

# Real-Time Water Quality Deployment Report

## Rattling Brook Network

December 2, 2021 to January 11, 2022



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

## General

- Department of Environment and Climate Change staff monitor 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 ([https://wateroffice.ec.gc.ca/index\\_e.html](https://wateroffice.ec.gc.ca/index_e.html))\*.

## 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

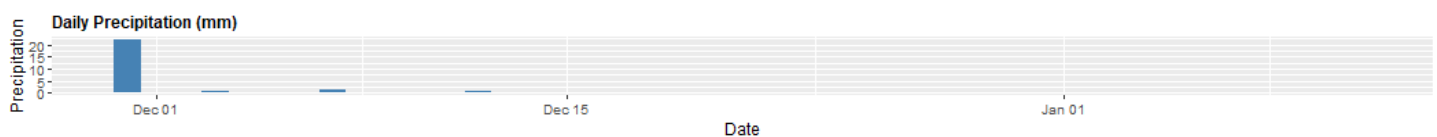
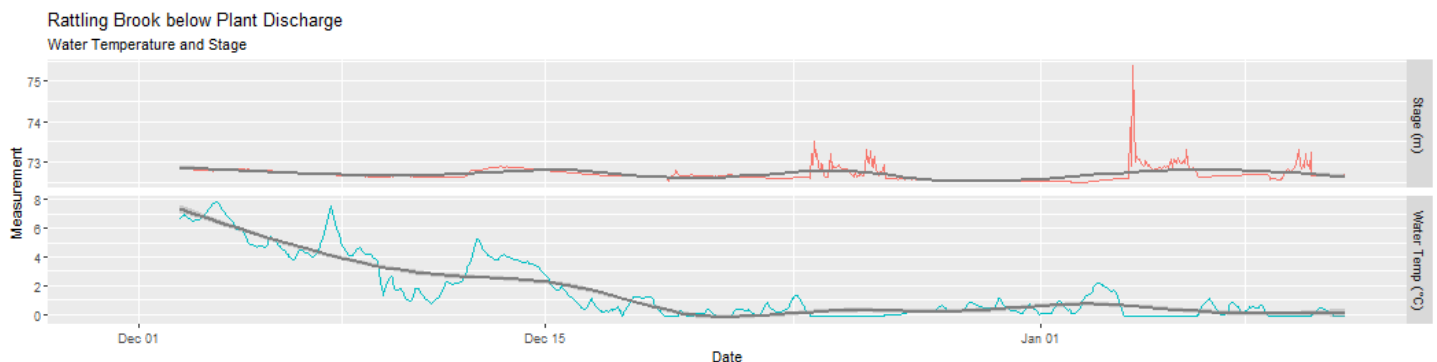
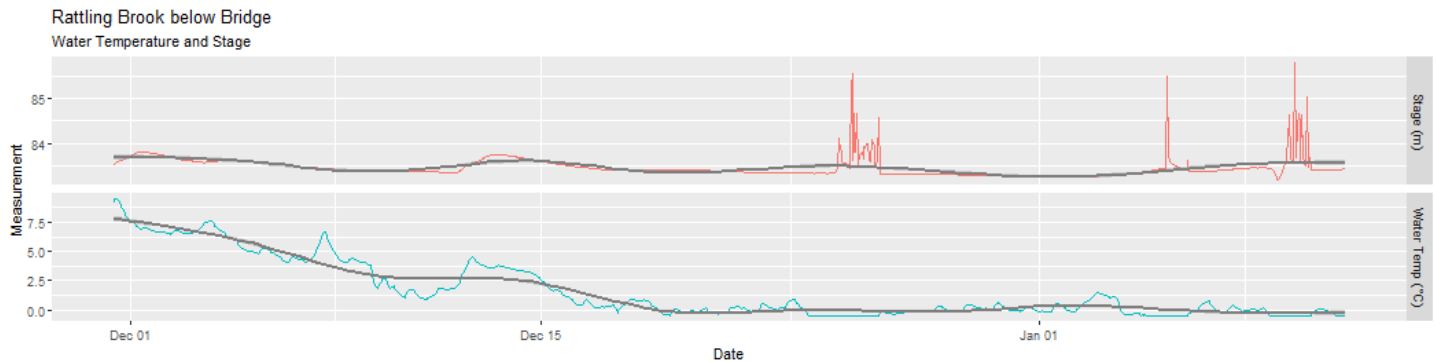
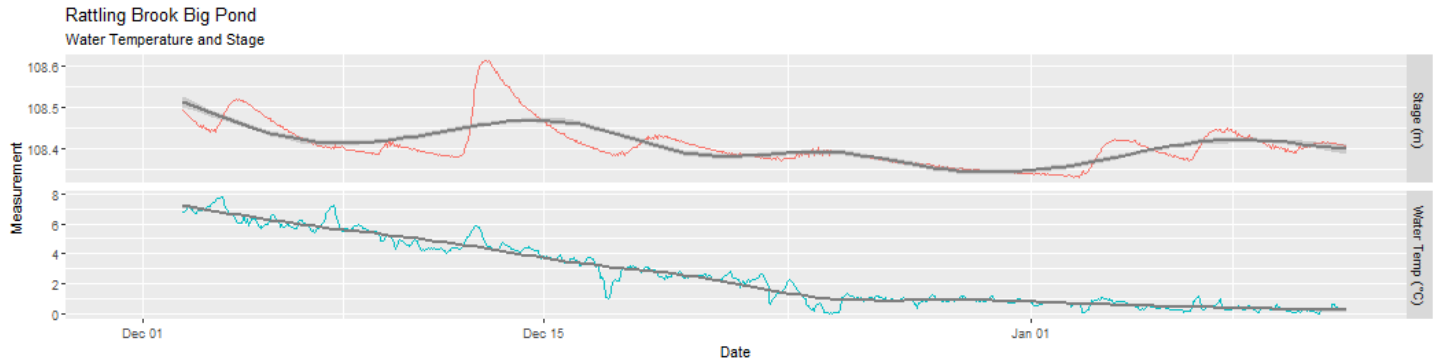
Station	Date	Action	Comparison Ranking				
			Temperature	pH	Conductivity	Dissolved Oxygen	Turbidity
Rattling Brook Big Pond	December 2	Deployment	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent	Fair
		Ongoing	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rattling Brook below Bridge	November 30	Deployment	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Poor
	January 11	Removal	Good	Fair	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Rattling Brook below Plant Discharge	December 2	Deployment	Excellent	Fair	Excellent	Good	Excellent
	January 11	Removal	Excellent	Good	Fair	Fair	Marginal

