

# Procedures in Managing Rainy River Flows to Benefit Sturgeon Spawning

## Statement of Objectives

Position the International Rainy - Lake of the Woods Watershed Board (IRLWWB) with an understanding of the conditions within the watershed pertaining to Lake Sturgeon spawning such that management decisions on flows can be assessed and implemented, to the degree possible, to avoid the de-watering of eggs.

## Draft Procedure

- 1) Annually, in advance of the sturgeon spawn, review procedure with relevant partners (organized by the IRLWWB).
- 2) Monitor conditions within the basin.
  - a. Available temperature data will be monitored and reported by the Lake of the Woods Secretariat (LWS). H2O Power will be responsible for maintaining a temperature gauge in the Fort Frances generating station tailwater and providing that data on a daily basis to the LWS. The LWS will advise relevant partners<sup>1</sup> as water temperatures begin to approach 12°C. (The sturgeon spawning trigger is considered to be two consecutive days of 12°C water temperatures.)
  - b. The IRLWWB and resource agencies<sup>2</sup> will assess, based on the current hydrology, whether changes in outflows are likely to negatively impact sturgeon eggs.
  - c. If a negative impact is anticipated the IRLWWB will inform Rainy River First Nations (RRFN), Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR), Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR), Sports Fishing Club, Boise Paper, and H2O Power of basin conditions and recommend that field observations commence.
    - i. RRFN will conduct observations at Manitou Rapids and, if necessary, Long Sault Rapids.
    - ii. The OMNR and MnDNR will undertake observations focusing on the area near the dam.
    - iii. As the opportunity arises, resource agencies will contribute observations and provide any accounts received from the public.
  - d. Field observations will be completed using the Lake Sturgeon Monitoring form, which will be posted on the IRLWWB website at <http://ijc.org/en /RLWWB/Activities>. The observers will submit their observations of spawning behaviour to the IRLWWB's contact, the LWS, at 1-800-661-5922 or [mdewolfe@lwcba.ca](mailto:mdewolfe@lwcba.ca) (during weekends contact Matt DeWolfe at 613-302-2938).
- 3) Based on any prediction of a possible impact on sturgeon eggs, the IRLWWB will appropriately engage the resource agencies (and other partners including RRFN) for advice regarding the appropriate management response.

- 4) If deemed necessary, the IRLWWB will direct the companies<sup>3</sup> to a specified outflow. When possible the IRLWWB will provide advance notice to Boise Paper and H2O Power of an impending change.
- 5) The companies will implement the IRLWWB's directive as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours after the directive has been issued.

**Notes**

During extreme rising inflows, safety and structural issues take precedence. This procedure will only be put in place during declining inflows or low levels of increasing inflows.

Adherence to the IJC Order will take precedence. The IRLWWB do not have authority to direct flows when the level of Rainy Lake is outside of the IJC approved rule curve band.

<sup>1</sup>Relevant partners include: International Falls and Baudette offices of MnDNR, Fort Frances District OMNR, RRFN, Sports Fishing Club, Boise Paper, and H2O Power

<sup>2</sup>Resource Agencies include: International Falls and Baudette offices of MnDNR, Fort Frances District OMNR

<sup>3</sup>Companies include: Boise Paper and H2O Power

Appendix A: Contact list

Appendix B: Reporting form