

NECHAKO FISHERIES CONSERVATION PROGRAM

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

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE DECISION RECORD

DATE: November 18, 2002

Decision Record (2002/03-04)

4. The Technical Committee has been made aware of the following:
- Alcan implemented the fall and winter flow release of 30 m³/s from the Nechako Reservoir on September 2, 2002 as approved by the Technical Committee. Further, Alcan was completing construction work at the Skins Lake Spillway between August 20 and October 21, 2002 and had a limit on the reservoir release capacity at this same rate of release during this period.
 - Reservoir inflows have been much greater than normal this year. The reservoir level is above normal operating level for this time of year, and a projection of the spring 2003 reservoir level based on the current release and spring inflows could result in forced spill and dam safety issues. Based on this information, Alcan, in consultation with the Comptroller of Water Rights for B.C. proposes to spill additional water during the winter to reduce the risk of the spring reservoir level being above the safe target and potentially requiring the release of large spills next spring.
 - Alcan has provided the Technical Committee with additional information that describes both the uncertainty in the predicted winter inflows to the reservoir and the resulting effects on the spring reservoir elevation under alternate release scenarios.

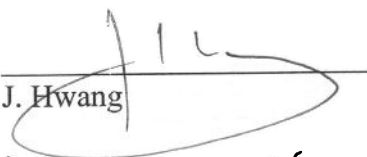
Given these uncertainties, Alcan has proposed that releases from the reservoir be regulated during the winter of 2002/03 based on the following principles:


- Changes in the rate of release that are to be greater than 30 m³/s will be made in steps such that the maximum change in release per step is not greater than 30 m³/s;
- Increases in releases from the reservoir following ice formation on the Nechako River should be avoided if possible;

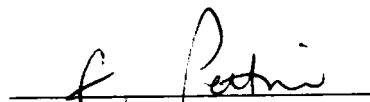
- The time between gate changes will be not less than two weeks recognizing the operational limitations of making gate changes in the winter (de-icing and safety), the uncertainty of predicting increases or decreases of inflow over the winter, and the need to make final decisions that place dam safety and flood protection first;
- The total number of gate changes made during the winter period will be minimized; and,
- Finally, any gate change decisions by Alcan would not decrease the release between March 7, 2003 and May 15, 2003 in the interests of emerging Chinook salmon.


Alcan has further proposed to allow spill releases to attenuate naturally from the spillway as the reservoir decreases over the winter period. As well, Alcan proposes to provide monthly updates to the NFCP Technical Committee of the reservoir level, inflows and outflows so as to keep them apprised of changing conditions throughout the winter period.

The Technical Committee has reviewed this information and recognizes the requirement to spill water. The Technical Committee, however, has a responsibility to ensure that any flow release decision will not risk Nechako chinook production. The Technical Committee has reviewed the proposed flow release scenarios and has concluded that they are unlikely to have a negative effect on Chinook production. The attached Memorandum provides the background information and the rationale for the Technical Committee's decision.


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