

Sturgeon-Nipissing French Committee
Pre-Freshet Call Meeting Minutes
March 4, 2021
1:00pm - 4:00pm

Conference Call Attendance: MNRF (North Bay District, Sudbury District, Parry Sound District, Surface Water Monitoring Centre (SWMC)), Ottawa River Regulation Secretariat (ORRS), Ontario Power Generation (OPG), Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC), Hydromega, West Nipissing Power, North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority (NBMCA), Dokis First Nation, Nipissing First Nation, Municipality of French River, Municipality of St. Charles, Nipissing Township, Municipality of West Nipissing, Municipality of Callander, Town of Temagami, Municipality of Killarney, Office of the Fire Marshall and Emergency Management (OFFEM)

Minutes

1) Welcome and Introductions

- MNRF conducted a roll call and committee members shared their role in water management and the length of time they have been involved in water management.

2) 2021 Freshet Overview – MNRF North Bay District

- MNRF shared a presentation which provided an overview of Sturgeon-Nipissing-French (SNF) watershed information and highlighted key sections of the SNF Committee's Terms of Reference (TOR) – see presentation for details.
 - If anyone requires a copy of the TOR let Shannon know.

3) Weather Forecast (5 day) – MNRF SWMC

- Next five days will be cold with no major precipitation. Daytime temperatures will range from -5 to -10C with nighttime temperatures ranging from -10 to -20C.
- Day five's temperature is expected be above normal with 5-10cm of snowfall if precipitation occurs.
- Weather outlook is provided using Aviation Forest Fire and Emergency Services February 10 forecast.
 - March – below normal temperatures with normal precipitation.
 - April – below normal temperatures with below normal to normal precipitation.
 - May – normal temperatures with normal precipitation.

4) Snow Readings

- **OPG** (see presentation for details) - data can also be found at opg.com/river
 - Snow surveys are conducted bi-weekly and are available online shortly afterwards.

- Sturgeon River - gentle drawdown taking place on Red Cedar and a small drawdown taking place on Tomiko today. Do not foresee issues reaching drawdown target.
 - South River – normal drawdown strategy.
 - Wanapitei River – another increase occurring today with levels settling where they would normally be.
 - Committee members receive Inflow and storage reports which build on publicly available data on OPG website.
- **MNRF North Bay District**
 - Five snow courses are monitored in the district. The contractor who provided readings for Afton and Dana stations has retired and has not been replaced yet. PSPC provided readings for these stations this week. All readings were taken this week.
 - Afton
 - Snow depth = 55.6cm, Snow water equivalent (SWE) = 101.6mm, 74.9% average
 - Chaudière Dam – Snow depth = 44.2cm, SWE = 48.3mm, 59.7% average
 - Dana – Snow depth = 45.7cm, SWE = 89.4mm, 76.2%
 - Martin River – Snow depth = 45.8cm, SWE = 50.8mm, 45.4%
 - Temagami – Snow depth = 54.9cm, SWE = 86.0mm, NA %average
 - **NBMCA** (see spreadsheet for details)
 - Most recent survey was conducted on March 11 and will begin to conduct on a weekly basis to determine inconsistencies with some readings.
 - Overall snow depths are above average this year with SWE below average.

5) Levels and Flows

- **MNRF North Bay District** – dams are still in winter set. Tilden Lake Dam work is ongoing, dam is almost operational but still operating off of temporary dam. Temporary dam will continue to be operated until new dam is ready.
 - Tilden Dam - 9.44 local datum, 285.01m above sea level.
 - Marten Dam is winter set, operations will begin once freshet arrives, 9.650 local datum.
 - Wickstead - 8.26 local datum.
- **MNRF Sudbury District** – operate two smaller dams that are currently winter set with no operations planned.
- **PSPC** (see presentation for details)
 - Dokis First Nation shared that a community member has expressed concerns regarding operations at Little Chaudière Dam on Monday near the construction site. Watery/slushy conditions were making it difficult to move equipment, access vehicles, etc.

- PSPC confirmed that Little Chaudière Dam has been fully open since last year and that there are no plans on closing it until the spring.
- Decreased outflows being seen could be linked to lower levels on Lake Nipissing.
- A second observation by the same member was regarding no flows being seen downstream of Big Chaudière Dam.
 - PSPC shared that some closures at the dam have occurred but the dam is currently passing just above the minimum flow based on recent snow surveys and their efforts to not have an aggressive drawdown. Will continue to monitor in increase flows if needed.

6) Discussion and Questions

- Those interested in participating in the Lake Nipissing ice out prediction game, please email Graham your prediction date. OPG has offered to provide a prize for the winner (thank you OPG!).
- Freshet calls will be scheduled as needed throughout the spring freshet.
- MNRF will provide pre-freshet meeting minutes in the near future.