

# Real-Time Water Quality Report

## Leary's Brook at Prince Philip Drive

Deployment Period  
June 17, 2020 to July 31, 2020



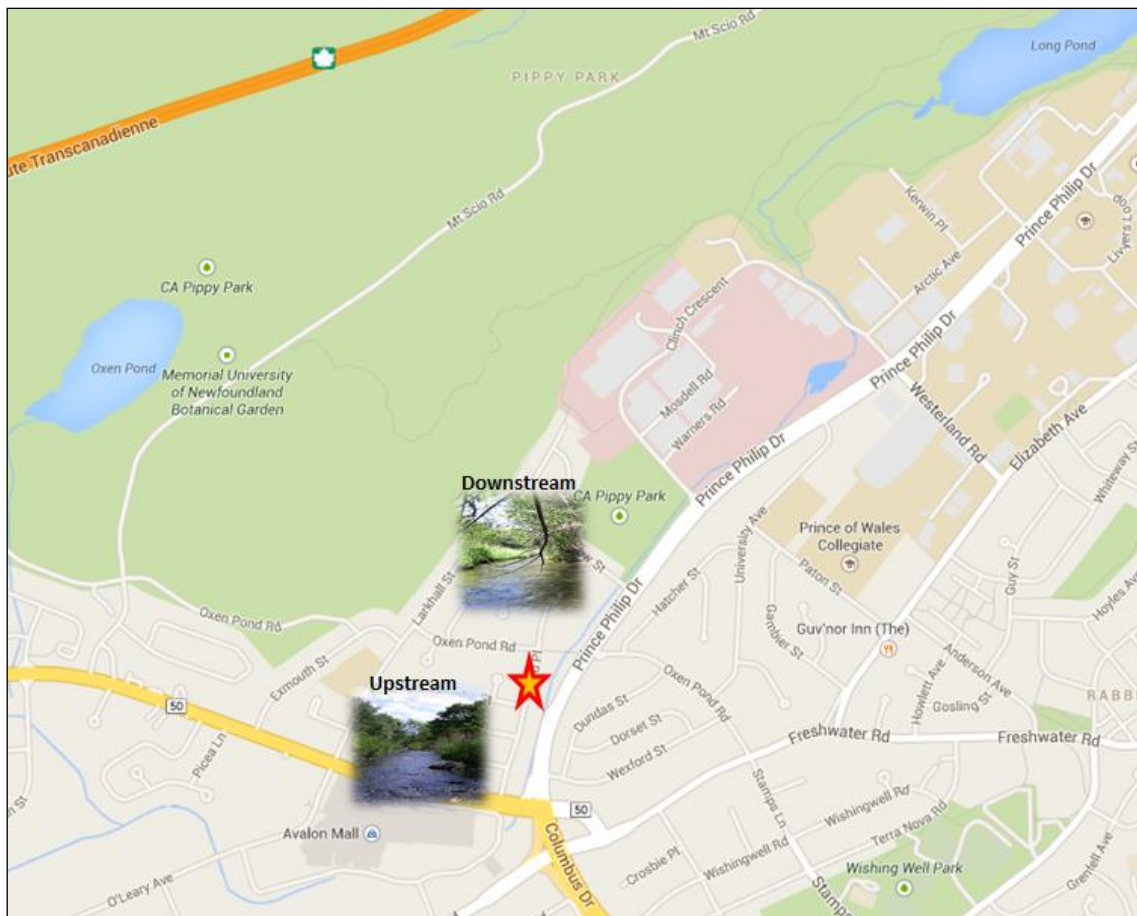
Government of Newfoundland & Labrador  
Department of Environment, Climate Change and  
Municipalities  
Water Resources Management Division

Prepared by:

Paul Rideout  
Environmental Scientist  
Water Resources Management Division  
Department of Environment, Climate Change and Municipalities  
4th Floor, Confederation Building, West Block  
PO Box 8700, St. John's NL A1B 4J6  
Ph. No.: (709) 729 - 0351  
Fax No.: (709) 729 - 0320  
[paulrideout@gov.nl.ca](mailto:paulrideout@gov.nl.ca)

## General

- The Water Resources Management Division (WRMD), in partnership with Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), maintains a real-time water quality and water quantity monitoring station at Leary's Brook adjacent to Prince Phillip Parkway.
- The real-time station allows for assessment and management of the water body. This deployment report discusses water quality related events occurring at the Leary's Brook station.
- The purpose of this real-time station is to monitor, process and publish hydrometric (water quantity) and real-time water quality data at the real-time station. Leary's Brook is an urban stream that flows through industrial and commercial areas and is adjacent to a major roadway.
- This report covers the period between the deployment on June 17, 2020 and removal on July 31, 2020.