- The below Bridge Turbidity sensor rating ‘Poor’ on deployment was likely due to the torrential rain, high winds and placement of the QA/QC sonde for safety reasons upstream approx. 20 ft.
- Initial removal at Big Pond and Plant Discharge scheduled on November 30 was delayed as it was unsafe to perform maintenance on the station due to weather conditions at the time.
- Big Pond was not removed on January 11<sup>th</sup> due to ice coverage, it will continue to be an ongoing deployment until ice conditions allow.

- 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.*



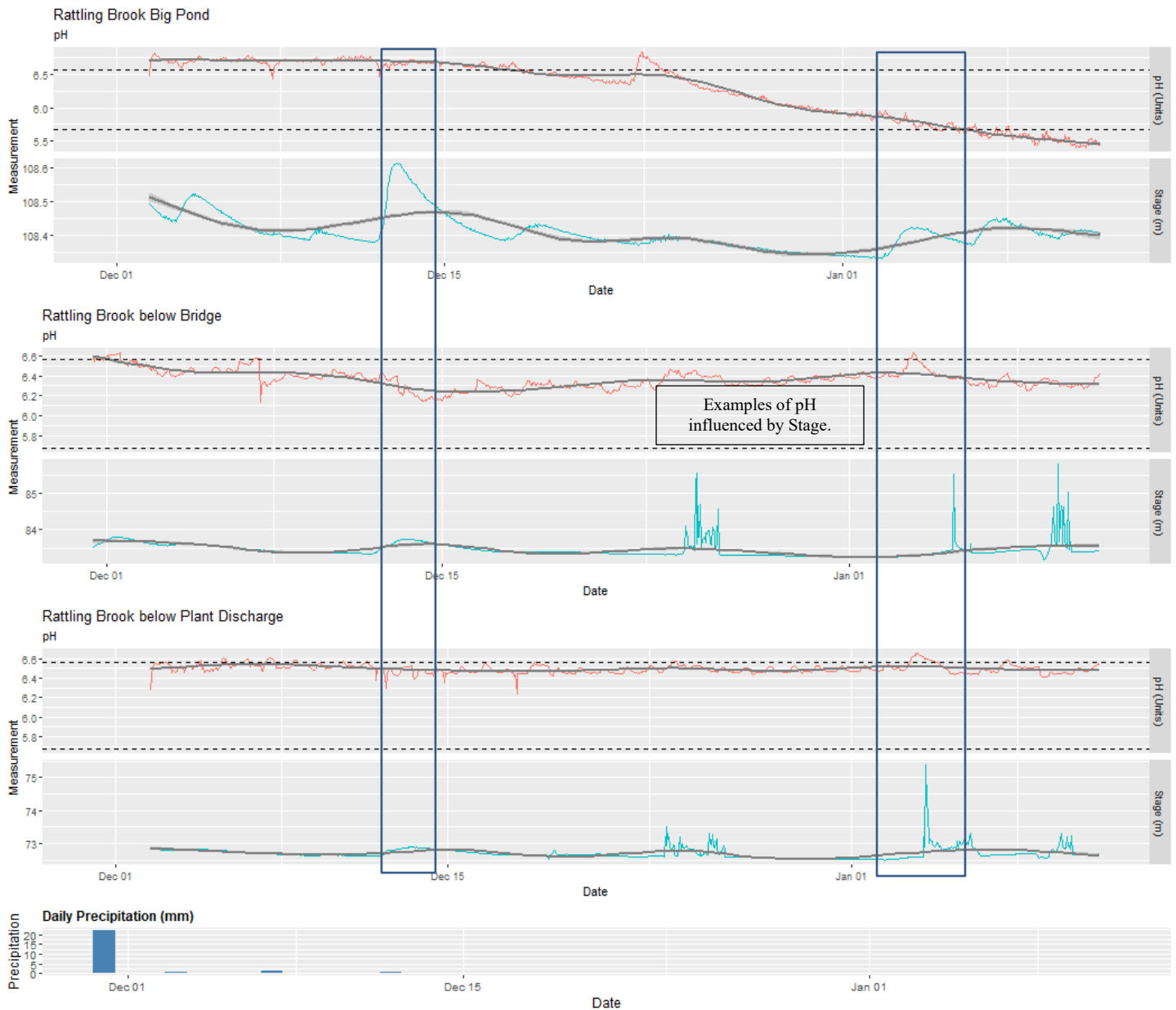
Station	Max	Min	Median	Mean
Big Pond	7.79	-0.04	1.98	2.57
Below Bridge	9.47	-0.52	0.33	1.63
Below Plant Discharge	7.84	-0.14	0.51	1.56

- Water temperature trends downward at the beginning of the deployment before plateauing.

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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.*



