

## Houle, Brian (Crofton)

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**From:** Houle, Brian (Crofton)  
**Sent:** Monday, July 26, 2021 4:45 PM  
**To:** Houle, Brian (Crofton)  
**Subject:** Weekly watershed update July 26

Good afternoon,

Dry weather continues and while it is easy to enjoy the sunshine, Cowichan Lake level continues to decline and 2021 is now a water shortage year like too many before.

Kerr Wood Leidal predictions from last week have clarified higher risk of running Cowichan Lake levels to empty if flows are not reduced.

Applications to both provincial and federal regulators were submitted on July 16 in light of the risk of not enough water in the lake.

With authorizations arriving late last week and then earlier today, both federal and provincial regulators have expedited those applications and Catalyst now has authorization to reduce river flow in Cowichan.

Beginning on July 28 (Wednesday) flow reductions of 0.5 cms reduction each day for 3 days will be taken.

Later on Wednesday the flow will be 6.5 cms, later on Thursday the flow will be 6.0 cms and then on Friday afternoon, a third reduction in flow down to 5.5 cms. Flow reductions will begin at the weir in the afternoon and multiple small gate adjustments will be made to bring the flow down slowly.

As part of the authorizations, Catalyst is required to have qualified environmental people monitoring and managing the impacts on the river and specifically on the fish in the river.

The region also has many engaged citizens who participate on a voluntary basis helping to ensure negative impacts from river flow reductions are managed.

A key activity during ramping down of river flow is to ensure stranding of small fish is managed; if fish are being cut off from access to main stem of river, salvage activities help relocate these fish.

With flow at 5.5 cms beginning later on Friday, flow will be controlled at that level and further flow reduction down to 4.5 cms will only be taken if the lake level drops into the orange zone in the flow guide chart (see below).

The flow guide chart is reproduced below and while in April, May and June, the flow guide was not adhered to, with the snow pack now fully melted, the flow guide is now more accurate.

The flow guide currently guides a flow of 5.5 cms and if the weather remains very dry, it is likely the lake level will drop into orange 4.5 cms zone.

As the flow settles in at 5.5 cms, the resulting slower rate of decline in level of the lake will help bring confidence to predictions of when pumping is expected to be needed (or not).

Weather prediction continues with just sunshine and another “heat dome” headed our way, as I have heard.

We are all learning new meteorological terms in recent years as we now have “river systems” and “heat dome”, and “1/1000 year weather events” from around the world to reflect on.

It seems we are coming up with new terms for brand new weather experiences that are off the scale or “normal and expected” and that worries me, what is our next extreme weather lesson going to be.

I am sad to report that some incorrect information is circulating online about Catalyst and water use and I feel compelled to clarify in this routine email and to this audience, accurate water use data for the mill.

Catalyst has flow measurement for the water it extracts from the Cowichan River and had achieved its lowest extraction rate of 1.4 cubic meters per second (cms) in 2016.

Since 2016 Catalyst has withdrawn from 1.5 to 1.6 cms of river water from the Cowichan.

Catalyst has a license authorizing the withdrawal of a maximum of 2.832 cms and withdraws just 56% of license allowance.

Catalyst also has strict license language that ensures the river below the mill pump station retains at least 2.832 cms of river flow, the mill must reduce operations if conditions cannot support the required river flow below the pump station.

Catalyst also understands that the water it withdraws from the Cowichan River is water that is prevented from flowing the last 20% of the river and that the mill use of water impacts the final 20% of the river due to this withdrawal of water.

From flow charts that predate the weir, 2021 is a year when the river flow would naturally decline and likely all the way to below 1 cms as was seen in 1915 flow chart.

