Real-Time Water Quality Deployment Report

Rattling Brook Network

October 9, 2015 to November 12, 2015

Newfoundland Labrador

Government of Newfoundland & Labrador
Department of Environment and Conservation
Water Resources Management Division
St. John's, NL, A1B 4J6 Canada

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2015-10-09 to 2015-11-12

General

- Department of Environment and Conservation staff monitors the real-time web pages consistently.
- Hydrometric data included in this report is provisional and used only for illustrative purposes. Corrected and finalized data may be retrieved from the Water Survey of Canada website (http://www.ec.gc.ca/rhc-wsc/)*.

Maintenance and Calibration of Instrument

- As part of the Quality Assurance and Quality Control protocol (QAQC), an assessment of the reliability of data recorded by an instrument is made at the beginning and end of the deployment period. The procedure is based on the approach used by the United States Geological Survey.
    - Upon deployment, a QA/QC Sonde is temporarily deployed *in situ*, adjacent to the Field Sonde. Depending on the degree of difference between each parameter from the Field and QAQC sondes a qualitative rank is assigned (See Table 1). The possible ranks, from most to least desirable, are: Excellent, Good, Fair, Marginal, and Poor. A grab sample is also taken for additional confirmation of conditions at deployment and to allow for future modelling studies.
    - At the end of a deployment period, a freshly cleaned and calibrated QAQC Sonde is placed *in situ*, adjacent to the Field Sonde. Values are compared between all parameters and differences are ranked for placement in Table 1.

