FEDERAL PROVINCIAL FLOODPLAIN MAPPING AGREEMENT

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA Ministry of Environment Lands and Parks

Water Management Division Floodplain Management Branch

A DESIGN BRIEF ON THE Floodplain Mapping Study

SKEENA AND BULKLEY RIVERS

AT HAZELTON

An overview of the study undertaken to produce Floodplain Mapping for the Skeena and Bulkley Rivers at Hazelton



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FLOODPLAIN MAPPING STUDY

SKEENA AND BULKLEY RIVERS AT HAZELTON

<u>Preface</u>

The purpose of this design brief is to present a description of the methodologies used and results of the study undertaken to delineate the floodplain of the Skeena and Bulkley Rivers at Hazelton, Drawing 91-1 sheet 1 (Appendix 4).

1. Background

The Village of Hazelton is situated at the confluence of the Skeena and Bulkley (originally known as Watsonquah) Rivers. Located at the end of the navigable waters of the Skeena, Hazelton served as a distribution point for the Omineca gold fields. In 1868 the settlement was officially established and its name derived from the abundance of hazel bushes growing in the area. Later, in 1881 a Hudson's Bay Co. trading post was established. (Appendix 1.1).

Since then, numerous flood events, both major and minor, have been recorded. These events are normally associated with Spring freshet flows, although occasional annual peaks have occurred in the fall. Water Survey of Canada flow records for the Skeena River at Glen Vowell (just upstream of the study area) have been maintained since 1960. The maximum recorded discharge occurred in 1972, although available data indicates that the highest flood level in the Village of Hazelton occurred in 1936.

Following the 1972 event, the Regional District of Kitimat -Stikine prepared a report documenting the damages and problems incurred throughout the area for various flood events (Appendix 1.3). In this report, flood levels and areas of inundation in the Village of Hazelton for the 1936 and 1972 events and have been estimated by the Regional District Staff.

Rock groynes were constructed in the upstream reach of the Skeena during the 1960's by the Village to counter the erosion effects of freshet flows. Over the years the effects of high flows has taken its toll on these structures. Reconstruction of the groynes took place after the 1972 flood event and continual maintenance has been required since then. Additionally, "Gabion" mat type bank protection has been added (Appendix 1.2) to help alleviate this bank erosion problem.

Appendix 2 contains 6 photographs of the subject area including 2 historical photos of the 1936 flood. The photos including the cover photo, were obtained by staff of the Regional Office in Smithers on August 18, 1992, as indicated in Appendix 1.5.

2. <u>Present Studies</u>

The 1992 studies undertaken to delineate the floodplain of the Skeena and Bulkley Rivers at Hazelton are based on the following information:

- Survey data obtained by the Surveys Section, Water Management Division, Project 91 11 F004, in May 1991 (Appendix 1.4) and includes cross sectional data, longitudinal profiles and information regarding monitoring cross sections on the Skeena and Bulkley Rivers (Drawing No. 91-26, Sheet 1).

- Topographic base mapping of the study area was issued in May 1988, by the Mapping Section, Surveys and Resource Mapping Branch, Project 86-036 NAD27. The mapping uses air photography obtained in 1986 and is at a 1:5000 scale with one metre contour intervals.

3. Location

The Village of Hazelton is located in the Cassiar Land District of British Columbia at the confluence of the Skeena and Bulkley Rivers. The Skeena River originates in the Skeena Mountains and flows in a generally southerly direction to Hazelton, which is located about 280 km from the headwaters. From this point the Skeena swings westward another 220 km to the Pacific Ocean for a total distance of about 500 km. The Bulkley River originates in the Nechako Plateau and flows generally northwest 180 km to its juncture with the Skeena River.

Figure 1 is a location plan of the study area. Figure 2 is a key map showing the location of the floodplain mapping sheet for the study area at a 1:250,000 scale.

The drainage area of the Skeena River at Hazelton is 25,900 km2 and for the Bulkley River at Hazelton is 12,300 km2 giving a combined total of 38,200 km2 (Appendix 3).

4. Designated Flood

In accordance with the policy of the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, the flood levels and floodplain limits shown on the floodplain mapping sheets are based on a designated (1:200 year frequency) flow plus an allowance for hydraulic and hydrologic uncertainties. At Gauge 08EB003 - Skeena River at Glen Vowell (no longer active) the estimated designated (daily) flow is 6432m³/s. For Gauge 08EE001 - Bulkley River at Hazelton (no longer active) the estimated 1:200 year daily flow is 1654m³/s. Section 5 provides a further discussion regarding estimated flows for the study area.

