



Columbia River Water Use Plan

Update for Revelstoke and Upper Arrow Lakes Reservoir

Number 1

Introduction

This update provides information about the projects that BC Hydro is planning to implement this year in Revelstoke and upper Arrow Lakes Reservoirs under the Columbia River Water Use Plan (WUP).

The Columbia River Water Use Plan

The Columbia River WUP defines how BC Hydro will operate its water control facilities on the Columbia River from Kinbasket Reservoir downstream to the Canada/US border. Water control facilities include the Mica, Revelstoke, and Hugh Keenleyside dams.

The objective of the WUP is to balance competing uses of water including fish, wildlife, recreation, heritage, flood control, and power generation. The WUP was developed through a consultative planning process involving representatives from BC Hydro, provincial and federal government agencies, municipal government, industry, First Nations, and local stakeholders.

The WUP outlines operational requirements for BC Hydro's water control facilities and specific physical works to benefit fish, wildlife and recreation. Numerous monitoring studies will also be undertaken as part of the Plan. The monitoring studies will evaluate the success of the physical works and help develop a better understanding of how these resources are affected by facility operations.

The provincial Comptroller of Water Rights reviewed the Columbia River WUP under the provisions of British Columbia's *Water Act* and involved federal/provincial agencies, First Nations and stakeholders who might be affected by the Plan. The Comptroller approved the Columbia River WUP in January 2007.

Implementation

The Columbia River WUP will be implemented over a 13-year period. This year, the Water Comptroller will direct BC Hydro to start work on revegetation programs, fisheries studies, boat access improvement projects and archaeological studies. This update provides details of the projects planned for Revelstoke and Upper Arrow Lakes Reservoirs.

Fish Studies

This summer, a number of fish studies will be started in the Columbia River downstream from the Revelstoke Dam. The goal of these studies is to collect information that will help determine whether planned changes in dam operations (minimum flows) benefit fish populations.

White Sturgeon

In cooperation with provincial recovery efforts, white sturgeon are being reared at the Kootenay Sturgeon Hatchery. About 12,000 young fish will be released into the Columbia River in early spring (May). Releases are planned downstream from the Revelstoke Dam (4,000) and Hugh Keenleyside Dam (8,000). Follow up monitoring will track survival, growth, and distribution of the released fish. Other studies will be started this year to provide information on how water flows affect white sturgeon in the Columbia River.



Boat Access Improvements

BC Hydro will be evaluating options for improving recreational boat access at Centennial Park in Revelstoke. A feasibility study will be completed this spring to determine if boat access to the river can be safely provided in the Revelstoke area. This study will identify options for either improving access at the existing Centennial Park launch or constructing a new boat ramp. These options will be evaluated in terms of safety, engineering feasibility, cost, and environmental and heritage impacts/benefits. BC Hydro will consult with local stakeholders to determine the preferred option.



In addition to boat access improvements, BC Hydro expects the Comptroller of Water Rights to order debris removal programs under the WUP in the future for Arrow Lakes Reservoir. In preparation, BC Hydro expects to undertake an environmental review in 2007 or 2008 to make sure that any future debris removal activities are completed in an environmentally sensitive manner.

Archaeology Program

There are a number of known heritage sites within the Columbia River system, and there may be other sites within the drawdown zones of upper Arrow Lakes and Revelstoke reservoirs affected by reservoir and dam operations. An archaeological site overview assessment will be started this spring to identify areas that may contain archaeological material. Results of these assessments will be used to determine heritage site protection needs, and help direct both revegetation and construction projects undertaken as part of the WUP.

Revegetation Program

The goal of the revegetation program is to increase and maintain plant cover in the reservoir drawdown zone through planting and fertilization. A well-established plant cover will benefit fish and wildlife, help control dust, improve recreation, reduce shoreline erosion, and help protect archaeological sites.



During the revegetation program, select bare areas will be seeded with fall rye and lenticulate sedge, planted with willow and native wetland plants, and fertilized.

A number of possible planting sites have been identified within the drawdown zone of Arrow Lakes Reservoir. This year sites will be visited to assess growing conditions and determine whether the site can support long-term plant growth. Other work will also be started this spring to prepare for planting. Sedge seeds will be collected and nursery stock will be developed for willow and other wetland plants.

BC Hydro will work with community residents, governments and First Nations in designing the revegetation program to ensure that it is compatible with recreation activities and other land uses, and archaeological site protection needs.



Map of possible planting/fertilizing sites identified for Upper Arrow Lakes Reservoir.

Larger scale maps are available that show the location of potential sites that BC Hydro will assess for planting suitability starting in April of 2007. Please contact us if you are interested in getting copies.

How to get more information?

For more information please contact Jennifer Walker-Larsen, Stakeholder Engagement Advisor at the Revelstoke District Office.
Email: jennifer.walker-larsen@bchydro.com
Phone: 250 814-6645.

- Copies of the Columbia River Water Use Plan and the Executive Summary of the Columbia River Consultative Committee report are available at www.bchydro.com/environment/wateruse/wateruse30859.html.
- To sign up to receive updates for specific programs and projects please call or email **Jennifer Walker-Larsen**.