**Figure 1: Leary's Brook Real-Time Water Quality and Quantity Station.**

## Quality Assurance and Quality Control

- As part of the Quality Assurance and Quality Control protocol (QA/QC), 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.
- At deployment and removal, a QA/QC Sonde is temporarily deployed alongside the Field Sonde. Values for temperature, pH, conductivity, dissolved oxygen and turbidity are compared between the two instruments. Based on the degree of difference between the parameters on the Field Sonde and QA/QC Sonde at deployment and at removal, a qualitative statement is made on the data quality (Table 1).

Table 1: Instrument Performance Ranking classifications for deployment and removal

Parameter	Rank				
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Marginal	Poor
Temperature (°C)	<=+/-0.2	>+/-0.2 to 0.5	>+/-0.5 to 0.8	>+/-0.8 to 1	<+/-1
pH (unit)	<=+/-0.2	>+/-0.2 to 0.5	>+/-0.5 to 0.8	>+/-0.8 to 1	>+/-1
Sp. Conductance (µS/cm)	<=+/-3	>+/-3 to 10	>+/-10 to 15	>+/-15 to 20	>+/-20
Sp. Conductance > 35 µS/cm (%)	<=+/-3	>+/-3 to 10	>+/-10 to 15	>+/-15 to 20	>+/-20
Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L) (% Sat)	<=+/-0.3	>+/-0.3 to 0.5	>+/-0.5 to 0.8	>+/-0.8 to 1	>+/-1
Turbidity <40 NTU (NTU)	<=+/-2	>+/-2 to 5	>+/-5 to 8	>+/-8 to 10	>+/-10
Turbidity > 40 NTU (%)	<=+/-5	>+/-5 to 10	>+/-10 to 15	>+/-15 to 20	>+/-20

- The temperature sensor on any sonde is the most important. All other parameters can be divided into subgroups of: temperature dependent, temperature compensated and temperature independent. Due to the temperature sensor's location on the sonde, the entire sonde must be at a constant temperature before the temperature sensor will stabilize. The values may take some time to climb to the appropriate reading; if a reading is taken too soon it may not accurately portray the water body.
- Deployment and removal instrument performance rankings for **Leary's Brook** for this period are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Instrument performance rankings for Leary's Brook

Station	Date	Action	Comparison Ranking				
			Temperature	pH	Conductivity	Dissolved Oxygen	Turbidity
Leary's Brook	June 17, 2020	Deployment	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	July 31, 2020	Removal	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

- At the Leary's Brook station at the time of deployment, temperature, pH, conductivity, dissolved oxygen and turbidity ranked as "Excellent".

- At the time of removal, temperature, conductivity, dissolved oxygen and turbidity ranked as “Excellent”, while pH “Good”.