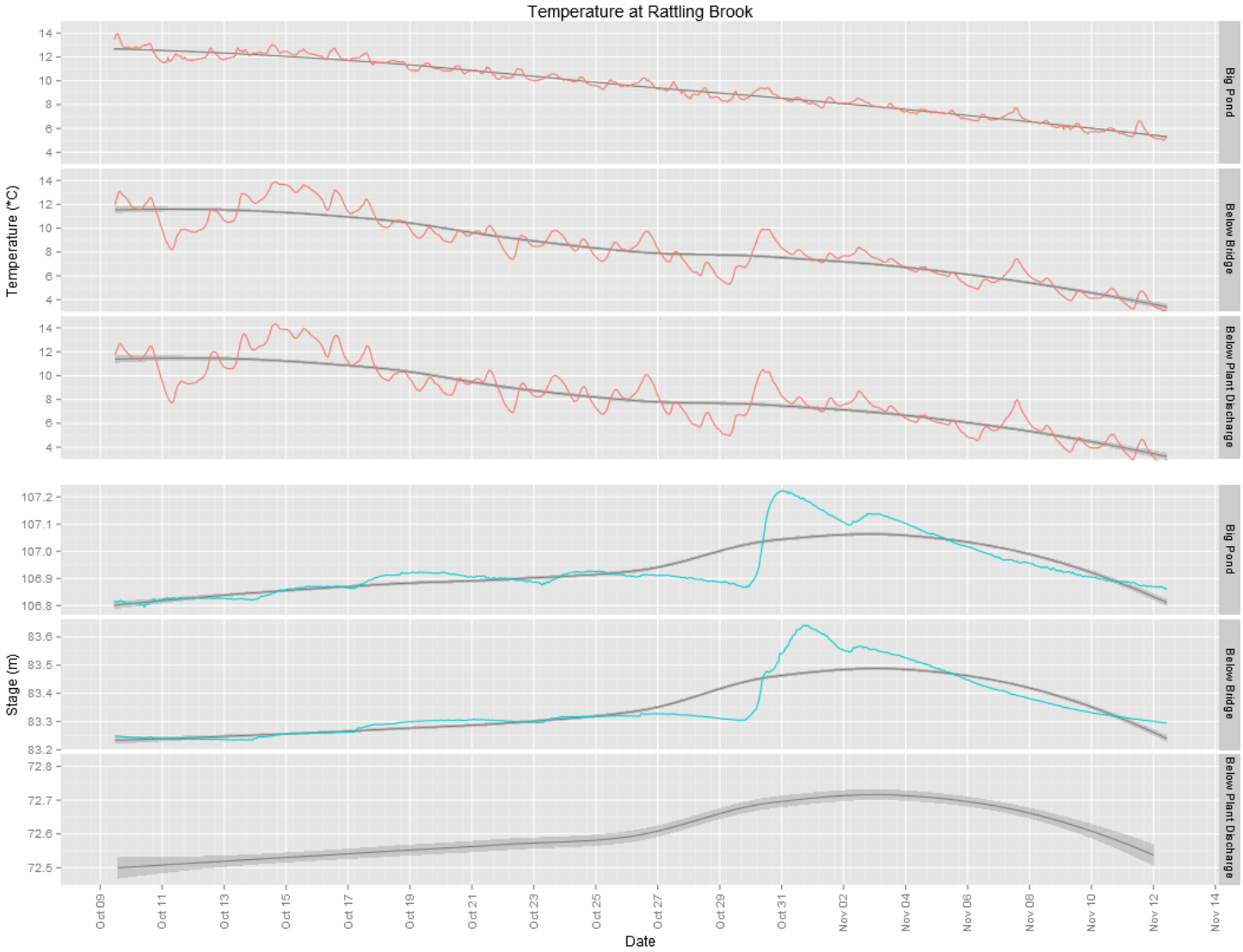
Table 1: Qualitative QAQC Ranking

Station	Date	Action	Comparison Ranking				
			Temperature	pH	Conductivity	Dissolved Oxygen	Turbidity
Rattling Brook Big Pond	October 9, 2015	Deployment	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent
	November 12, 2015	Removal	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Rattling Brook below Bridge	October 9, 2015	Deployment	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent
	November 12, 2015	Removal	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Rattling Brook below Plant Discharge	October 9, 2015	Deployment	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Fair
	November 12, 2015	Removal	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

Data Interpretation

Temperature

Water Temperature is a major factor used to describe water quality. Temperature has major implications on both the ecology and chemistry of a water body, governing processes such as the metabolic rate of aquatic plants and animals and the degree of dissolved oxygen saturation.



Station	Mean	Median	Min	Max
Big Pond	9.48	9.59	5.02	13.97
Below Bridge	8.41	8.28	3.08	13.88
Below Plant Discharge	8.31	8.17	2.74	14.31

- Water temperature fell throughout the deployment period at all stations in conjunction with cooling air temperatures. Mean and Median temperatures indicate that water temperature cools consistently along the length of the river system.

