



Real-Time Water Quality Report

Outer Cove Brook Network

Deployment Period
August 6 to September 4, 2013



Government of Newfoundland & Labrador
Department of Environment and Conservation
Water Resources Management Division

Prepared by:

Kyla Brake
Environmental Scientist
Water Resources Management Division
Department of Environment & Conservation
4th Floor, Confederation Building, West Block
PO Box 8700, St. John's NL A1B 4J6
Ph. No.: (709) 729 - 3899
Fax No.: (709) 729 - 0320
kbrake@gov.nl.ca

General

- The Water Resources Management Division (WRMD), in partnership with the City of St. John's and Environment Canada, maintain two real-time water quality and water quantity monitoring stations along Outer Cove Brook.
- This deployment report discusses water quality related events occurring at the stations: Outer Cove Brook below Airport and Outer Cove Brook at Clovelly Golf Course in St. John's.
- WRMD staff monitors the real-time web pages regularly. The City of St. John's will be notified of any water quality issues that arise so mitigative measures can be taken.
- The purpose of these real-time stations is to monitor, process and publish hydrometric (water quantity) and real-time water quality data at the real-time stations. Outer Cove Brook is in the vicinity of the Torbay Road North Commercial Development Area and the real-time stations allow for assessment and management of the water body.
- This report covers the 28-day period from deployment on August 6, 2013 until removal on September 4, 2013.

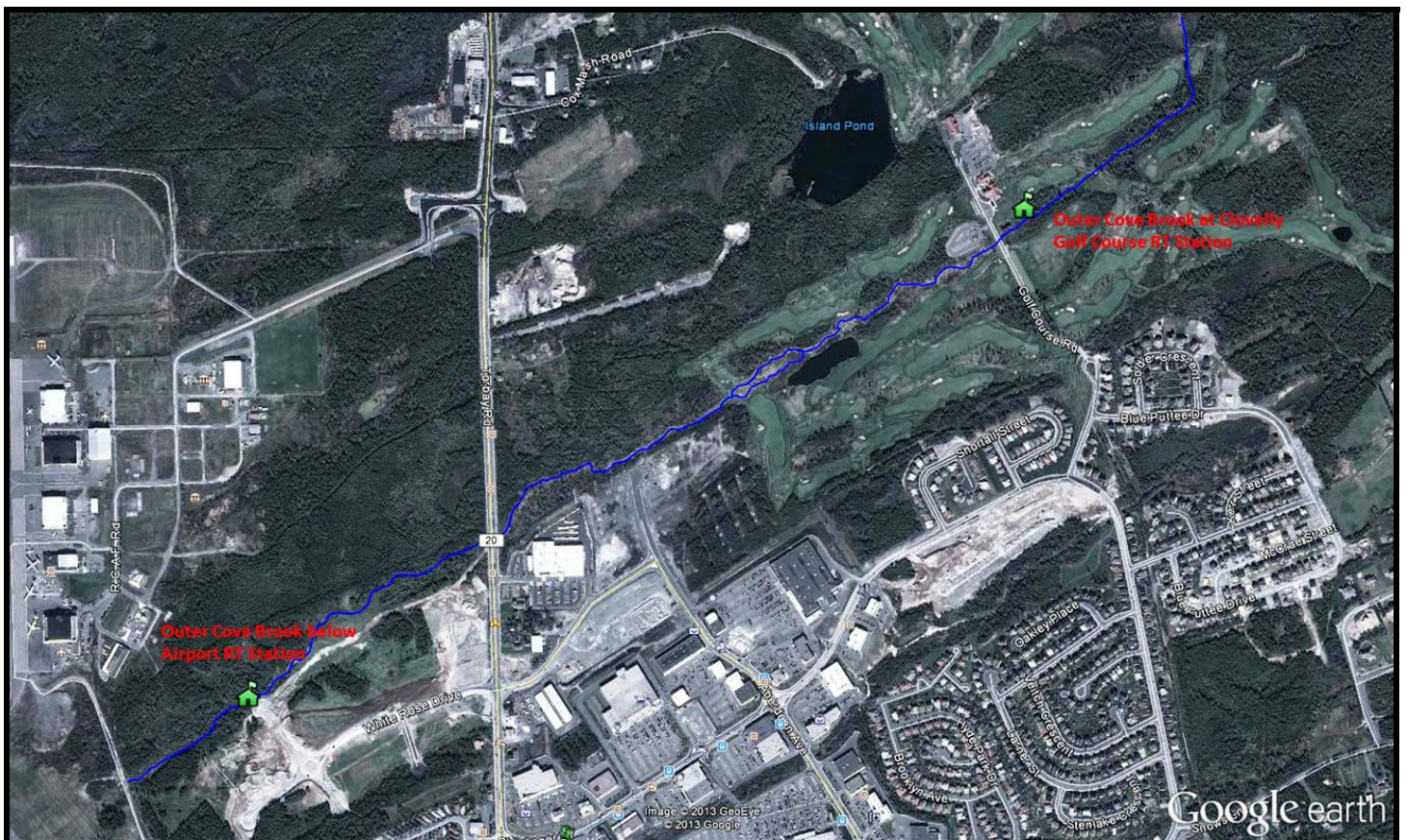


Figure 1: Outer Cove Brook Real-Time Water Quality and Quantity Stations.

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)	$\leq \pm 0.2$	$> \pm 0.2$ to 0.5	$> \pm 0.5$ to 0.8	$> \pm 0.8$ to 1	$< \pm 1$
pH (unit)	$\leq \pm 0.2$	$> \pm 0.2$ to 0.5	$> \pm 0.5$ to 0.8	$> \pm 0.8$ to 1	$> \pm 1$
Sp. Conductance ($\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$)	$\leq \pm 3$	$> \pm 3$ to 10	$> \pm 10$ to 15	$> \pm 15$ to 20	$> \pm 20$
Sp. Conductance $> 35 \mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ (%)	$\leq \pm 3$	$> \pm 3$ to 10	$> \pm 10$ to 15	$> \pm 15$ to 20	$> \pm 20$
Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L) (% Sat)	$\leq \pm 0.3$	$> \pm 0.3$ to 0.5	$> \pm 0.5$ to 0.8	$> \pm 0.8$ to 1	$> \pm 1$
Turbidity < 40 NTU (NTU)	$\leq \pm 2$	$> \pm 2$ to 5	$> \pm 5$ to 8	$> \pm 8$ to 10	$> \pm 10$
Turbidity > 40 NTU (%)	$\leq \pm 5$	$> \pm 5$ to 10	$> \pm 10$ to 15	$> \pm 15$ to 20	$> \pm 20$

- It should be noted that the temperature sensor on any sonde is the most important. All other parameters can be divided into subgroups of: temperature dependant, 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 **Outer Cove Brook below Airport** for the period of August 6, 2013 through to September 4, 2013 are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Instrument performance rankings for Outer Cove Brook below Airport Aug. 6, 2013 – Sept 4, 2013

Station	Date	Action	Comparison Ranking				
			Temperature	pH	Conductivity	Dissolved Oxygen	Turbidity
Below Airport	Aug. 6 2013	Deployment	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	*Poor
	Sept 4 2013	Removal	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

- At the Outer Cove Brook below Airport station at the point of deployment, the dissolved oxygen, conductivity and pH sensors ranked 'excellent' while the temperature sensor ranked 'good'. The turbidity sensor ranked 'poor' due to an issue with the QA/QC sonde turbidity sensor, which recorded a value which was inaccurate for the clarity of the water.
- At removal, all sensors on the field sonde ranked 'excellent' when compared with a freshly calibrated QA/QC sonde.
- Deployment and removal instrument performance rankings for **Outer Cove Brook at Clovelly Golf Course** for the period of August 6, 2013 through to September 4, 2013 are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Instrument performance rankings for Outer Cove Brook at Clovelly Golf Course Aug. 6, 2013 – Sept 4, 2013

Station	Date	Action	Comparison Ranking				
			Temperature	pH	Conductivity	Dissolved Oxygen	Turbidity
Clovelly Golf Course	Aug. 6 2013	Deployment	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	*Poor
	Sept 4 2013	Removal	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

- During the Outer Cove Brook Clovelly Golf Course station deployment, temperature, pH, conductivity, and dissolved oxygen sensors ranked 'excellent' when compared to the freshly calibrated QA/QC sonde. The turbidity sensor again ranked 'poor', however, this was again due to the erroneous sensor on the QA/QC sonde, as was noted as the below airport station.
- At removal, pH, turbidity, conductivity and dissolved oxygen ranked 'excellent', while temperature ranked 'good'.
- Outer Cove Brook has a large amount of algae growing and it was very hard to select a location for the sonde where the probes wouldn't be influenced by the long hair-like algae. The algae may cause issues periodically if it becomes tangled around the turbidity sensor or block the sensors on the conductivity probe.

Deployment Notes

- There were several short transmission errors during this deployment period at the below airport station, but none occurred at the Clovelly Golf Course station.
- Due to issues with the turbidity sensor at the below airport station, the sonde was replaced by a back-up sonde on August 19th. The original sonde will now undergo performance testing and repairs if necessary.
- The river's substrate and surrounding vegetation at the below Airport station showed signs of a red colored scaling 'growth' or 'coating' on the rocks during deployment, but the substrate showed no signs of 'slime' or any other substance during sonde removal and the clarity of the water was very clear.

Data Interpretation

- The following graphs and discussion illustrate water quality-related events from August 6 to September 4, 2013 at the Outer Cove Brook Stations.
- 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 is responsible for QA/QC of water quantity data. Corrected data can be obtained upon request from Water Survey of Canada.
- Precipitation data from the deployment period was retrieved from Environment Canada's weather station at St. John's Airport and supplemented with information from 'The Weather Network' when EC data was not available.

Outer Cove Brook below Airport

Water Temperature

- Water temperature ranged from 10.50°C to 18.00°C during this deployment period (Figure 2).
- There are noticeable increases and decreases in the water temperature during the deployment period. This is consistent with ambient air temperatures over this time period, generally increasing during daylight hours and cooling overnight.
- Water temperatures display diurnal variations, typical of shallow streams and ponds which are highly influenced by natural diurnal variations in ambient air temperatures.
- Water temperature is a very important parameter and it has the ability to influence other parameters that are measured by the water quality instrument.

