# FISHER CREEK BRIDGE NO. 07117 REPLACEMENT HYDROTECHNICAL DESIGN BRIEF MOTI PROJECT 37479-0000



Prepared for:

BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure Northern Region

Prince George, BC

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Northwest Hydraulic Consultants Ltd. (NHC) has been retained by MoTI (under Contract No. 831CS1092) to carry out a hydrotechnical assessment of Fisher Creek and develop the hydrotechnical design for the replacement of Bridge No. 07117. This structure is undersized and was damaged by the 2011 and 2016 South Peace floods.

NHC developed hydrotechnical design constraints and a preliminary waterway opening design for replacement of the Bridge in July 2012, following the 2011 Peace Flood (NHC, 2012). In 2018 NHC was asked to update the waterway design and carry out the detailed hydrotechnical design.

### 1.1 Design codes and references

The following design codes and reference documents form the basis of the hydrotechnical design summarized in this report:

Design Codes:

- CAN/CSA-S6-19 in conjunction with the BC MoTI Supplement to CHBDC S6-14
- BC MoTI Supplement to 2019 TAC Geometric Design Guide (2021)

BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure Standards and Guidelines:

- BC MoTI Standard Specifications for Highway Construction (2020)
- Resilient infrastructure Engineering Design Adaptation to the Impacts of Climate Change and Weather Extremes (Technical Circular T-04/19).

Hydrotechnical Design Guidelines:

- TAC Guide to Bridge Hydraulics (2001)
- Hydraulic Design of Stable Flood Control Channels (NHC, 1984)
- Developing Climate Change-Resilient Designs for Highway Infrastrucure in British Columbia (Interim) (V2; EGBC, 2020)

#### **1.2** Information provided by MoTI

The following reference drawings, reports and survey data were provided by MoTI:

 07117 Fisher Creek Bridge; Development of Mitigation Options for Lateral Channel Instability (timeline compiled by D. Cossette, Oct. 2018)



### **1.3** Information from other sources

The following reference drawings, reports and survey data were obtained from other sources:

- Highway 97 crossing at Fisher Creek Hydrotechnical assessment following the flood of June 2011 (NHC, 2012a)
- Fisher Creek Bridge No. 7117, Hydrotechnical Design Constraints for Bridge Replacement, (Ministry PEP Project No. 35153), Draft Report. (NHC, 2012)
- South Peace Flood Recovery Program, Report on the 2016 Flood Event and Regional Hydrology (NHC, 2017)
- Fisher Creek Riprap Construction 35479 (Associated Engineering, 2018)
- Ground survey and structural bridge drawings (McElhanney, 2018-19)



## 2 FISHER CREEK CHARACTERISTICS

#### 2.1 Watershed and reach physical characteristics

The following information summarizes baseline physical characteristics of the watershed and the reach of the stream where the subject crossing exists.

•	Watershed area to the crossing:	44.8 km <sup>2</sup>
•	Maximum watershed elevation:	El. 1,900 m
•	Minimum watershed elevation:	El. 661 m
•	Elevation at crossing:	El. 660.8 m
•	Channel morphology at crossing:	Wandering planform on alluvial fan
•	Channel slope:	3.5 percent (0.35 m/ km)
•	Existing Channel bottom width:	10 m to 16 m (riprap controlled)
•	Bed material $D_{50}$	110 mm

#### 2.2 Streamflow estimates

Peak Flood flow estimates for Fisher Creek are based on a set of regional flood curves developed by NHC. For background on the development of the curves please refer to the *Report on the 2016 South Peace Flood Event and Regional Hydrology* (NHC, 2017). The following flow estimates were used in the design of the permanent crossing, with the future 200-year annual peak flow estimate being the basis for sizing the clear span bridge.

•	10-year annual peak flow:	62 m³/s
•	100-year annual peak flow:	149 m³/s
•	200-year annual peak flow:	173 m³/s
•	200-year design flow:	207 m³/s

The recommended design flow includes a 20 percent increase to account for the effects of climate change. A Design Criteria Sheet for Climate Change Resilience is attached as **Appendix A**.

## **3 HYDRAULIC ANALYSIS OF PROPOSED WATERWAY**

Traditionally the waterway opening for a bridge is determined, at least in part, on the existing channel characteristics, collected survey data, hydrology and numerical modelling. In 2012, NHC established a preliminary waterway design using these methods. However, the channel of Fisher Creek within the Highway 97 reach has been affected by the undersized bridge and numerous flood recovery efforts that have occurred over its life. Consequently, a clear and consistent channel width is difficult to determine from observation and surveys, and the 2012 channel width recommended was conservatively wide as a result. NHC re-assessed the waterway width using a regime analysis, along with updated hydrology, and confirmed the results with numerical modelling. Every channel has a unique regime, though research has



shown that regime can be generally defined by a set of curves that relate the bank full width, mean depth and gradient of the channel to its dominant discharge and the  $D_{50}$  size of its bedload (NHC 1984). The 10-year annual daily maximum flow has been adopted as the channel forming flow for the regime analysis, and a high resistance to erosion has been assumed since the waterway channel will be riprapprotected.

