
INTERNATIONAL RAINY LAKE BOARD OF CONTROL (IRLBC) INTERNATIONAL RAINY RIVER WATER POLLUTION BOARD (IRRWPB)

NEWSLETTER

1st Quarter 2010

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 1st Quarter (January to March) of 2010.

Basin Conditions and Regulation

Winter regulation proceeded normally from the first of the year through the middle of March, with both Namakan and Rainy lake levels staying in the middle portion of their IJC rule curve bands. Mid-March saw an unusually early onset to the spring freshet. Water levels, inflows and outflows are shown on the attached graphs for both lakes.

Namakan Lake level began the year at 80 % of its IJC band, with inflow at 70 %ile. The lake declined to a minimum of 38 % of band in early March, with inflow remaining at 65 to 70 %ile through the first two and a half months of the year. By March 18, due to very mild weather, inflow had risen to maximum of record for the time of year, although still low compared to a normal spring peak inflow. The Companies responded with outflow increases and the lake reached a maximum level of 74 % of band before ending the quarter at 72 % of band. By the end of March, inflows were declining, indicating that the snowmelt freshet was over for the year.

The level of Rainy Lake started the year at 42% of its IJC band. Inflow varied between 75 %ile and 40 %ile from January through early March, with the lake level varying between about 30% and 60% of its IJC band. As with Namakan, early freshet began quickly in mid-March, with inflow reaching greater than 95 %ile by March 16. With outflow increases, the lake rose to 75% of band before ending the quarter at 68 % of band. By the end of the month, freshet appeared to be over with inflows declining and the Companies already making cuts to the outflow.

Board Meetings and Activities

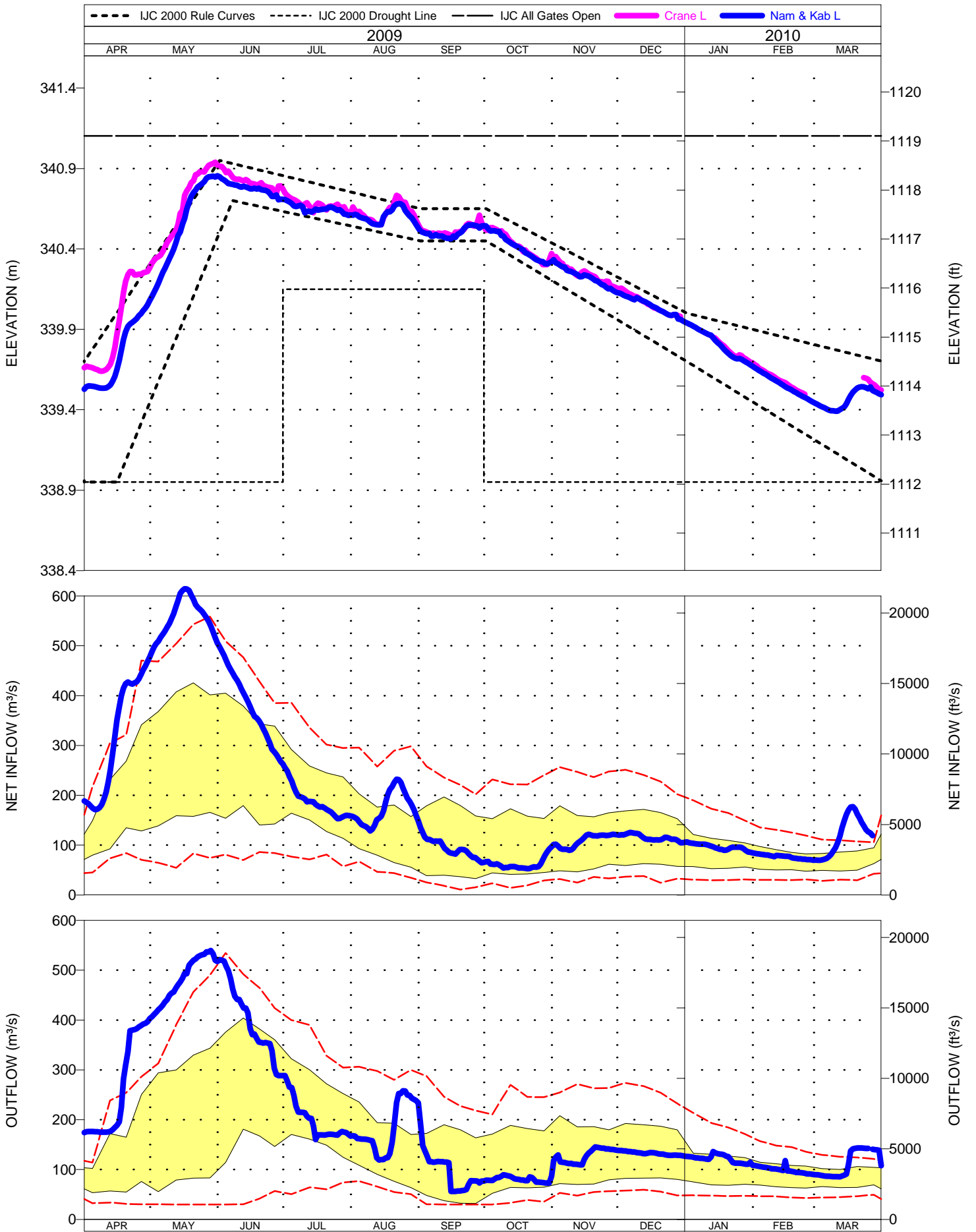
The Board held one conference call during the quarter, on February 11. The primary purpose of the call was to move forward on the development of a combined Boards workplan. However, several other topics were discussed, including: issues with several IWI projects (temperature monitoring on the Rainy River and an aquatic vegetation study on the lakes), updates on the Namakan River hydropower development proposal, migration to a single annual report to the IJC, data harmonization for Canada-US boundary area mapping, coordination of the 2015 rule curve review for Namakan and Rainy Lakes and plans to prepare the 2010 Boards spring report to the IJC.

