

Real-Time Water Quality Deployment Report

Northern Harvest Smolt Ltd.

April 16th, 2025 to August 7th, 2025



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

Introduction

- The Real-Time Water Quality (RTWQ) Monitoring Network near Stephenville, NL consists of three groundwater well monitoring stations funded by Northern Harvest Smolt Ltd. The program is a partnership between Northern Harvest and the Newfoundland & Labrador Department of Environment, Conservation and Climate Change (ECC).
- Each of the three stations consists of groundwater water quality and quantity monitoring equipment (water level) which transmits data in near real-time every 2-3 hours.
- The well stations are known as: MW5/6; FMW10 and FMW12. They were installed in November 2019 by ECC staff and first deployed on November 6th, 2019. The instruments remain in the monitoring wells year-round unless removed temporarily for maintenance and calibration.
- These stations measure the following water parameters: temperature, pH, specific conductivity, total dissolved solids (TDS), oxidation-reduction potential (ORP) and water quantity (depth). Parameters are recorded on an hourly basis during the deployment period and are available in real-time online:
- NLGWMW5/6: https://www.ECC.gov.nl.ca/wrmd/ADRS/v6/Template_Station.asp?station=NLGWMW56
NLGWFMW10: https://www.ECC.gov.nl.ca/wrmd/ADRS/v6/Template_Station.asp?station=NLGWFMW10
NLGWFMW12: https://www.ECC.gov.nl.ca/wrmd/ADRS/v6/Template_Station.asp?station=NLGWFMW12
- MW5/6 – This 50mm well is one of the thirteen wells which make up the Northern Harvest near field monitoring well network within 500m of the water supply area. This is a relatively shallow well at 2.92 m.
- FMW10 - This 50mm well is one of the five wells which make up the Northern Harvest far-field monitoring network which is set up outside the 500m radius of the hatchery. This well is relatively deep at 22.54 m.
- FMW12 - This 152mm well is one of the thirteen wells which make up the Northern Harvest near-field monitoring well network which is within 500m of the water supply area. This well is relatively deep at 31.16 m.



Figure 1: Map of Northern Harvest Smolt Ltd. Real Time Water Monitoring Network

- The purpose of this network is to monitor, process, and distribute water quality/quantity data to Northern Harvest Smolt Ltd. and ECC for assessment and management of water resources, as well as to provide an early warning for any potential or emerging water issues, allowing mitigative measures to be implemented in a timely manner.
- ECC will provide Northern Harvest Smolt Ltd. with deployment and annual deployment reports for 2025. Data is available in near real-time on the ECC's website.
- Gaps in the water quality data are the result of transmission loss by the stations or the removal of inaccurate data due to ongoing station maintenance during that time period.



(a) MW5/6

(b) FMW10



(c) FMW12

Figure 2: Northern Harvest Real Time Monitoring Network: (a) MW5/6, (b) FMW10, (c) FMW12

Maintenance and Calibration

- To ensure accurate data collection of the real time groundwater monitoring network, maintenance and calibration of the water quality instrumentation is performed approximately every four months.
- Maintenance includes thorough cleaning of each instrument and replacement of any small sensor parts that are damaged or unsuitable for reuse. Once the instrument is cleaned, ECC staff carefully calibrate each sensor attachment for pH, specific conductivity and ORP to ensure accurate data collection.

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 each deployment period. The procedure is based on the approach used by the United States Geological Survey.
- During the maintenance phase, a volume equivalent to three well casings is purged from each well prior to re-installation and the collection of grab samples. This process flushes stagnant water from the wells and ensures that the water being observed is aquifer water.
- After full purging of the well, the sonde is deployed and initial field readings are recorded. A grab sample is also taken when possible to compare the values of pH and specific conductance against the deployed sonde's initial values.
- Three instruments are owned by Northern Harvest and are installed in the wells on a rotating basis to ensure data accuracy.
- Deployment comparison rankings for the stations are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: QA/QC comparison rankings for Northern Harvest Stations

Station	Date	Action	Instrument #	pH	Specific Conductivity
MW5/6	16-APR-2025	Deployment	19E100387	Poor	Poor
FMW10	16-APR-2025	Deployment	19D105282	Poor	Excellent
FMW12	16-APR-2025	Deployment	23F102409	Good	Excellent

Data Interpretation

- The following graphs and discussion illustrate water quality and level related events from April 16th to August 7th, 2025 at Northern Harvest Smolt real time water monitoring network.
- All data used in the preparation of the graphs and subsequent discussion below adhere to this stringent QA/QC protocol. Corrected data can be obtained upon request.

