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DAMS HOLDING BACK SKAGIT FLOOD THREAT

RUNOFF OF DEEP SNOW IS ANTICIPATED IN OPERATION OF POWER PROJECTS

Snow surveys completed April 1st in the upper Cascades indicate that the amount of water contained in the snow cover in the upper Skagit River is about 16 percent greater than there was at the same time in 1948. The anticipated run-off of the upper Skagit at Diablo Dam during the snow melting period April 1 to August 31 will be 16 percent greater than last year and 37 percent greater than the 40-year average for the period.

The information from the surveys completed through the joint efforts of the U.S. Geological Survey, the Dominion Water and Power Bureau of Canada, the Forest Service and Soil Conservation Dept. and City of Seattle has provided much valuable information in anticipating flood conditions.

Last year from May 24 to June 12, the natural flow of the Skagit River at Diablo Dam maintained a flow of from 16,000 to 32,000 cubic feet per second, which is the highest spring runoff of record at that point. This year, due to the large storage capacity of the Ross Dam, the greatest amount of the runoff has been held and flows actually released at Diablo now range between 2,500 and 8,000 cu. ft. per second. Actually 78 percent of the total runoff was impounded.

Between June 9 and 12 last year the river was near the 20-foot stage at Mount Vernon and reached an observed peak stage of 20.3 on June 10. The City Light dams are credited with reducing the peak from an estimated 22.3 feet. This would also have meant flood stage in all valley and channel

storage such as the Nookachamps basin. Much damage was averted.

A close check is being kept by power dispatchers of The Dalles gauge at Concrete and the gauge at Mount Vernon. Water released at the dams is kept at a minimum during high water at these joints.

The Skagit dams are now releasing water from the reservoirs in excess of the amount required for power in order to hold a large area of storage in readiness for any quick run-off in the next month or two.

In their statement concerning the possibility of floods, City Light reminds residents of the valley that floods are still possible despite all precautions if weather conditions bring on unusual runoffs. However, most serious floods occur during the winter period from October to March.

Still un-harnessed are the Cascade and Sauk Rivers which contribute a great deal to flood conditions.

Flow of the Baker River by the Puget Sound Power dam is also controlled as far as possible by river conditions and release of water from all dams are timed through close cooperation of the power dispatchers.