

NEWS RELEASE

Distributed October 8, 2024

Nanaimo River flow to increase from planned pulse release

Partnership between City, Nanaimo Fish Hatchery and Nanaimo Forest Products helps protect migrating Chinook salmon

Summary

From Oct. 9-11, 2024, the City of Nanaimo and Nanaimo Forest Products will release water from the Jump Lake and Fourth Lake reservoirs to provide a temporary pulse flow of stored water down the Nanaimo River. The public may notice an increase in water levels in the river as the flow increases from its present level over the course of the week and then decline to summer levels, unless it rains. Residents near the river and river users should use caution due to the increased flow.

This partnership between the City, Nanaimo Forest Products and the Nanaimo Fish Hatchery, in concert with Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Provincial Ministries has existed for a number of years. The parties come together annually to coordinate an early fall flush of fresh, cool water to encourage Chinook salmon waiting in the Nanaimo River estuary to move upstream to begin spawning.

For more information on the City's approach to fish protection in our waterways, visit the [Water Conservation page](#) on the City website.

Strategic Link: Encouraging Chinook salmon migration supports a resilient and regenerative ecosystem leading to a greener Nanaimo.

Key Points

- The City of Nanaimo operates Jump Creek dam and will release additional flow starting on Oct. 9; normally the City releases about 1 cubic metre per second to augment base flow in the Nanaimo River. The pulse release will be noticeable starting Wednesday, Oct. 9, and will taper off by the weekend.
- Nanaimo Forest Products operates Fourth Lake and released water earlier this week. Water from Fourth Lake takes two days to reach where it converges with the South Fork, to join with the City's release.
- Nanaimo River Hatchery staff swim the river regularly to monitor the numbers of fish and determine readiness for migration. Mature Chinook salmon typically wait in the tidal portion of the Nanaimo River, until the first fall rains provide enough flow to move upstream. The pulse release provides that flow, and over the past several years has aided in recovery of this species.
- Through careful management of the reservoirs, there are sufficient reserves available to be able to facilitate the pulse release.

Quotes

"The City has worked with our partners for a number of years to ensure the Nanaimo River maintains the best conditions for fish in the river to spawn and migrate. This pulse release is possible thanks to water conservation by Nanaimo citizens and the City's careful management of its reservoir, along with Nanaimo Forest Products' careful operation."

Bill Sims
General Manager, Engineering and Public Works
City of Nanaimo

Continued... Nanaimo River flow to increase from planned pulse release

"Nanaimo Forest Products, through its releases from Fourth Lake, are one of the main contributors to the health of the Nanaimo River. We are pleased to join with the City again this year to provide the additional pulse flow to encourage migration of salmon."

Honey Nampak
Technical Services Superintendent
Nanaimo Forest Products

"Fish hatchery staff swam this week and there are a lot of chinook holding in the lower river. The rain we had forecasted, which would have helped encourage migration has disappeared and a water release will be beneficial."

Brian Banks
Manager
Nanaimo River Hatchery

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<https://www.nanaimo.ca/NewsReleases/NR241008NanaimoRiverFlowToIncreaseFromPlannedPulseRelease.html>