

**INTERNATIONAL RAINY LAKE BOARD OF CONTROL
INTERNATIONAL RAINY RIVER WATER POLLUTION BOARD****NEWSLETTER****2nd 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 2nd Quarter (April – June) of 2004.

Basin Conditions and Regulation

Water levels, inflows and outflows up to the end of June are shown on the attached graphs for Namakan and Rainy lakes. Namakan started the 2nd Quarter at 58% of its IJC operating band; Rainy was at 52%. Due to an early snowmelt runoff, inflows to both lakes rose strongly in early April. To maintain the lake levels within their bands, outflows were increased by Abitibi and Boise. Although inflows to Rainy declined in the latter half of April, a major storm on May 11-12 again increased inflows to Rainy and sustained Namakan inflows. Several additional rainfall events led to a total rainfall for May of 125 mm (4.9 in) for the Rainy-Namakan basin, the 4th highest for May since 1900. Sluices were opened on both lakes to manage the excess water; 10 out of 15 sluices on Rainy were fully opened, while on Namakan 7 out of 10 were fully opened and 2 more were partially opened. The levels of both lakes were kept within their operating bands, with Rainy reaching 86% of its band on June 6th and Namakan reaching 67% of its band on June 8th. Inflows to both lakes declined after early June through to month-end and outflows were reduced. On June 30th, Rainy and Namakan were at 45% and 44% of their respective operating bands.

IRLBC Membership Change

On June 25, 2004, Colonel Robert L. Ball completed his three-year tour as District Engineer of the St. Paul District, Corps of Engineers and resigned his appointment to the International Rainy Lake Board of Control.

Colonel Michael F. Pfenning will replace Colonel Ball as Co-Chairman of the International Rainy Lake Board of Control when he assumes command of the St. Paul District on July 30, 2004. During the interim, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas E. O'Hara will serve as the St. Paul District Commander and Co-Chairman of the IRLBC.

Colonel Ball will be assuming the duties of Deputy Commander of US Army Alaska at Fort Wainwright, Alaska.

***2004 IRLBC and IRRWPB
Joint Annual Public Meetings*****August 24, 2004****7:00 – 9:00 pm****Le Place Rendez-Vouz Hotel,
Ft. Frances, Ontario****August 25, 2004****10:00 – 12:00 am****Ranch House Meeting Room,
Baudette, Minnesota**

International Joint Commission Semi-Annual Meeting

IRLBC and IRRWPB members and staff attended the spring semi-annual meeting of the International Joint Commission (IJC) in Washington, D.C. on April 21, 2004. Current hydrologic conditions in the basin and work initiatives were discussed during the Boards' appearance before the Commission.

Current work initiatives include a report on peaking on the Rainy River and the development of an educational floodplain management tool for the Rainy-Namakan basin. The Boards expect to follow-up on these issues at the fall semi-annual meeting. A third initiative assigned to the Board by the IJC, to investigate the establishment of a local advisory committee, was deferred in order to allow the Boards an opportunity to integrate the newly appointed board members.

The Commission and Boards also agreed to work together to improve the usability of the new IRLBC and IRRWPB websites.

Finally, the Commission asked for assistance with their initiative to update security and maintenance data for dams subject to Commission Orders.

Board Meetings Summary

The IRLBC and IRRWPB held one meeting and two joint conference calls during the 2nd Quarter. The Boards met on April 21, 2004 in Washington, D.C. to finalize their presentation for the semi-annual meeting of the International Joint Commission. A conference call was conducted on May 6, 2004 to discuss the action items resulting from the semi-annual meeting. On June 8, 2004 the Boards held a second conference call to discuss ongoing work, the 2004 Annual Public Meeting in the Basin, and a Commission request for information to support the IJC's International Watersheds Initiative.

The International Watersheds Initiative calls for the establishment of ecosystem-focused watershed boards, in accordance with a 1998 request from the U.S. and Canadian governments. [Core elements](#) of the concept include recognizing local expertise and initiatives and coordinating among numerous organizations within the watershed -- including the IJC's boards -- for mutual benefit, while respecting differing responsibilities. The IJC's fundamental interest in promoting the watershed board concept is to more effectively meet its mandate of preventing and resolving transboundary water disputes and not to replace existing basin authorities or organizations. The Commission has requested information to assist preparation of its second report to governments under the International Watershed Boards Reference of November 19, 1998.

Gold Portage Beaver Dam

Rising lake levels, resulting from precipitation received during May, led to the overtopping and eventual breach of a beaver dam blocking Gold Portage. At the end of May, the USGS recorded a flow of 574 cfs (16.25 cms) through the breached dam.



USGS staff monitors the beaver dam at Gold Portage.
Picture courtesy of the USGS.

Gold Portage, which connects Rainy and Kabetogama lakes, was blocked in the spring of 2003 when a beaver colony took advantage of low lake levels. Although it was originally a high level overflow between the two lakes, Gold Portage has conveyed flow on a regular basis since the area was cleared in the 1950s.

From a regulation standpoint, the existence or nonexistence of the beaver dam does not affect the ability of Boise and Abitibi-Consolidated to comply with the IJC's 2001 Consolidated Order for regulation of Rainy and Namakan lake levels and outflows. The IRLBC's main concern is that flow through the portage (if any) is known and included in outflow calculations for Namakan Lake.

