cm (10 in) below its LRC.

Under the IJC's 2001 Order, while the IRLBC has the authority to reduce outflow to as low as 65 m<sup>3</sup>/s when the level of Rainy Lake is below its DL, the outflow must be 100 m<sup>3</sup>/s between the DL and the LRC. With concerns that the dry conditions might persist into the spring, both Boards wanted to ensure that outflows could be maintained at 65 m<sup>3</sup>/s well into 2007 to benefit lake level recovery, rather than having to increase the outflow if the level just rose above the DL. Thus, in February, the IRLBC sought a Supplementary Order from the IJC that would allow the Board to set the outflow as low as 65 m<sup>3</sup>/s whenever the lake level was below the LRC or elevation 336.8 m, whichever was higher, through to June 30. This request was supported by the resource agencies, the Companies and affected municipalities. The IJC issued the requested Supplementary Order on February 27; this Order and a related IJC news release were posted on both Board web sites.

## ***Board Meetings***

During the quarter, the Boards dealt with business via two joint conference calls (January 29 and March 2) and a number of email exchanges. Topics addressed included regulation, the Rainy Lake Supplementary Order, hydropower peaking, Namakan River hydropower development, the Pine Island peat mine, environmental monitoring, basin conferences/workshops, Board correspondence, Board membership, and the spring report and presentation for the IJC.

Several Members and staff represented the Boards at the 4<sup>th</sup> International Lake of the Woods Water Quality Forum on March 7-8 in International Falls.

## ***Rainy River Peaking Work Group***

During the quarter the Work Group finalized the report documenting their agreement that, for 2007 and 2008, no peaking would be conducted during a 2.5 month spring spawning period window, nominally from April 15 through June 30 but with actual dates depending on the status of the spawn. The Work Group held a conference call on March 15 to confirm an April 15 start date for 2007, with a tentative end date of June 30, subject to further assessment on June 8.

## ***Pine Island Peat Mine Monitoring***

As noted in the last newsletter, to ensure that the Black and Rainy rivers would not be adversely impacted by the peat operations, the IRRWPB had drafted recommendations for additional long-term mercury monitoring. These recommendations were finalized and transmitted to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency by letter in mid-January.

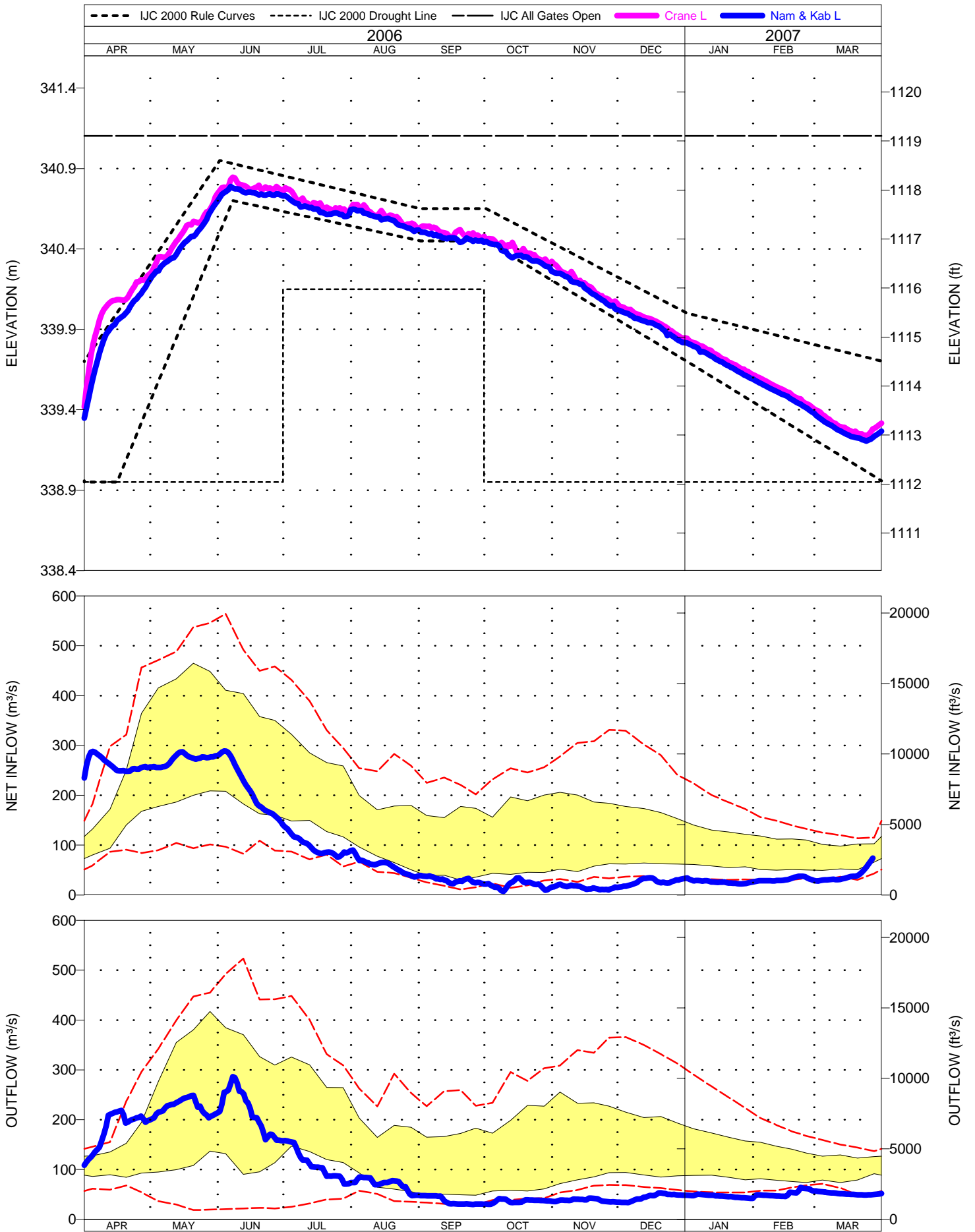
## ***Environmental Monitoring for Future Rule Curve Evaluation***

As noted in previous newsletters, regarding the proposed review of the Rainy and Namakan rule curves in 2015, concerns have been growing about gaps in environmental monitoring and socio-economic data collection, and about continued funding to support the monitoring that is underway. This was addressed in the Boards' fall 2006 report and presentation to the IJC and in a follow-up letter sent to the IJC in early December. The IJC responded in early February, proposing that a Plan of Study (POS) be developed to outline the work required and its cost. This POS would be submitted to governments to seek funding. The IJC requested that the Boards propose and solicit members for a team to develop the POS for the IJC. The Boards responded with a list of potential candidates in early March.

*Questions or comments? Contact the Boards' Secretary:*

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# NAMAKAN LAKE



# RAINY LAKE