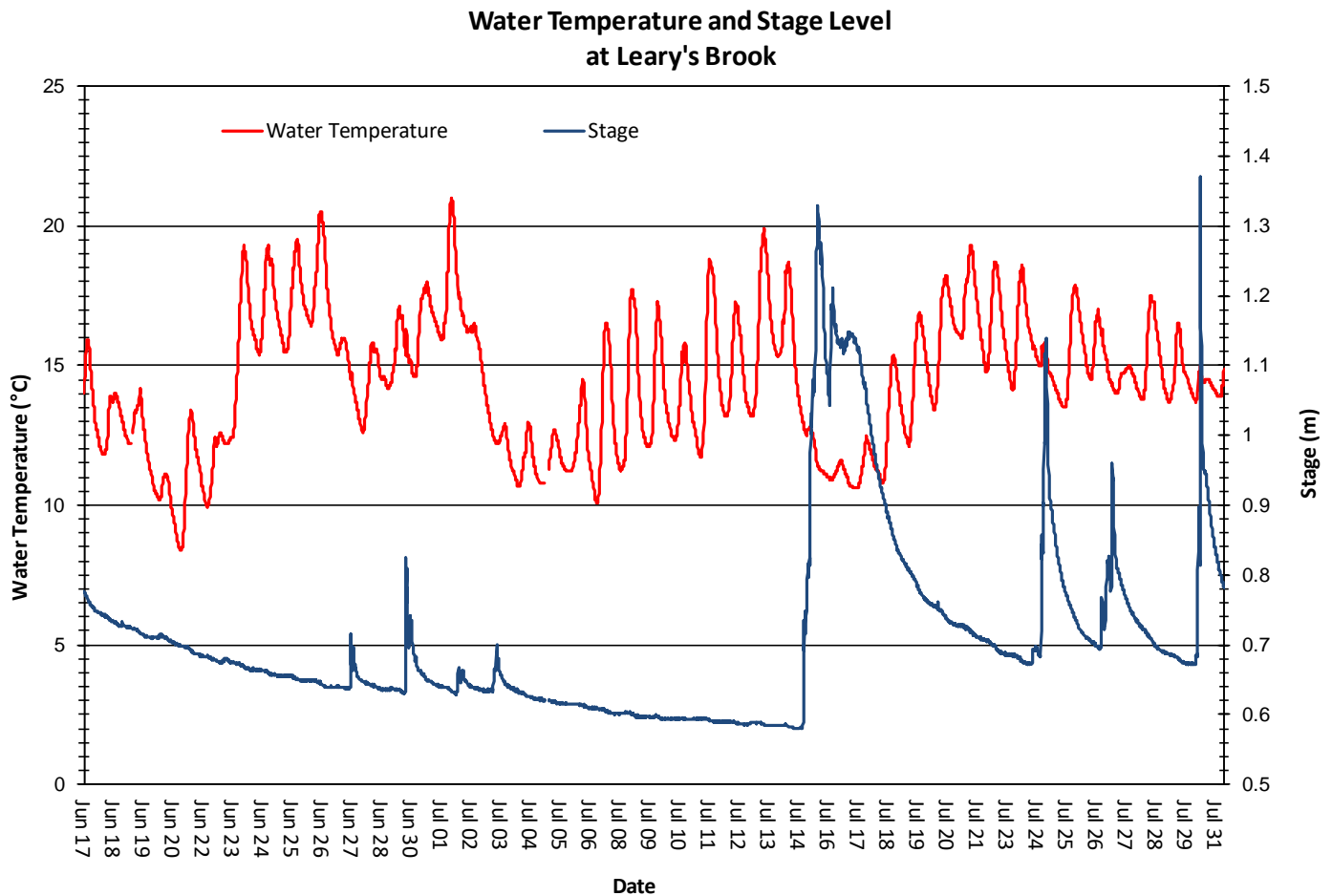
## **Data Interpretation**

- The following graphs and discussion illustrate water quality-related events from June 17, 2020 to July 31, 2020 at the Leary's Brook station.
- With the exception of water quantity data (stage), all data used in the preparation of the graphs and subsequent discussion below adhere to this stringent QA/QC protocol. Water Survey of Canada (WSC) is responsible for QA/QC of water quantity data. Corrected and finalized data may be retrieved from the WSC website (<http://www.ec.gc.ca/rhc-wsc/>)
- Precipitation data from the deployment period was retrieved from the ECCC weather station at St. John's International Airport.

