

Update: Flood warning – Southern Lakes

July 16, 2021 at 1 p.m.

A flood warning is being maintained for:

- Bennett Lake, Tagish Lake and Marsh Lake

Water levels on Bennett Lake, Tagish Lake, and Marsh Lake are currently 13, 8, and 18 centimetres above 2007 levels, respectively. Currently, water levels are mostly stable with a slight decline in the last five days.

Recent lower than normal temperatures and little to no rain has allowed flows in upstream tributaries to decrease substantially. Contributions from Atlin River have started to stabilize. This indicates there is still enough snow in the highest elevation areas of the watershed to generate high runoff volumes. Glacial melt has also likely decreased with the lower temperatures over the last five days.

The current forecast is for close to or slightly above, seasonal temperatures and minimal rainfall through the weekend with some potential scattered showers mid-week. Water levels are predicted to remain close to current levels in the short term.

Yukon Energy models water levels in the Southern Lakes, with forecasts updated regularly. Modelling indicates that inflows to the Southern Lakes have decreased from over 1500 m³/s at the end of June, to close to 700 m³/s currently. Updated model results project a peak water level of 657.9 metres above sea level for Marsh Lake, which is close to 38 centimetres above current levels. This assumes average July temperatures and precipitation. Below and above average July rainfall could result in lower and higher water levels from 657.6 to 658.2 metres above sea level. These forecasted peak water level estimates may change as the model is rerun with updated observations. The Government of Yukon is in continuous communication with Yukon Energy regarding water level modelling forecasts for the Southern Lakes as conditions change.

Rainfall is the greatest source of uncertainty as precipitation timing and severity will likely determine the peak water level in 2021. Above-normal temperatures that promote continued snow and glacier melt will also play a role. Dry conditions in the last 4 weeks have resulted in limited rainfall inputs, which has helped to limit water level increases beyond those driven by snowmelt.

Flood prone property owners are advised to have a plan in place. See Yukon.ca for more information. We will continue to monitor conditions and will provide updates as conditions change.

Advisory and warning levels

High streamflow or water advisory means that river or lake levels are rising or expected to rise rapidly, but that no major flooding is expected. Minor flooding in low-lying areas is possible.

Flood watch means that river or lake levels are rising and will approach or may exceed bankfull or flood stage. Flooding of areas adjacent to affected rivers and lakes may occur.

Flood warning means that river or lake levels have exceeded or will exceed bankfull or flood stage imminently, and that flooding of areas adjacent to the rivers and lakes affected will result.

Contact

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