
INTERNATIONAL RAINY LAKE BOARD OF CONTROL (IRLBC)
INTERNATIONAL RAINY RIVER WATER POLLUTION BOARD (IRRWPB)
NEWSLETTER
2nd Quarter 2008

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 2008.

Basin Conditions and Regulation

As shown on the attached graphs, both Rainy and Namakan lakes started the quarter with levels near the middle of their IJC bands and with inflows of only 15 percentile (%ile). Inflows rose sharply in mid-April as a result of two late-season snowfall events and then, after a brief lull, continued to rise due to a series of significant rainfall events. Namakan inflow rose from 10%ile in mid-April to 85%ile at end-April, to greater than 95%ile by May 13 and to a new maximum of record (for the time of year) by May 30. Inflow continued at maximum of record (for the time of year) through June 17 and was still greater than 95%ile on June 30. Over the quarter, Namakan inflow rose over eleven-fold, from a low of 59 m³/s to a high of 654 m³/s. On Rainy Lake, inflow rose from less than 5%ile in mid-April to 70%ile at end-April, to 85%ile by May 14, to 95%ile by May 31 and was mostly greater than 95%ile from June 12 through month-end. Over the quarter, Rainy inflow rose over fourteen-fold, from a low of 84 m³/s to a high of 1184 m³/s.

The Companies responded to these high inflows by increasing outflow through the dams on both lakes. The Namakan dams were nearly fully open by April 28, had their outflow reduced a little in early May during the lull in rising inflow, and then were fully open from May 12 through June 30. Nevertheless, the inflow exceeded the outflow capacity of the dams, resulting in Namakan being above its Upper Rule Curve (URC) from May 13 through June 30. Its peak level in the quarter was 341.21 m (1119.5 ft) on June 15. It reached 31 cm (12.2 in) above its URC on June 16 and was still 19 cm (7.5 in) above on June 30. As shown on the graph, higher levels occurred on Crane Lake. On Rainy Lake, the first sluice was opened on May 5 and all 15 were open June 6-30. As with Namakan, Rainy Lake rose above its URC due to inflow being greater than the outflow capacity. Rainy was above its URC from May 13 through June 30, reached 39 cm (15.4 in) above its URC on June 17, peaked at 338.11 m (1109.3 ft) on June 29, and ended the quarter still 36 cm (14.2 in) above its URC with all gates open.

Regarding the fact that the Rainy Lake dam was not fully open until June 6, it should be noted that opening more sluices sooner would not have materially increased the outflow. Due to the constriction in the Rainy River at Ranier Rapids, above the dam, at the outlet of the lake near Pithers Point, it is not possible for the upper river to pass the full capacity of the dam until the lake is near its full summer level. Opening more gates sooner simply draws down the water level in front of the dam, which results in problems in the Canadian powerhouse and mill but no additional water released.

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 16. The Boards' presentation to the IJC addressed lake regulation, planned

<p><u>NOTICE</u></p> <p>2008 Public Meeting</p> <p>7:00 PM, Tuesday, August 26</p> <p>La Place Rendez-Vous</p> <p>Hwy 11 E, Fort Frances ON</p>
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summer meetings, the IJC's International Watersheds Initiative and a brief update on on-going basin issues and Board business. The main focus of the presentation was the Boards' response to several organizational questions posed previously by the IJC under its Watersheds Initiative. The Boards responded that they supported their merger along with an expansion of the water quality function to include Rainy and Namakan lakes and Lake of the Woods in addition to just the Rainy River, but noted the need for additional members and resources, discussion of a number of related questions and issues, and consultations with various groups and the public. The Commissioners directed the Boards to initiate the proposed discussions with IJC staff.

Board Meetings

During the quarter, the Boards held a conference call on May 28 with four IJC staff members to discuss the proposed Board merger and related issues, following which several members and staff exchanged draft Board positions via email. Emails were also exchanged regarding arrangements for the summer meetings.

Data Collection and Monitoring for Future Rule Curve Evaluation

This topic has been addressed in several previous newsletters. In a December 2006 memorandum to the IJC, the Boards noted the collaborative efforts of the resource agencies to monitor effects of the 2000 rule curve change, and that ongoing agency funding for the monitoring was in doubt. The Boards also suggested that significant gaps in the monitoring should be filled prior to the rule curve review in 2015.

The Commission responded by establishing a six-member Workgroup in October 2007 to develop a Plan of Study (POS). The Workgroup's mission was to report on and prioritize the monitoring and analyses required to lead to a scientifically defensible identification of the impacts on the biological and aquatic communities of the adoption of the 2000 Order by 2015 for Rainy and Namakan Lakes and Rainy River.