Water Temperature

- After the initial acclimatization period, water temperature ranged from 5.39°C to 13.29°C within the well network (Table 3).
- During the deployment, water temperature at FMW12 varied little, while FMW10 slightly decreased. At MW5/6, water temperature gradually increased until late July when it began to level off (Figure 3).
- MW5/6 is a shallower well and could be influenced by the surface temperatures and climatic conditions, therefore more variability is possible in the data.

Table 3: Water Temperature (°C) Summary Statistics from the Well Network

	MW5/6	FMW10	FMW12
MIN.	5.39	7.03	7.09
MAX.	13.29	7.46	7.16
MEDIAN	9.65	7.18	7.12

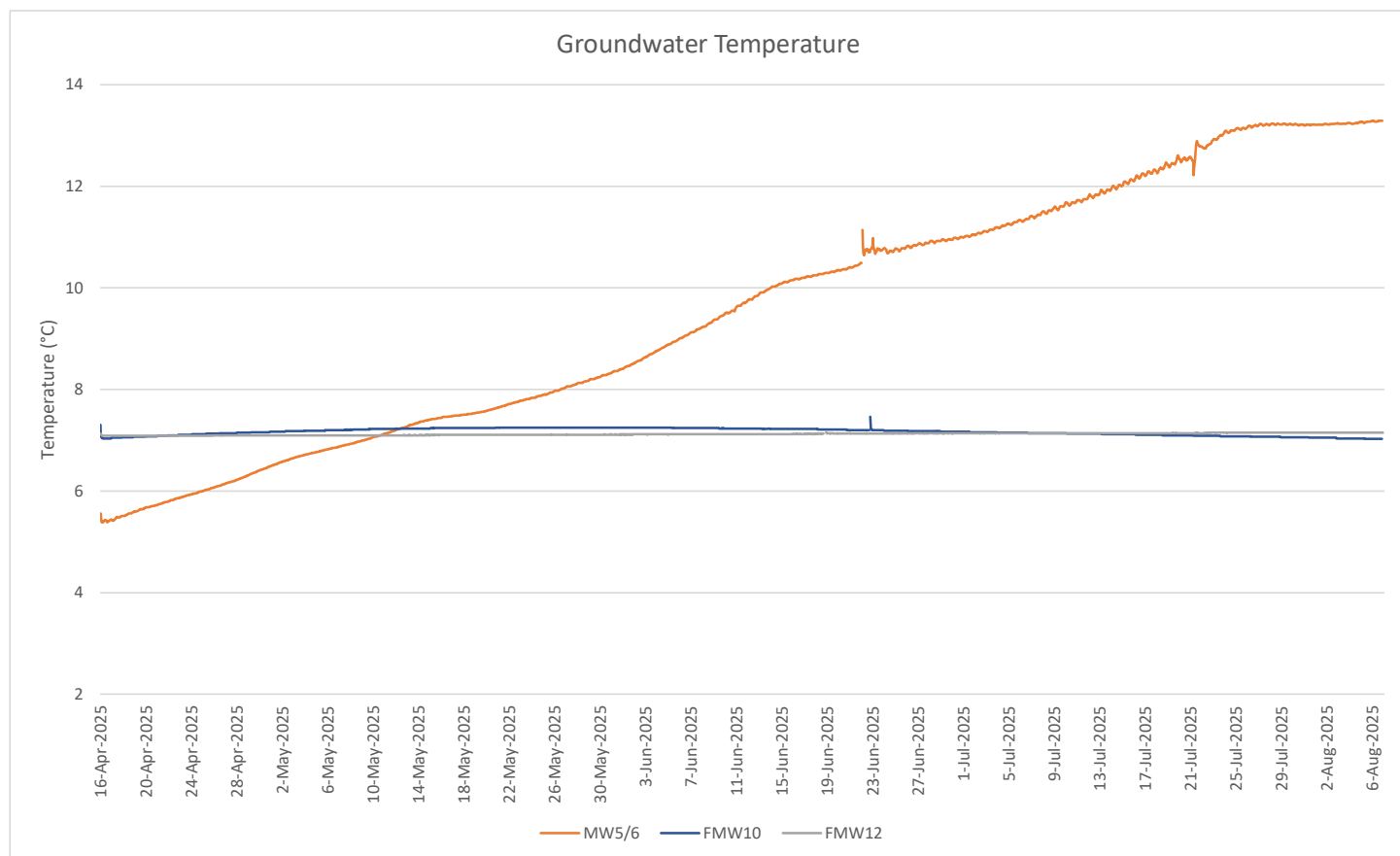


Figure 3: Ground Water Temperature (°C) – Northern Harvest Smolt Ltd. Network

Water Depth

- During the deployment, all wells displayed moderate fluctuations in groundwater elevation (Table 4). The moderate variations in level were noticeable concurrently at all wells at the same time (Figure 4).