The following paragraphs describe the recommended channel improvements and training works. A copy of design drawings is provided in **Appendix B**.

The revised waterway opening has a trapezoidal channel with a 20.5 m bottom width and 2H: 1V side slopes (Table 2). The bottom width is reduced by 4.5 m relative to the 2012 waterway width. Given the required size of the waterway channel, the magnitude of the design flow and the volume of wood debris and bedload carried by the creek, a clear span replacement bridge is favoured over a mulit-span bridge. The selected option is a 37.8 m long, clear-span bridge. Channel widening and riprap protection are proposed for approximately 30 m upstream and 40 m downstream of Highway 97. The existing channel gradient will be maintained over this distance.

Training berms are recommended upstream of Highway 97 to gather flow from across the alluvial fan and guide it towards the new bridge. The main trunks of both training berms will extend upstream at angles of 30 to 35 degrees to Highway 97. The West Training Berm and East Training Berms are approximately 90 m long and 235 m long, respectively. The Training Berms will be riprap-armoured and tie to high ground (service roads) on either side of the fan, reducing the risk of a future channel avulsion.

On the west side of the alluvial fan, the West Containment Berm is a raised and riprap-protected berm extending approximately 170 north of the Enbridge pipeline crossing. It is offset from the main channel of Fisher Creek and is intended to contain high flows within the fan area and prevent avulsions from damaging highway infrastructure farther west. The top surface of the west containment berm is 3.2 m above the adjacent minimum elevation in the Creek, providing 1 to 1.5 m of freeboard over the expected 200-year flood profile.

### 3.1 Hydraulic summary

A HEC-RAS (USACE 2016) model of the Fisher Creek crossing was developed using cross-sections extracted from the provided survey data. The model has been used to assess hydraulics in the creek during floods and to size the appropriate replacement structure.

A Manning's 'n' roughness coefficient of 0.05 is used for the channel upstream and downstream of the crossing – the coefficient accounts for the coarse surficial material, irregular shape of the channel and the likelihood that debris will obstruct portions of the channel during flood events. The roughness coefficient used for the left and right overbanks range from 0.1 to 0.2. The roughness coefficients cannot be calibrated because flood flows and high-water marks have not been recorded at the site.

Normal depth for slopes of 3.7 percent (0.037 m/m) and 3.3 percent (0.033 m/m) are used as boundary conditions at the upstream and downstream limits of the model, respectively.



The following table summarizes the hydraulics at the proposed replacement bridge.

Peak Flow		Flood	Average	Froude
Return Period	Peak Flow (m <sup>3</sup> /s)	Level, (El., m <sup>1</sup> )	Velocity (m/s²)	Number <sup>2</sup>
10-year	62	661.7	2.9	1.0
100-year	149	662.4	3.8	1.0
200-Year	173	662.6	4.0	1.0
200-Year Design Flow <sup>3</sup>	207	662.8	4.2	1.0

Table 1. Summary	/ of the hv	draulic model	results for th	e new channel	and bridge

Notes:

1. The flood levels shown are at the upstream side of the proposed new bridge.

2. Average velocities and Froude Numbers s are average values within the hydraulic opening.

3. Includes a 20 percent increase to account for the effects of climate change.

#### **3.2** Design flood level and required bridge clearance

MOTI standard for flood clearance is 1.5 m above the 200-year design flood level. The lowest point of the bridge soffit is at the east end of the upstream girder – the soffit elevation at that location will be 1.5 m above El. 662.8 m, or El. 664.3 m.

#### 3.3 Aggradation, degradation and scour

#### 3.3.1 Aggradation

Aggradation and degradation at the site will tend to be cyclical, though net long-term aggradation is expected. Larger floods in excess of a 10-year return period will mobilize significant amounts of debris and sediment (from bank scour, landslides etc.), which will form jams and cause short term aggradation of bed material in the bridge reach. Lesser, average floods in subsequent years will tend not to entrain much new sediment or debris but will rework and erode the aggraded bed material.

Even with the proposed new channel and bridge at Highway 97, the location of the highway crossing through the middle of a very active alluvial fan is not ideal, and aggradation through the crossing is expected to continue. Mechanical removal of debris and sediment may be required from time to time in order to maintain adequate clearance at the new bridge.

#### 3.3.2 Degradation

Degradation is unlikely to occur due to the large amount of bedload supplied to the crossing. Any bed lowering will likely be offset by the aggradation trend.



