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

NEWSLETTER

2nd Quarter 2009

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 2nd Quarter (April-June) of 2009.

Basin Conditions and Regulation

Following a brief rise in inflow in late March, cool weather in early April delayed the onset of full freshet until nearly mid-April. Once freshet did start, it was quite strong as expected due to the high over-winter precipitation that had been received. The initial snowmelt freshet for Namakan Lake peaked the third week of April, but significant precipitation in late April sent inflows rising strongly again, peaking just after mid-May. With the high inflow, outflow was increased steadily, with the dams reaching wide-open on April 20. Despite this, Namakan Lake rose steadily through April and May, with lake levels exceeding the upper rule curve from May 17 to 26. The maximum deviation above the upper rule curve was 5 cm (2 in) on May 20 but the peak lake level was still 9 cm (4 in) below the peak summer upper rule curve level. Inflow declined quickly after mid-May and Namakan levels were at mid-band by June 6 and finished the month at 34% of band.

Inflow to Rainy Lake rose quickly during the middle part of April and then was flat until early May when rainfall caused it to increase again, peaking about mid-May. Outflow was increased sharply mid-April, with seven of fifteen spill gates opened between April 16 and 18. Another 3 gates were opened by April 27 but attempts to open additional gates resulted in the headwater level falling below safe levels for AbitibiBowater's firewater intake. As the headwater rose, 11 gates were open on May 11, 12 on May 13, 13 on May 20 and 14 on May 26. Rainy Lake was above its IJC upper rule curve level from May 2 to June 22, with a maximum deviation of 26 cm (10 in) on June 2. At the peak level reached on June 5 at 337.87 m (1108.5 ft), the lake was 3 cm (1 in) below the IJC "all-gates-open" level and 12 cm (5 in) above the summer upper rule curve level. Inflow declined quickly after late May and the lake had recovered to 63 % of band by the end of June, with only 2 spill gates remaining open.

Water levels, inflows and outflows are shown on the attached graphs for both lakes.

International Joint Commission Semi-Annual Meeting

Several Board Members and staff attended an IJC International Watersheds Initiative (IWI) workshop in Washington on March 31. On April 1 the Boards appeared before the IJC at their semi-annual hearing in Washington to present the Boards' spring report. The Boards met in two sessions before and after their presentation to the IJC. Items on the agenda included finalizing the presentation to the IJC, public concern over possible high water levels on Rainy Lake during the coming season and an appropriate Board response, planning for the Board meetings in International Falls / Fort Frances in August, a review of the IWI workshop, IWI project submissions and a joint Board workplan.

Board Meetings and Activities

The Board issued a news release on April 8 in response to reports of public concern over the potential for high water levels during the spring. Several individual inquiries and complaints regarding Rainy Lake water levels were responded to directly by the Boards during the quarter.

Two meetings of the Rainy River Peaking Work Group were held during June. The Work Group extended the spawning (no peaking) window to July 6 due to cold water delaying the sturgeon spawn.

