



The word "can't" has been stricken from the vocabulary of cadets who completed the Leadership and Challenge Confidence Course at the Vernon Army Cadet Summer Training Centre (VACSTC). Once the candidates confront the course's height it is hoped they realize other challenges in life can be managed head-on. One of those cadets was Jonathon Morin, a member of 2276 Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps (Rocky Mountain Rangers), who is taking the Cadet Leaders course this summer.

Under the watchful eye of safety personnel, he successfully crossed the course's Three-Rope, Loop, Postman Walk and Commando Crawl rope bridges (the highest of which is 10 metres from the ground) before experiencing an exhilarating zip line to the ground. Over the duration of the summer 1,250 cadets from various regions of the country will attain new skills and friendships while attending VACSTC.

- VACSTC photo by Capt. Karl Kopan

Rainfall down across the province

VICTORIA - Following a winter that produced near or above normal snow packs, and a cool spring that delayed snow melt, the warmer, drier weather of the last few weeks is beginning to result in below normal river levels in some areas, particularly in the southern one-third of the province.

Rainfall during June was variable, ranging from one-third the normal precipitation for Kamloops and Fort St. John, to 60 to 90 per cent of normal for much of the province. Some locations, including Penticton, Fort Nelson and Williams Lake, received near normal rainfall.

Beginning the last week of June, a strong high pressure system over southern B.C. resulted in sustained hot and dry weather. Rainfall in the coastal and interior areas of B.C. has been well below normal in most areas. In most of the southern Interior (Williams Lake, Kamloops, Merritt, Kelowna, Penticton, Grand Forks, Creston and others), the south coast and Vancouver Island, rainfall amounts ranged from negligible to slight for the past three to four weeks. In the northeast interior, periodic waves of frontal moisture have brought some rainfall.

The sustained warmer than normal temperatures of the past three weeks have accelerated the loss of water from soil, and also from rivers, lakes and other water bodies, through evaporation and transpiration. River levels are variable across the province, but are falling quickly in many areas due to warmer, drier weather. Many rivers are near their median water levels for this date in mid-July, but many others are at low levels seen on average once in five to 10 years.

River levels in the south and central Interior:

- The Granby and Kettle rivers (located in Westbridge, Midway, and Grand Forks) are at five-to-10 year low flows.

- Camp Creek (Summerland), Salmon River (Salmon valley), Nicola River and Coldstream Creek (Merritt) are at five-to-10 year lows.

- The Tulameen and Similkameen rivers (Hedley, Princeton) are well below median water levels for the date, and dropping steadily.

- In the Kootenay, the Salmo River and Redfish Creek are at five-year lows.

- Penfold Creek and the Horsefly River are at five-year lows.

- The Bulkley River (Smithers) is near a five-year low. River levels on the south coast and Vancouver Island:

- The Cowichan and Englishman rivers are above their median levels for the date (likely due to late-season snow melt from high elevations).

- Tofino Creek (on the west coast Vancouver Island) is at 200 per cent of its median flow for this date.

- The Oyster and Chemainus rivers are at five-to-10 year low flows.

Current weather forecasts indicate continued drier, warmer weather for the south interior for the next five days. River levels in some areas (Okanagan, Kettle, Nicola/Coldwater, Thompson, others) will continue to drop. For Vancouver Island and the south coast, the forecast is dry, with slightly above normal temperatures. Without significant and widespread rain in the next couple of weeks, river levels in many areas could be at critical low-flow levels (25-year return period) by the end of July or early August.

With warmer and drier weather conditions now upon us, Environment Minister Barry Penner urges all British Columbians to help conserve our precious water resources. Last month, the B.C. government released Living Water Smart: A Plan for Water Sustainability. The plan highlights the need for new conservation measures to ensure adequate supplies of fresh water for British Columbia's future.

\$5 million investment to launch SolarBC

DAWSON CREEK - The Province is investing \$5 million in the SolarBC program to encourage the installation of solar hot water heaters in homes, municipal buildings, schools, social housing and First Nations communities, Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources Minister Richard Neufeld announced.

"The SolarBC program supports the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and builds on the BC Energy Plan commitment for electricity self-sufficiency," said Neufeld. "This is a great example of how B.C. is a leader in the alternative energy sector, and how solar can play a significant role in our future energy supply."

The funding will support six SolarBC projects, including: Residential Retrofit, Local Government Solar Thermal, First Nations Solar, Social Housing Solar, Solar for Schools and Solar Communities. Five B.C. communities will have the opportunity to become solar-friendly and be part of a sustainable energy future.

"Communities throughout the province will benefit from a clean, renewable and climate-friendly source of energy," said Blair Lekstrom, Minister of Community Development and MLA for Peace River South. "By harnessing the solar power, we are promoting a sustainable environment."

Dawson Creek is a community

leader in its use of solar technology, and its target is to be a sustainable city focusing on reducing the city's environmental impact. Mayor Calvin Kruk received the Solar Leader of the Year award from the Canadian Solar Industry Association in November 2007.

"I am pleased to see more sources of clean energy being developed," said Kruk. "This is a promising technology, which will add to Dawson Creek's high quality of life and reputation for innovation."

Solar hot water systems reduce greenhouse gas emissions by about one tonne per year for a single family home using natural gas for water heating. The increased use of solar energy technology is part of a broader sustain-

able energy strategy that will help the Province reach its goal to curb greenhouse gas emissions by 33 per cent by 2020.

"SolarBC is leading a comprehensive program to promote the deployment of solar technologies," said Nitya C. Harris, executive director of SolarBC. "This funding will help us achieve the goal of widespread adoption of solar hot water systems throughout B.C."

SolarBC supports the BC Energy Plan conservation target to acquire 50 per cent of BC Hydro's resource needs through conservation by 2020.

For more information on SolarBC, please visit www.solarbc.ca.