

NECHAKO FISHERIES CONSERVATION PROGRAM

A Joint Program of the Government of Canada, Alcan and the Province of British Columbia

NECHAKO RIVER TECHNICAL COMMITTEE DRAFT DECISION RECORD

DATE: APRIL 8, 2002

Decision Record (2002/03-2) DL

2 The NFCP received a request from Alcan regarding the operation of the Skins Lake Spillway as follows:

- Alcan is in the process of planning a discharge change at Skins Lake Spillway to increase the water flow to comply with the NFCP Decision Record of December 21, 2001 requiring an average discharge to March 31, 2002 of 31cms. There is no required minimum release in this Decision Record but past practice has permitted Alcan to "saw tooth" the water discharge around the required average, using minimum gate movements of 0.01 m, to avoid discharging excess water, as long as the average discharge was respected. In this year, Alcan planned to increase the discharge when the daily discharge level reached 30.25 m³/s.
- The ambient temperature in the Spillway area has fallen to sub-zero levels and is staying there so the ice on the gate operating mechanism would have to be removed by a de-icing procedure before the gate can be moved, otherwise damage to the gate will result. De-icing procedures require bringing in a crane from Terrace to support the work platform used to operate the de-icing equipment. Consequently, Alcan is requesting an opinion from the NFCP on the urgency of making a gate movement under these conditions.

The situation is as follows:

- As of April 3, 2002, the average discharge of water since December 21, 2001 has been 31.23 m³/s. The present rate of discharge is 30.34 m³/s. At the present rate of reservoir elevation recession (-0.03 ft / day) the average discharge from the Spillway will be 31.0 m³/s by April 21, 2002.
- The real-time rate of discharge on April 21 would be 29.96 m³/s. The original discharge rate proposed for the winter of 2001-2002 was 30.0

m³/s but this was increased to 31.0 m³/s to ensure the NFCP water budget was delivered by March 31, 2002. This was accomplished.

Alcan would prefer to avoid the extra expense of de-icing the gates under the current conditions. If, in the opinion of the NFCP, the water discharge is adequate to support their mandate, Alcan will wait to make a water discharge change until the ice has left the gates naturally within the next couple of weeks. As soon as it is reasonably practicable Alcan will increase the discharge.

If, in the opinion of the NFCP, the water discharge as stated above is inadequate, Alcan will proceed with de-icing the gates as soon as the arrangements for transportation of the crane can be completed.

The NFCP has reviewed this request and determined that the drop in flow over the period in question (for this April) is approximately equal to a 2mm stage difference (based on WSC stage discharge curve) on the Nechako River below Cheslatta Falls. Based on this information, the Technical Committee has accepted Alcan's request on the basis that the small change in flows would not affect the emergent Chinook fry.

3. Given the current weather conditions the normal spring increase in flows would not take place until April 21 or later, dependent on the timing of ice melting around Murray and Cheslatta Lakes. Assuming that the timing of the change is April 21, and further assuming that the Alcan will request that the fall release from the Nechako Reservoir not exceed 30 m³/s to allow for completion of the Skins Lake Spillway Maintenance Project, Alcan is to be directed to set the spring release from the reservoir at 52.7 m³/s on or before the end of April 26, 2002 subject only to constraints on the notification of the public.

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