Eagle Banding

On June 21, IJC Commissioners Allen Olson (USA) and Robert Gourd (Canada) made a special trip to Voyageurs National Park (VNP), in the Rainy-Namakan Basin to observe bald eaglet banding. Local IRLBC member, Lee Grim of International Falls, coordinated arrangements for their trip.

The Commissioners arrived at the Ash River Visitor center and boated with VNP staff to an eagle nest territory on Namakan Lake. The field research and banding team explained the who, what, why, when, where and how of the park's eagle management and research work since 1989.

Dr. William Bowerman and two of his graduate students of Clemson University and Teryl G. Grubb, Wildlife Research Biologist of the United States Forest Service, Flagstaff, Arizona demonstrated the climbing and banding procedures. The Commissioners got an eagle's eye view that made their trip very worthwhile and were interviewed by a reporter of Minnesota Public Radio.

Agency Links

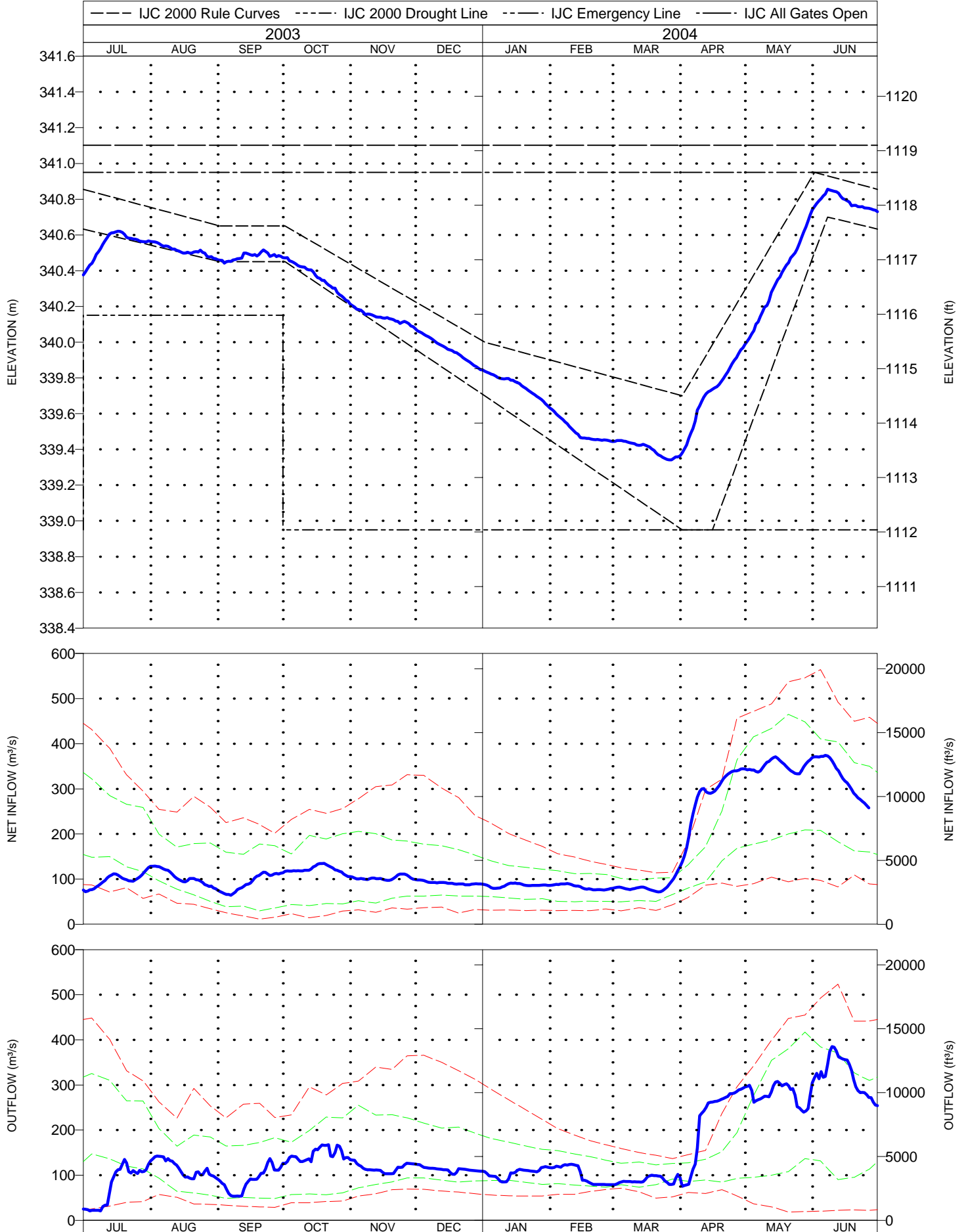
Additional basin data and information pertaining to the IRLBC and IRRWPB can be found at the following websites.

[International](#) Joint Commission
Lake of the [Woods](#) Control Board
USACE – St. Paul District, [Water](#) Control Center

The Boards will be using the Newsletter as a mechanism to keep the public informed. If you have comments or questions, please contact the Boards' Secretary:

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NAMAKAN LAKE



RAINY LAKE