Several Board Members and staff attended the 7th Annual Lake of the Woods International Water Quality Forum in International Falls on March 10-11. Ninety people attended the forum, which brings together scientists and others concerned with water quality, not just in Lake of the Woods, but throughout the entire Lake of the Woods, Rainy River and Rainy Lake watershed.

Activities of note during the quarter were:

- Regarding the Rainy River temperature monitoring, discussions were held with AbitibiBowater to have them install a temperature probe as part of their monitoring equipment upgrade at the Fort Frances powerhouse.
- The Boards received a brief report on three open houses that were held in February in Lac la Croix, Atikokan and Fort Frances to allow public input on the Draft Environmental Report released December 23 by the Ojibway Power and Energy Group (OPEG) on their proposed Namakan River hydropower development.
- A detailed scope of work for the proposed aquatic vegetation study (an IWI project) was drafted for review by the Boards and the IJC. Discussions were held with VNP park staff, potential contractors and IJC staff to facilitate this project, with the hope that it can be completed in summer 2010.
- The Boards' joint spring report was prepared and submitted to the IJC.
- The Boards were provided a brief chronology of events related to treatment plant problems at the AbitibiBowater pulp and paper mill in Fort Frances that led to a mill shutdown for several days in January.
- The Boards began using a SharePoint site for online collaboration. The site is hosted by the IJC and allows Board Members to share information and documents.
- The Peaking Work Group set its first 2010 meeting for April 1st to set the start and tentative end dates for the 2010 spring spawning window.
- The Boards workplan was reviewed during the quarter, with the goal of having an updated workplan to submit to the IJC this spring.
- A "Plan of Study for the Evaluation of the IJC 2000 Order for Rainy and Namakan Lakes and Rainy River: June 30, 2009" was approved by the IJC for posting to the Boards websites in January. The IJC also submitted the report to the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and to the United States Department of State.
- The Boards were provided an update by DFAIT on the status of a proposed Lake of the Woods reference to the IJC. The process is moving ahead slowly and the Boards will continue to monitor this issue.
- The Boards were invited by the IJC's IWI coordinating committee to participate in a modelling steering committee. The steering committee is being set up to develop a strategic modelling framework as part of its IWI effort. The Boards decided not to nominate a representative but advised the IWI that they are interested in the project and in receiving the updates on its progress.
- The Boards held discussions on the timing and frequency of its formal reports to the IJC, with a letter being sent to the IJC Advisors recommending that the Boards report only in the spring. In addition, the Boards proposed combining the websites into one. The options are being pursued with the Commission.

NAMAKAN LAKE



RAINY LAKE