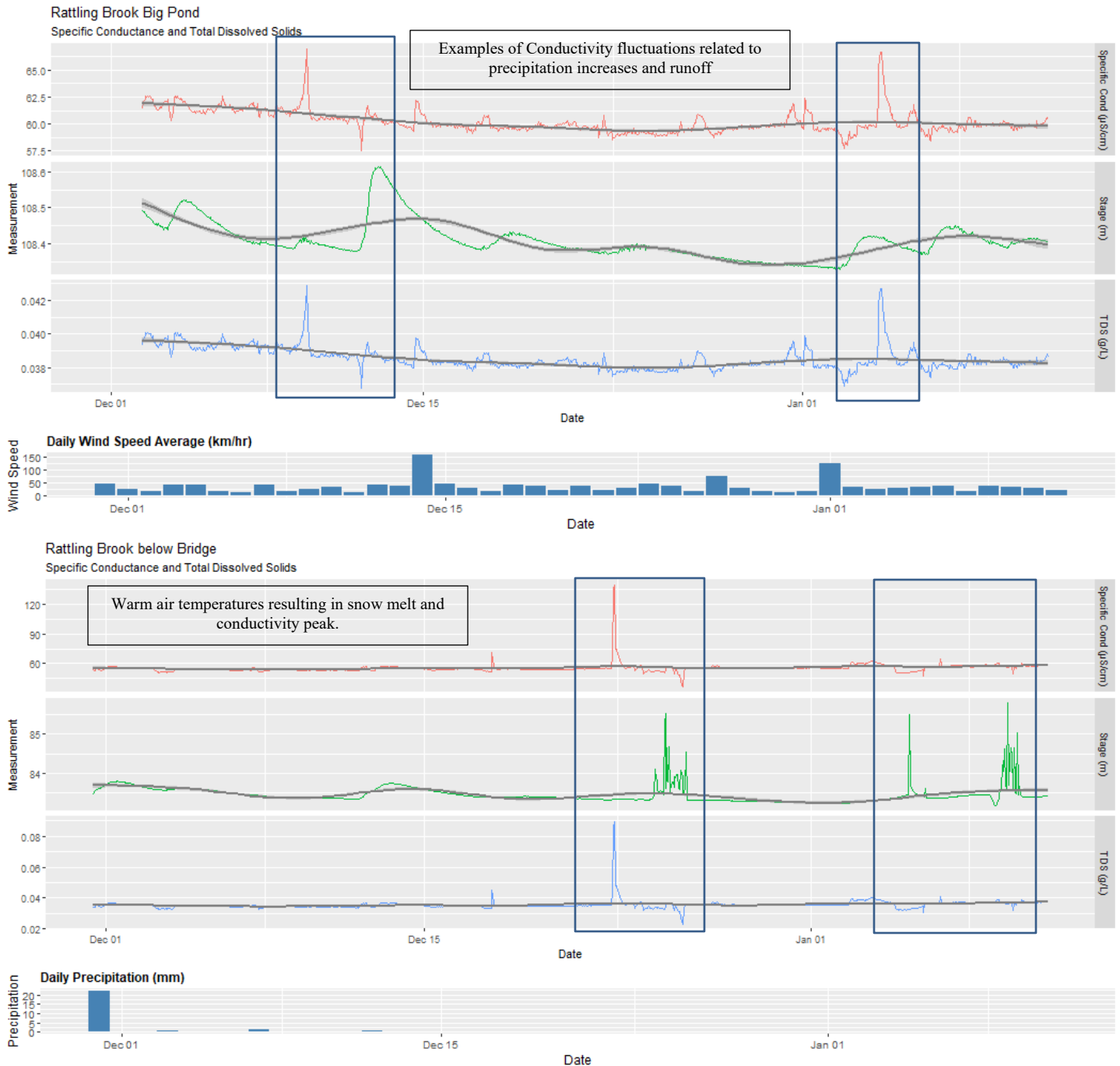
Station	Max	Min	Median	Mean
Big Pond	6.83	5.40	6.46	6.28
Below Bridge	6.63	6.14	6.37	6.37
Below Plant Discharge	6.65	6.24	6.49	6.49

- pH values were generally consistent with the majority of values within the site-specific guidelines (5.67-6.56 pH Units). Towards mid-deployment, Big Pond showed a slow decline, possibly due to sensor drift.