5. Flood Magnitudes

As stated in Appendix 3, the Skeena River is one of the major rivers of British Columbia's north coast. Its watershed is quite mountainous and drains the Coastal Mountains, the Skeena Mountains and a portion of the Nechako Plateau. The major portion of the annual runoff is the result of melting of the annual snowpack. The annual peak flows also show the impact of snowmelt with most of the annual peaks occurring in May or June. However, occasional winter storms producing heavy warm rain falling on a shallow snowpack do cause flooding problems but this is mostly confined to the tributaries near the mouth of the Skeena. On rare occasions these winter storms do cross the Coast Mountains and produce an annual peak in October or November on the upstream tributaries as well.

Gauge 08EF001 - Skeena River at Usk and Gauge 08EE004 -Bulkley River at Quick are the only gauges currently in operation and provide 57 and 61 years of daily flow data respectively. Gauge 08EB003 - Skeena River at Glen Vowell operating from 1961 to 1985 and Gauge 08EE001, Bulkley River near Hazelton, operating during the years from 1928 to 1932, and 1935 to 1941, inclusive, were also used in the studies. The Hydrology Section Report, Appendix 3, outlines the study undertaken to determine the peak flows at Hazelton.

Following is a summary of the estimated daily and instantaneous flows used in the study which is taken from Table 2 of Appendix 3.

			Bulkley R.	Skeena R.	Skeena R.
drainage area		km2	@ mouth 12,300	@ Glen Vowell 25,900	below Bulkley 38,200
200 year	daily	m3/s	1654	6432	7769
200 year	inst	m3/s	2018	6818	8002
20 year	daily	m3/s	1351	4892	5966
20 year	inst	m3/s	1648	5186	6145
June 1, 1936	daily	m3/s	1510	* * *	***
June 12, 1972	daily	m3/s	1493	5530	6946
June 12, 1972	inst	m3/s	* * *	5860	7293
May 10, 1991	daily	m3/s	668	1257	1832

Peak Daily and Instantaneous Discharge

6.

Hydraulic Analyses

6.1 <u>General</u>

The information sources listed in Appendix 1 and 3 were utilized in the HEC-2 water surface profile computer program, version 6.4, developed by the Hydrologic Engineering Centre, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Davis, California. The flood profile studies assumed open channel flow conditions.

Flood profiles calculated for the Skeena and Bulkley Rivers in the study area are outlined as follows. A plot run of river cross sections was obtained. An assessment was made of the river channel survey data and cross section extensions which were obtained from the 1 metre contour topographic mapping. Output from the plot run was also used to review other data such as flow regime, loss coefficients, reach lengths, overbank information and relative Manning's "n" values.

6.2 <u>Sensitivity studies</u>

The total length of the Skeena River in the study area is 5.4 km. The average gradient of the flood profile in the study area is .12 percent. A total of 16 cross sections were used in this reach. The reach length of the Bulkley River is 2.3 km long. A total of 8 cross sections were used in this reach which has an average flood profile slope of .10 percent as shown in Figure 4. Water levels obtained from the May 10, 1991 survey were used to calibrate the model based on flow estimates listed in Section 5. Manning's "n" values for the channel varied from 0.027 in the lower reaches to 0.045 in the upper reaches (groyne area).

Sensitivity to discharge (Q) studies were made using estimated flows for the Q20 daily and instantaneous, Q200 daily and instantaneous and the Q200 instantaneous multiplied by a factor of 1.1. From these runs it was determined that the daily level + 0.6m dominates over the instantaneous level + 0.3m. The levels produced by the daily criteria, including the 0.6m allowance for uncertainties, generally yields a value equal to the levels produced by the 1:200 year instantaneous flow when multiplied by a factor of 1.1. Additional runs were made using the Q200 daily flows factored by 0.9, 1.0, 1.1 and 1.2. These runs indicate a general water level increase of about 0.4m for each 10% increase in "Q".

Sensitivity studies were also undertaken to determine the effect of increased Manning's "n" values on flood levels.

6.2 <u>Sensitivity studies</u> cont.