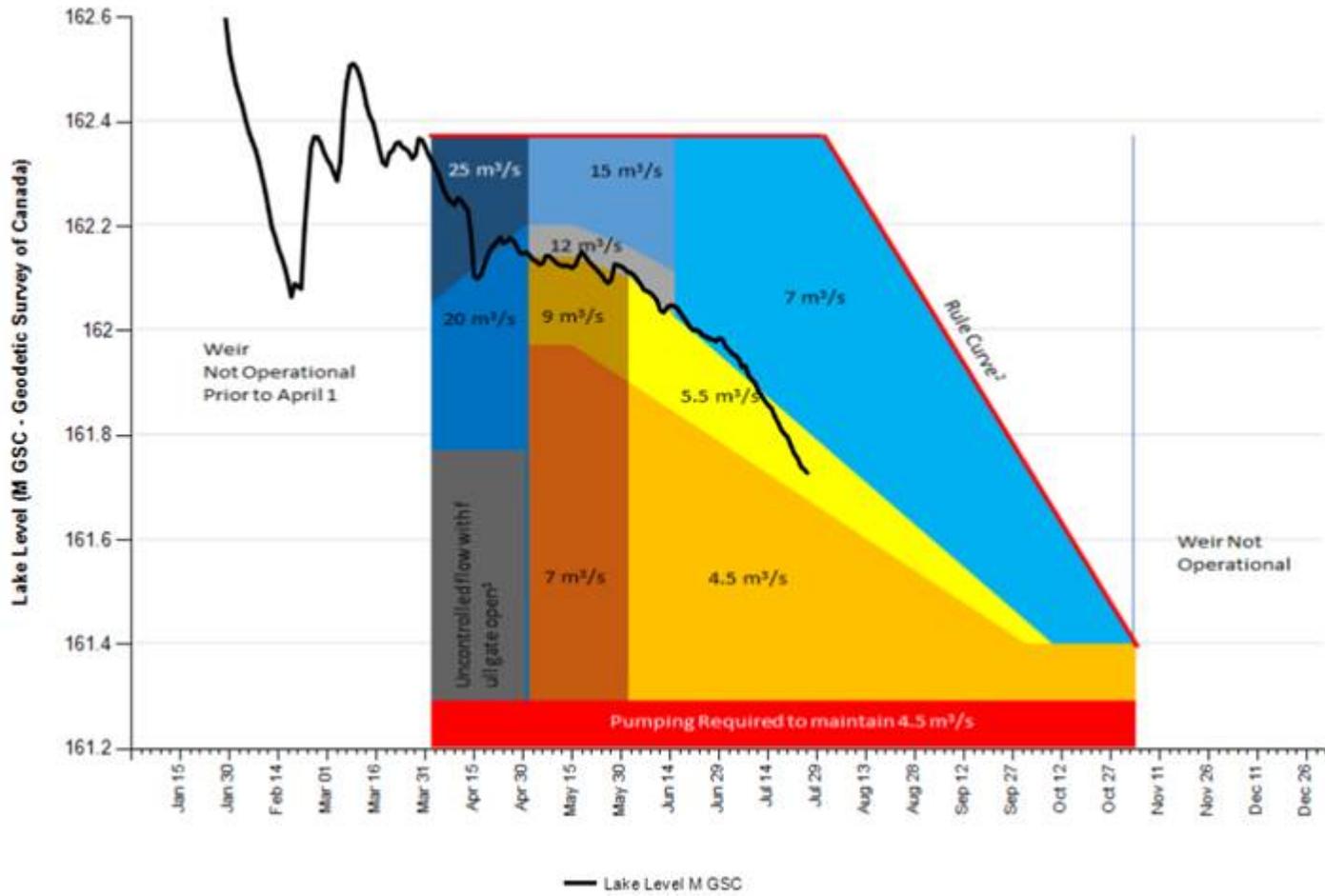
The presence of the weir ensures a much higher flow in the river and the presence of the mill results in some of the water that is released is available for the mill to operate.

As we move forward with flow reductions to below 7 cms, the Catalyst mill in Crofton will also move into water saving mode and will take both the simple actions of shutting down the automobile rinse station as well as instruct all workers to use water more sparingly.

Catalyst will bring focus to water use throughout the mill to ensure that during these dry summer months, the mill is doing everything it can to use less river water and to reduce the impact mill operations have on the lower Cowichan River.