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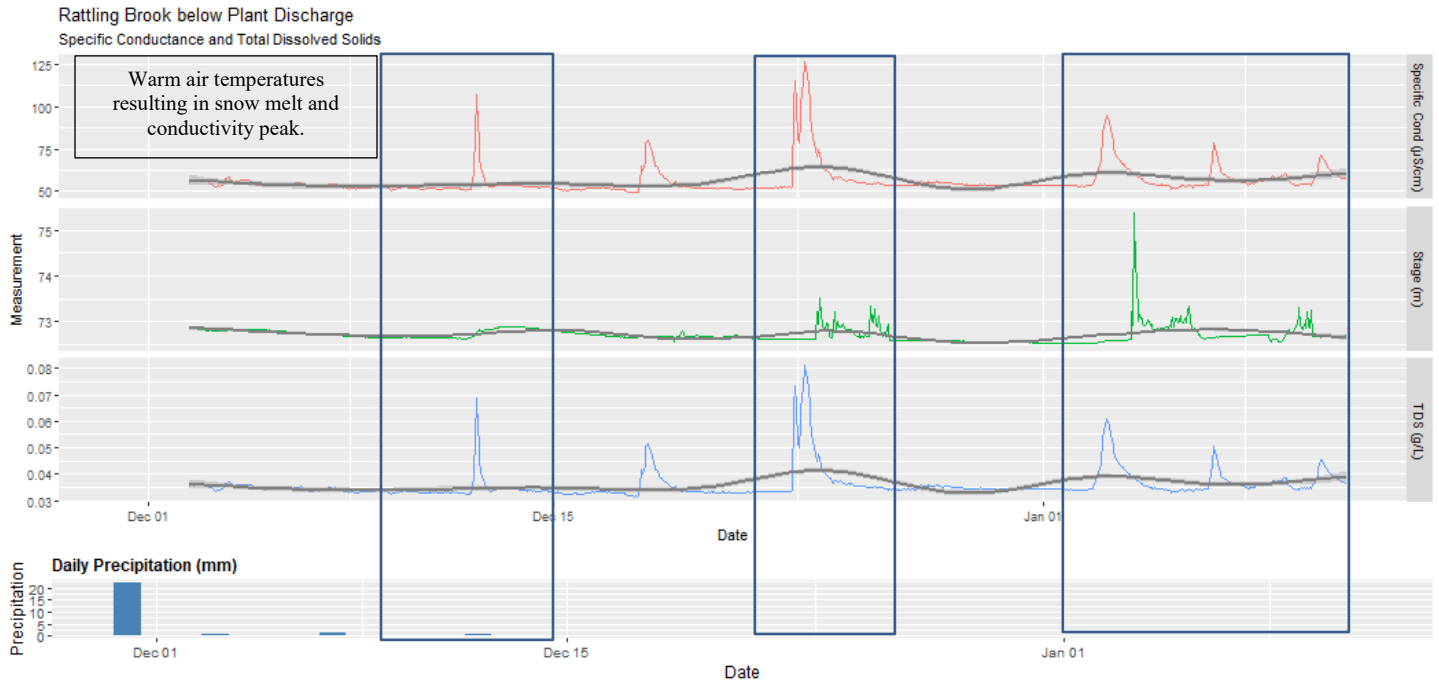
## Specific Conductivity

*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.*



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Station	Max	Min	Median	Mean
Big Pond	67.0	57.5	59.9	60.2
Below Bridge	140.1	36.3	55.3	55.5
Below Plant Discharge	126.8	49.3	53.8	56.3

- Specific conductivity fluctuated at all stations but showed no major trends up or down during the deployment period. There are increases at Big Pond not related to precipitation. This may be due to wave action from the pond occasionally stirring up sediment around the sonde, increasing the conductivity.