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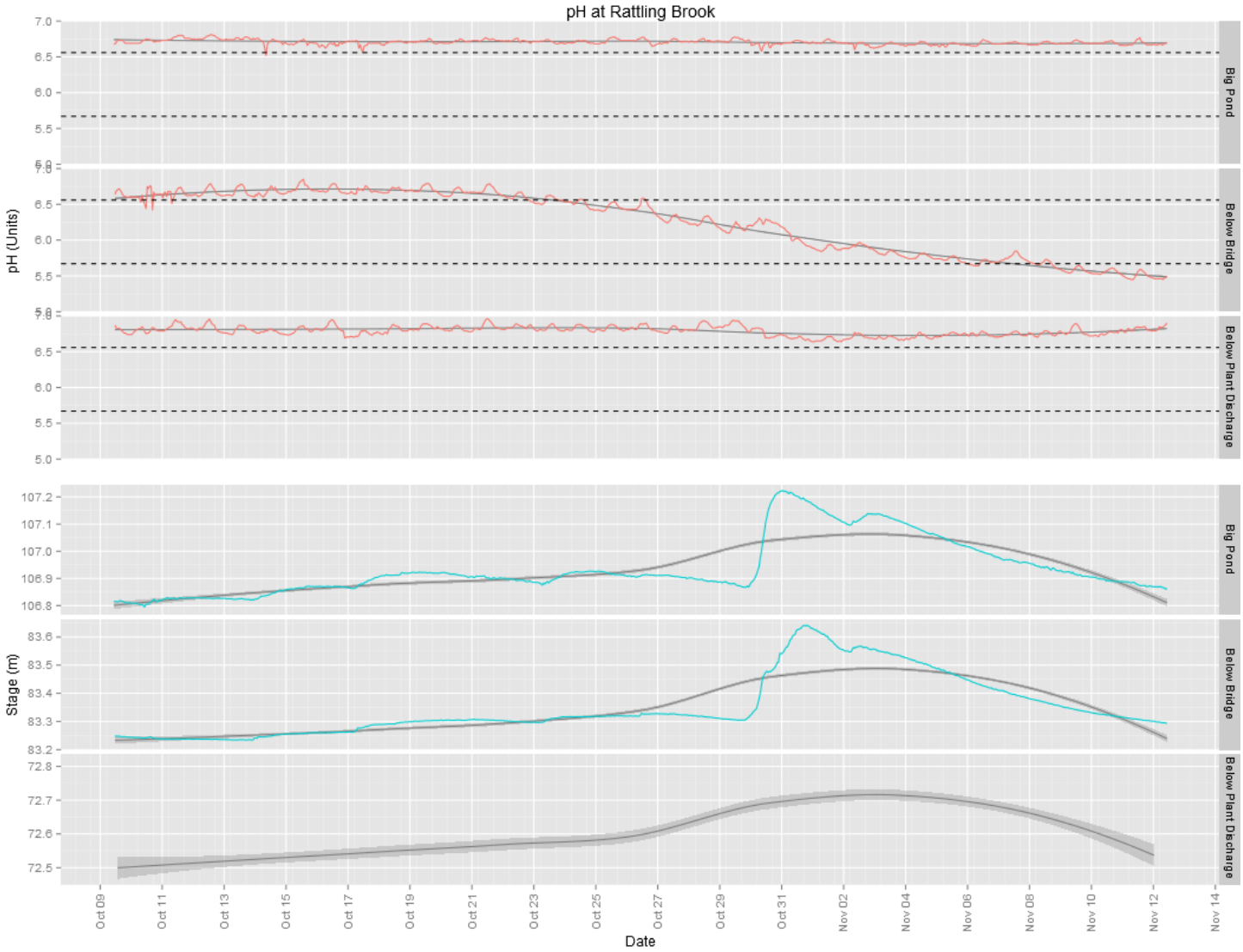
pH

pH is used to give an indication of the acidity or basicity of a solution. A pH of 7 denotes a neutral solution while lower values are acidic and higher values are basic. Technically, the pH of a solution indicates the availability of protons to react with molecules dissolved in water. Such reactions can affect how molecules function chemically and metabolically.



Station	Mean	Median	Min	Max
Big Pond	6.71	6.70	6.52	6.81
Below Bridge	6.25	6.42	5.45	6.85
Below Plant Discharge	6.79	6.79	6.64	6.96

- pH levels were consistent at Big Pond and Plant Discharge stations, residing slightly above the Site Specific Guidelines (dashed lines) for most of the month. pH at Bridge station shows a decline over the month.
    - This trend has been typical for the station and has been observed when using different instruments. The datalogger will be tested next to ensure there is no interference.