## Leary's Brook

### Water Temperature

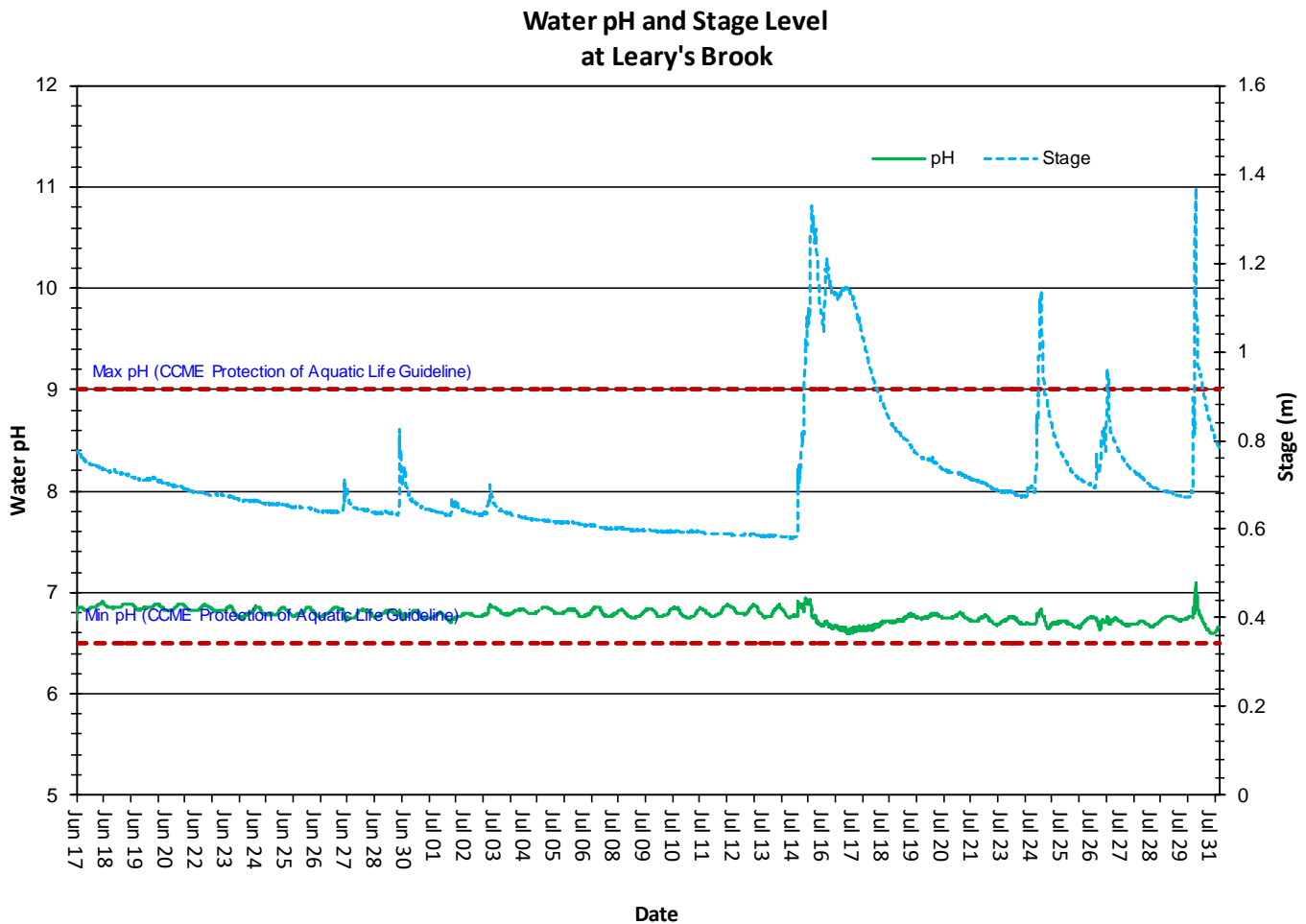
- Water temperature ranged from 8.38 to 21.00 °C during this deployment period (Figure 2).
- Water temperature at Leary's Brook displayed a typical variation over the deployment period. Water temperatures in shallow streams respond quickly to changes in air temperature.
- The water temperature data displayed on Figure 2 is typical of shallow streams and ponds. Shallow water bodies are highly influenced by variations in ambient air temperatures. Water temperature usually falls overnight and rises during daylight hours.
- Please note the stage data is raw data that is published on the ECCC web page. It has not been corrected for backwater effect. WSC is responsible for QA/QC of water quantity data. Corrected data can be obtained upon request to WSC.