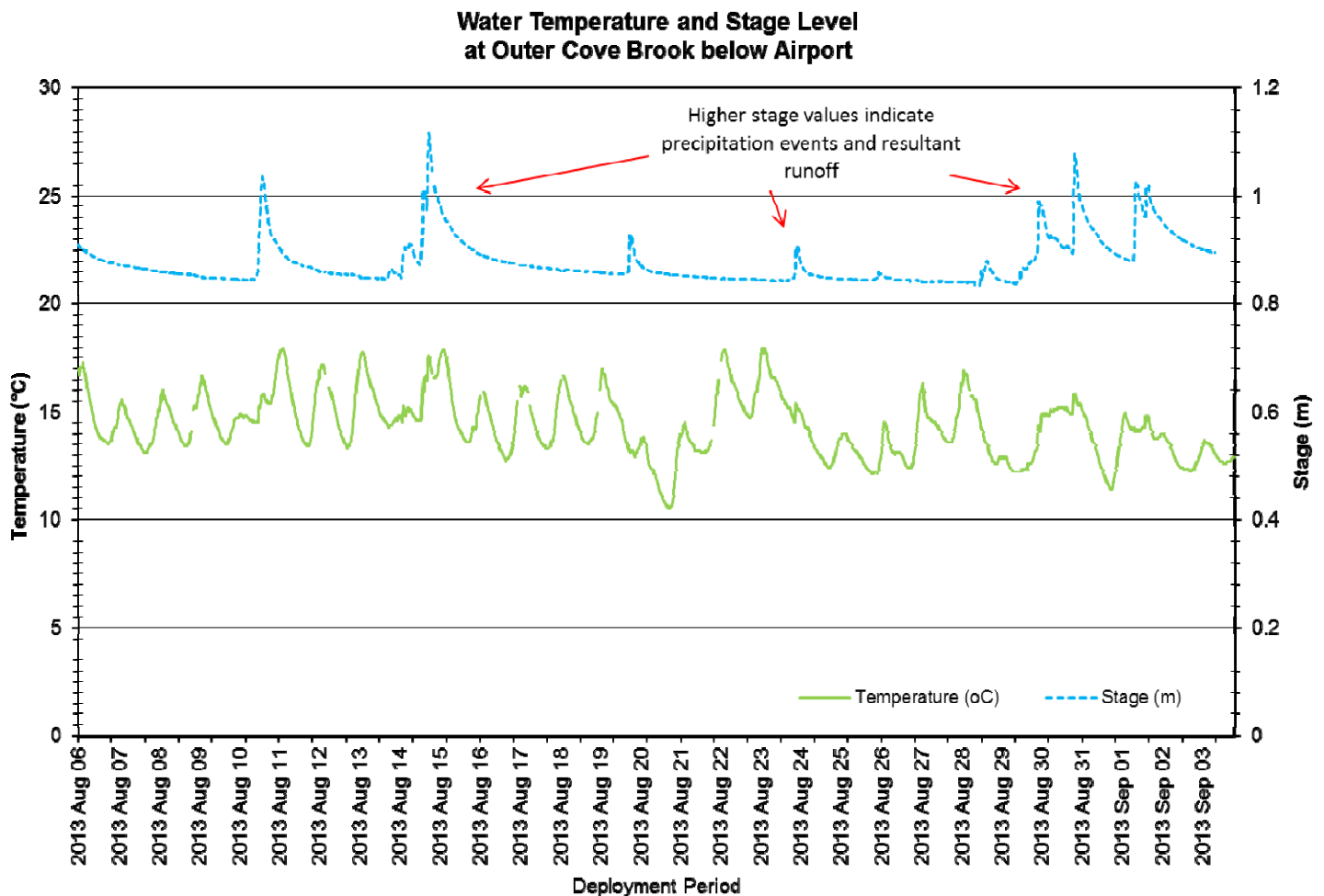


Figure 2: Quarter-hourly water temperature (°C) and stage level (m) values at Outer Cove Brook below Airport for the deployment period August 6, 2013 to September 4, 2013.

pH

- Throughout this deployment period pH values ranged between 6.16 pH units and 6.72 pH units (Figure 3).
- During the deployment, the pH values at this station hover around the minimum CCME Guideline for the Protection of Aquatic Life (between 6.5 and 9 pH units), dropping below the guideline after precipitation events such as those on August 15th and September 2nd (Figure 3). This is a natural occurrence between rainfall and pH levels.
- The CCME guideline provides a basis by which to judge the overall health of the brook. Naturally, all streams and brooks are different. In the case of Outer Cove Brook below Airport, pH is within the normal range for stream water in St. John's.

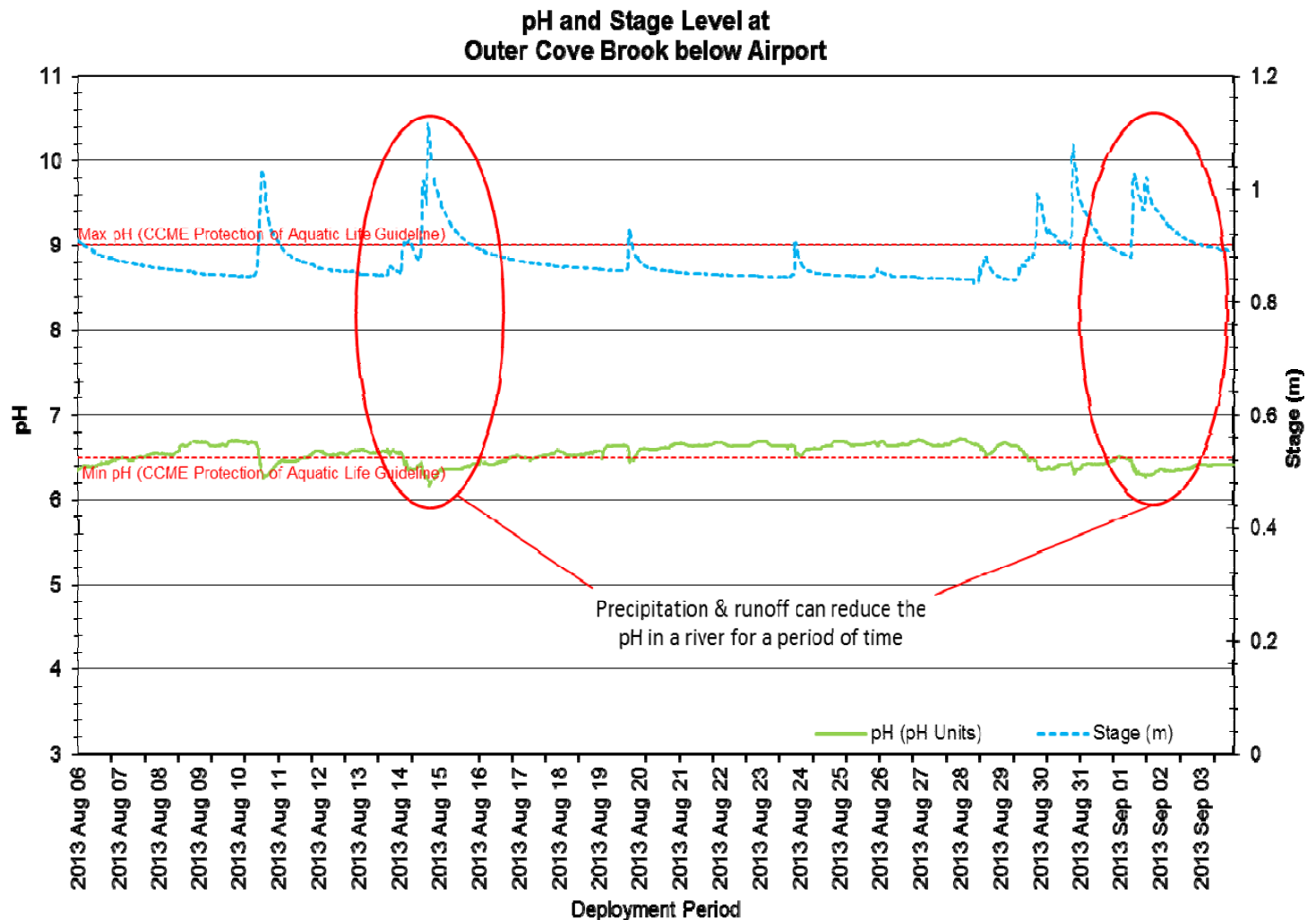


Figure 3: Quarter-hourly pH (pH units) and stage level (m) values at Outer Cove Brook below Airport for the deployment period August 6, 2013 to September 4, 2013.

Specific Conductivity & TDS

- The conductivity levels were within 129.1 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ and 465.0 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ during this deployment period. TDS ranged from 0.0826 g/L to 0.2980 g/L.
- Generally, rainfall events, such as that which occurred on August 14th, 24th and 30th (see Figure 4), can have the effect of diluting and lowering conductance levels. When stage levels rise, the specific conductance levels drop in correlation as the increased amount of water in the river system dilutes the solids present there, thus generally decreasing the specific conductivity readings.
- Total Dissolved Solids (TDS), is a parameter that the instrument calculates by an algorithm that utilizes the data from specific conductivity and water temperature to produce a TDS value and generally always mirrors specific conductivity.