#### 3.3.3 Scour

Natural scour occurs in streams even if the channel is not constricted or controlled to a significant degree. The causes of natural scour can include: i) accelerated, deep flow along the outside of a bend; ii) lateral shifting of the channel thalweg; iii) flow alongside or impinging upon rock outcrops, debris jams, other hard points or rigid materials along the channel boundaries; and iv) sudden concentrations of flow such as at the confluence of two or more channels.

At the proposed bridge, the most likely form of natural scour will be accelerated flow along the rigid, riprap protected banks of the channel. If a debris jam forms within the waterway, the flow pattern would be similar to flow along the outside of a rigid bend or flow impinging at an angle against a rigid bank.

The 200-year natural scour elevation has been estimated using the Modified Blench procedure (TAC 2004) with the following inputs:

- Channel top width at approach and bridge waterway opening = 28.5 m
- Design flow = 207 m3/s
- Energy slope = 0.014 m/m (conservative for this scour estimate)
- D50 of bed material = 108 mm
- Z factor = 2.0 (upper range for flow along the outside of a bend where banks are rigid)

The natural scour depth is estimated to be 3.4 m below the 200-year flood level. Additionally, in the unlikely event that the bridge crossing is outflanked in the future (due to a significant blockage of the waterway), the bridge abutment piles could become exposed to scour. The riprap protection through the bridge will collapse around the piles and help limit the depth of local scour, but it is still prudent to design the abutment piles to be able to withstand exposure to the depth of natural scour.

There is no contraction or local scour potential at the bridge.

#### 3.4 Riprap protection for streambanks

In NHC's 2012 report, 1000-kg riprap was recommended for erosion protection through the waterway. Due to concerns over being able to source riprap of that size, the size class was reduced to 500-kg, but the thickness was doubled (to 2.4 m) as compensation<sup>1</sup>. Increasing the placement thickness of riprap is a legitimate means of increasing its stability and long-term performance, however, it appears the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Reductions in riprap class size in combination with thicker placement is an approach that has also been used at several other sites in the Peace (e.g. Commotion Creek and Bissett Creek)



thickness at Fisher Creek Bridge need only be increased to 2100 mm to achieve the necessary stability (factor of safety  $\sim$  1.2).

For the bridge opening, MoTI Class 500 kg riprap, with nominal thickness of 2.1 m is recommended. The minimum slope for erosion protection is 2H: 1V and will extend to the design water level elevation plus 0.6 m.

Riprap bank protection is recommended to extend approximately 30 m upstream and 40 m downstream of the bridge.

The East and West Training berms are outside of the channel and therefore can be protected with a lower riprap class. Class 250-kg riprap is recommended to protect the upstream face of both west and east berms.

The West Containment Berm runs parallel to and at an offset from the main channel of Fisher Creek. However, in the future it is possible that the Creek will migrate west and flow directly against the berm; therefore, Class 500-kg riprap is recommended to protect the creek-side face of the berm.



## **APPENDIX A**

Design Criteria Sheet for Climate Change Resilience Fisher Creek

## **BCMoTI Design Criteria Sheet for Climate Change Resilience**

Highway Infrastructure Design Engineering and Climate Change Resilience Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (Separate Criteria Sheet per Discipline)

Project: Type of work: Location: Discipline: Fisher Creek Bridge (07117) Replacement Bridge Replacement (Detailed Design) Highway 97; BC MoTI Northern Region Hydrotechnical

Design Component	Design Life or Return Period	Design Criteria + (Units)	Design Value Without Climate Change	Change in Design Value from Future Climate	Design Value Including Climate Change	Comments / Notes / Deviations / Variances
Replacement Bridge (36 m clear span)	200yr	Flow Rate (m³/s)	173	+20%	207	<ul> <li>Design Flood elevation rises by 0.2 m</li> <li>200-year average velocity increases by 0.2 m/s</li> <li>Minor increase in riprap volume (~ 5%)</li> </ul>

#### Explanatory Notes / Discussion:

The BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) is intending to replace Fisher Creek Bridge No. 07117 located approximately 51 km west of Chetwynd on Highway 97. Highway 97 cuts across the middle of Fisher Creeks alluvial fan, which is a very active fan with high bedload and debris loads. There are privately operated gas pipeline crossings of Fisher Creek 130 m upstream and 75 m downstream of Highway 97. The existing bridge consists of 18.3 m long, concrete stringers supported on timber piles at the abutments and central pier. The bridge has a significantly undersized waterway opening relative to the channel width determined by regime analysis. Because of this, and the presence of a pier, the bridge traps a large amount of debris and bedload during floods, creating deep scour under the structure and a risk of avulsion upstream. The bridge was overwhelmed by flooding in both June 2011 and June 2016. MoTI's intent is to replace the existing bridge with a new, 36 m long, clear span bridge. The channel beneath the bridge will be enlarged to a minimum bottom width of 20.5 m and will have 500-kg riprap-protected banks rising at 2H: 1V. Training berms will extend diagonally upstream across the fan, tying into to both bridge abutments. The intent of the training berms is to capture all flood flow across the fan and re-direct it back towards the bridge. Northwest Hydraulic Consultants Ltd. (NHC) has been retained by MoTI under General Services Contract 831CS0995 to prepare a Hydrotechnical Design Brief for the new Fisher Creek Bridge Channel Improvements and Training Berms.