**Figure 2: Water Temperature and Stage Level at Leary's Brook**

### pH

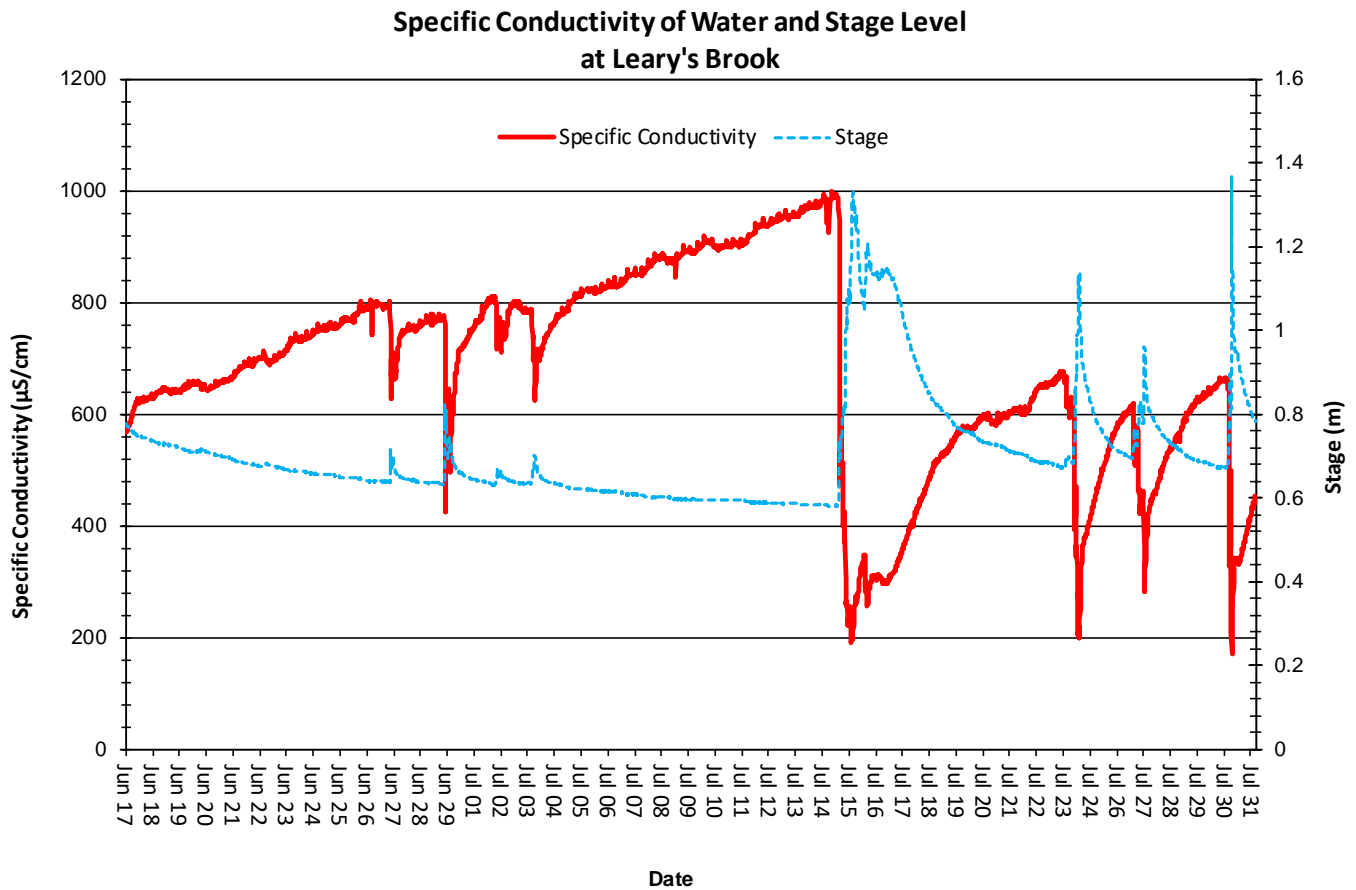
- Throughout this deployment period, pH values ranged between 6.59 pH units and 7.09 pH units (Figure 3).
- The CCME Freshwater Aquatic Life guideline provides a basis by which to judge the overall health of the brook. Naturally, all streams and brooks are different. Leary's Brook pH median was 6.78 (pH units) for this deployment period.
- pH typically falls slightly in Leary's Brook (the water becomes more acidic) at the same time as stage and flow are increasing. In general, precipitation entering Leary's Brook has a lower pH than local surface water causing a small reduction in the pH of the brook.



**Figure 3: Water pH (pH units) values at Leary's Brook Station**

### Specific Conductivity

- The conductivity levels ranged between 169.6  $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$  and 998.0  $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$  during this deployment period. The median was 693.5  $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ . TDS ranged from 0.1086 g/ml to 0.6390 g/ml (Figure 4).
- During this deployment period, specific conductivity decreases when water levels increase as runoff dilutes the salts that are dissolved in the brook.
- During a period of high precipitation (July 15 to July 17) there is a notable increase in stage and a corresponding decrease in conductivity as dissolved solids become more dispersed.



**Figure 4: Specific conductivity values at Leary's Brook Station**



### Dissolved Oxygen

- The instrument measures dissolved oxygen (mg/L) and then calculates the percent saturation (% Sat.).
- The Dissolved Oxygen % Sat levels within this deployment period were between 90.3 % Sat and 100.1 % Sat. Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L) measured between 8.49 mg/L and 11.33 mg/L (Figure 5).
- The majority of DO mg/L values were above the minimum DO CCME Aquatic Life guidelines for the protection of early life stages and all were above the guidelines for the protection of other life stages during the deployment period (Figure 5).
- Small decreases in available oxygen are associated with increases in water temperature, as warm water can hold less dissolved oxygen than cooler water.