Table 4: Water Depth (MASL) Summary Statistics from the Well Network

	MW5/6	FMW10	FMW12
MIN.	1.75	7.33	5.97
MAX.	2.28	8.61	6.48
RANGE	0.53	1.28	0.51
MEDIAN	2.01	7.92	6.25

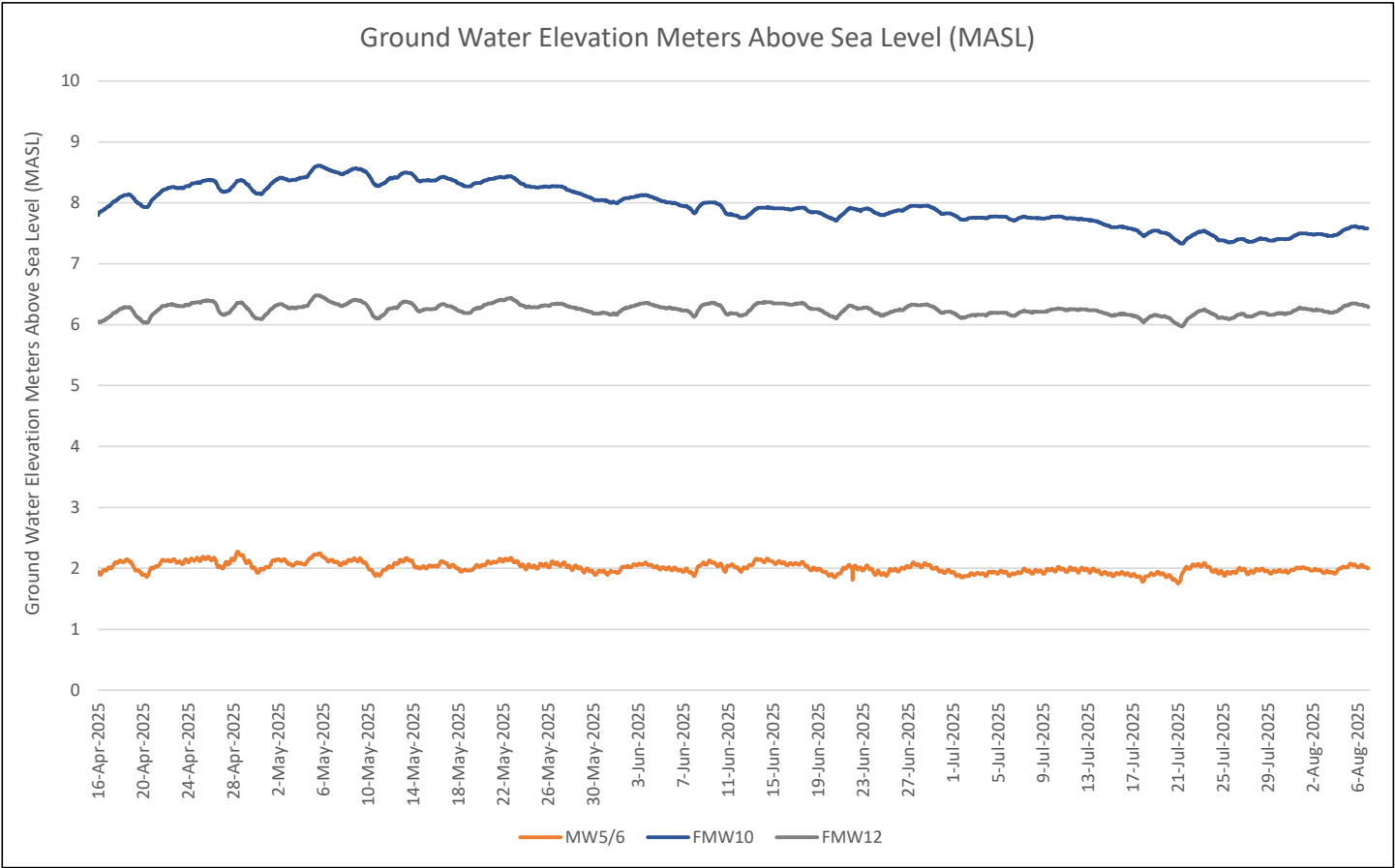


Figure 4: Ground Water Elevation (masl) – Northern Harvest Smolt Ltd. Network

pH

- After the initial acclimatization period, pH ranged from 5.94 to 8.01 pH units within the well network (Table 5).
- FMW10 & FMW12 were slightly basic and showed little variation during deployment, while MW5/6 is slightly acidic with a lower pH than the other wells and showed significant variation (Figure 5). There are several sudden drops at MW5/6 and FMW12 that may be related to changes in the aquifer or temporary removal of the instrument to collect grab samples.