A comparative run using the Q200 daily flow and factored "n" values of 0.7, 0.85, 1.0 and 1.15 resulted in an average rise in levels of about 0.5m for each incremental increase in "n" value.

From these studies it was determined that the floodplain isrelatively sensitive to both "Q" and "n" changes as a result of the "U" shaped configuration of the valley in this area (see Figure 5). It was therefore decided to adopt a conservative approach and use the calibration "n" values multiplied by a factor of 1.15 combined with the "Q200" daily criteria to determine the flood levels.

At the request of Mr. Reid White, P.Eng., of the Smithers Regional Water Management Branch Office, a number of river cross sections surveyed in 1979 in the study area were resurveyed in 1992. Figure 5 indicates data from sections 5 and 11 on the Skeena River for 1979 and 1991. This data is typical of the information obtained at 9 other sections in the area and available in the survey package (Appendix 1.4). The calculated flood levels are indicated on these sections. There appears to be no significant degradation/aggradation trend effecting flood levels.

Figure 3 and 4 are profiles showing the thalweg, surveyed water level, high water marks for the various flood events and flood level determined in the study for the Skeena and Bulkley Rivers respectively.

7. Floodplain Mapping

7.1 General

The designated flood levels determined in the study were used to delineate the floodplain limits onto the existing 1 metre contour mapping of the study area. The studies were based on the information noted in Section 2.

The floodplain mapping of the Skeena and Bulkley Rivers, Drawing 91-1 Sheet 1 (Appendix 4) was produced and provides the following information:

- the location of river cross sections
- the designated floodplain limits
- the flood levels determined in the study
- the location of survey monuments established in May 1991.

8. Conclusions

- 1. This design brief presents an overview of the studies undertaken to produce the floodplain mapping sheets of the Skeena and Bulkley Rivers at Hazelton.
- 2. The floodplain in the study area is relatively sensitive to changes in "Q" and "n" values due to the valleys "U" shaped configuration.
- 3. The limit of inundation during the 1936 flood event (Appendix 1.2) in the Village of Hazelton is equivalent to the designated floodplain limits shown on Drawing 91-1 Sheet 1.

9. <u>Recommendations</u>

- 1. It is recommended that the floodplain delineated on Drawing 91-1, Sheet 1, be designated under the terms of the Federal Provincial Floodplain Mapping Agreement.
- 2. The Drawing may be used for administrative purposes related to the preparation of hazard map schedules for official plans; floodproofing requirements in zoning and building bylaws; the designation of floodplains in floodplain management plans; and the identification of floodable land by Subdivision Approving Officers.
- 3. Flood level data from significant events such as occurred in 1972 and 1936 should be obtained in the Village area to provide future additional hydraulic model confirmation data.

R.W. Nichols, P.Eng. Senior Hydraulic Engineer Flood Hazard Identification Section

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1571	1.400	DATE	R.W. NICHOLS ENGINEER				
SCALE: VERT. HOR.	1:4000	JANUARY 1993	FILE No. 400-0000 DWG No. FIGURE 5				





APPENDIX 1 Detailed Information Sources Skeena and Bulkley Rivers Floodplain Mapping Study

No. Source Contents 1 "The Skeena - river of History of the Skeena destiny" R.G. Large, 1957 Valley 2. "Village of Hazelton Report on the history of -Skeena River Erosion erosion problems at Protection" Northwest Hazelton and remedial Hydraulic Consultants Ltd. works. 3. "Floodplain Study" Regional Documentation of flood data District of Kitimatof the Skeena watershed Stikine, 1974 4. "Project No. 91 11 F004", 1 Volume containing channel May 1991, Surveys Section, cross sections, high water Water Management Division, elevations, thalweg and Ministry of Environment, water level profiles and Lands and Parks videotape of the cross sections.

Booklet of Photos (19 pages) provided by Mr. Reid White, R.P. Bio, P.Eng, Smithers Regional Office, File 35100-01/Hazelton

5.

