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

2nd Quarter 2007

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 2007.

Basin Conditions and Regulation

The dry basin conditions that commenced in the 2nd Quarter of 2006, and continued through this spring, persisted into the 2nd Quarter of 2007. Inflows to both Namakan and Rainy lakes hovered around 10 percentile for most of April and May, but then finally started to show some improvement. Water levels, inflows and outflows for both lakes are shown on the attached graphs.

Namakan Lake started the quarter at 42% of its IJC operating band. However, the operating band rises significantly over April and May. Even though the lake level rose strongly, assisted by a reduction in outflow in early April from about 50 m³/s to the IJC-specified minimum of 30 m³/s, the meager inflow was not sufficient to keep the level within the band. While the lake level continued to rise, it crossed the IJC Lower Rule Curve (LRC) on May 17. With rainfall improving after the first week of May, inflows gradually increased, allowing the lake level to continue rising parallel with the LRC. At most, the lake level was 15 cm (6 in) below the LRC during this period. With the IJC operating band starting to decline in early June, the lake level crossed the LRC back into the band on June 10. The outflow was increased rapidly to about 160 m³/s to stop the lake rising and briefly reached nearly 190 m³/s before ending June at 160 m³/s, at which time the lake level was 40% of band and inflow was 25 percentile.

Rainy Lake started the quarter at 45% of its IJC operating band and with an outflow of only 65 m³/s. This outflow, well below the normal IJC minimum of 100 m³/s, was maintained since December 2006 in order to hold as much water in Rainy Lake as possible under the continuing dry conditions. The lake level rose steadily through April and May but, in spite of the low outflow, was not able to keep up with the rising IJC operating band and crossed the LRC on May 15. As with Namakan, improved rainfall starting in May led to increasing inflows from late May into June. The lake rose more steeply and re-entered its IJC operating band on June 11. At most, the lake level was 15 cm (6 in) below its band. Outflow was increased sharply starting on June 11, reaching 420 m³/s on June 20 before stabilizing at 375 m³/s by the end of June, at which time the lake level was 57% of band and inflow was 50 percentile. With the extended drought apparently over, Rainy Lake inflow from June 2006 through May 2007 was computed to be only 88 m³/s, the lowest for this 12 month period since records began in 1912.

International Joint Commission Semi-Annual Meeting

IRLBC and IRRWPB members and staff attended the spring semi-annual meeting of the IJC in Washington DC on April 18. The Boards' presentation to the IJC addressed lake regulation, ongoing and

<p><u>NOTICE</u></p> <p>2007 Public Meeting</p> <p>7:00 PM, Tuesday, August 21</p> <p>The Theater</p> <p>Rainy River Community College</p> <p>Hwy 71 W, International Falls MN</p>
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emerging basin issues, projects under the IJC's "Watersheds Initiative" program and planned summer meetings. The basin issues component addressed hydropower peaking and rule curve monitoring, while emerging issues included proposed plans for hydropower on the Namakan River and the potential impacts of Rainy River turbidity and nutrient loads on Lake of the Woods water quality.

Board Meetings

During the quarter, the Boards met in Washington on April 18 and held two conference calls, on June 5 and June 28. While much of the meeting in Washington focused on the presentation to the IJC, there was also significant discussion about spawning criteria (especially water temperature) for walleye and sturgeon in the Rainy River. The conference calls addressed correspondence with the IJC, the change in ownership of the Abitibi Fort Frances outlet works, the spring spawn on the Rainy River, summer meeting arrangements, the proposed Namakan River hydro developments and basin studies (with their related funding issues). In addition, at the meeting, on the conference calls, and via email, the Boards dealt with basin conditions and regulation under the Supplementary Order issued by the IJC in February to address the drought conditions.

Several Members and staff also attended the ManOMin Watershed Conference in International Falls on April 10-12, at which staff gave a presentation on the IJC and the Boards.

Rainy River Peaking Hydropower Peaking

During the 1st quarter the Work Group had finalized a 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. During the 2nd quarter, these start and end dates were confirmed for 2007, based on river conditions and observations of the spawn. Collaborative studies were also commenced, conducted by the Minnesota DNR, the Ontario MNR and Fisheries & Oceans Canada, on the sturgeon spawn below the Rainy Lake dam and on water temperatures along the Rainy River. A summary report will be prepared.

Change of Ownership of Fort Frances Dam and Powerhouse

Effective April 1, Abitibi-Consolidated sold its outlet works on Namakan Lake at Kettle Falls and on Rainy Lake at Fort Frances to ACH Limited Partnership. Abitibi currently owns 75% of ACH. While some changes can be expected over time, the facilities will continue to be operated in accordance with IJC Orders.