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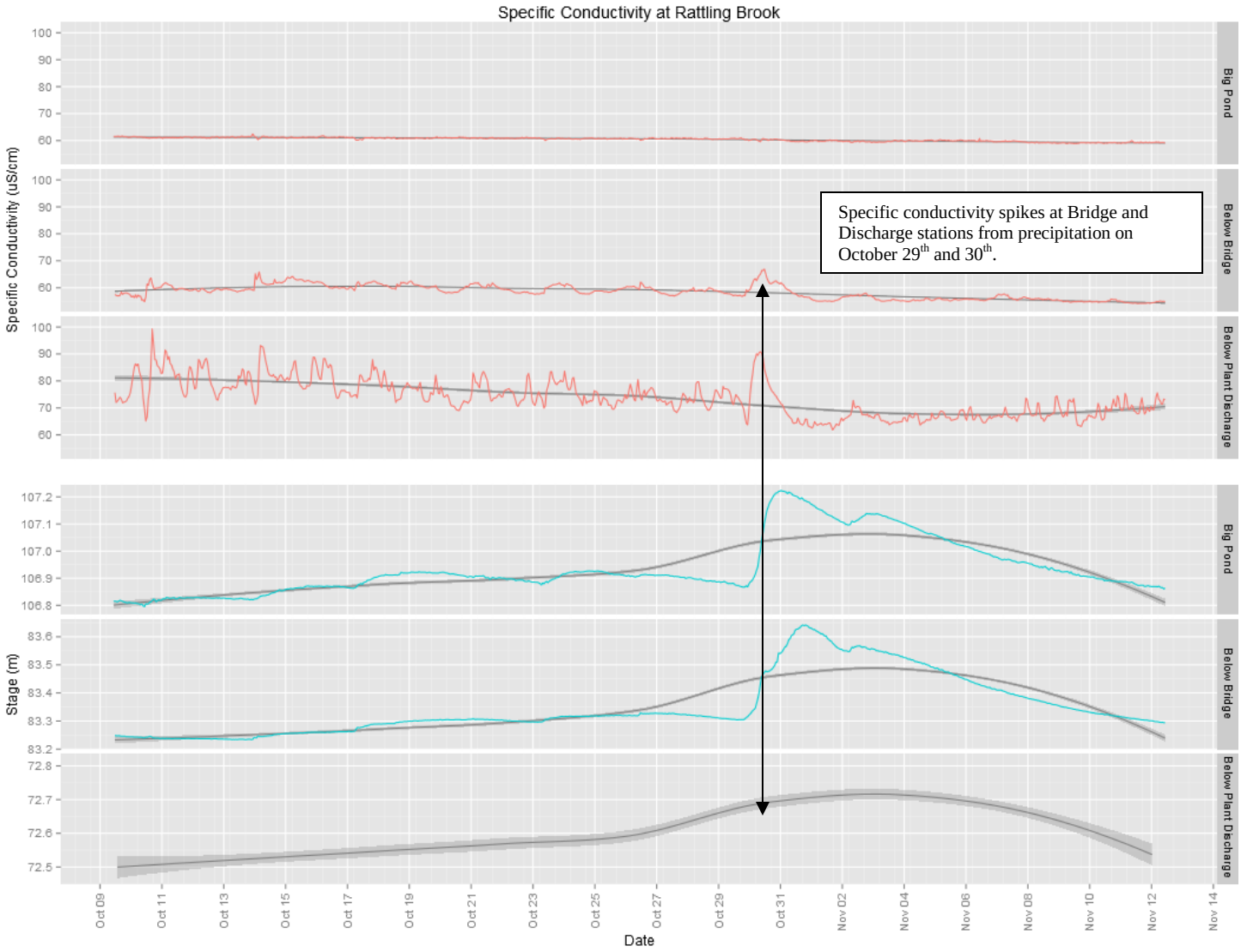
Specific Conductivity

Conductivity relates to the ease of passing an electric charge – or resistance – through a solution. Conductivity is highly influenced by the concentration of dissolved ions in solution: distilled water has zero conductivity (infinite resistance) while salty solutions have high conductivity (low resistance). Specific Conductivity is corrected to 25°C to allow comparison across variable temperatures.



Station	Mean	Median	Min	Max
Big Pond	60.5	60.7	58.9	62.5
Below Bridge	58.4	58.5	54.1	66.9
Below Plant Discharge	73.7	73.1	61.8	99.3

- A downward trend in specific conductivity is observed at all three stations, with an especially notable trend being observed at Plant Discharge station. Also notable is the variability observed at Plant Discharge station – likely as a result of inflow from the settling ponds upstream.