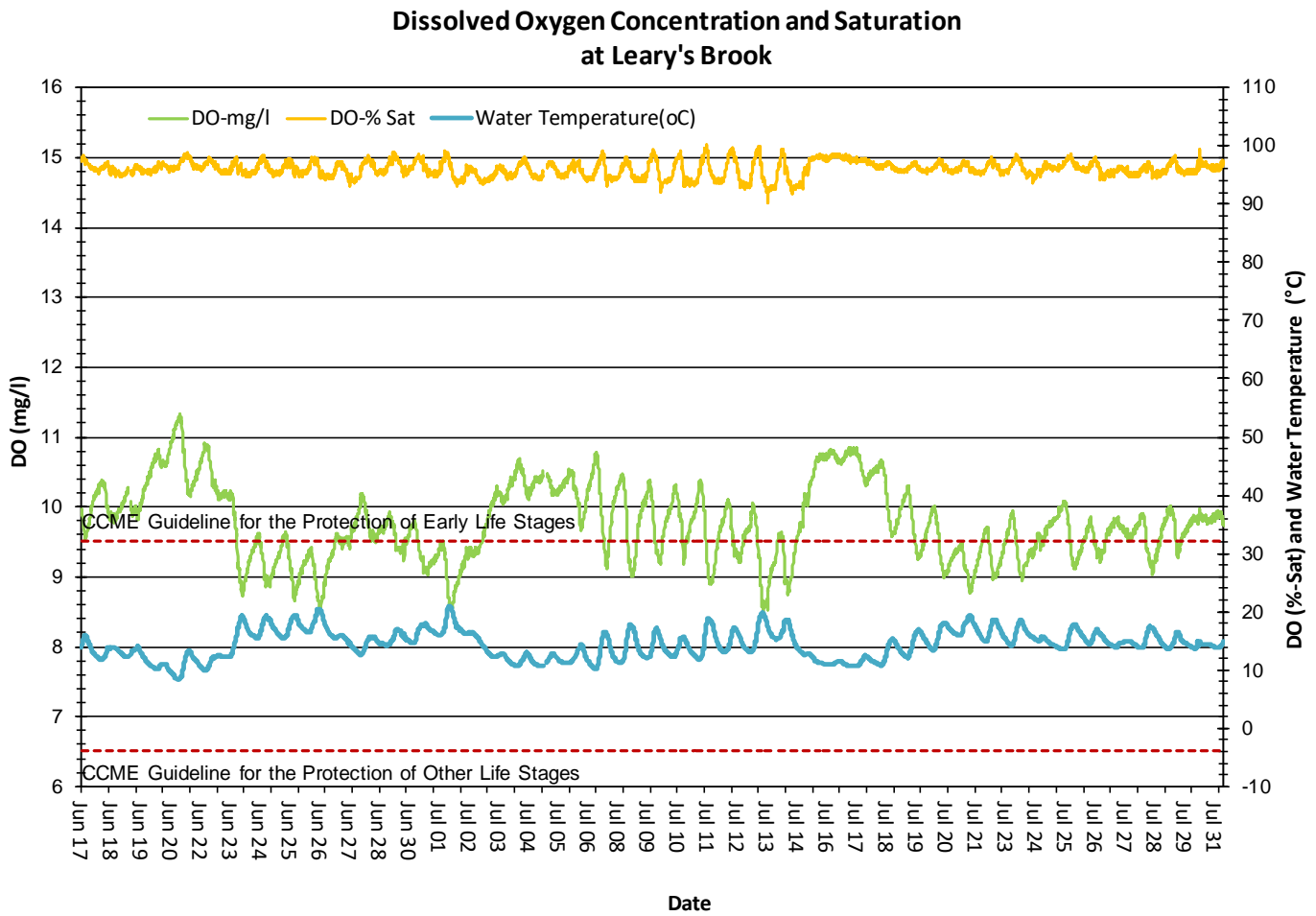


Figure 5: Dissolved oxygen (mg/L & % sat) and water temperature (°C) values at Leary's Brook Station

### Turbidity

- The turbidity sensor records values between 0 NTU and 3000 NTU. A turbidity reading of 3000 NTU is identified as an error and is not a true value. Readings of 3000 NTU should not be included in any statistical analysis.
- The turbidity readings during this deployment ranged between 0.0 NTU to 75.2 NTU (Figure 6).
- Increases in turbidity (cloudiness) are usually caused by increased runoff during precipitation events. Runoff carries silt and other debris into Leary's Brook. Upstream construction and the inadequate control of silt-laden runoff can also cause turbidity to increase.
- Turbidity values from July 24 at 13:32 to the end of the deployment on July 31 have been removed from the dataset. Recorded turbidity values became erratic over this period and indicative of the presence of debris around the sensor. As stated above, turbidity sensor QA/QC procedures indicated 'excellent' performance at the end of the deployment period and the erratic readings were likely caused by solid debris interfering with readings.