The effect of climate change on the flood hydrology for Fisher Creek has been assessed by analyzing future projections in rainfall intensity at nearby climate stations and well as future projections in streamflow for some of the larger rivers in the region (streamflow projections are not available for streams in the size range of Fisher Creek). The hydrologic impacts of climate change will be partly attributed to changes in rainfall intensity, but there are numerous other climate indicators that will be affected as well, including changes to temperature normals, and the spatial and temporal variation in precipitation throughout the year, etc.

The projected impact on rainfall intensity has been evaluated by using IDF-CC, an online tool developed by Srivastav, Schaardong, and Simonovic (2014) that applies the downscaled global circulation model(GCM)'s output to modify present intensity-duration-frequency (/OF) curves published by (ECCC)1. The IDF-CC tool produces ensemble predictions from the full suite of climate projections from Assessment Report 5 (AR5) of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on the Climate Change (IPCC 2014). AR5 output is produced for three Representative Concentration Pathway (RCP) scenarios (RCP 8.5, RCP 4.5 and RCP 2.6). RCP 8.5, for example, refers to the projected change in radiative forcings (+8.5 WIm2) in the year 2100 relative to pre- industrial levels. While RCP 8.5 is the

worst case scenario of greenhouse gas concentration trajectories referred to in the IPCC report, it is the general consensus by local climate change scientists that RCP 8.5 is the likely pathway given the current state of anthropogenic (human) activity.

The online IDF-CC tool also allows the user to input historical rainfall data, which can be used to generate locally relevant updated IDF curves and adjust for climate change based off the same method for the ECCC data. NHC used the IDF-CC tool to produce estimates of changes in rainfall intensities over different durations, time periods and RCPs for the BCFF Stations at Lemoray, Hudson's Hope and Noel, and the ECCC Stations at Chetwynd and Dawson Creek. The results of the analysis show that for RCP 8.5, the increase in rainfall intensities by the end of the 2151 Century could be as much as 25%.

To assess the impacts of climate change on larger rivers, NHC carried out non-stationary flood frequency analysis on the Pine River (12,000 km<sup>2</sup>) and Moberly River (1,520 km<sup>2</sup>). The projections were developed by the Pacific Climatic Impacts Consortium (PCIC). Unfortunately, there are no projections for streams of an intermediate size. The analysis results show that there is not a consistent regional signal in terms of the magnitude and direction of changes in peak flows on the larger rivers in the region. In NHC's judgement, it is prudent to assume that a maximum ensemble median percent increase similar to the Pine River (11%) will apply to other large river systems in the mountainous region of the South Peace that have physiography similar to the Pine River (i.e. Murray River, Sukunka River).

For smaller watersheds in the mountainous region, and for all watersheds on the Alberta Plateau, large floods tend to be rainfall driven as opposed to snowmelt driven. Therefore the estimated median increases in rainfall intensity should be directly applied to design flows for those streams. There should be some reduction in the percent increase in flows as watershed size increases. At this time, NHC recommends applying a 25 percent increase in the 100- and 200-year flow for the smallest watersheds (under 25 km<sup>2</sup> in size), a 15 percent increase for larger watersheds (1000's km<sup>2</sup> and larger), and a 20 percent increase for watershed sizes in between those limits. According, the 200-year design flood for Fisher Creek should incorporate a 20% increase to account for climate change. NHC recommends that 200-year peak discharge of 207 m<sup>3</sup>/s be adopted as the design discharge for the replacement structure for future phases of design. The impacts of climate change on 200-year hydraulics are noted in the table above.

For a more complete discussion of the results, please refer to NHC's 2017 report entitled: "Report on the 2016 Flood Event and Regional Hydrology".

Recommended by: Engineer of Record: Des Goold, P.Eng.

Date: April 4, 2019

Engineering Firm: Northwest Hydraulic Con	sultants Ltd.			
Accepted by BCMoTI Consultant Liaison:	Dan Cossette	Stats	Apr. 4, 2	019
(For External Design)			•	

Deviations and Variances Approved by the Chief Engineer: \_\_\_\_\_\_ Program Contact: Dirk Nyland, Chief Engineer BCMoTI



### **APPENDIX B**

Set of Five (5) Drawings Channel Improvements and Berms









