



# NICOLA TRIBAL ASSOCIATION (NTA)

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August 24, 2015

To: the Upper Nicola, Coldwater, Lower Nicola, Nooaitch, Shackan, and Cook's Ferry Bands  
Cc: Tracy Wimbush, Jess Urquhart

From: Neil Todd

Re: Nicola Dam Flow Release Committee Meeting 3 p.m. Thursday, August 20, 2015

I joined the 3 p.m. meeting by phone at about 3:20 but was able to get caught up on the discussions, which centred around three main themes:

1. Water temperatures and flow increases.

Water temperature dataloggers are in place at the Nicola Lake outflow, below Nicola Dam; in the Nicola at Norgaard's just above the confluence with the Coldwater; and in the Nicola upstream from its confluence with Spius Creek (UREP site). On July 31 air temperature was 35C and flow from Nicola Dam was <2.7 cubic metres/sec (cms). On August 13 air temperature was 37C and flow was 4 cms. On both days Nicola R temperature reached 25C at the UREP site. This indicated that there is not strong evidence that more flow provides significant stream temperature benefits, at least from the Coldwater confluence downstream. It is worth noting that there may have been some benefit in the reach between Nicola Dam and Norgaard's: on July 31 water temp was 21 at the Dam and 23 at Norgaard; but on August 13 water temp at the Dam was 22 and was 22.5 at Norgaard. The relatively confined channel of this stretch of river, as compared to the over-widened (bank erosion and channel migration) and more shallow reach between the Coldwater and Spius confluences, may be a factor – especially if the assumed increases in water column depth resulted when flow was increased.

2. Coldwater River and irrigation.

The significant rainfall during the preceding weekend caused an increase in flow that resulted in the seven day average flow exceeding 480 litres/sec (0.48 cms). Therefore in accordance with the Order that suspended irrigation withdrawals, irrigation could be resumed during the 12 hour night time periods. It is obvious, though, that the seven day average would not stay above 480 litres/sec and the Ministry will be making it known that irrigation would have to be voluntarily stopped or another Order will have to be issued.

3. Future releases from Nicola Dam

The volume at Spences Bridge is currently exceeding the target flow of 4 cms, which is enhancing migration conditions for chinook. Flow at the dam was reduced to 3.3 cms during this

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week but will be increased to 3.6 cms tomorrow (Friday), then the situation will be re-assessed on Monday August 21. The total flow at Spences Bridge will be maintained at about 4 cms until September 8 when releases from Nicola Lake will be reduced gradually to 1.8 cms. Considerable discussion occurred regarding some available storage at Mamette Lake and how that could best be used, perhaps to save a bit more storage at Nicola Lake which may be useful for assisting coho in October if the current drought persists through September with little or no rainfall. It is a juggling act, trying to maintain good migration flows for returning chinook spawners while conserving water behind Nicola Dam as much as possible in order to be prepared for extended drought conditions well into the fall.

The next meeting of the Planning Committee will take place on Sept 3 at 9 a.m.