

**INTERNATIONAL RAINY LAKE BOARD OF CONTROL
INTERNATIONAL RAINY RIVER WATER POLLUTION BOARD****NEWSLETTER****3rd Quarter 2004**

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 3rd Quarter (July – September) of 2004.

The Boards' 2nd Quarter 2004 Newsletter incorrectly reported that Lieutenant Colonel Thomas E. O'Hara served briefly from June 25, 2004 to July 30, 2004 as the Co-Chairman of the IRLBC and that Colonel Michael F. Pfenning assumed these duties on July 30. In reality, the IRLBC Co-Chair's seat for the United States was vacant from June 25 through July 31, following the resignation of Colonel Robert L. Ball, and was filled with the IJC's appointment of Colonel Pfenning effective August 1, 2004.

Basin Conditions and Regulation

Water levels, inflows and outflows up to the end of September are shown on the attached graphs for Namakan and Rainy lakes. Namakan started the 3rd Quarter at 44% of its IJC operating band; Rainy was at 43%. Inflow to both lakes declined through the latter part of August and was somewhat below normal. To maintain the lake levels within their bands, outflows were decreased by Abitibi and Boise through this period with Rainy Lake outflow reduced to its normal IJC-specified minimum for most of August. Several minor rainfall events in September provided moderate increases in inflow to both lakes, but more so on Rainy. Throughout the July to September period, the levels of both lakes were kept near the middle portions of their IJC rule curve bands. On September 30, Rainy and Namakan were at 59% and 33% of their respective operating bands.

Annual Public Meetings

The IRLBC and IRRWPB held joint annual public meetings in Fort Frances on August 24th and in Baudette on August 25th. Members of the IJC and staff were in attendance. The Fort Frances meeting was attended by about 35 people, while about 19 people attended the Baudette meeting. A presentation by the Boards provided a brief background on both Boards, highlighting the December 2003 appointments of two new board members (Leland Grim of International Falls and Steven Richardson of Fort Frances) to the IRLBC from the local area. A review of basin conditions from January 2002 to the present was provided that emphasized the sharp contrasts between the high water event of 2002, the low water event of 2003 and the more normal conditions of 2004 in the Rainy-Namakan basin. This contrast revealed the high variability and unpredictability of inflow that can be produced by nature. The Boards again stressed the need for floodplain management and public awareness in light of such natural variability and limited ability of humans to control its consequences. Other items discussed at both meetings included

the IJC's International Watersheds Initiative, hydropower peaking on the Rainy River, a blockage of the Gold Portage overflow into Rainy Lake by a beaver dam (see the Boards' 2nd Quarter 2004 Newsletter for details), and access to information contained on the Boards' web sites. At the Baudette meeting, public concerns were expressed over shoreline erosion and nutrient influx related to Lake of the Woods. Also, general concerns were raised over control of exotic species. Board members and staff answered questions from the public at both meetings.

Board Meetings Summary

The IRLBC and IRRWPB held one joint conference call in the 3rd Quarter on July 20, 2004. Key topics of discussion included work on two Commission information requests (IJC Watersheds Initiative and dam security and maintenance information update), hydropower peaking on the Rainy River, and an update on preparations for the August 24-25, 2004 Annual Public Meetings in the Basin. Other topics on the call agenda included an update on basin conditions, Lake of the Woods water quality concerns and needed improvements to the Boards' web sites.

IJC International Watersheds Initiative

The Boards' responded to a request from the IJC for assistance in identifying specific projects/initiatives that the Boards would like to undertake in support of the Commission's International [Watersheds Initiative](#). The Boards recommended several projects/initiatives and provided estimated funding requirements to the IJC in a September 23rd letter. These projects/initiatives included:

- 1) *Floodplain Management* - *Technical work to define the floodplain area and/or hazard-land levels for Namakan and Rainy lakes and along the Rainy River in connection with a public education process using a multi-media approach aimed at raising public awareness in the Rainy-Namakan basin of water levels that can occur, educating the public about the shoreline hazard land area and how it should be used, and encouraging local governments to adopt and enforce hazard land zones with appropriate development restrictions.*
- 2) *Local Involvement* – *Increased level of participation by the Boards in relevant basin issues and increased interaction with basin interests to foster development of collaborative initiatives and synergistic solutions to the management of basin water resources.*
- 3) *Hydrologic/Hydraulic Modelling* – *Development of hydraulic/hydrologic models for the Rainy River and Namakan Chain of Lakes. The Rainy River model would provide a much needed tool for use in determining flood levels on the Rainy River and for use in assessments of existing or future issues affecting Rainy River levels, flows, water quality, fish and wildlife and other environmental issues. The Namkan model would allow the Boards to assess the potential for the new 2000 rule curves to cause more frequent high water events and/or higher peak levels on Crane Lake.*

The Commission is preparing its second report to governments under the International Watershed Boards Reference of November 19, 1998. In its report, the Commission intends to request funding support from governments for this initiative and the activities of its boards.

Dam Security and Maintenance

The IJC requested the IRLBC to update security and maintenance data for dams subject to Commission Orders. This routine request was subsequently completed through information submitted by the IRLBC, Boise Cascade and Abitibi Consolidated.

Questions or comments? Contact the Boards' Secretary:

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NAMAKAN LAKE