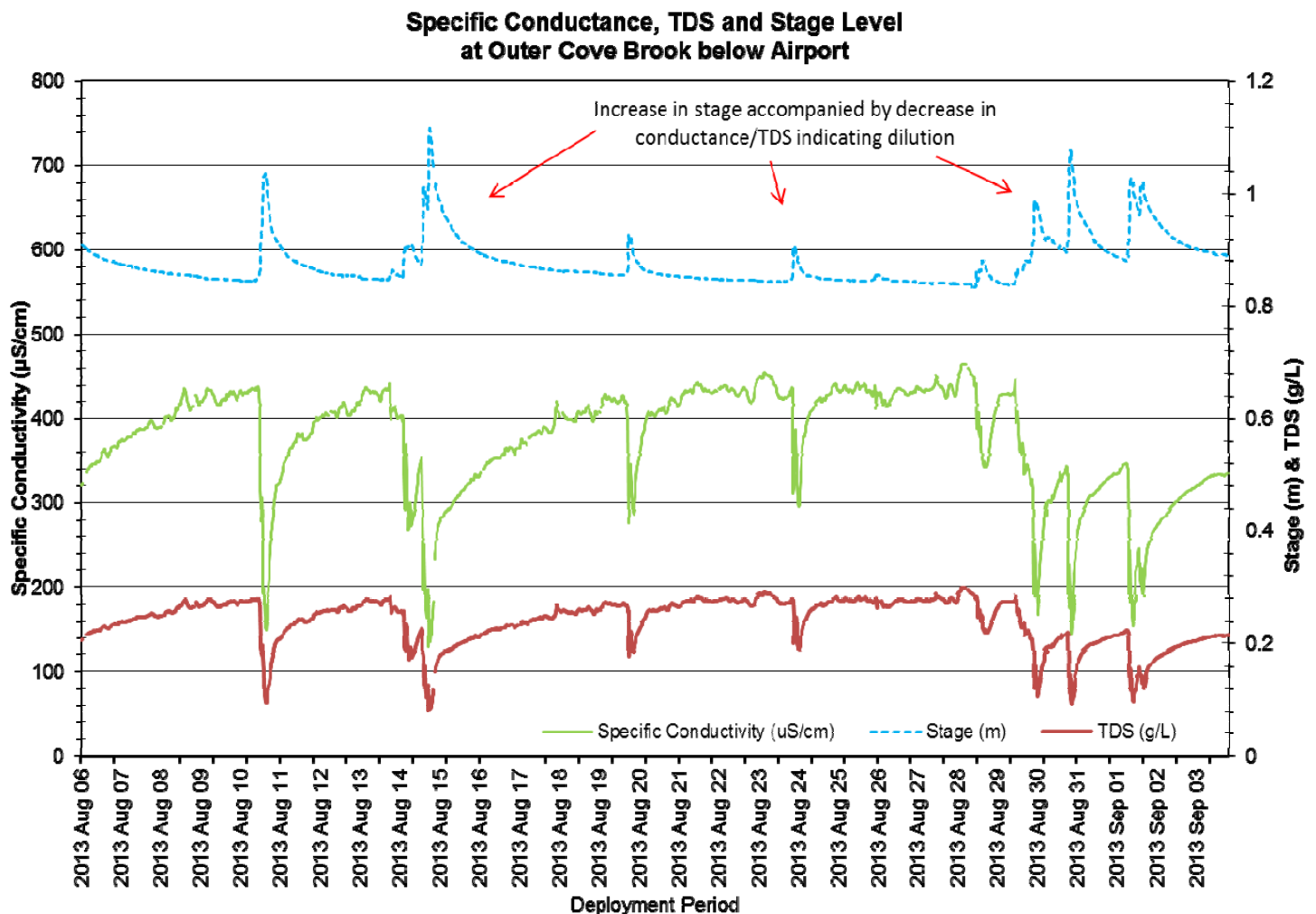


Figure 4: Quarter-hourly specific conductivity ($\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$), TDS (g/L) and stage (m) values at Outer Cove Brook below Airport for the deployment period August 6, 2013 to September 4, 2013.

Dissolved Oxygen

- The instrument measures dissolved oxygen (mg/L) directly then calculates percent saturation (% Sat.).
- The Dissolved Oxygen % Sat levels within this deployment period were within 81.2% Sat–91.9% Sat. Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L) measured 7.85 mg/L to 10.05 mg/L.
- The DO mg/L values hover around the minimum DO CCME guideline for early life stages, dropping below the guideline when water temperatures increase, and rising again when water temperatures decrease (Figure 5). All values are above the CCME guideline for the protection of other life stages.
- Dissolved Oxygen percent saturation remains relatively constant throughout the deployment period. Dissolved oxygen mg/L content fluctuates with the water temperature changes. Small decreases in dissolved oxygen values are inversely related to increases in water temperature as warmer water can hold less oxygen.

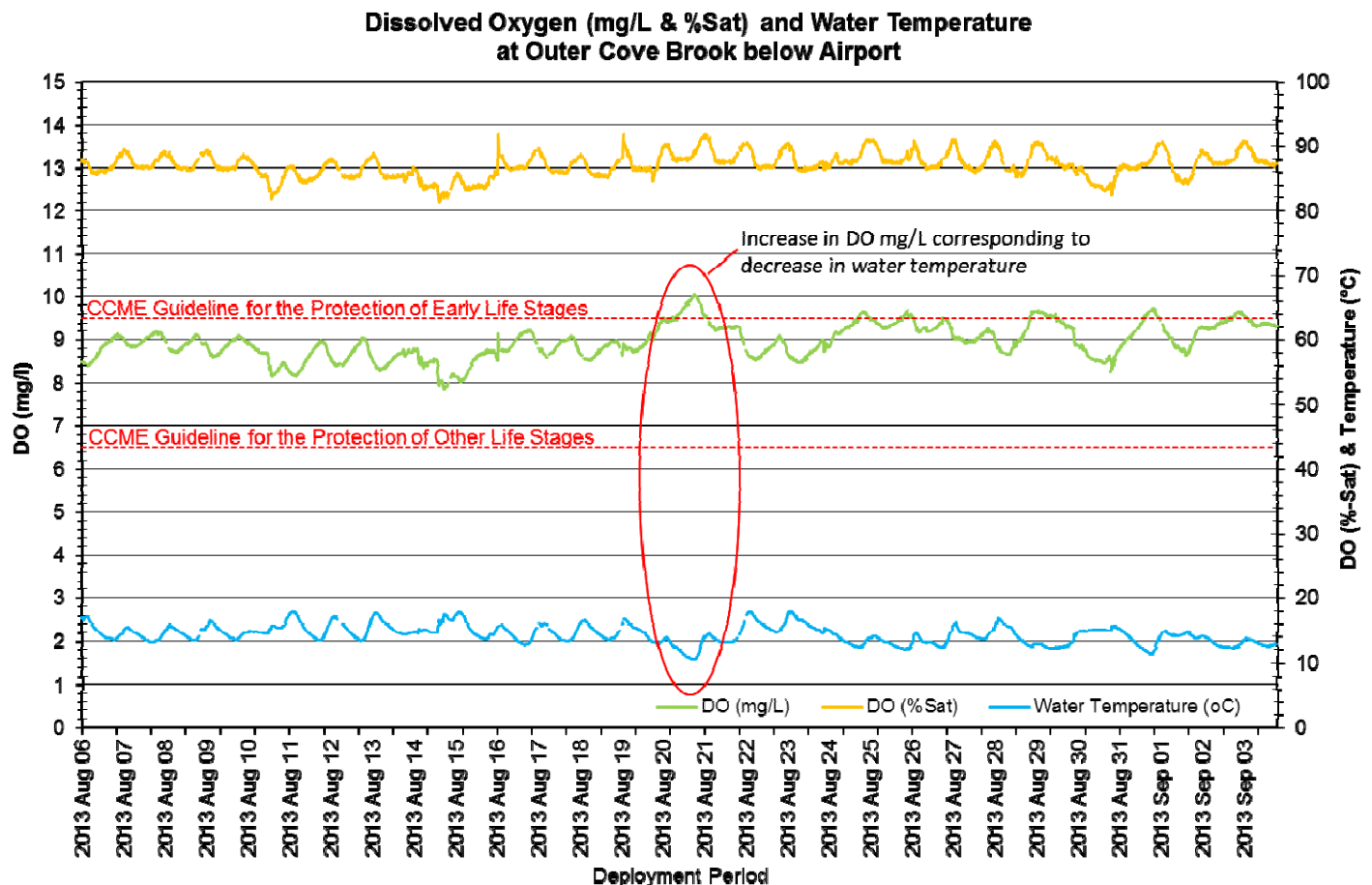


Figure 5: Quarter-hourly dissolved oxygen (mg/L & % sat) and water temperature (°C) values at Outer Cove Brook below Airport for the deployment period August 6, 2013 to September 4, 2013.

Turbidity

- Outer Cove Brook below Airport contains a significant amount of algae. High algal growth, biofouling, or leaf and grass debris can interfere with turbidity measurements as they block the sensor.
- The 'poor' performance ranking of the turbidity sensor (with an initial reading that did not reflect the clarity of the water) during the deployment indicated that there may be an issue with the sensor. Values were monitored over the deployment, and the sonde was switched out with a different sonde on August 19th. The turbidity values from August 6th-19th were erroneous and thus removed from the dataset.
- The turbidity sensor can read a turbidity value between 0 NTU and 3000 NTU. If a reading hits 3000NTU it is identified as an error reading and thus is not a true turbidity value.
- The turbidity readings from August 19th to September 4th ranged within 0.2 NTU to 19.8 NTU.
- Several precipitation events and corresponding stage increases led to fluctuating turbidity values (see Figure 6) as sediment and debris were resuspended into the water column.

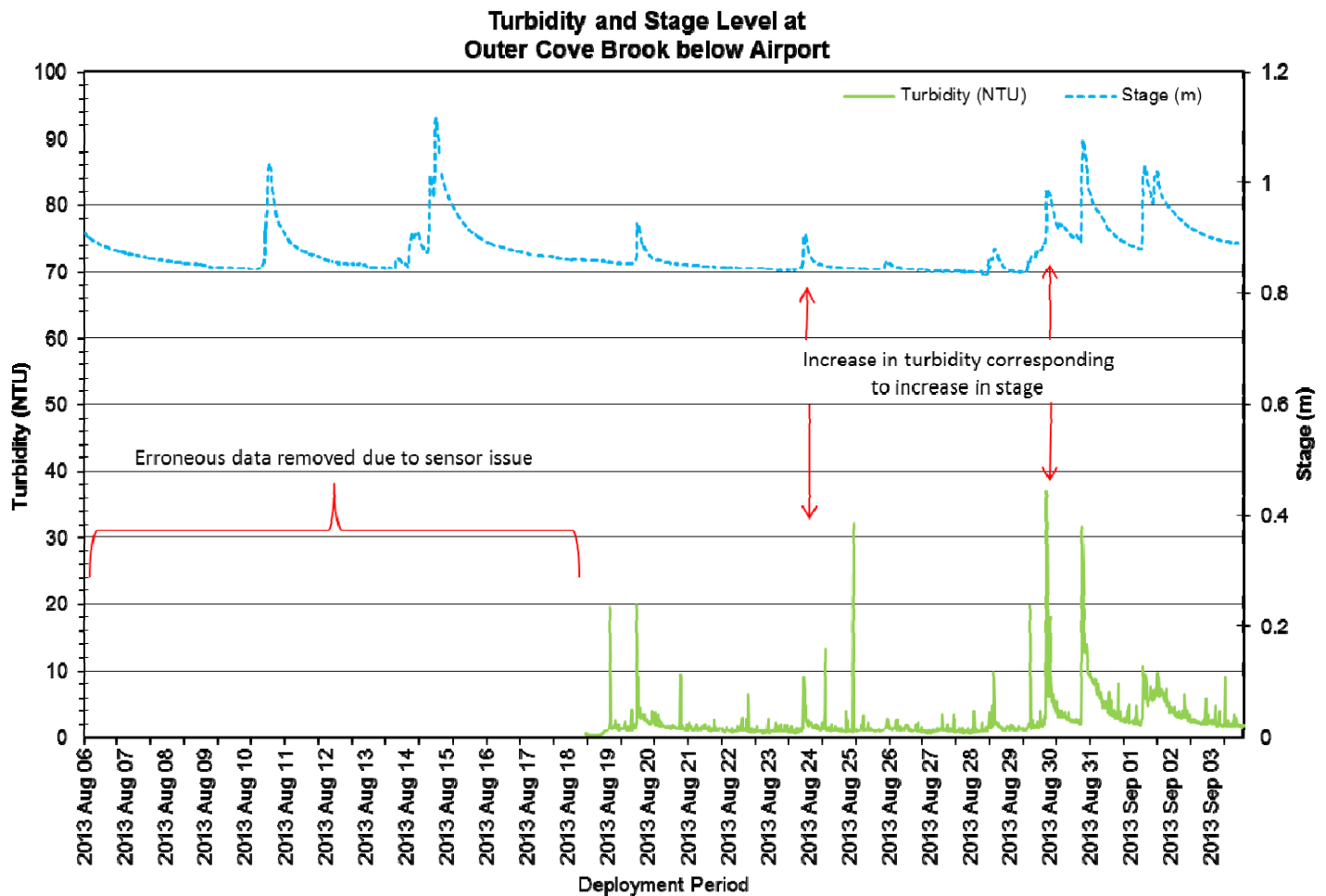


Figure 6: Quarter-hourly turbidity (NTU) and stage level (m) values at Outer Cove Brook below Airport for the deployment period August 6, 2013 to September 4, 2013.