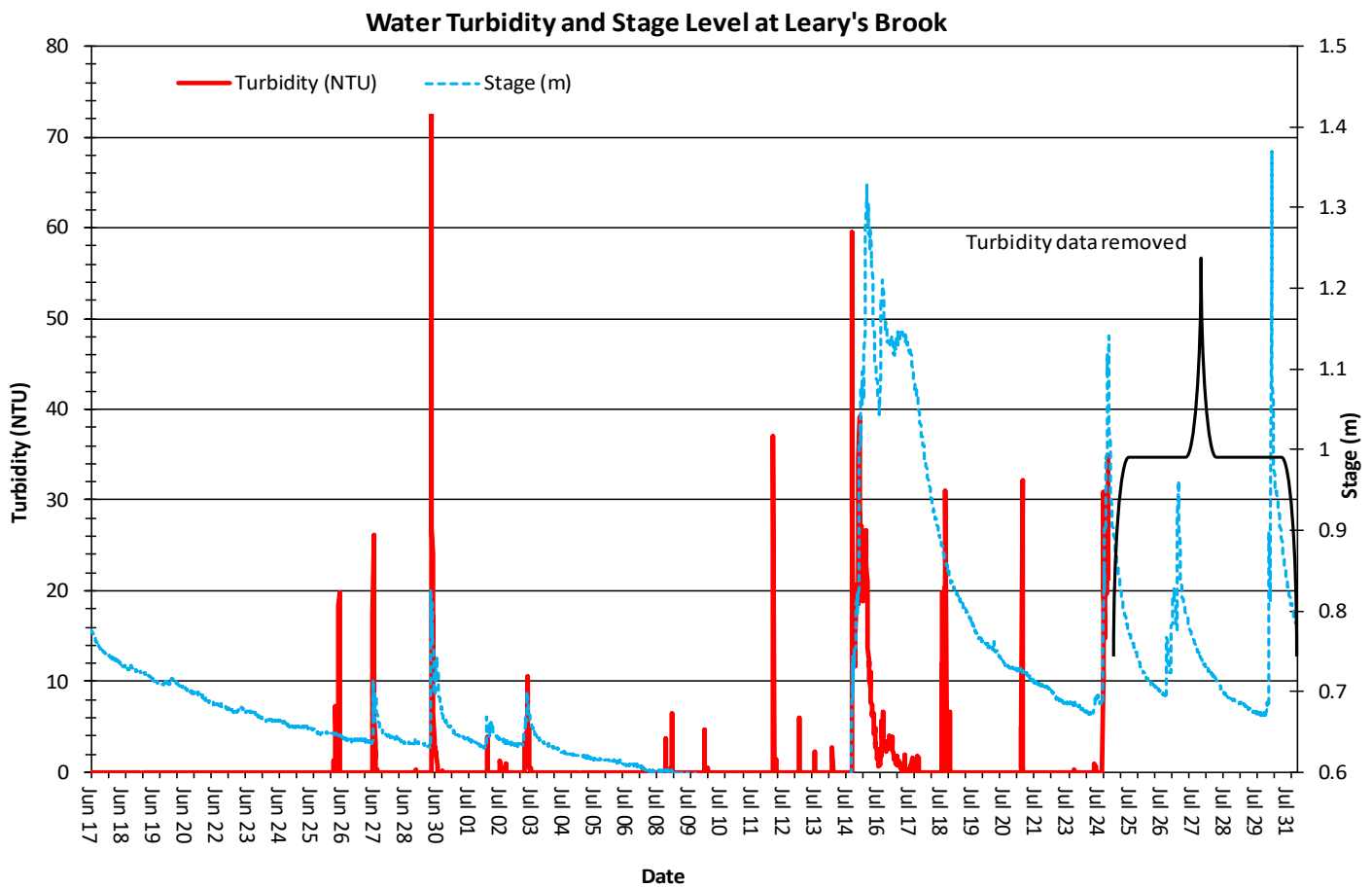
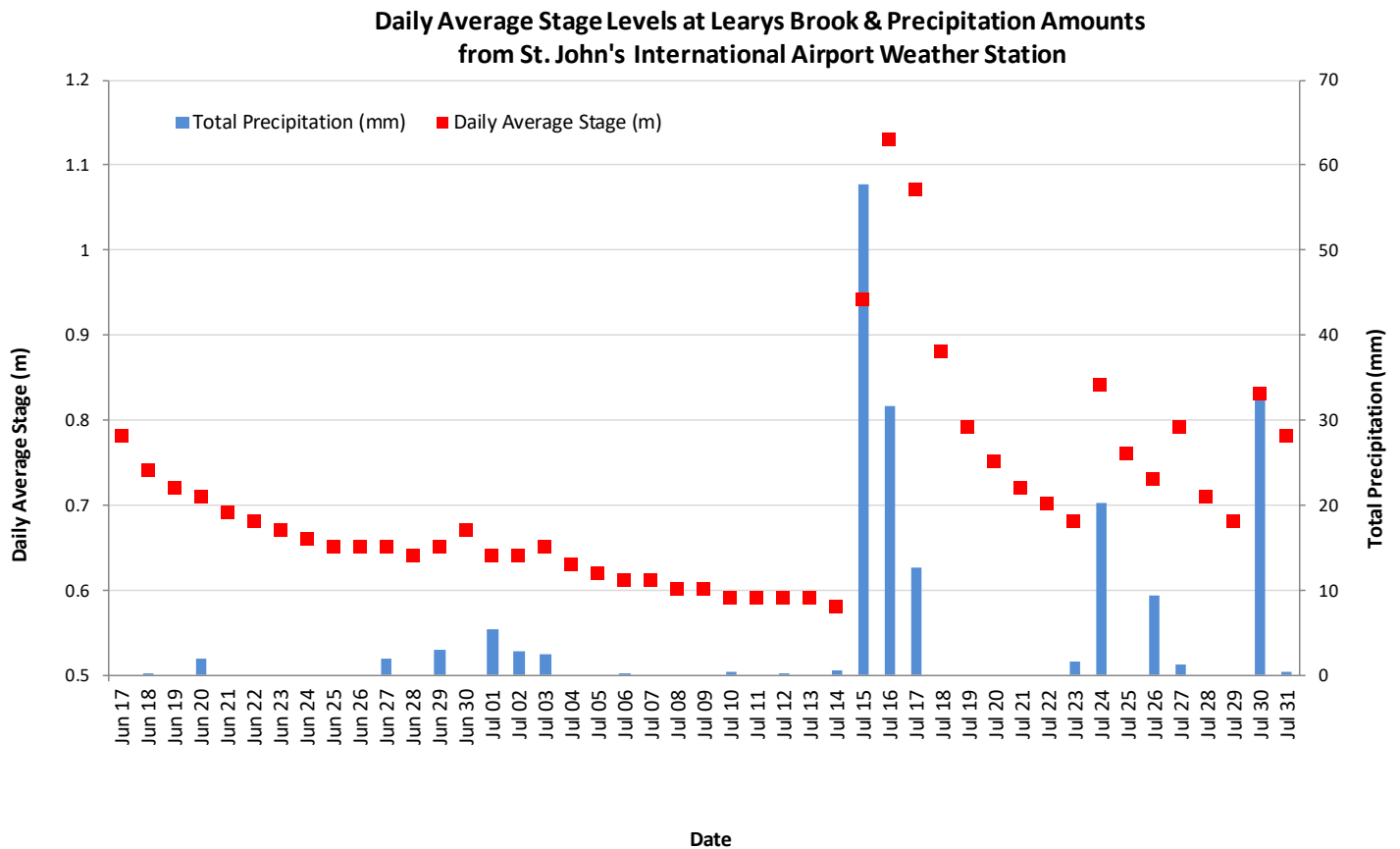