Series of photos of Skeena and Bulkley Rivers at Hazelton obtained on August18, 1992. <u>APPENDIX 2</u> Skeena River at Hazelton Floodplain Mapping Study Photos of Study Area



SKEENA RIVER LOOKING DOWNSTREAM - GOVERNMENT STREET ON LEFT



SKEENA RIVER LOOKING UPSTREAM FROM XS 12 (All photos provided by Mr. Reid White, Smithers Regional Office)

APPENDIX 2 Skeena River at Hazelton Floodplain Mapping Study Photos of Study Area



SKEENA RIVER LOOKING UPSTREAM FROM XS 11



SKEENA RIVER LOOKING DOWNSTREAM TO XS 10 (All photos provided by Mr. Reid White, Smithers Regional Office)

APPENDIX 2 Skeena River at Hazelton Floodplain Mapping Study Photos of Study Area



GOVERNMENT STREET - HAZELTON 1936



GOVERNMENT STREET - HAZELTON 1936 (All photos provided by Mr. Reid White, Smithers Regional Office)

APPENDIX 3

Study No. 382 October 1992

HYDROLOGY SECTION REPORT

SKEENA AND BULKLEY RIVERS AT HAZELTON

DETERMINATION OF 20 AND 200 YEAR PEAK FLOWS

At the request of the Flood Hazard Identification Section, a hydrology study was carried out to determine the 20-year and 200-year peak flows on the Skeena River below and above the mouth of the Bulkley River and on the Bulkley River at the mouth.

The Skeena River is one of the major rivers of British Columbia's north coast. Its watershed is quite mountainous and drains the Coastal Mountains, the Skeena Mountains and a portion of the Nechako Plateau. The major portion of the annual runoff is the result of melting of the annual snowpack. The annual peak flows also show the impact of snowmelt with most of the annual peaks occurring in May or June. However, occasional winter storms producing heavy warm rain falling on a shallow snowpack do cause flooding problems but this is mostly confined to the tributaries near the mouth of the Skeena. On rare occasions these winter storms do cross the Coast Mountains and produce an annual peak in October or November on the upstream tributaries as well.

Hydrometric data are available from four gauges in the vicinity of the study area. These gauges with their period of record of annual peak flows is shown below.

Skeena River at Usk	8EF001	1928 to 1931 and 1937 to 1992
Skeena River at Glen Vowell	8EB003	1961 to 1985
Bulkley River near Hazelton	8EE001	1928 to 1941
Bulkley River at Quick	8EE004	1931 to 1992

The Skeena River gauge at Usk is located well downstream of the mouth of the Bulkley River and as such the flows at this gauge cannot be used directly to indicate the flows of the Skeena River just below the Bulkley River. The discontinued gauge at Glen Vowell was located a short distance upstream of the Bulkley River and can be used without adjustment. On the Bulkley River, the gauge at Quick with its long continuous record is located well upstream of the mouth. The discontinued gauge near Hazelton was located near enough to the mouth to indicate flows at this point. <u>1. Data Analysis</u>

In order to make maximum use of all the available data, it was decided to extend the available record at Glen Vowell and Hazelton and to use this extended data to estimate the peak flow below the confluence. This should give a more consistent data set for frequency analysis and produce more dependable results. Table 1 lists the annual peak daily flow data and estimates for the four gauge locations and for the location below the mouth of the Bulkley River. A code letter is shown against each flow value to indicate the source; these codes are defined as follows:

A Peak flow for the Bulkley at Hazelton estimated by correlation of peak flows with the Bulkley at Quick

r	=	0.809		b =	152
a	=	1.402		n =	: 11
	-		a		

where "r" is the correlation coeficient, "a" is the linear slope, "b" is the intercept and "n" is the number of years of overlapping record.

B Peak flow for the Bulkley at Quick estimated by correlation of peak flows with Bulkley near Hazelton.

r = 0.809	b = 134
a = 0.466	n = 11

- C Peak flow on the Skeena River below the Bulkley determined from the observed peak flow at Glen Vowell plus the estimated flow of the Bulkley River at the mouth for the same day as the peak at Glen Vowell. The estimate of the daily flow at the mouth of the Bulkley was based in daily flow correlations and watershed area.
- D Peak flow for 1972 for the gauge at Glen Vowell revised, based on an observed but unpublished peak instantaneous flow of 5860 m³/s. The daily peak flow was determined using an Inst./daily ratio of 1.06.
- E Estimate of the peak flow for the Skeena below the Bulkley based on correlation with the peak flows at Usk.

r = 0.965	b = -27
a = 0.830	n = 25

F

Estimate for the peak flow for the Skeena at Glen Vowell based on correlation with the peak flow for the Skeena below the Bulkley less the peak flow of the Bulkley at the mouth.

r	=	0.991	b	Ξ	96
а	=	0.998	n	=	25

M Measured and published peak flow.

m Value missing, could not be estimated reliably.