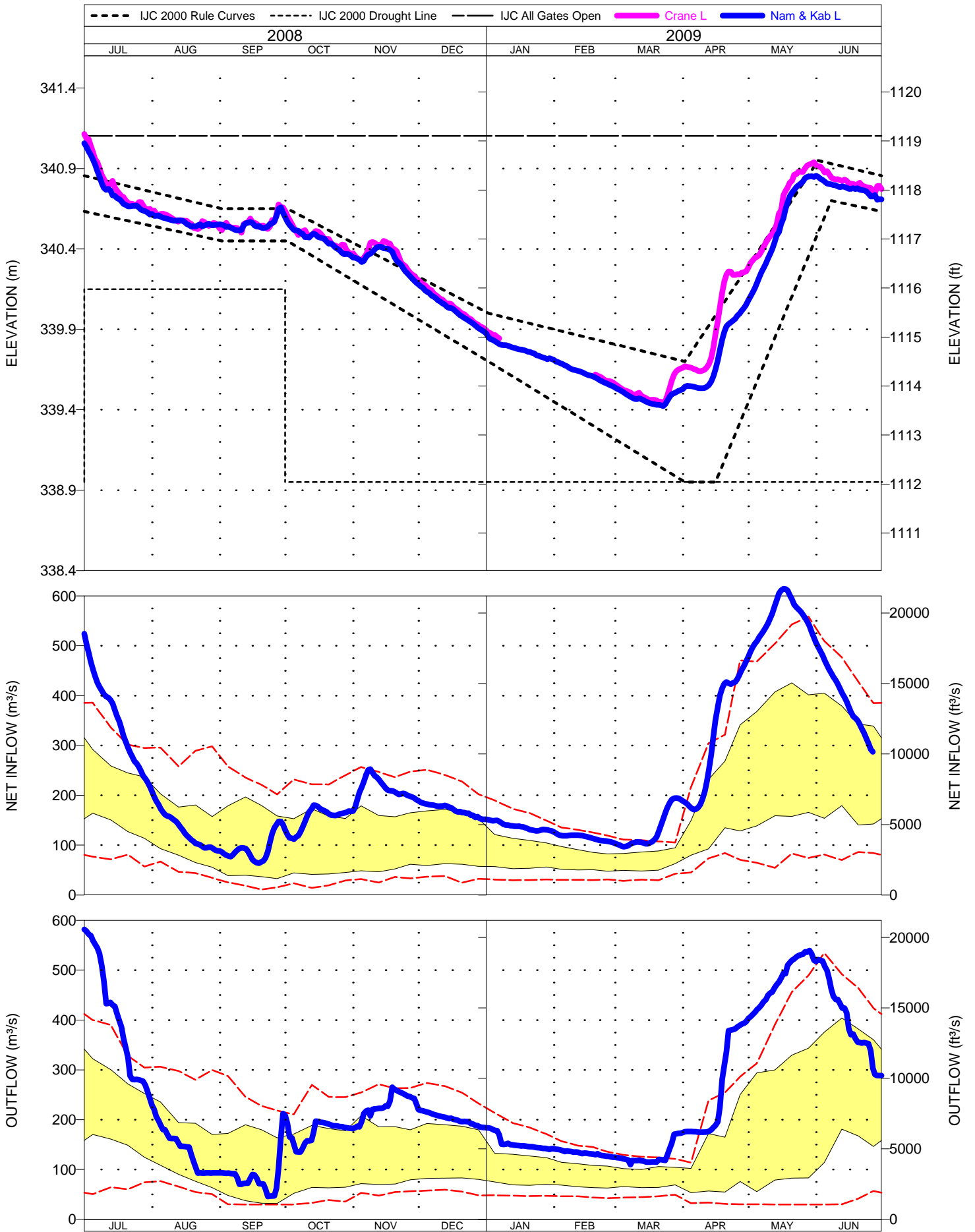
Several Board Members participated in a conference call with the IJC's IWI coordinators and engineering advisors to discuss a Rainy River water temperature monitoring proposal that the Board had submitted. Two IWI projects proposed by the Boards were approved during the quarter – the Rainy River water temperature monitoring as well as a Rainy River cross-section survey from Rainy Lake to the dams at International Falls / Fort Frances. This latter project is the first step in the proposed development of a hydraulic model for this reach of the river. The first water temperature probe was installed at Manitou Rapids on the Rainy River by the United States Geological Survey in mid-June.

At the end of May, local operation of the Canadian powerhouse in Fort Frances was handed off to the control centre of ACH LP (the powerhouse owners), in Oshawa, Ontario. During June, the transfer of the water management function from local staff to the control centre was also completed. The IRLBC has been monitoring the transition.

In addition to the above, the following items were completed or advanced during the quarter:

- Plans were made for the August meetings and public meeting in International Falls
- The Boards reviewed, and provided comments on the draft Health Professional Task Force draft report “Water and Health in Lake Woods and Rainy River Basin”
- Mining issues and concerns in the basin continued to be monitored

NAMAKAN LAKE



RAINY LAKE

