Creek Behaviour

Peak flow in Winlaw has usually occurred mid to late May, but sometimes in June. Peak discharge (given in cubic meters/second) has varied widely since data was first recorded in 1944. A chart showing readings from 1997 – 2005 is included. (Graphs from other periods can be seen in the "Resources" section.)

Note that 1 cubic meter = 264.172 Canadian gallons
So at 5.5 cu. m/sec (recorded in 1998), there were 1453 gallons going by every second.

Low flow has occurred at widely different times from year to year – mid-August in 2004, mid-February in 2001. The extreme low recorded in 2004 of .037 cu.m./sec translates to almost 10 gal/sec, or 600 gal/minute.

Winlaw Creek is known to make sudden and dramatic shifts in its channel. The 1998 "Channel Conditions and Assessment report (see "Resources section) explains how a winter rain-on-snow event caused landslides in the headwaters, exposing a huge sediment source to be eroded into the creek.

A big surge of gravel and cobbles in 1998 raised the level of the creekbed in the Riparian Corridor nearly level with Paradise Valley Rd. To head off potential flooding, the WWC contracted to have a berm built between the road and the creek. A rain-on-snow event that December did send the creek over its bank, where it was contained by the berm and redirected back to the channel below.

Action Site 5

Fig. 16: Winlaw Creek flowing against new flood control berm after unseasonal rain, Dec. 1998.

Historically, water temperature in this creek has remained low in relation to air temperature. Most readings have been below 10°C. The high over a 10 year period was 14.5°C. During this time, water temperature in the Slocan River reached 20°C. This shows the value of maintaining good shade cover over the creek.

Suspended Sediment: Higher levels occur during spring run-off. Rain during winter can also flush materials into the creek.