Stage

- Stage values are based on a vertical reference that is unique to each station. As a result, absolute values of stage are not comparable between stations, but relative changes in stage are.
- Stage provides an estimation of water level at the station and can explain some of the changes that are occurring with other parameters (i.e. Specific Conductivity, DO, turbidity). Stage increases during precipitation events (Figure 7) due to increased runoff from the surrounding area.
- Precipitation data was obtained from Environment Canada's St. John's Airport weather station and supplemented with data from 'The Weather Network' when EC data was unavailable.
- During the deployment period, the stage ranged from 0.83m to 1.12m, consistent with the previous month's deployment.

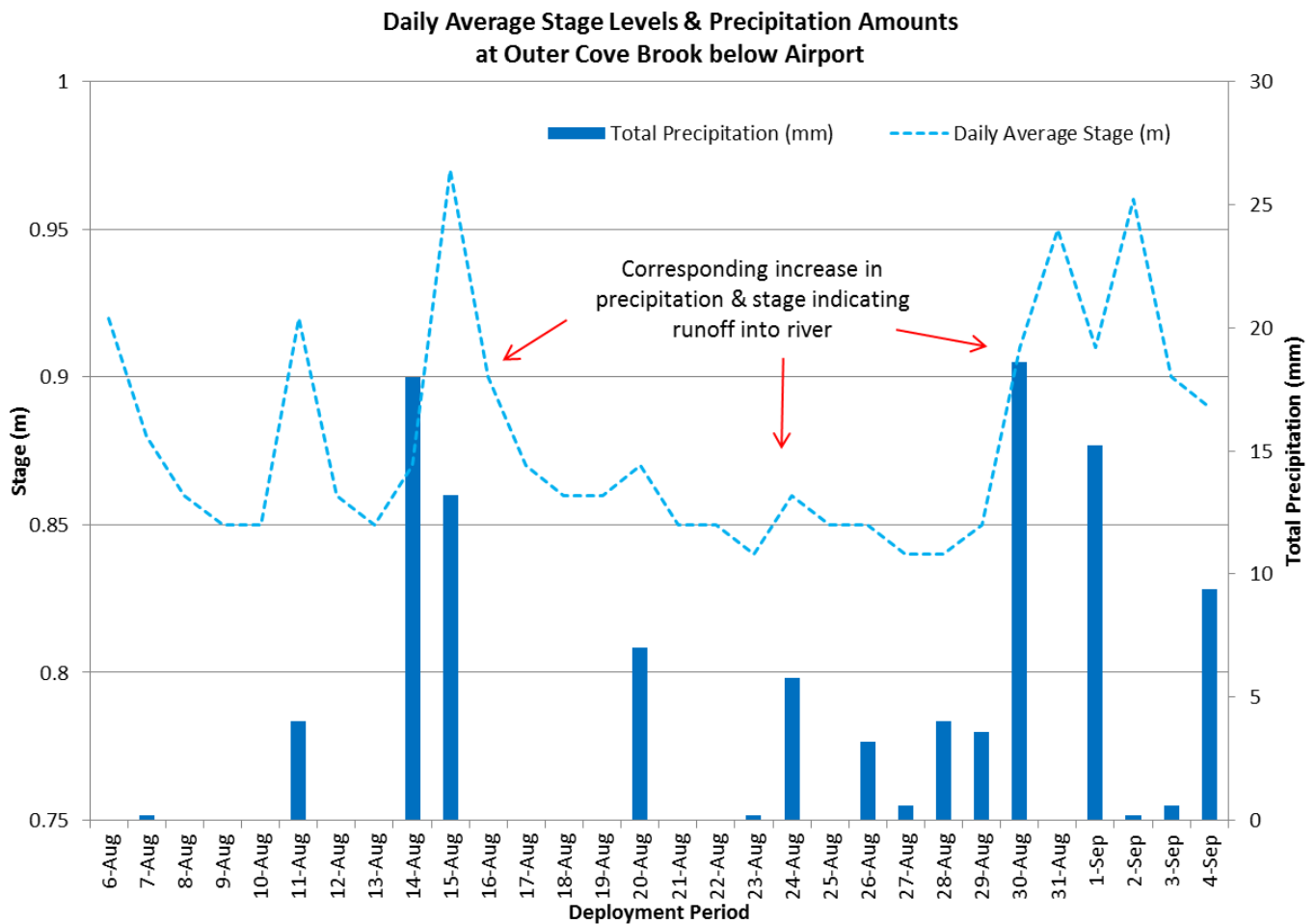


Figure 7: Daily average stage values (m) at Outer Cove Brook below Airport and daily total precipitation values (mm) from Environment Canada's St. John's Airport Station for the deployment period August 6, 2013 to September 4, 2013.

Conclusions

- Generally in natural environments, climate and weather conditions contribute in large part to the variation in water quality parameters. During this deployment it was evident that many of the changes in the parameter data displayed on the graphs, was related to the intermittent precipitation events and small climatic changes of the seasons (i.e. temperature increases).
- Precipitation events during the deployment period led to related fluctuations in stage, which thus influenced the values of turbidity, pH, specific conductance, and TDS. As ambient air temperatures rose, there were correspondingly warmer water temperatures, which in turn decreased the amount of dissolved oxygen in the water.
- Although accurate turbidity data was only gathered from August 19th to September 4th, the majority of turbidity events in this time period were correlated with increases in stage and thus precipitation events. This originally deployed sonde experienced issues with the turbidity sensor, so the originally deployed sonde was replaced by another on August 19th, 2013.
- There do not appear to be any issues with conductivity, TDS, dissolved oxygen or pH at this station during this deployment period.

Outer Cove Brook at Clovelly Golf Course

Water Temperature

- Water temperature ranged from 10.16°C to 18.67°C during this deployment period (Figure 8). This is notably cooler than the previous deployment.
- There are noticeable increases and decreases in the water temperature during the deployment period. This is consistent with ambient air temperatures over this time period, generally increasing during daylight hours and cooling overnight.
- Water temperatures display diurnal variations, typical of shallow streams and ponds which are highly influenced by natural diurnal variations in ambient air temperatures.
- Water temperature is a very important parameter and it has the ability to influence other parameters that are measured by the water quality instrument.

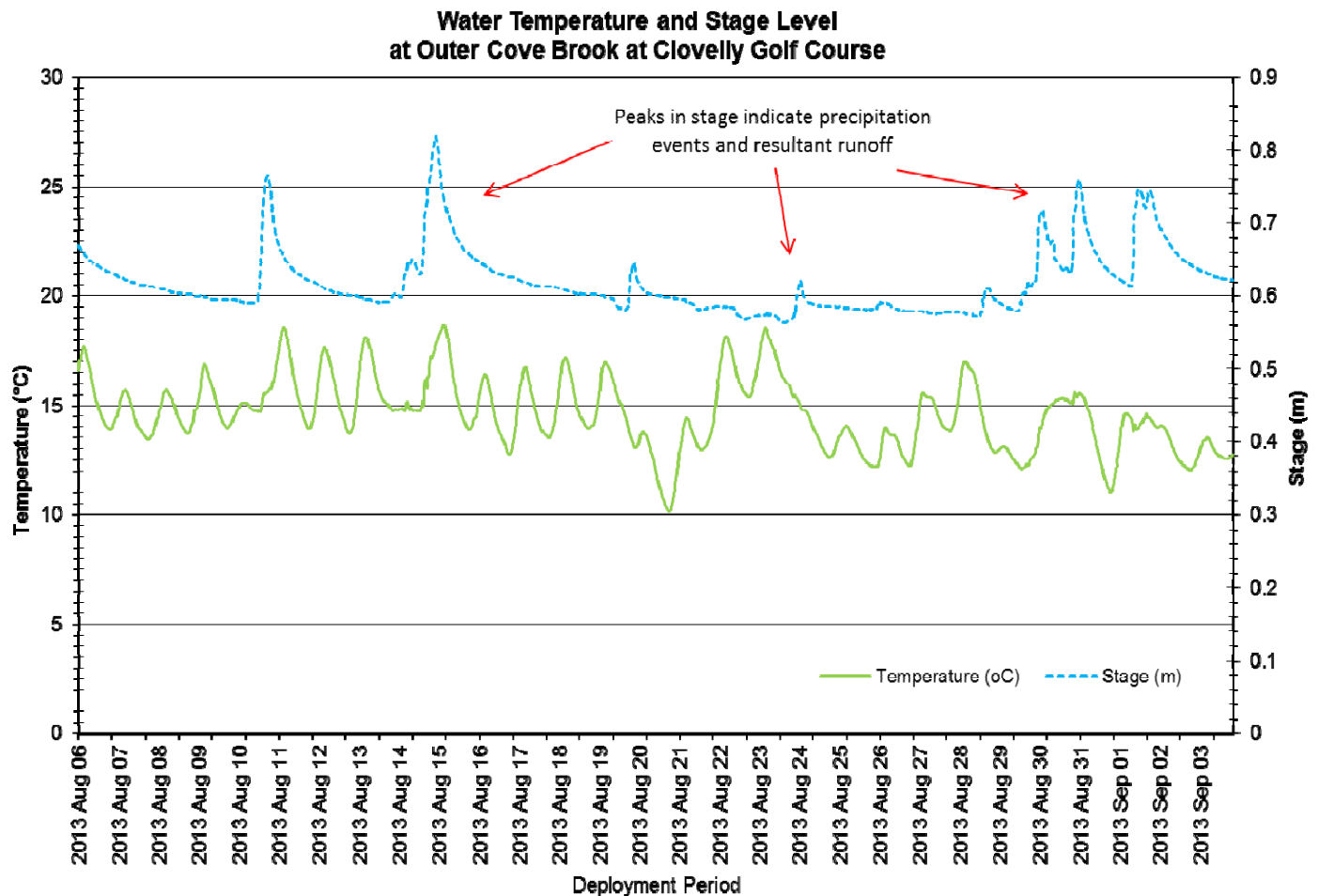


Figure 8: Quarter-hourly water temperature (°C) and stage level (m) values at Outer Cove Brook at Clovelly Golf Course for the deployment period August 6, 2013 to September 4, 2013.

pH

- Throughout this deployment period pH values ranged between 6.02 pH units and 6.39 pH units (Figure 9).
- During the deployment, the pH values at this station hover just below the the minimum CCME Guideline for the Protection of Aquatic Life (between 6.5 and 9 pH units) decreasing further at times due to the addition of precipitation. There are notable drops on August 15th and 30th, related to precipitation events. This is a natural occurrence between rainfall and pH levels.
- The CCME guideline provides a basis by which to judge the overall health of the brook. Naturally, all streams and brooks are different. In the case of Outer Cove Brook at Clovelly Golf Course, pH is within the normal range for stream water in St. John's.