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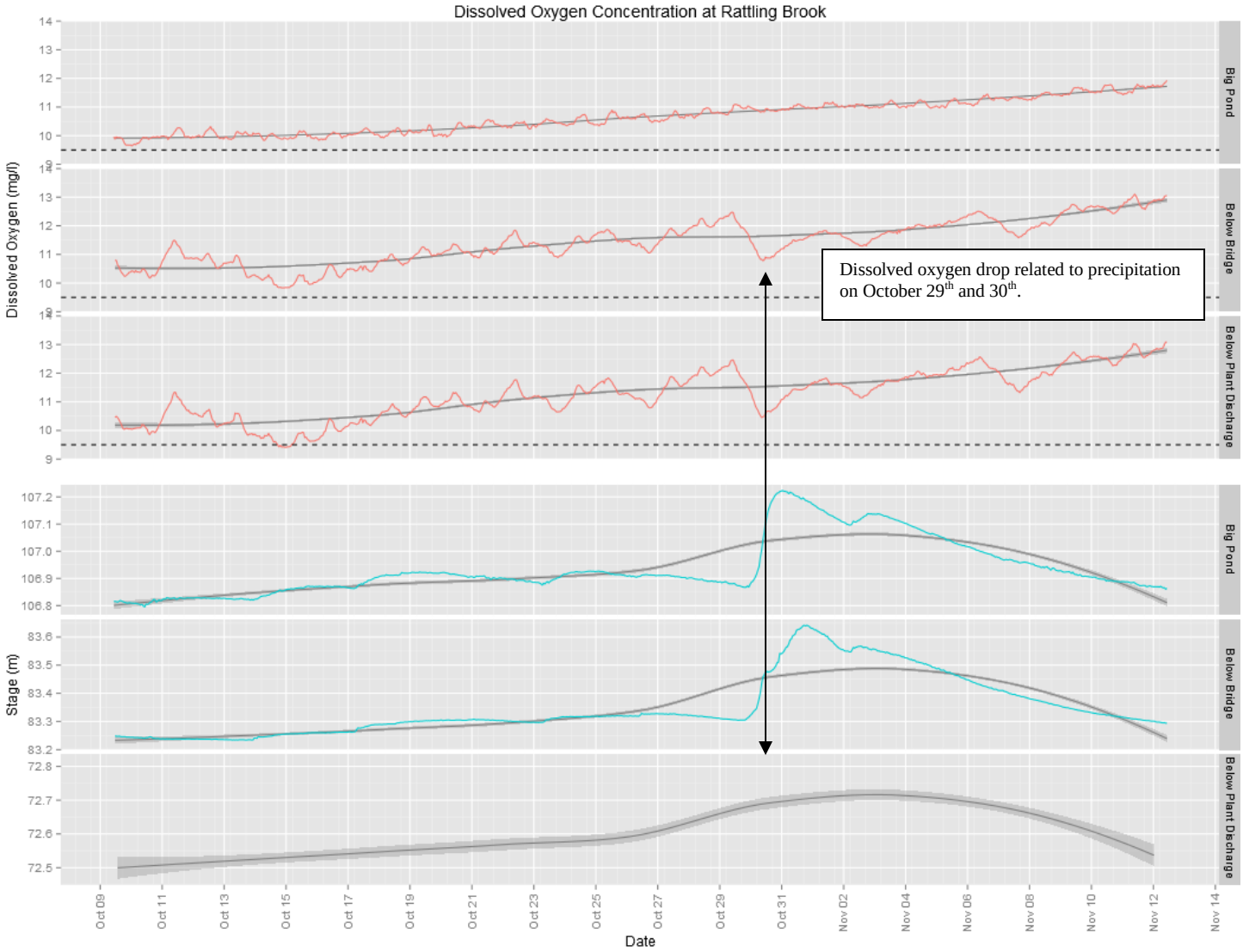
Dissolved Oxygen

Dissolved oxygen is a metabolic requirement of aquatic plants and animals. The concentration of oxygen in water depends on many factors, especially temperature – the saturation of oxygen in water is inversely proportional to water temperature. Oxygen concentrations also tend to be higher in flowing water compared to still, lake environments. Low oxygen concentrations can give an indication of excessive decomposition of organic matter or the presence of oxidizing materials.



Station	Mean	Median	Min	Max
Big Pond	10.66	10.64	9.64	11.93
Below Bridge	11.42	11.43	9.83	13.11
Below Plant Discharge	11.25	11.29	9.41	13.09

- As a consequence of falling air temperatures, dissolved oxygen concentrations increased throughout the deployment period. Concentrations can be expected to increase into early winter as water temperatures continue to drop towards the annual low.