Figure 6: Turbidity (NTU) values at Leary's Brook Station

### Stage and Total Precipitation

- The graph below shows daily total precipitation data from St. John's International Airport weather station and the daily average stage (Figure 7).
- Please note that the stage data in this report is raw data. It has not been corrected for backwater effect. WSC is responsible for QA/QC of water quantity data. Corrected data can be obtained upon request to WSC.
- Stage (and streamflow) usually varies significantly throughout a deployment period in Leary's Brook.



**Figure 7: Daily average stage values (m) from Leary's Brook and daily total precipitation values (mm) from St. John's International Airport.**

## Conclusions

In both natural and developed environments, climate and weather conditions can contribute to variations in water quality. Being an urban stream surrounded by developed land however, it is often the case that observed and recorded changes in Leary's Brook water quality are related to anthropogenic disturbances or effects.

Precipitation and runoff events during the deployment period led to expected increases in stage, which thus influenced the values of turbidity, pH, specific conductance, and TDS.

During this deployment period the median water temperature at the Leary's Brook station was 14.50°C.

The median pH value for Leary's Brook Station was 6.78 (pH units). The pH level generally decreases slightly at this station during rainfall events and increases during dry periods.

Increased turbidity levels are sometimes associated with upstream disturbances and construction, though most often are caused by precipitation runoff carrying sediments into the brook, both overland and via storm drains.

Conductivity had a median value of 693.5  $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ . The maximum conductivity was 998.0  $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ . At this time of year conductivity reaches its highest values during periods of low water. Conductivity rapidly decreases as precipitation runoff dilutes pollutants present in the brook.

Dissolved Oxygen at Leary's Brook had a median of 96.0 %Sat and 9.73 mg/L during the deployment period. Small decreases in DO (mg/L and % Sat) correspond with increases in water temperatures. DO levels were above the "CCME Guidelines for the Protection of Early and Other Life Stages" for the majority of the deployment period.