The Workgroup submitted a work plan to the Commission on December 31, 2007, and began to undertake its work on January 31, 2008. It hosted a gap analysis workshop of agency and academic experts on March 10-11, 2008. At the end of June it submitted, to the Commission, draft Workshop Proceedings and a draft Plan of Study. A final Plan of Study is due to the Commission by August 29, 2008.

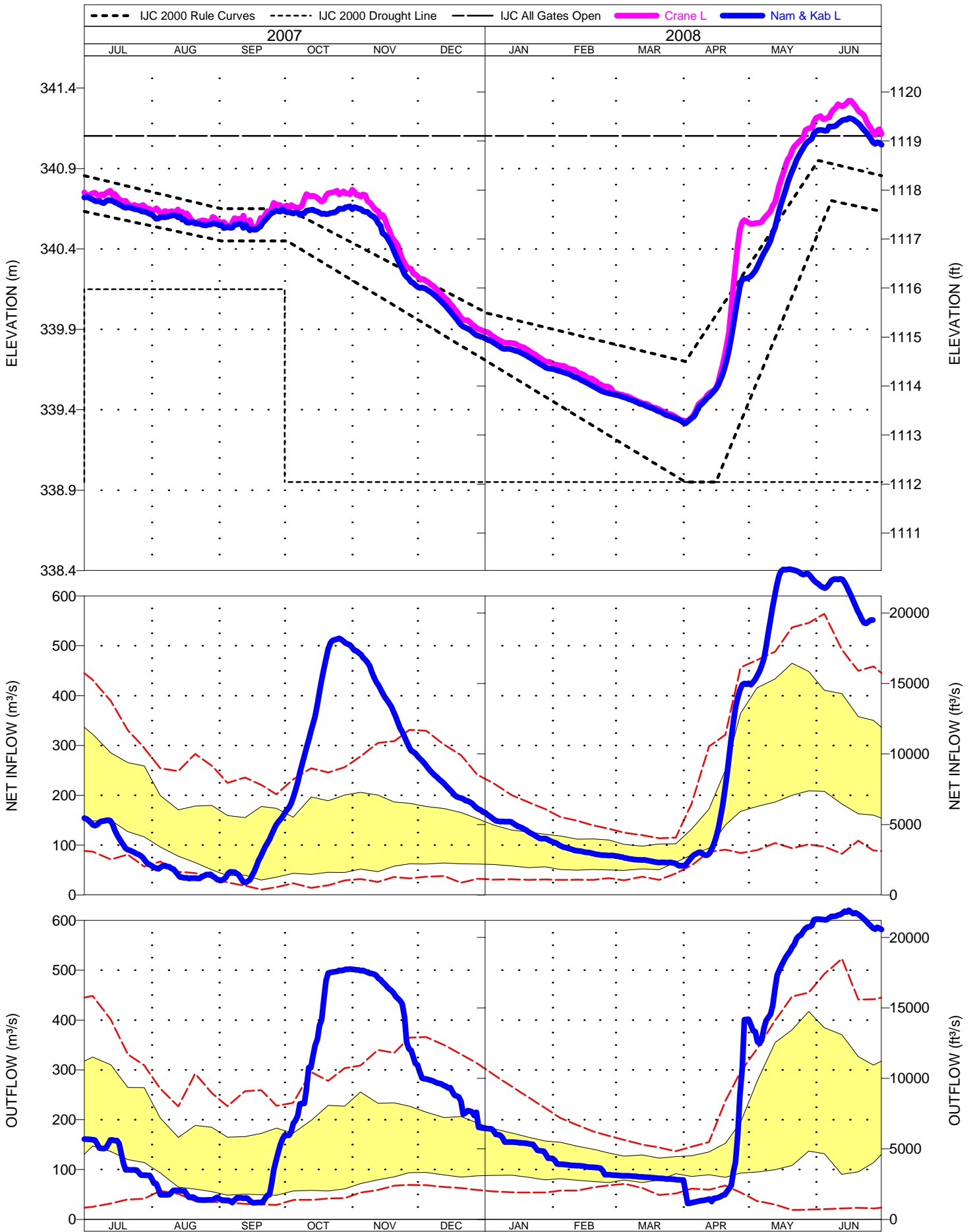
Appointment of New IRLBC Member

Effective May 5, 2008, Glen Witherspoon of Fort Frances was named by the IJC as a Canadian Member of the IRLBC, replacing Peter Williams of Thunder Bay, whose 3-year term ended May 4.

Questions or comments? Contact the Boards' Secretary:

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NAMAKAN LAKE



RAINY LAKE

