WHY IS RAINY LAKE SO DIFFICULT TO CONTROL?

Rainy Lake Property Owners Association Open House
La Place Rendez-Vous, Fort Frances, Ontario
June 18, 2015

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Github: http://jckantor.github.io/Rainy-Lake-Hydrology/

SUMMER FLOODING 2014

Photo by Bob King (rking@duluthnews.com)

[0]Photo by WCCO, CBS Minnesota

[0]Photo by John Meyers, Duluth News Tribune

1987 LOW WATER YEAR

Photo by Larry Kec

IMPACTS OF THE RULE CURVE CHANGE IN 2000

WATER FLOW NAMAKAN RESERVOIR THROUGH RAINY LAKE

Source: US National Park Service

RAINY LAKE AND NAMAKAN LAKE LEVELS 1911–

Clearly see three rule curve regimes ...

Source: Github Repository for this paper.

RULE CURVE PERFORMANCE 1970–1999

Source: Github Repository for this paper.

RULE CURVE PERFORMANCE 2000–2010

Source: Github Repository for this paper.

SUMMER HIGH WATER EVENTS (MAY–SEPTEMBER)

	1971–1999 4437 days	2000–2010 1683 days
Rule Curve Exceeded		
Frequency	14.8%	17.8%
Median	0.07 m	0.23 m
95th Percentile	0.38 m	0.70 m
Emergency High Water		
Frequency	7.6%	13.7%
Median	0.05 m	0.19 m
95th Percentile	0.36 m	0.71 m
All Gates Open		
Frequency	1.9%	8.7%
Median	0.12 m	0.17 m
95th Percentile	0.29 m	0.62 m

Source: Github Repository for this paper.

RULE CURVE CHANGES IN 2000

Source: Github Repository for this paper.

IMPUTED CHANGE IN FLOWS TO RAINY RIVER

The change in rule curves implies a change in flows to Rainy River. Assuming midpoints of the rule curves ...

Source: Github Repository for this paper.

ESTIMATING RAINY LAKE INFLOWS

RAINY LAKE INFLOWS, 1970-1999 VS 2000-2010

Source: Github Repository for this paper.

CHANGE IN INFLOW TO RAINY LAKE, 1979-99 VS 2000-10

Source: Github Repository for this paper.

BOTTLENECK AT RAINY RIVER

FLOW CONSTRICTIONS ON UPPER RAINY RIVER

Constrictions at Ranier limit the discharge rate from Rainy Lake

Source: Github Repository for this paper.

RAINY RIVER DISCHARGE 1970–2010

Source: Github Repository for this paper.

IMPACT OF THE RULE CURVE CHANGE, 1970 - 2000

1. Displaces winter inflow to Rainy Lake from winter to summer months.
2. Flow constrictions in Upper Rainy River lead to water level increases in May/June.

IMPROVING CONTROL OF LAKE LEVELS

CURRENT PRACTICE

MODEL PREDICTIVE CONTROL FOR RAINY LAKE

MATLAB/SIMULINK SIMULATION

A calibrated Matlab/Simulink model of single loop control and full implemention of the 2000 IJC Order for Rainy Lake.

Source: Github Repository for this paper.

SIMULATION RESULTS FOR RAINY LAKE

Simulation results show improved control of high and low water events.

Source: Github Repository for this paper.

INTEGRATED CONTROL OF NAMAKAN AND RAINY LAKE

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE RULE CURVE REVIEW

1993 FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"To offset the potential for the proposed rule curve modifications to increase the frequency of spring flood events, the IJC should enforce the provision of its 1970 Supplemental Order requiring the dam operators to anticipate inflows and maximize the discharge capabilities of the dams to prevent emergency water levels.

"The Steering Committee believes that diligent use of the existing network of upstream lake level gauges and currently available hydrologic models can make this IJC mandate a reality and improve the accuracy and reliability of reservoir level control."

Source: Rainy Lake & Namakan Reservoir Water Level International Steering Committee, Final Report and Recommendations, November, 1993.

CONCLUSIONS

The rule curve review needs to include control implementation within the scope of its work.

1. Contrary to the 1993 Report, there is little evidence for "diligent use of existing network of upstream lake level gauges and currently available hydrological models can make this IJC mandate a reality and improve the accuracy and reliability of reservoir level control."
2. The 2000 rule curves are not a feasible mandate for level management on Rainy Lake.
3. Consideration should be given to an integrated control strategy for flow control points on the Rainy-Lake of the Woods watershed coupled with significant rule curve revisions.

DISCUSSION

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ADDITIONAL PHOTO CREDITS

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