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## Dissolved Oxygen

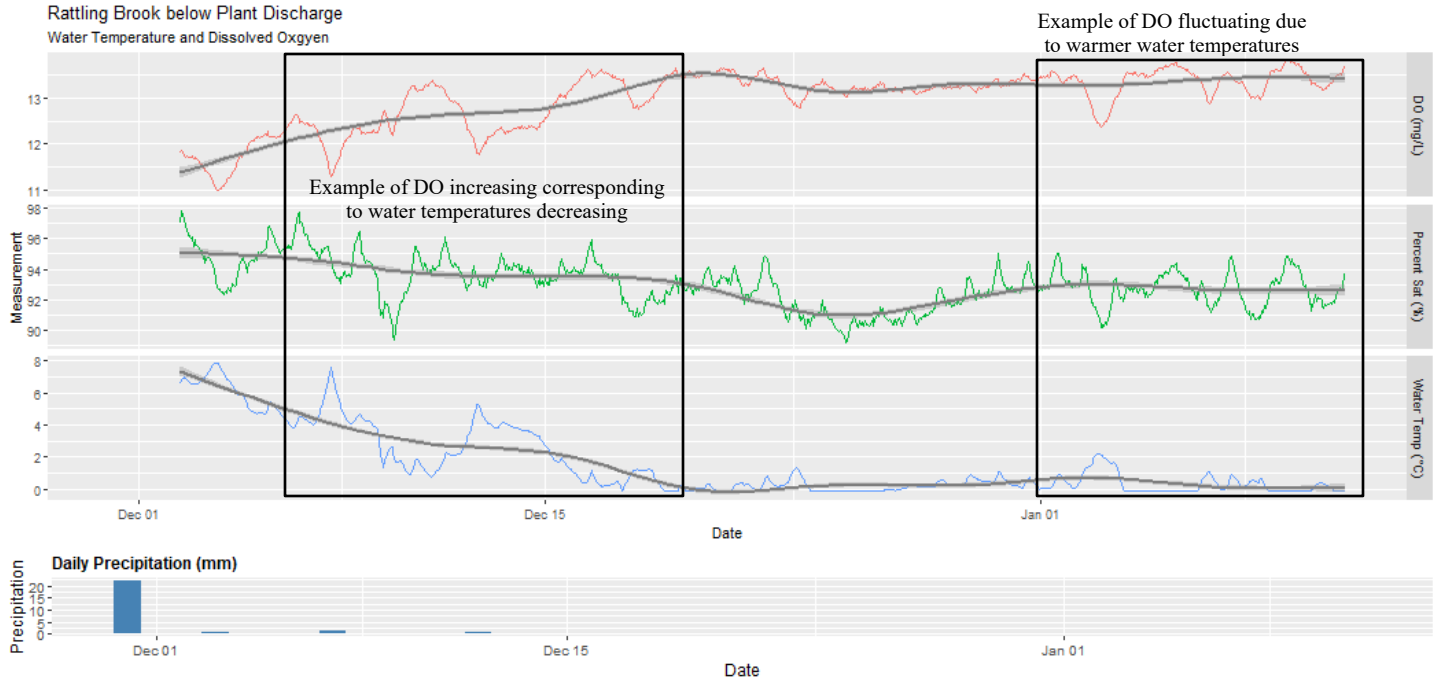
*Dissolved oxygen is a metabolic requirement of aquatic plants and animals. The concentration of oxygen in water depends on many factors, especially temperature – the saturation of oxygen in water is inversely proportional to water temperature. Oxygen concentrations also tend to be higher in flowing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



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Station	Max	Min	Median	Mean
Big Pond	13.52	11.07	12.52	12.40
Below Bridge	14.76	10.89	14.04	13.61
Below Plant Discharge	13.85	10.98	13.21	12.98

