

Good Spirit Lake Levels Update

The Good Spirit Lake Watershed Association (GSLWA) owns and operates the control structures on Good Spirit Lake and would like to let property owners around Good Spirit Lake know that water levels are expected to remain above normal for the foreseeable future.

Good Spirit Lake entered the spring at approximately 484.45m (1589.40ft). This was just below the desired summer operating range of 484.48-484.63m (1589.5-1590ft). Due to above normal snowpack and rapid melt, inflows increased significantly this spring. Early forecasts provided to the GSLWA from WSA indicated that lake levels were forecasted to reach 484.90m (1590.88ft). On May 2 the forecast was updated to 485.20m (1591.86ft).

On May 2 the GSLWA mobilized operations, opening three outlet gates to begin releasing water from the lake to manage increasing inflows. This action was taken to proactively reduce peak lake levels ahead of the well above normal inflows the lake was receiving. While the lake naturally buffers high runoff events, it cannot store all inflows, especially during well above normal events. Therefore, making early, controlled releases was preferred to limit downstream impacts as well as mitigate risk to GSLWA's infrastructure. As lake levels continued to rise, water began flowing through the emergency spillway just east of the outlet structure, as it is designed to do.

As of May 12, the lake level is approximately 485.42m (1592.59ft), which is above the desirable operating range. The WSA forecast was updated last week and indicated that the lake could reach a level of approximately 485.5m (1592.85ft). Over the past few days, the pace at which the lake level has been rising has slowed. This suggests that the lake is nearing its peak and is expected to reach its highest level within the next few days. Any additional rainfall in the basin area would potentially extend higher than normal levels.

These conditions are thought to exceed a 1 in 25-year runoff event, making this year's runoff the highest in the last 10 years.

Historical high years include the summer of 2010, when the lake peaked at 485.67m (1593.41ft) and the summer of 2014, when the lake rose to 485.55m (1593.01ft) after a Canada Day long weekend rainstorm, and the spring of 2011 when the lake reached an elevation of 485.2 m (1591.86ft).

Increased outflows combined with already wet conditions can result in flooding of downstream agricultural lands and conditions continue to be monitored with support from WSA.

Since higher water levels on the lake and downstream may continue for some time, we remind area residents and visitors to the Good Spirit Lake area to use caution around the water due to fast moving water and higher lake levels.