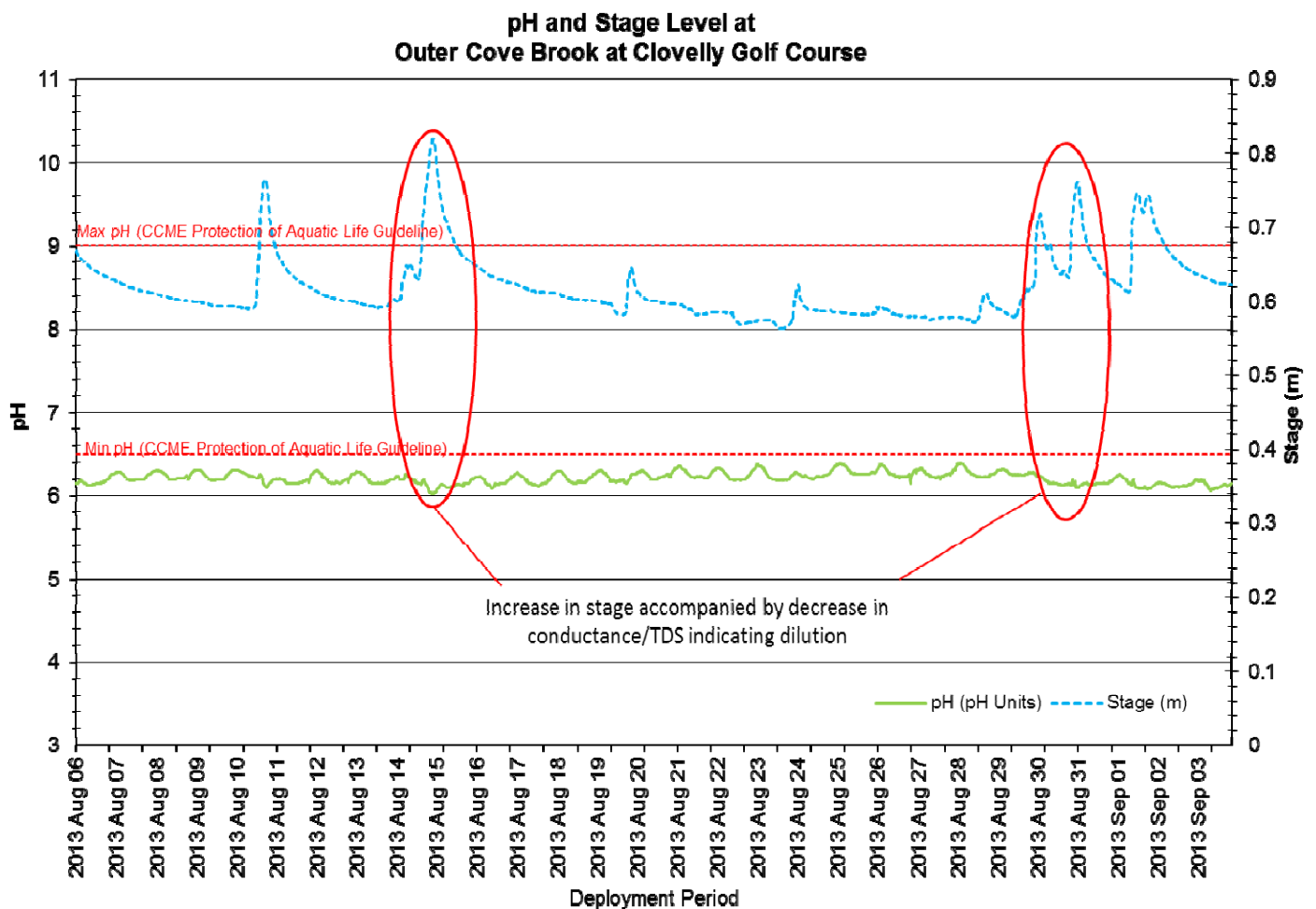


Figure 9: Quarter-hourly pH (pH units) and stage level (m) values at Outer Cove Brook at Clovelly Golf Course for the deployment period August 6, 2013 to September 4, 2013.

Specific Conductivity & TDS

- The conductivity levels were within 173.2 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ and 436 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ during this deployment period. TDS ranged from 0.1108 g/L to 0.2790 g/L.
- Generally, rainfall events, such as that which occurred on August 15th (see Figure 10), can have the effect of diluting and lowering conductance levels. When stage levels rise, the specific conductance levels drop in correlation as the increased amount of water in the river system dilutes the solids present there, thus generally decreasing the specific conductivity readings.
- Total Dissolved Solids (TDS), is a parameter that the instrument calculates by an algorithm that utilizes the data from specific conductivity and water temperature to produce a TDS value and generally always mirrors specific conductivity.

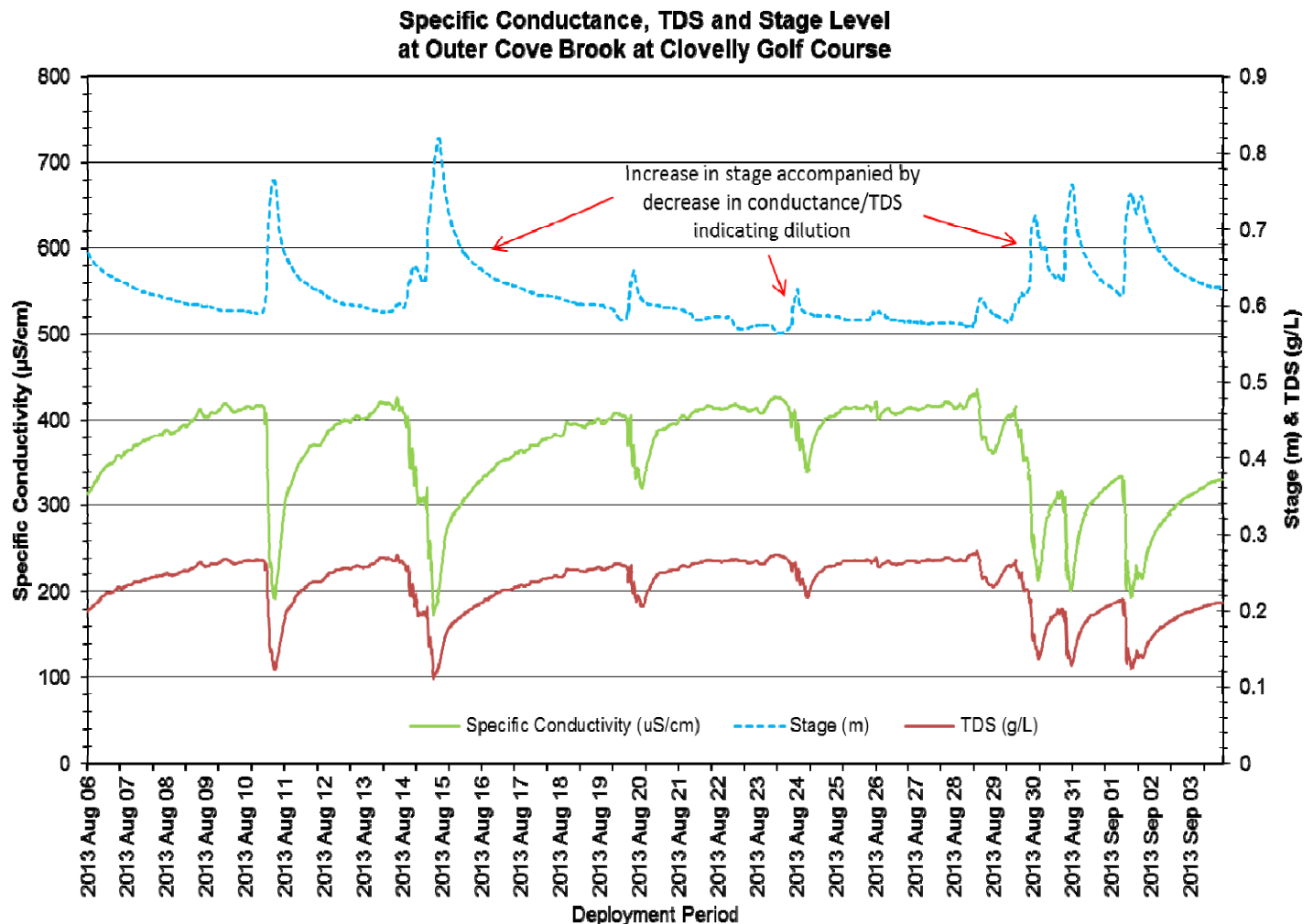


Figure 10: Quarter-hourly specific conductivity ($\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$), TDS (g/L) and stage (m) values at Outer Cove Brook at Clovelly Golf Course for the deployment period August 6, 2013 to September 4, 2013.

Dissolved Oxygen

- The instrument measures dissolved oxygen (mg/L) then calculates percent saturation (% Sat).
- The Dissolved Oxygen % Sat levels within this deployment period were within 63.5% Sat–95.4% Sat. Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L) measured 6.12 mg/L to 9.87 mg/L.
- The DO mg/L values dip below the minimum DO CCME guideline for early life stages for the majority of the deployment due to the high water temperatures reported over this deployment period. Low water temperatures August 20th led to higher oxygen (mg/L) levels in the water at this time (Figure 11).
- Dissolved Oxygen percent saturation remains relatively constant throughout the deployment period, with diurnal fluctuations. Dissolved oxygen mg/L content fluctuates with the water temperature changes. Decreases in dissolved oxygen values are inversely related to increases in water temperature as warmer water can hold less oxygen.