Proposed Hydropower Developments on the Namakan River in Ontario

Under an Ontario government energy initiative, three sites on the Namakan River in Ontario have been identified for potential hydropower development. Field work, environmental assessments and planning studies are currently underway. Public information will be made available, and a public comment period provided, before any approvals to proceed are granted. While the proposed projects are not expected to have any impact on international boundary waters, they will continue to be monitored by the Boards and the IJC. If an impact is likely on boundary waters, the projects would be subject to IJC approval. Further information is available at the proponent's web site:

www.opeg.ca/ProjectOverview.html

Questions or comments? Contact the Boards' Secretary:

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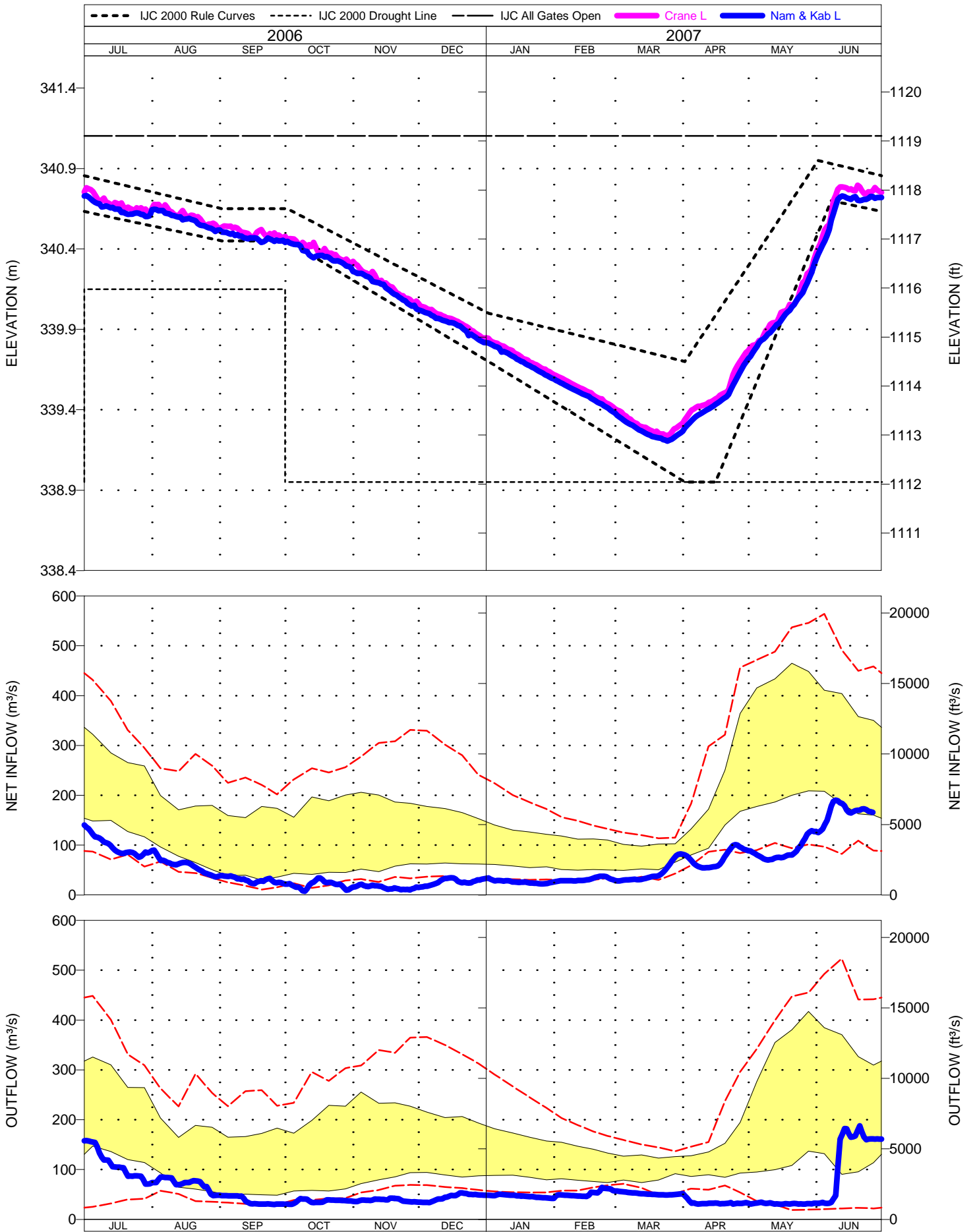
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NAMAKAN LAKE



RAINY LAKE