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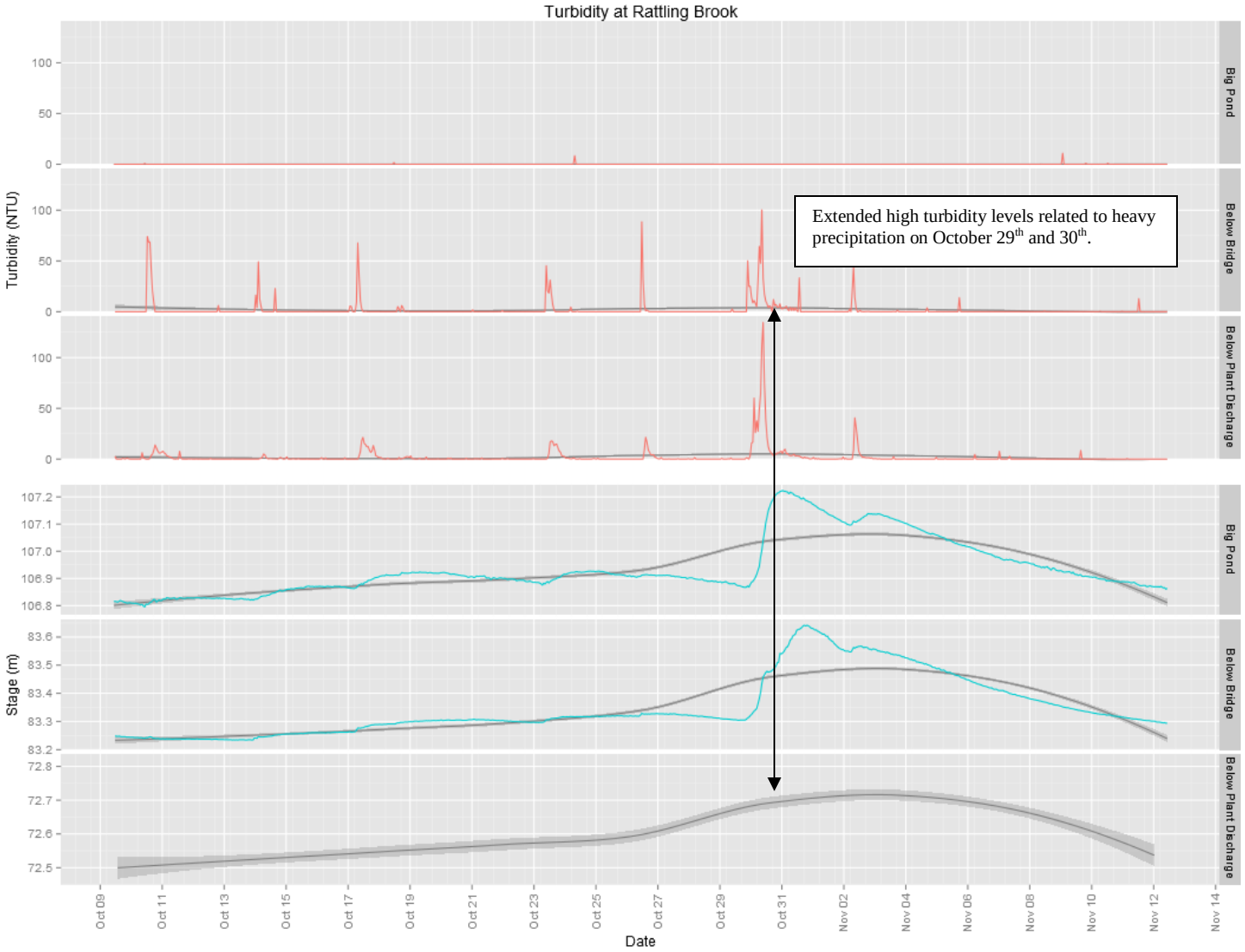
Turbidity

Turbidity is typically caused by fine suspended solids such as silt, clay, or organic material. Consistently high levels of turbidity tend to block sunlight penetration into a waterbody, discouraging plant growth. High turbidity can also damage the delicate respiratory organs of aquatic animals and cover spawning areas.



Station	Mean	Median	Min	Max
Big Pond	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.9
Below Bridge	1.9	0.0	0.0	100.3
Below Plant Discharge	1.9	0.0	0.0	134.7

- Turbidity levels were low throughout the deployment with some periodic spikes observed at Bridge and Plant Discharge stations usually related to precipitation.

