

Muskrat Falls Generation Project Stakeholder Update

MAY 17, 2019

Update on Spring Thaw Water Flows

The following is an update to the actual and forecasted water flows issued on May 16

As noted in our stakeholder update yesterday, we reported that with the spring melt the flow rate at Muskrat Falls was approximately 3,500 cubic metres per second (m³/s) raising to approximately 4,000 m³/s over the coming days.

Today, the flow rate at Muskrat Falls is over 4,000 m³/s and forecasted to increase to approximately 5,000 m³/s over the next couple of days. As the melt continues it is forecasted that flow increases to over 5,500 m³/s are likely early next week.

For context, this is approaching a rate that would only be expected once every 20 years.

Stakeholders should also be aware that as flows continue to increase in the river all spillway gates at Muskrat Falls will need to be opened to pass the increased flow in the river.

Stakeholders should be aware that this information is based on forecast data and is subject to change.

Monitoring on the lower Churchill River

The Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment - Water Resources Management Division (WRMD-MAE) regularly reports water and ice levels on the lower Churchill River on its website.

Please visit the following pages to learn more about water and ice levels during the spring melt.

- May 17, 2019 Public Advisory: Government Monitoring Water Levels at Mud Lake Road: <https://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2019/mae/0517n02.aspx>
- Churchill River Early Flood Warning and Alert System: https://www.mae.gov.nl.ca/waterres/flooding/lc_flood_warning.html
- Ice Jam Risk Forecast for the lower Churchill River: https://www.mae.gov.nl.ca/waterres/flooding/LC_Ice_Jam_Risk_Forecast.html

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CONTACT US

For more information or to speak to a member of our team, contact us:

1-888-576-5454

lowerchurchill@nalcenergy.com

 Twitter: @nalcenergy

 Facebook: facebook.com/nalcenergy

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Background Information

With warming temperatures in parts of central Labrador, the annual spring melt of ice and snow in the Churchill River watershed has begun. This melting ice and snow is increasing the amount of water that is flowing in the Churchill River. We are maintaining a constant water level of approximately 25m in the reservoir. To allow the increased water flow occurring as a result of melting ice and snow to pass through the spillway, we are raising the spillway gates. Raising the gates allows the naturally occurring increasing flows to pass through the spillway. All of the additional water that will be seen in the Churchill River watershed is due to the spring melt.

River Safety: The river around the Muskrat Falls facility is unsafe for recreational use. The ice cover has deteriorated, and strong currents are associated with high flows on the river. We advise people to avoid the areas upstream and directly downstream of the facility. During the spring melt, raising water levels and flooding from runoff and/or ice jams is possible. People should be aware of this risk and the possible consequences of a flood during this period.

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Facebook: [facebook.com/nalcorenergy](https://www.facebook.com/nalcorenergy)

