

November 19, 2007

DFO general comments related to potential new or alteration of existing storage sites

- after yesterdays meeting with WMC, it appears that a significant amount of pre-work related to site suitability for particular potential storage sites could be completed utilizing the water supply data sets and analysis (strictly for water availability type issues)
- First Nations interests (rights and title type issues) will need to be addressed early within this process if it is expected to succeed
- land tenure and land ownership will also be a significant factor as many potential sites have recreation sites and/or private land adjacent
- existing water rights and current licensing status will need to be considered explicitly in the storage prioritization scheme
- the majority of the sub-basins within the Nicola watershed already have identified issues with water supply/demand and proposed construction or alteration of water storage structures must consider current and future water use conflicts between consumptive extraction and instream flow needs for biota and ecosystem processes
- sites located upstream of fish bearing stream reaches will likely be “easier” to address within an environmental assessment context related to fish habitat impacts
- the development of storage sites in the upper Coldwater system will likely not be supported by DFO without substantial environmental assessments and flow management requirements, due to known low flow issues and a number of fish stocks of concern in this particular system
 - the proposed construction of an all-season resort in the upper Coldwater valley may be an issue related to both land use and water supply
- the lakes/systems that are stocked with fish by MoE may have specific management concerns and these should be discussed directly with MoE
- the Nicola watershed supports a number of salmonid species of concern to the agencies, including chinook and coho salmon, bull trout and steelhead
- other salmonid species in the Nicola system include pink salmon, rainbow trout, kokanee and mountain whitefish
- burbot are a species of concern in the watershed with documented presence in a number of lakes including Nicola, Douglas, and Mamit
- need for multi-year and multi-season fish sampling if fish presence is unknown or unconfirmed

- potential storage sites will need to be examined within a standardized assessment framework for environmental concerns/issues
- assessment of potential flow related impacts including water quantity, quality, timing and magnitude
- assessment of potential changes in base flows, low flows, peak flows

- assessment of biophysical changes in stream channels, lakes and wetlands including potential changes in downstream habitats
- alteration of riparian vegetation communities
- potential issues with fish passage at new or altered structures within fish bearing waters
- potential direct and indirect impacts to fish at all life stages including, spawning, incubation, rearing and migration

The above list of potential concerns and assessment requirements is not exhaustive and site specifics related to proposed storage sites will guide assessment requirements for particular sites.