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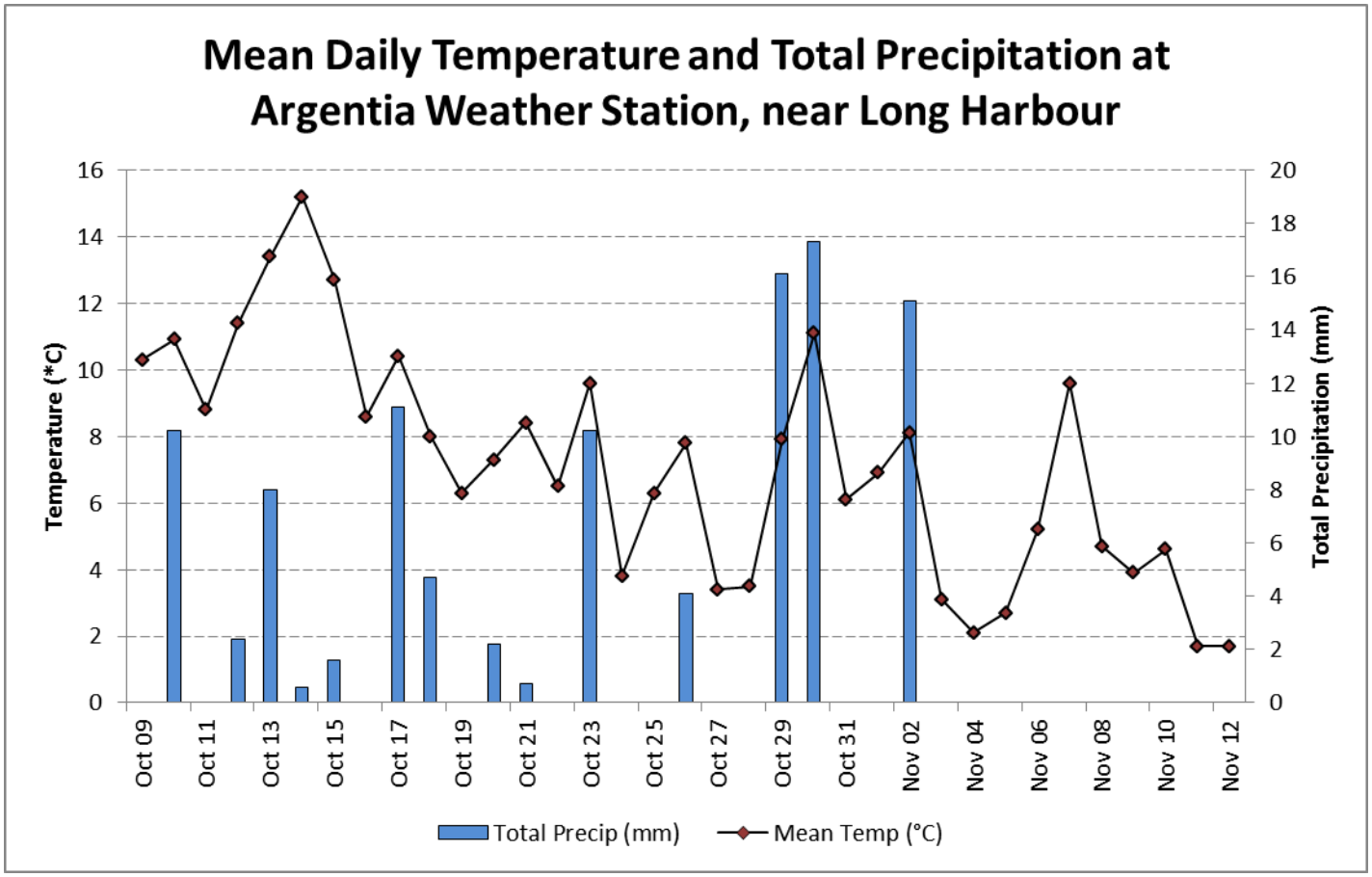
Appendix



Prepared by:
Ryan Pugh
Department of Environment and Conservation
Water Resources Management Division
Phone: 709.729.1681
Fax: 709.729.3020