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	Skee			Bulkley River			
Year	at Usk	below Bulkley R	at Glen Vowell	at Quick	at mouth		
1928 1929 1930 1931 1932 1933 1934 1935 1936 1937 1938 1939 1940 1941 1942 1943 1944 1945 1946 1947 1948 1949 1950 1951 1952 1953 1954 1955 1956 1957 1958 1959 1960 1961 1962 1963 1964 1965 1966 1967 1968 1969 1970 1971 1972 1973 1974 1975 1976 1977 1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986	3910 M 3620 M 5010 M 4730 M m m m M 4330 M 3450 M 3540 M 3910 M 2690 M 2690 M 3910 M 3940 M 3790 M 6540 M 5920 M 5920 M 5920 M 5920 M 4660 M 5520 M 4760 M 5520 M 4670<	3218 E 2978 E 4131 E 3899 E m m m 3567 E 2836 E 2745 E 2488 E 2372 E 2488 E 2372 E 2488 E 2372 E 4090 4 4322 E 4953 E 5401 E 5401 E 5401 E 5401 E 5403 E 5403 E 5403 E 5403 E 5403 E 5403 E 5403 C 5403 C 5400	2451 F 2538 F 3407 F 3201 F m m m m 2577 F 1985 F 1757 F 2167 F 1906 F 2189 F 1856 F 1902 F 3241 F 3489 F 4134 F 6401 F 2343 F 2531 F 3128 F 3925 F 3025 F 3128 F 3925 F 3026 F 2531 F 3925 F 3025 F 3026 F 4439 F 2523 F 3025 F 3025 F 3026 F 4439 M 2520 M 4790 M 2860 M 3260 M 3260 M 3260 M 2530 M 2510 M 25	534 B 361 B 513 B 405 M 368 M 575 M 838 M 575 M 838 M 575 M 838 M 572 M 589 M 510 M 408 M 691 M 343 M 592 M 510 M 408 M 691 M 543 M 544 M 544 M 640 M 640 M 640 M 563 M 640 M 552 M 661 M 652 M 642 M 652 M 642 M 652 M 642 M	858 M 530 M 813 M 787 M 634 M 787 M 1520 M 926 M 1510 M 926 M 1080 M 943 M 1080 M 943 M 1080 M 943 M 1040 A 942 A 1041 A 1049 A 1049 A 1049 A 1052 A 1049 A 980 <t< td=""></t<>		

2. Frequency Analysis of Daily Peak Flows

Standard frequency analysis was carried out for all the peak daily flow values listed in table 1. (An analysis was also carried out on the observed values for comparison.) A review of all results indicated that the Pearson Type III distribution produced the best overall fit; this distribution was selected for use for all analysis results. Table 2 lists the frequency analysis results for peak daily flows (20-year and 200-year return periods) for the three locations: Skeena above and below the Bulkley and Bulkley at the mouth.

Table 2.

	Bulkley R Skeena River						
			at mouth	Glen Vowell	bl Bulkley		
drainage area		km2	12,300	25,900	38,200		
200-year	daily	m3/s	1,654	6,432	7,769		
200-year	inst	m3/s	2,018	6,818	8,002		
20-year	daily	m3/s	1,351	4,892	5,966		
20-year	inst	m3/s	1,648	5,186	6,145		
1936 June 01	daily	m3/s	1,510	m	m .		
1972 June 12	daily	m3/s	1,493	5,530	6,946		
1972 June 12	inst	m3/s	m	5,860	7,293		
1991 May 10	daily	m3/s	668	1,257	1,832		

Peak Daily and Instantenous Discharge

3. Instantaneous Peak Flows

In order to determine instantaneous peak flows at the three required locations, a regional analysis of the ratios of instantaneous peak flow to daily peak flow as published was completed. This analysis gave inst./daily ratios as follows:

Skeena below Bulkley	1.03
Skeena at Glen Vowell	1.06
Bulkley at the mouth	1.22

Table 2 lists the instantaneous peak flows for the 20-year and 200-year return periods for the three locations these estimates use the above ratios.

Also shown in table 2 are observed or estimated flow values for three specific dates as requested; "m" indicates that a dependable estimate could not be made.

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C. H. Coulson, P. Eng. Head Hydrology Section

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