Forecasting and Flood Response Coordination
Regulatory and Operational Services,
Manitoba Water Stewardship

Flood Report for Manitoba

April 25, 2009

Weather Conditions:

- A significant storm system expected to move northeastward across Minnesota could produce 20 mm or rain over the U.S. portion of the Red River watershed tomorrow. Areas of the Red River Valley south of Letellier could receive 5-10 mm from this storm.

- Winds light, becoming northeast 30 tomorrow morning and northwest 30 early Monday.

City of Winnipeg:

- The Red River level at James Avenue in Winnipeg this morning was 19.72 feet, a decline of 0.27 feet from yesterday morning. The decline was still due to further decreases in flows on the Assiniboine River and on un-controlled local streams such as Sturgeon Creek and the La Salle River. The computed natural level for this morning (without flood control works) is 31.4 feet.

- The decline of river levels in Winnipeg will be gradual for the next few weeks even with favourable weather due to the need to gradually lower the gates on the floodway control structure at St. Norbert. The gates must be lowered gradually since natural river levels at the floodway inlet will be declining slowly and controlled levels must remain just below the natural levels.

- With favourable weather, the level at James Avenue in downtown Winnipeg should decline to the flood stage of18 feet by May 4.

- The crest of 22.5 feet at James Avenue in Winnipeg was the second highest since major flood control works began operation in 1969. The crest was 24.5 feet in1997. The 2009 crest natural (without flood control works) of 32.5 feet in Winnipeg is the second largest since 1852. The natural crest in 1997 was 34.4 feet and that of 1852 was 34.5 feet. The crest of 1776 and 1826 are estimated at 36.5 feet.

Emerson to St. Adolphe:

- River levels declined between 0.1 and 0.2 feet at most locations during the 24 hour period ending this morning. However the level remained the same at St. Adolphe and fell 0.28 feet at Letellier, mainly as a result of wind effects.

- River levels will decline very slowly for the rest this week but will decline more significantly next week.

- With favourable weather, the level at Morris is expected to decline to the PTH 75 elevation of 775 feet by mid May. Opening of the highway would occur somewhat later following a road condition inspection.

- Strong winds and wave action can cause river levels at Letellier, Morris and Brunkild to fluctuate by one foot or more. Wave action can erode dikes and closures. Vigilance should be increased when strong winds are predicted.

- The Red River at Grand Forks continues to decline at half a foot per day.

Floodway Inlet:

- The floodway gates will continue to be operated to maintain levels somewhat below natural levels upstream at the floodway inlet. There will be a very gradual lowering of the control gates for most of this week.

- The water level upstream of the Floodway Inlet this morning was 766.18 feet, a decline of 0.04 feet since yesterday morning. The flow into the Red River Floodway this morning was 41,100 cubic feet per second (cfs) of a total 96,300 cfs upstream of the Floodway Inlet.

- The natural level at the floodway inlet crested at 766.96 feet on April 21 and the natural flow crested at 97,900 cfs on April 23.

Lockport to Breezy Point:

- Levels in this portion continue to decline very slowly for the next week or so. Levels declined a quarter of a foot at Lockport and at Selkirk and 0.2 feet at Breezy Point since yesterday morning.

Assiniboine River:

- Flow into Portage Reservoir declined from 13350 cfs yesterday morning to 13020 cfs this morning. A gradual decline is expected to continue for the next five days. The flow in the Portage Diversion this morning was 12444 cfs and the flow in the river downstream was 576 cfs. River flows toward Winnipeg will be gradually increased once levels at James Avenue in Winnipeg are below the flood stage of 18 feet.

- Continued high flows in the Portage Diversion have resulted in considerable flooding of farmland west of the failsafe. The function of the failsafe is to localize damage on the diversion embankments to a relatively small area.

- Assiniboine River levels from Baie St. Paul to Winnipeg will continue to decline slowly until levels in the City of Winnipeg have declined to below flood stage.

- River levels are declining rapidly in the Griswold to Brandon area with a decline of 0.9 feet at 1st Street in Brandon since yesterday morning. The Assiniboine River now below flood stage at all points.

- The outflow from Shellmouth Reservoir remains at 50 cfs. The reservoir water level has risen 0.43 feet since yesterday and stood at 1399.93 feet this morning. The level is expected to rise to the normal summer level of 1402.5 feet by early May.

Souris River:

- The Souris River continues to rise but rises in the Coulter and Melita are becoming very gradual as the crest nears. The level was 1407.56 feet at Melita this morning, a rise of 0.13 feet.

- Crests at Coulter and Melita will be about 1.5 feet lower than those of 1999, whereas crests from Hartney to Wawanesa will be two to three feet lower than in 1999. The crest is expected at Coulter on April 29 and at Souris on May 3.

- Significant overbank flooding is underway from the U.S. boundary to just south of Melita. The river is expected to remain within its banks at points from just north of Melita to Wawanesa.

- The duration of flooding in the Coulter area should be much shorter than in 1999 unless unusually heavy rain develops as in 1999. Flooding that year extended into June.

Pembina River:

- Flooding of the Pembina Valley continues from Rock Lake to Near Windygates but levels are declining at all points.

- The level declined 0.3 feet at La Riviere during the 24 hour period ending this morning.

- Rock Lake had declined to 1336.59 feet as of this morning, a decline of 0.16 feet from yesterday morning. While the level remains high, there is no serious shoreline flooding at this time. The normal summer level is near 1330 feet.

- The level of Pelican Lake is estimated at 1352.6 feet this morning. The outlet control works continue to be operated at the maximum outflow possible (about 400 cfs today) in order to reduce the lake to its desirable level of 1351.7 feet.

- The Pembina River at Neche has declined another 0.1 feet since yesterday and will continue to decline slowly. There is no longer a concern about boundary overflows or flooding at Gretna or Halbstadt.

Other Rivers:

- Both the Fisher River and the Icelandic River crested a week ago and levels have decline by three to four feet since that time. The river declined a further quarter foot since yesterday morning and flooding along the river has now ended.

- Overland flooding continues in portions of the Interlake region but is generally subsiding. Flooding could easily be prolonged or increase if significant precipitation were to develop during the next few weeks.

Lakes:

- Many lakes such as Lake Winnipeg, Lake Manitoba and Dauphin Lake are still ice covered. Some smaller lakes such as Pelican Lake are partially ice covered. Ice is expected to break up nest week. Strong winds may cause ice to push to considerable depths up the shoreline in areas of shallow ground slopes such as at beaches.

- Ice pushed up shorelines by strong winds can cause significant damage and pose a risk to low lying cottages. Those who have experienced such difficulties before are advised to take whatever precautions may be feasible, such as moving valuables to higher ground.

- Lakes in the Whiteshell area are well above their summer target levels at this time, which is not unusual during spring runoff. Brereton Lake is near a record high level. Logs are being removed to reduce lake levels.

Overland Flooding:

- Overland flooding continues in some portions of the Red River Valley and the Interlake but is subsiding in most areas and should end next week if dry weather continues. Flooding could quickly re-develop if significant rainfall were to occur during the next few weeks.

- Further details are provided below and specific forecasted crest stages are shown on the daily flood sheets issued by Manitoba Water Stewardship. This information may be viewed at http://www.gov.mb.ca/waterstewardship/floodinfo/floodsheet.html