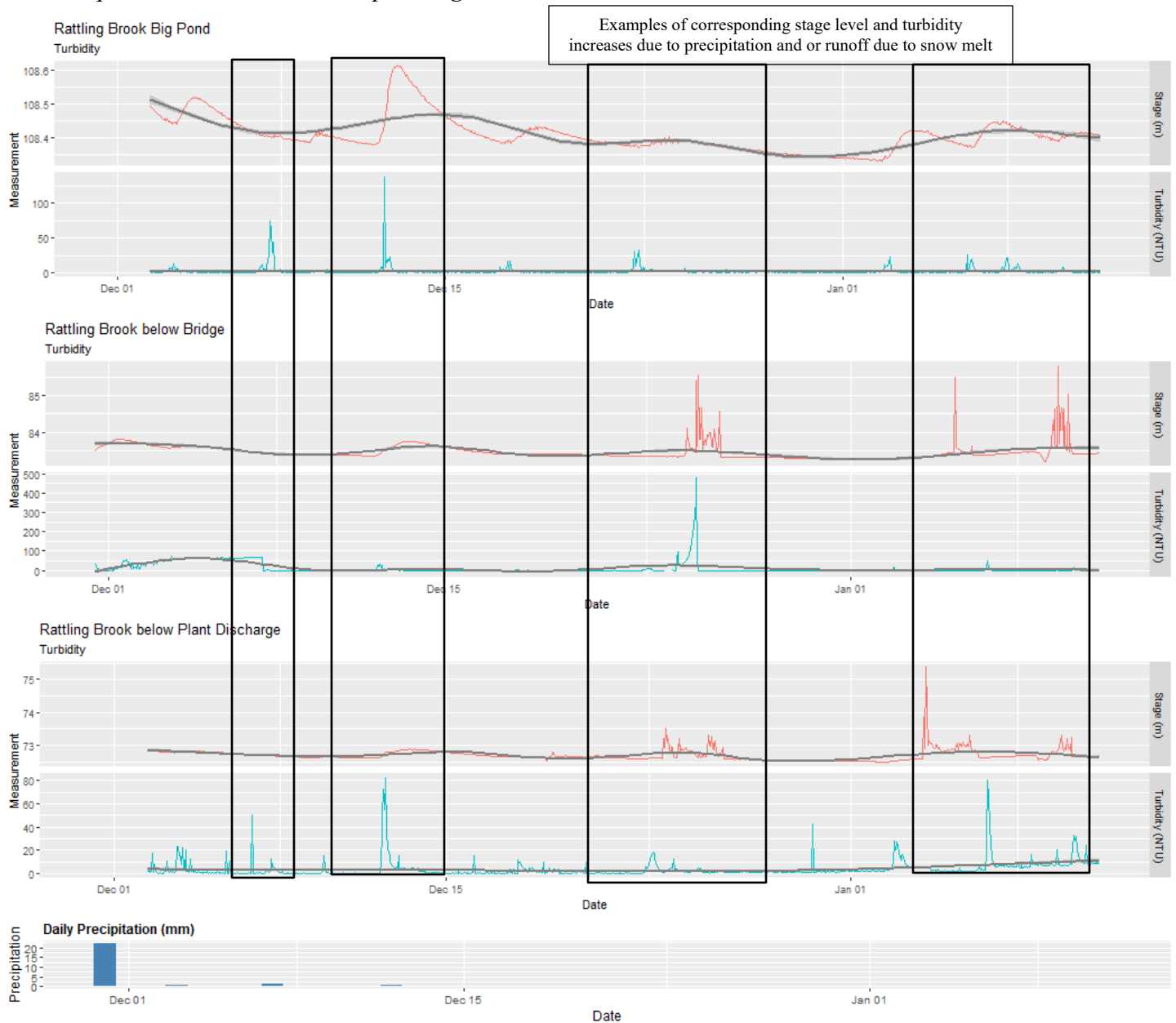
- As water temperatures are stabilizing for winter, dissolved oxygen concentrations plateau the second half of the deployment period. Note an abnormally warm period late in the deployment that caused DO fluctuations for a short period of time at Rattling Brook below Discharge and Below Bridge.
- During this deployment period all measurements were found to be above the CCME dissolved oxygen guideline of 9.5 mg/L for the protection of early life stage cold-water biota.

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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	Max	Min	Median	Mean
Big Pond	137.0	0.1	0.9	2.3
Below Bridge	480.0	0.0	0.0	10.8
Below Plant Discharge	82.0	0.0	1.7	3.8

- Isolated turbidity events were experienced simultaneously with precipitation and runoff events and are of short duration.

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### Appendix

