



INFORMATION BULLETIN

City of Abbotsford Prepared for Spring Freshet

Abbotsford, May 11, 2018 – The City of Abbotsford is prepared for the spring freshet and rising river levels announced Mayor Henry Braun today.

The snow pack this year is very high and unseasonably warm weather means we are expecting higher than usual water levels in all local rivers beginning as early as next week. The City's Emergency Flood Planning Committee has been holding meetings to review flood response plans, emergency routes and resource coordination.

Residents can be assured that our flood plan is in place and that staff have been monitoring the dykes regularly for the last few weeks. The work we did raising our dykes over the last few years ensures that we have a buffer for the high flows that are forecast.

The City of Abbotsford has an extensive dyking network to protect the community from floods on the Fraser and Sumas River systems. The City inspects and maintains the dykes and related infrastructure on a routine basis to keep the system functioning as designed.

In 2007, the City and the Provincial government collaborated together and provided funding to re-fortify and raise the height of the dykes to projected flood levels. Abbotsford's dykes were raised to the design flood level advised by the Province and include a 0.6 meter freeboard above the design water level."

City staff are closely monitoring snow pack and runoff forecasts provided by the Ministry of Environment and the readings on the Mission Gauge, which is the main indicator of the rising water level of the Fraser River.

Detailed flood information is available on the City's website at www.abbotsford.ca and also available through the @abbotsford app. Residents are encouraged to download the app and 'allow' notifications from the app as users will receive notifications right to their smart device when and if the freshet conditions change. The City website provides flood information for the Fraser River, including emergency planning and response, runoff conditions and information for residents living in the floodplain. Residents in the floodplain are advised to familiarize themselves with the flood preparedness information.

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FRESHET 2018: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Emergency Management British Columbia (EMBC) has advised communities that snow packs in the Fraser River basin are very large this year and are higher than the snow pack levels that occurred in 2007. EMBC is expecting the spring freshet to bring higher than usual water levels in all local rivers beginning in mid-May and possibly lasting until July.

Spring freshet flooding occurs as a result of rapid snow melt, or a combination of rapid snow melt and additional input from rainfall. Snow pack plays an important role in seasonal flood risk by providing a plentiful source of water available for melt and runoff. In years with elevated snow packs there is an increased likelihood of flooding. However, whether or not flooding occurs depends on the weather conditions during the snow melt season, and flooding cannot be forecast as a result of snow pack levels alone. The greatest risk for flooding results from above normal snow packs combined with well above normal temperatures and/or heavy rainfall during the snow melt season. Given the necessary adverse weather conditions, flooding can occur in years with or without high snow pack.

The City's Emergency Flood Planning Committee has been meeting to review flood response plans, emergency routes and resource coordination. The City's Engineering Department is providing the lead role on flood operations and is working with Police, Fire Rescue Service, City departments and outside agencies as required.

The following are key points for keeping you informed about flood preparations:

- The City is preparing for possible flooding in the Matsqui, Sumas and Glen Valley areas.
- The City of Abbotsford has an extensive dyking network to protect the community from floods on the Fraser and Sumas River systems.
- In 2007, the City and the Provincial government collaborated together and provided funding to re-fortify and raise the height of the dykes to projected flood levels. Abbotsford's dykes were raised to the design flood level advised by the Province and include a 0.6 meter freeboard above the design water level.
- The Ministry of Agriculture is a member of the flood response committee and will be working directly with producer associations on flood preparedness planning and flood response. Information for the agriculture sector is available at the Ministry website at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/business-market-development/emergency-preparedness>
- Detailed flood information and tips on how to be personally prepared is posted on the City's website at abbotsford.ca. Residents are encouraged to check the website often as information is updated daily. Public computers are accessible at all branches of the City library.
- Information is also available through the City's app @abbotsford. The app is free for download through the App Store or Google Play. The app allows you to access city information conveniently through your phone or digital device. It also allows you to receive

notifications from the City. The City will be using this method to notify residents in flood-risk areas if the situation changes or if new information is available.

- The City will also post important flood and river level updates on the social media channels Facebook: /CityofAbbotsford and Twitter: @City_Abbotsford. Please follow us for current information.
- In the case of an evacuation, residents will be notified in person by Abbotsford Police department members.