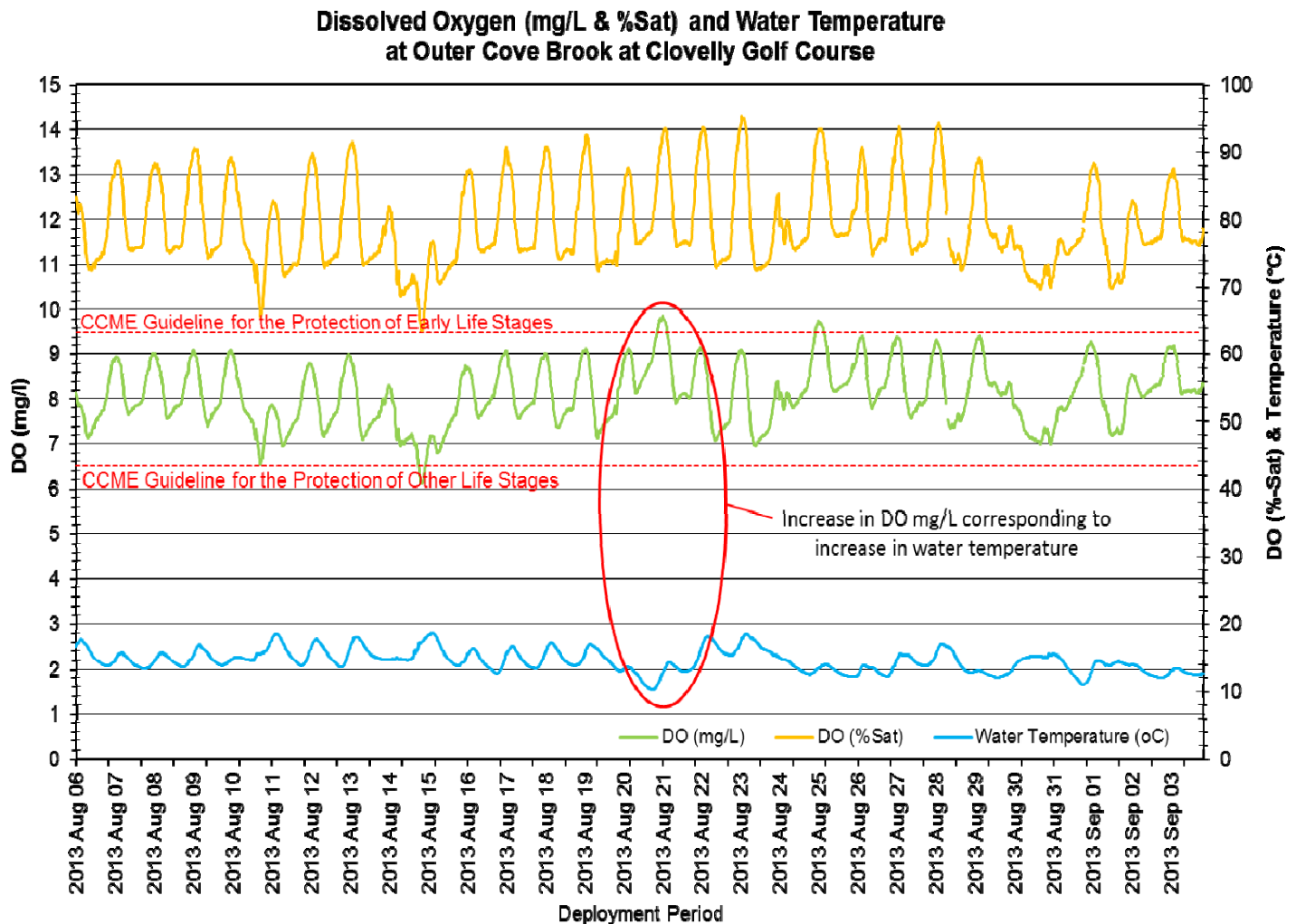


Figure 11: Quarter-hourly dissolved oxygen (mg/L & % sat) and water temperature (°C) values at Outer Cove Brook at Clovelly Golf Course for the deployment period August 6, 2013 to September 4, 2013.

Turbidity

- Outer Cove Brook contains a significant amount of algae. High algal growth in the summer or leaf debris during all seasons can interfere with turbidity measurements as they block the sensor.
- The turbidity sensor can read turbidity values between 0 NTU and 3000 NTU. If a turbidity reading hits 3000NTU it is always identified as an error reading and thus is not a valid turbidity reading.
- The turbidity readings during this deployment ranged within 0.0 NTU to 69.5 NTU (Figure 12). Fluctuations in turbidity values were correlated with increases in stage and thus precipitation events.
- Several precipitation events and corresponding stage increases led to fluctuating turbidity values as sediment and debris were resuspended into the water column.

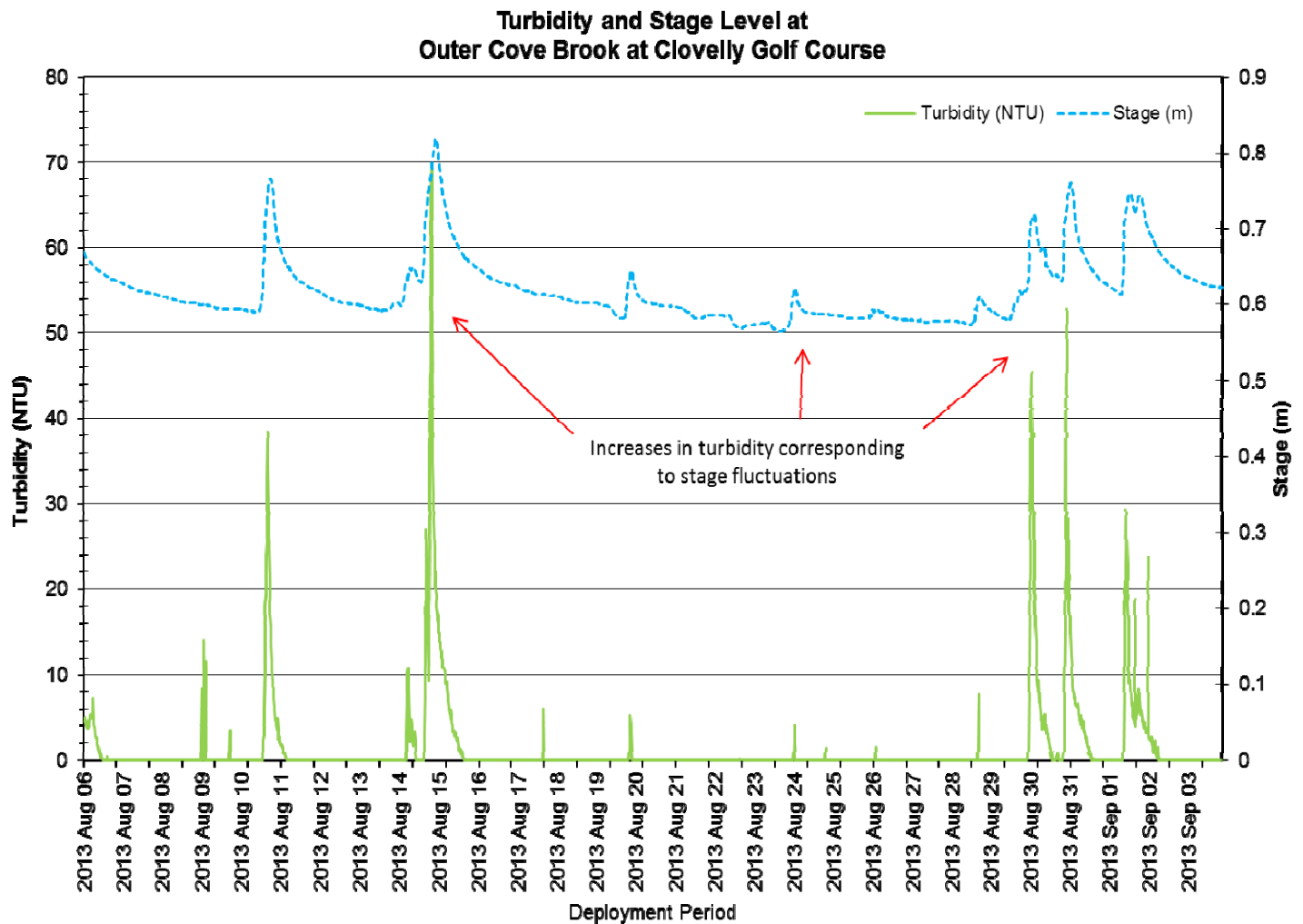


Figure 12: Quarter-hourly turbidity (NTU) and stage level (m) values at Outer Cove Brook at Clovelly Golf Course for the deployment period August 6, 2013 to September 4, 2013.

Stage

- Stage values are based on a vertical reference that is unique to each station. As a result, absolute values of stage are not comparable between stations, but relative changes in stage are.
- Stage provides an estimation of water level at the station and can explain some of the events that are occurring with other parameters (i.e. Specific Conductivity, DO, turbidity). Stage increases during precipitation events due to increased runoff from the surrounding area (see Figure 13).
- Precipitation data was obtained from Environment Canada's St. John's Airport weather station and supplemented with data from 'The Weather Network' when EC data was unavailable.
- During the deployment period, the stage values ranged from 0.56m to 0.82m.

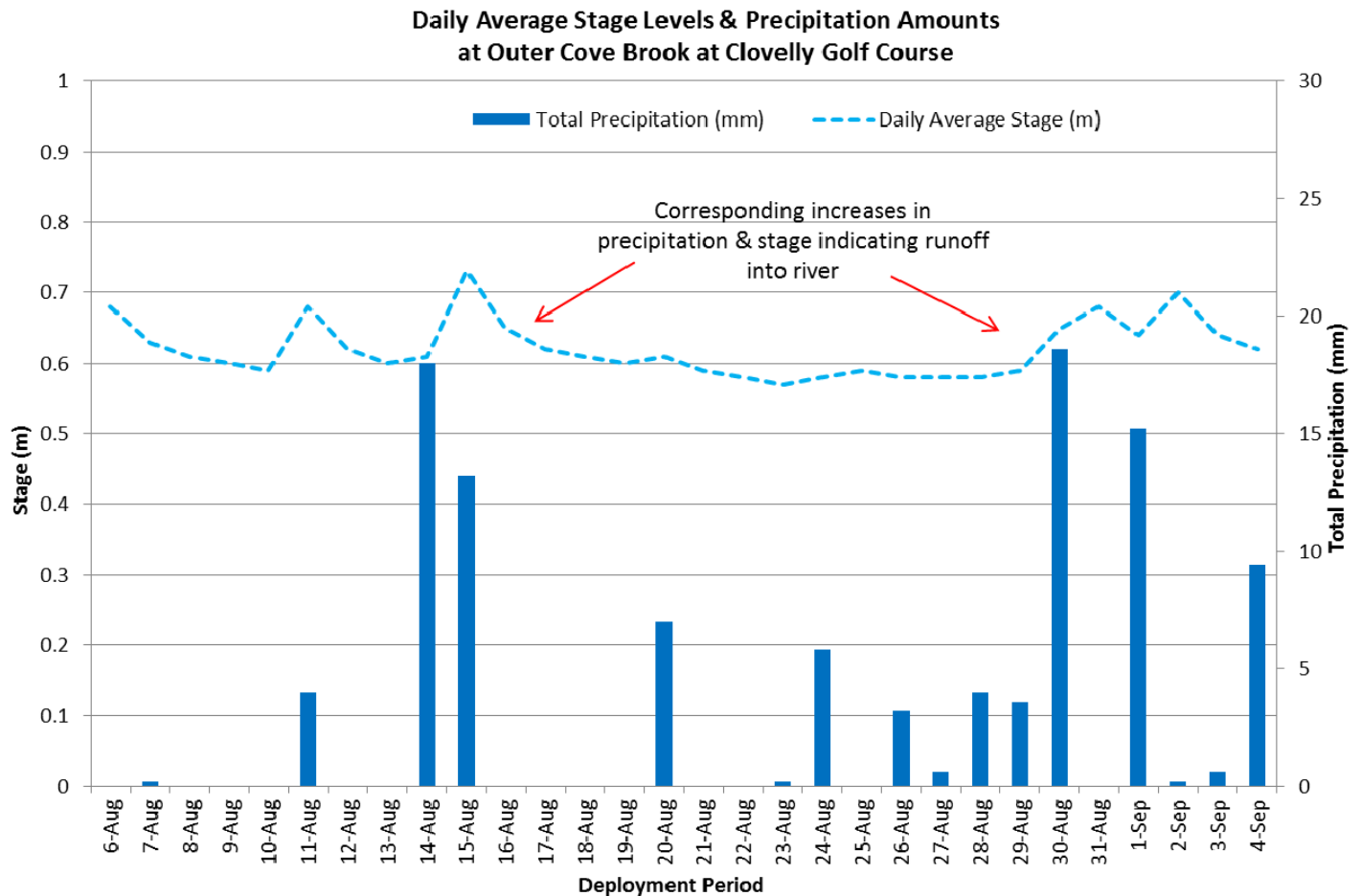


Figure 13: Daily average stage values (m) at Outer Cove Brook below Airport and daily total precipitation values (mm) from Environment Canada's St. John's Airport Station for the deployment period August 6, 2013 to September 4, 2013.

