



Réal:
So Luke, did you go fishing in the Rupert?

Luke:
I sure did, and I caught a BIG fish!



Hydlo and Friends is a program broadcast by JBCCS. Its hosts, Luke MacLeod and Réal Courcelles, discuss various matters related to Hydro-Québec activities on Eeyou Istchee lands. Swapping their mike for a pen, they invite you to explore various aspects of the Eastmain-1-A/Sarcelle/Rupert project.

Hydlo and FRIENDS unplugged

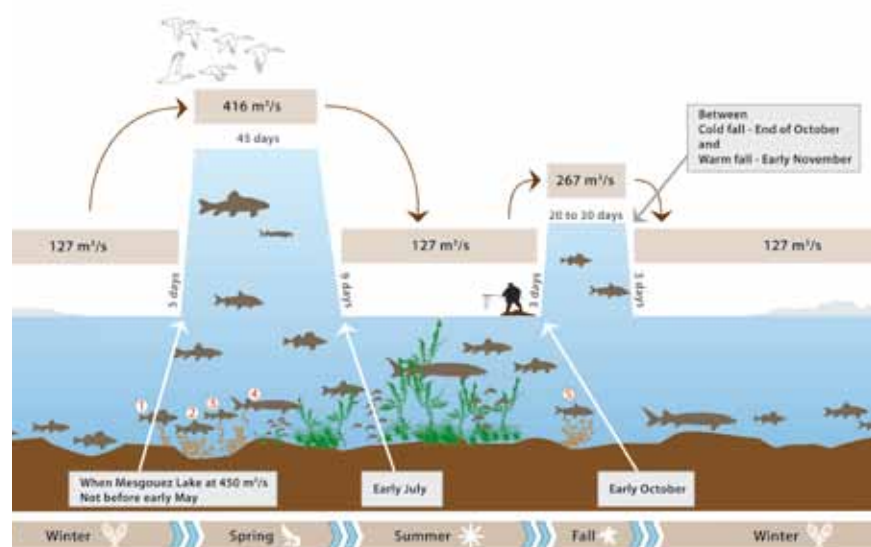
Rupert instream flow regime: Being waterly correct!

The Rupert continues to flow downstream of Rupert dam. But that's not all. For 45 days beginning in mid-May, Hydro-Québec is going to increase the amount of water released to support spring spawning. The goal is to pattern spring and fall releases on the natural flow of the Rupert in order to protect fish habitat. That's what's called the "instream flow regime."

In diverting part of the Rupert's flow, Hydro-Québec took on a commitment to preserve fish habitat and ensure the river's continued use for hunting, fishing, trapping and boating. That's why an instream flow is released year round through the spillway gates.

Protecting spawning grounds

A number of fish species, each with its own breeding season, are found between the dam at KP 314 and Baie de Rupert. Walleye, sturgeon, long-nose sucker and white sucker spawn in spring, while lake whitefish and cisco spawn in fall. Flow is increased twice a year, during spring spawning and again during fall spawning. Changes in flow are gradual and are adjusted to take into account whether the seasons are early or late.



Rupert River Ecological Instream Flow Regime

Ingenious engineering

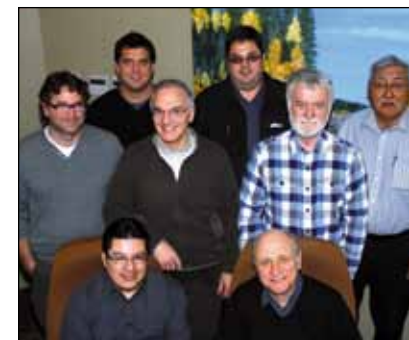
Partial diversion of the Rupert posed major engineering and environmental challenges. Downstream of Rupert dam, five weirs, two spur dikes and one rock blanket were built. These eight structures make it possible to maintain the level of the river along nearly half its length.



Is it working?

Instream flow on such a large scale is a world first. The Rupert River Water Management Board, composed of Cree and Hydro-Québec representatives, was set up to make sure that the regime is well managed and to suggest any necessary corrective action.

In addition, many studies on fish populations have been undertaken to ensure the regime is effective, and those studies are not about to end! Some follow-ups, like the one for cisco, will continue until 2014.



Members of the Rupert River Water Management Board (from left to right): Jean Matte, Mathieu Boucher, Réal Courcelles, Martin Desgagné (Secretary), Brian Craik and Lawrence Jimiken. Seated: A. Thomas Hester and Pierre Magnan (President).



Rupert spillway has three gates. Instream flow is released through the middle one.

weir and another for brook trout in the channel itself.



In spring 2010, the abundance of sturgeon larvae in the Rupert was estimated for the first time since the partial diversion. Nearly 30 people took part in the study, including some 15 Crees. Opposite: Nelson Wapachee, Joanie Carrier and Martin Dallaire bring up a net at the KP 276 sampling site. The purpose of monitoring sturgeon larvae drift is to assess how effectively instream flow maintains spawning ground productivity.



Weir at KP 290. To the right of the weir is the fish pass, a small channel allowing the free movement of fish, which swim up past the weir. A spawning ground for sturgeon has been developed downstream of the