

NEWS RELEASE

Distributed October 4, 2022

Pulse release on Nanaimo River to encourage Chinook migration

Partnership between Nanaimo Fish Hatchery, Nanaimo Forest Products and City

Summary

During the week of October 2, Nanaimo Forest Products and the City of Nanaimo will release water from the Fourth Lake and Jump Creek reservoirs to provide a temporary pulse flow to the Nanaimo River. The public may notice an increase in water levels in the Nanaimo River, as the flow will increase from its present level over the course of the week and then decline to summer levels, unless it rains. Caution around increased water levels is advised for residents adjacent to the river and in-stream users such as boaters or fishers. The pulse release will be noticeable starting Wednesday, October 5, and will taper off by the weekend of October 8-9.

A partnership between the Nanaimo Fish Hatchery and the two water licensees, in concert with Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Provincial Ministries has existed for a number of years. The parties come together annually to coordinate an early fall flush of fresh, cool water to encourage Chinook salmon waiting in the Nanaimo River estuary to move upstream to begin spawning.

Through careful management of the reservoirs, there is sufficient reserves available to be able to facilitate the pulse release, despite this year's late-season drought.

Strategic Link: Encouraging Chinook salmon migration supports a resilient and regenerative ecosystem leading to a greener Nanaimo.

Key Points

- Nanaimo Forest Products operates Fourth Lake and will release water early in the week. Water from Fourth Lake takes two days to reach where it converges with the South Fork, to join with the City's release.
- The City of Nanaimo operates Jump Creek dam and will release additional flow starting on Wednesday; normally the City releases about 1 cubic metre per second to augment base flow in the Nanaimo River.
- Mature Chinook salmon typically wait in the tidal portion of the Nanaimo River, until the first fall rains provide enough flow to move upstream. The pulse release provides that flow, and over the past several years has aided in recovery of this species.
- Nanaimo River Hatchery staff swim the river regularly to monitor the numbers of fish and determine readiness for migration.

Quotes

"The citizens of Nanaimo, through conservation of their drinking water and the City's careful management of its reservoir make this pulse release possible, even though we have had a long dry summer. Nanaimo's clear commitment to environmental sustainability is one of the guiding principles that govern how the City's most precious resource is managed."

Jake Rudolph
CAO
City of Nanaimo

"Nanaimo Forest Products, through its releases from Fourth Lake, are one of the main contributors to the health of the Nanaimo River. We are pleased to join with the City again this year to provide the additional pulse flow to encourage migration of salmon."

Honey Nampak
Technical Services Superintendent
Nanaimo Forest Products

"Fish hatchery staff swam this week and there are a lot of chinook holding in the lower river. The rain we had forecasted, which would have helped encourage migration has disappeared and a water release will be beneficial."

Brian Banks
Manager
Nanaimo River Hatchery

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