Conclusions – Outer Cove Brook at Clovelly Golf Course

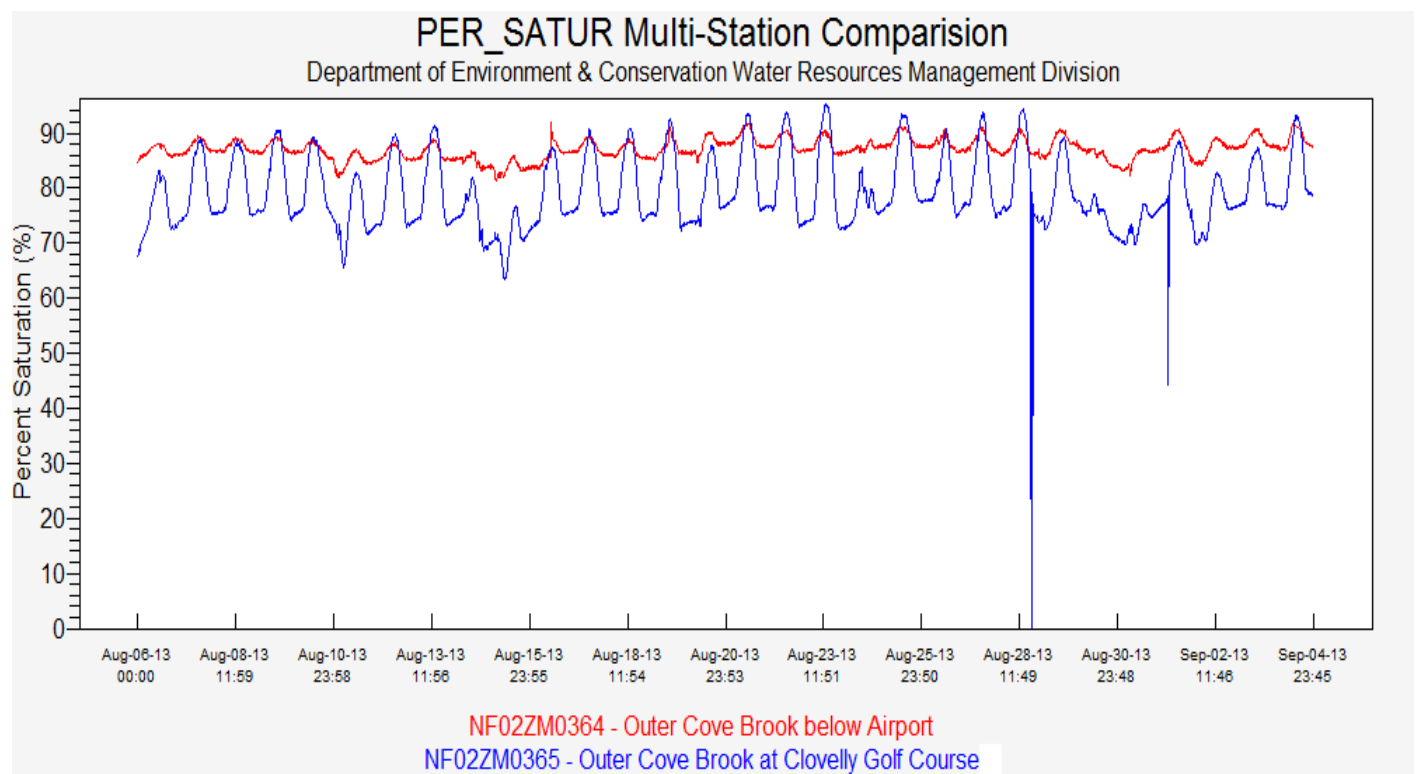
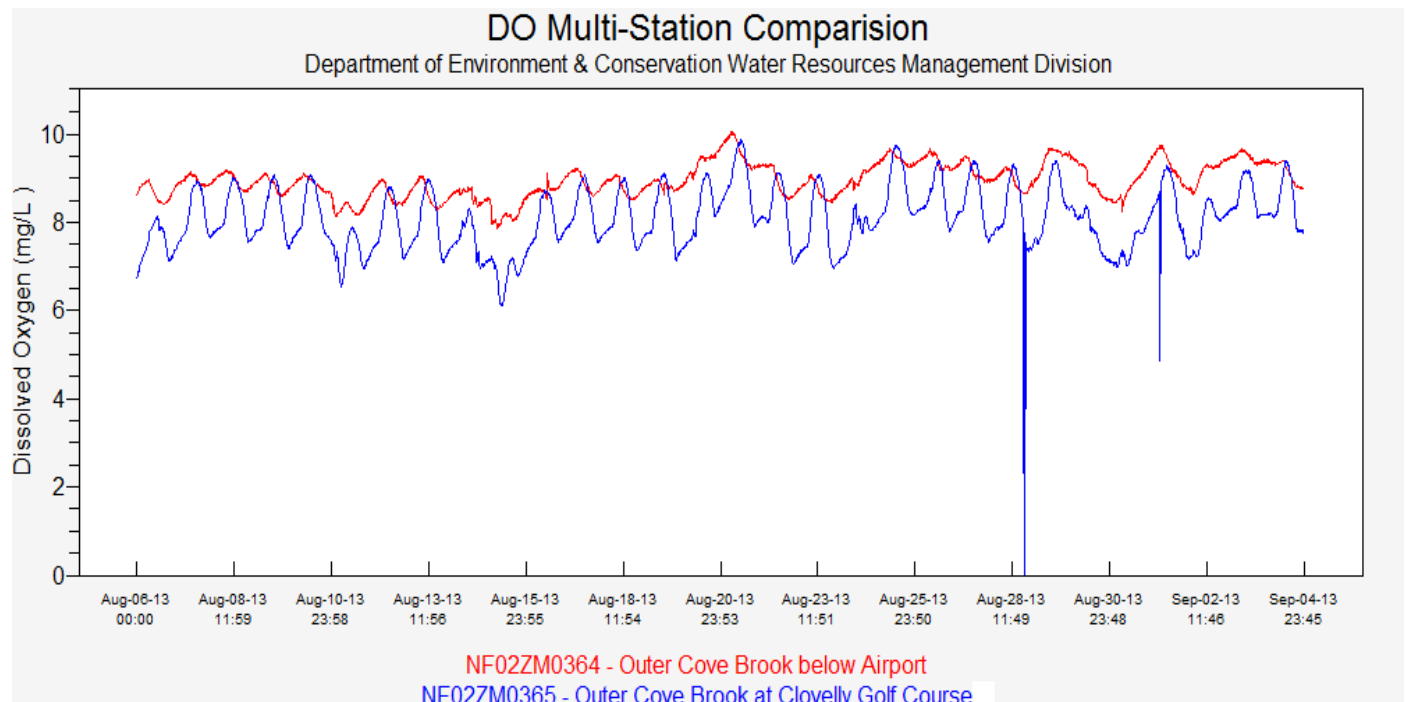
- Precipitation events during the deployment period led to related fluctuations in stage, which thus influenced the values of turbidity, pH, specific conductance, and TDS. As ambient air temperatures rose, there were correspondingly warmer water temperatures, which in turn decreased the amount of dissolved oxygen in the water.
- During this deployment, the turbidity sensor did not suffer from biofouling as it had in previous months. The river contains abundant long stranded grass and algae, but it was not a major issue during this deployment.
- Dissolved oxygen values at this site fluctuate diurnally, increasing values during the day and decreasing values into the night, indicating a relationship between the oxygen levels and sunlight.
- Generally, dissolved oxygen, pH, conductivity and TDS values are lower while water temperatures are higher at this station than at the below airport station.

Conclusions – Outer Cove Brook Network

During this deployment period, the median water temperature at the upstream station (below Airport) of 14.30°C was slightly lower than that of the downstream station (at Clovelly Golf Course) of 14.53°C. The median pH value of 6.55 below the Airport is higher than the Clovelly station median of 6.21. A comparison of the two stations pH values over the deployment period indicates that this trend was consistent over this period, and thus there is a noticeable change in pH from the upstream to the downstream station. The specific conductivity medians were similar at both stations with 402 uS/cm reported below the airport and 386 uS/cm reported at the golf course. Dissolved oxygen at the upstream station (below Airport) had a median of 87.0%Sat during the deployment period, while the downstream station (Clovelly Golf Course) had a lower median of 77.1%Sat. The lower oxygen levels at the downstream Clovelly station occur at night, indicating an interaction with the prolific aquatic grass growth which cannot synthesize oxygen and replenish the dissolved oxygen in the water at night. The median turbidity value below the airport was 1.3 NTU while at Clovelly Golf Course the median was 0.0 NTU. However, there were issues with the turbidity sensor at the below airport station resulting in erroneous data from August 6-19th being removed from the dataset.