Regards,  
Brian Houle  
Manager, Environment  
Catalyst Crofton  
250-246-6236

### 2021 Cowichan Lake Level and River Flow Guidance Chart - Above Average snow pack

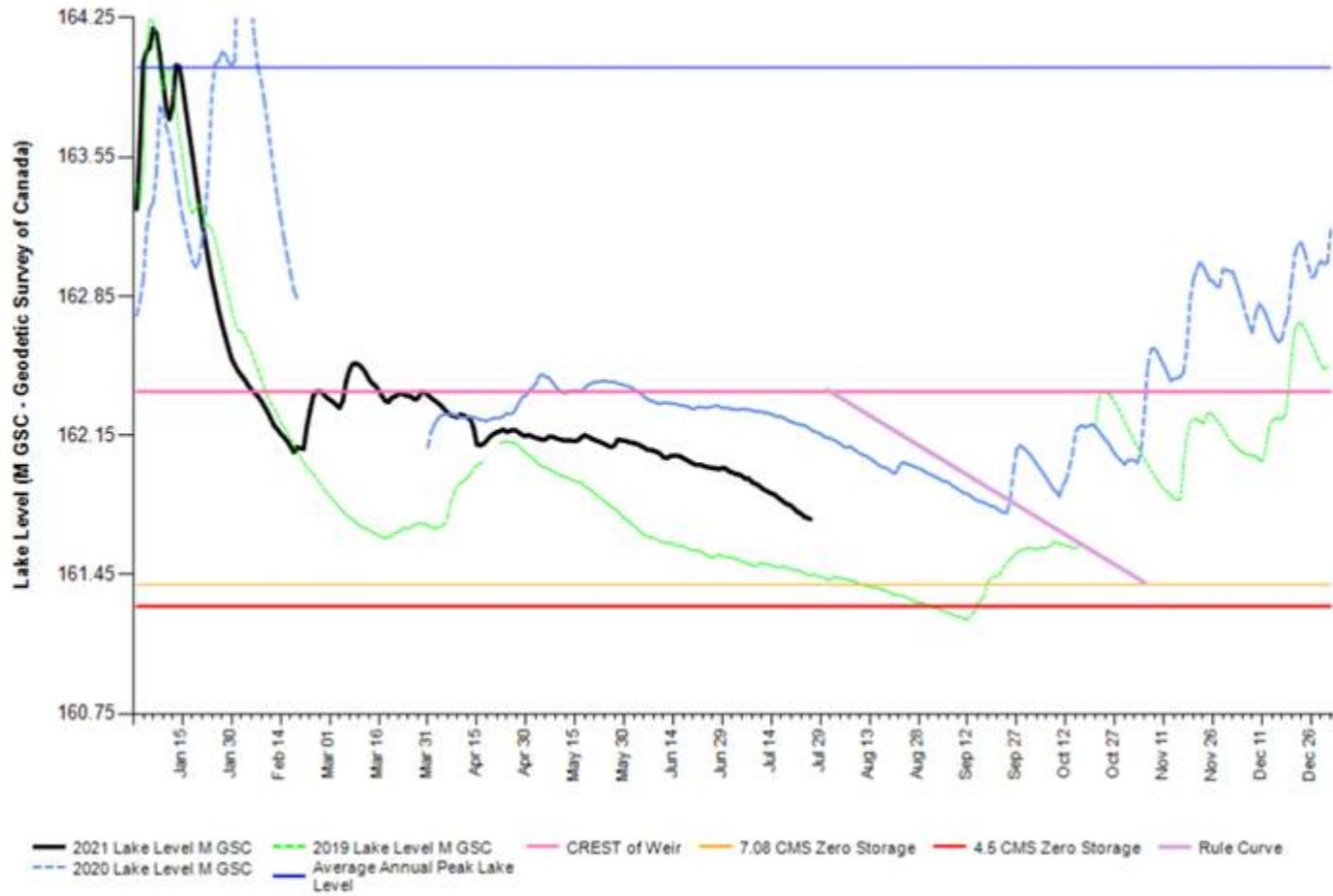


## Next 7 Days

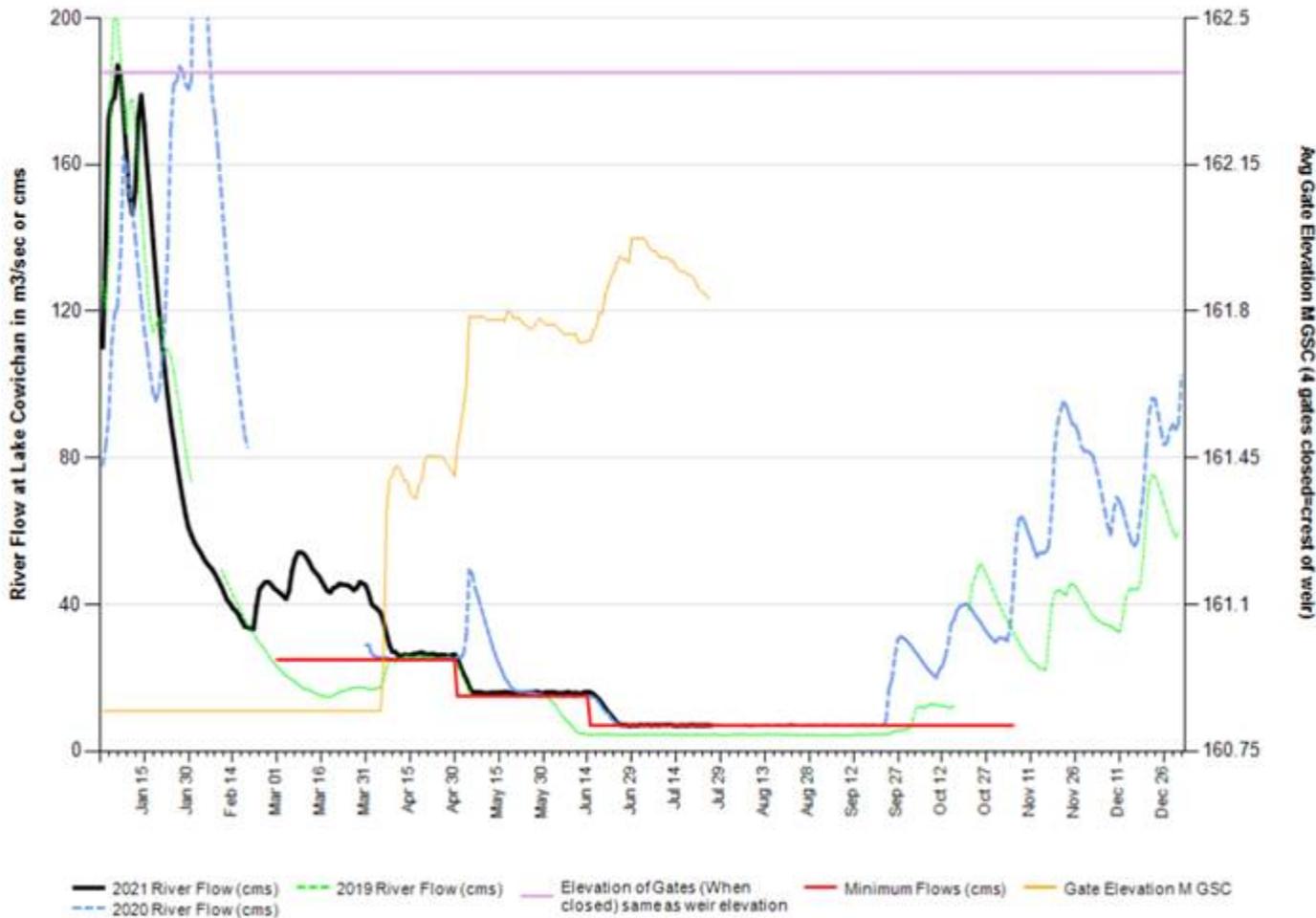


	<b>Tue</b> 07/27 Sunny	<b>Wed</b> 07/28 Mainly sunny	<b>Thu</b> 07/29 Sunny	<b>Fri</b> 07/30 Sunny	<b>Sat</b> 07/31 Sunny	<b>Sun</b> 08/01 Mainly sunny	<b>Mon</b> 08/02 Sunny
	29°	31°	30°	31°	31°	29°	28°
Feels like	32	34	33	34	34	30	30
Night	15°	16°	17°	17°	15°	15°	13°
POP	10 %	20 %	10 %	0 %	0 %	10 %	10 %
Wind (km/h)	5 NE	5 s	4 N	5 s	4 s	5 SE	4 SE
Wind gust (km/h)	8	8	6	8	6	8	9
Hrs Of Sun	14 h	11 h	14 h	15 h	15 h	10 h	14 h

2021 Cowichan Lake Level - 2021 (Black) & 2020 (Blue) & 2019 (Green)



2021 Cowichan River Flow - 2021 (Black) & 2020 (Blue) & 2019 (Green)



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