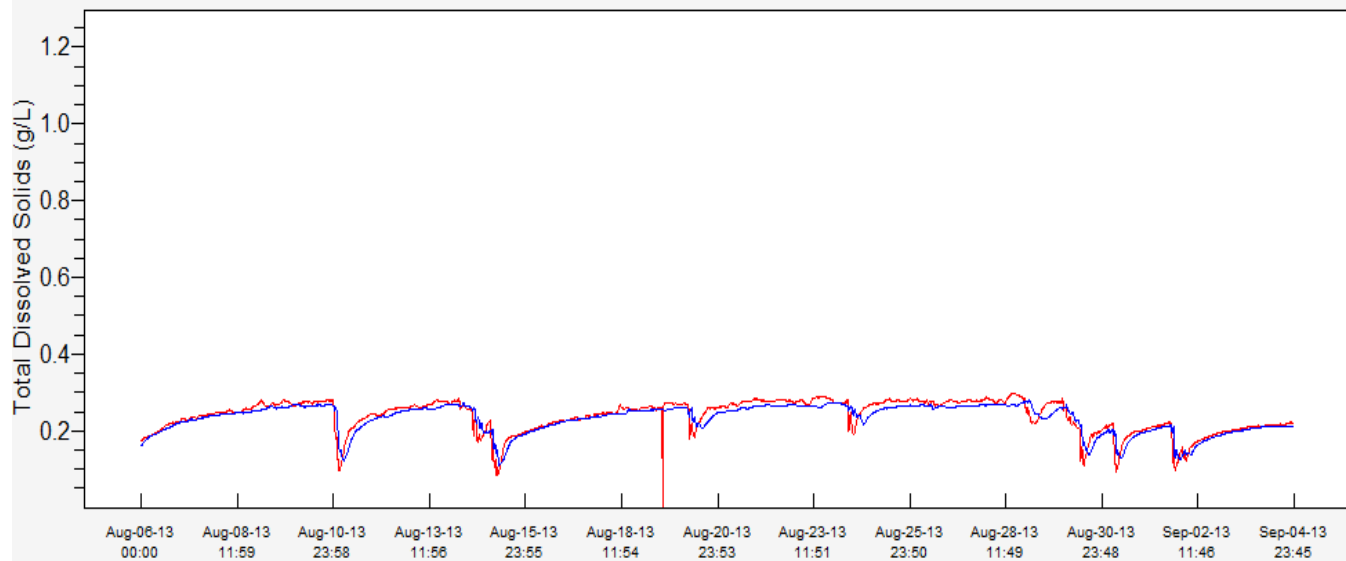
Appendix

Parameter Station Comparison Graphs



TDS Multi-Station Comparision

Department of Environment & Conservation Water Resources Management Division

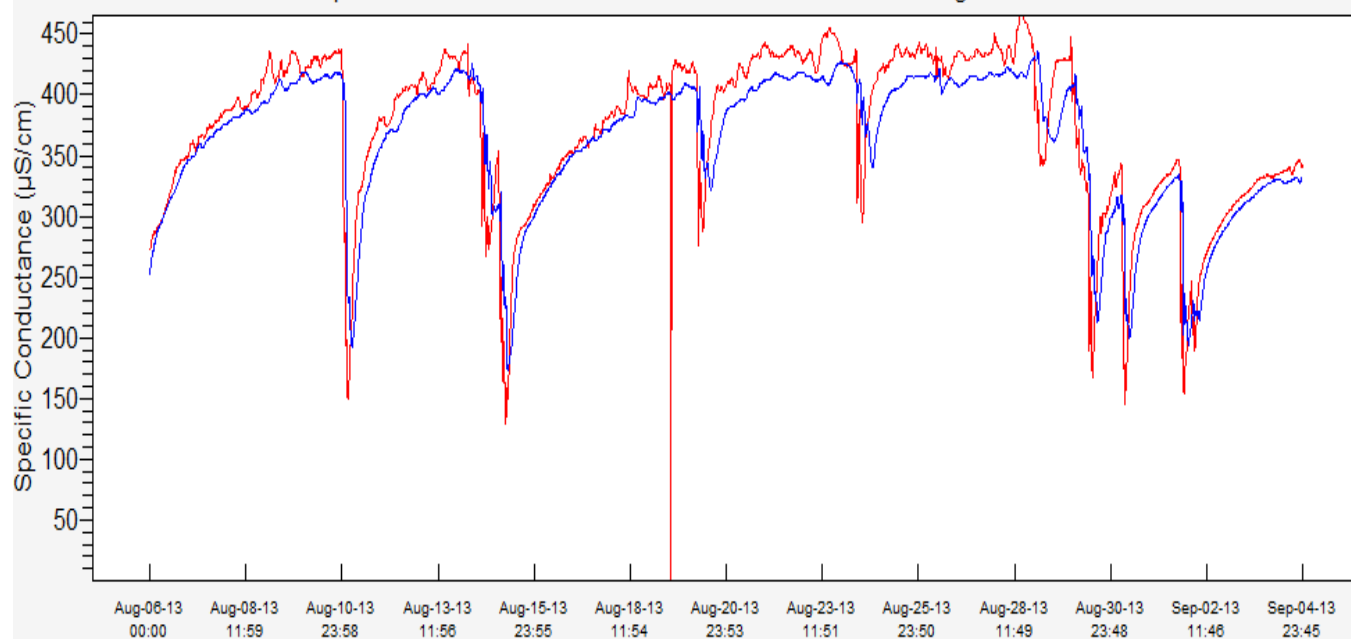


NF02ZM0364 - Outer Cove Brook below Airport

NF02ZM0365 - Outer Cove Brook at Clovelly Golf Course

SPEC_CONDUCT Multi-Station Comparision

Department of Environment & Conservation Water Resources Management Division

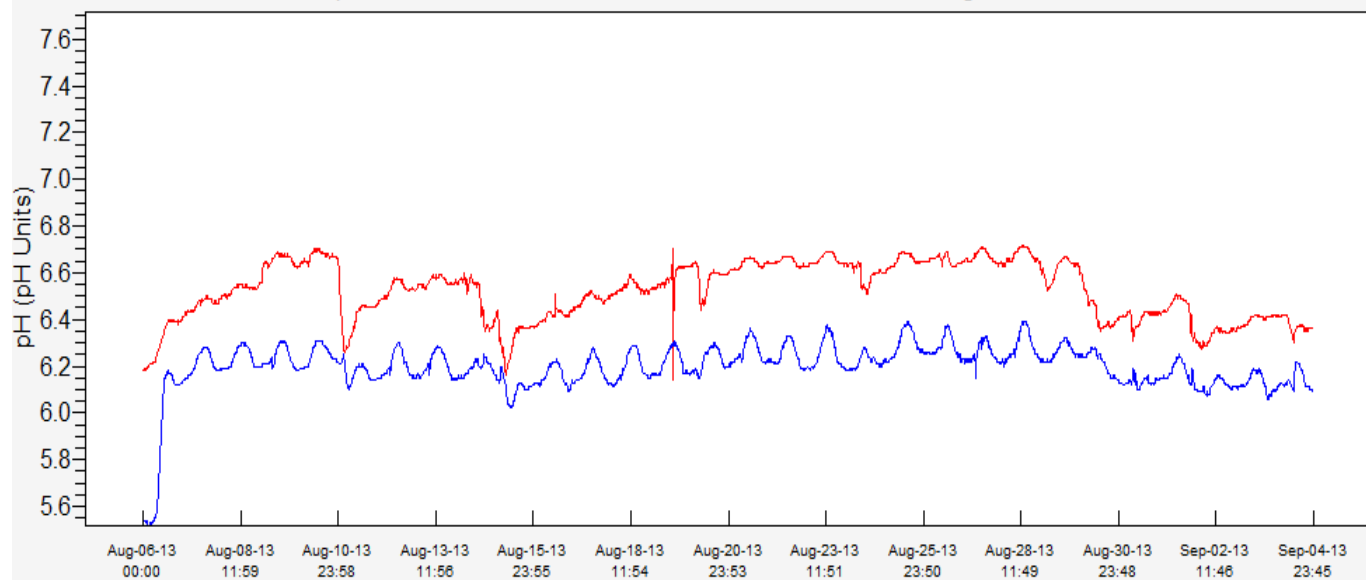


NF02ZM0364 - Outer Cove Brook below Airport

NF02ZM0365 - Outer Cove Brook at Clovelly Golf Course

PH Multi-Station Comparision

Department of Environment & Conservation Water Resources Management Division

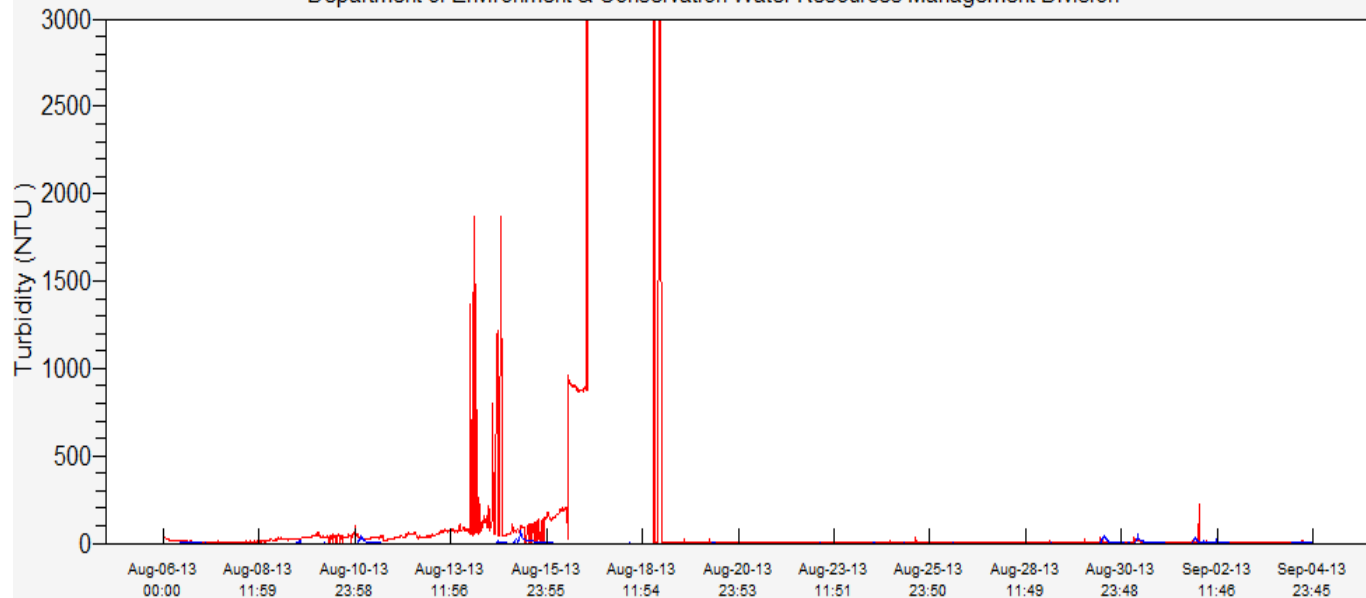


NF02ZM0364 - Outer Cove Brook below Airport

NF02ZM0365 - Outer Cove Brook at Clovelly Golf Course

TURBIDITY Multi-Station Comparision

Department of Environment & Conservation Water Resources Management Division



NF02ZM0364 - Outer Cove Brook below Airport

NF02ZM0365 - Outer Cove Brook at Clovelly Golf Course