Table 5: pH (pH units) Summary Statistics from the Well Network

	MW5/6	FMW10	FMW12
MIN.	5.94	7.37	7.55
MAX.	6.27	7.63	8.01
MEDIAN	6.14	7.51	7.89

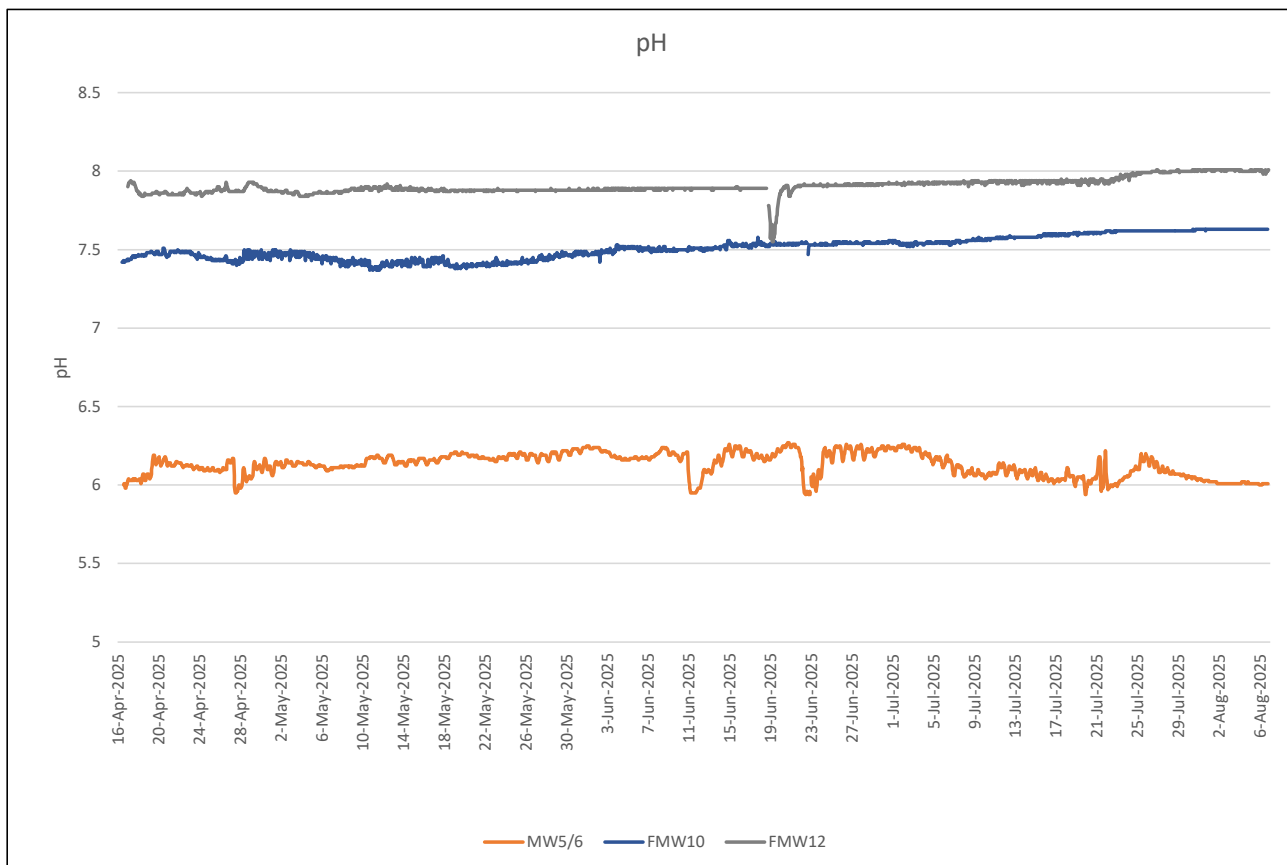


Figure 5: pH – Northern Harvest Smolt Ltd. Network

Specific Conductance and TDS

- After the initial acclimatization period, specific conductance ranged from 65.34 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ to 518.78 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ within the well network (Table 6).
- During the deployment, FMW12 displays little variation, FMW10 showed an increasing trend until mid-May before steadily decreasing, and MW5/6 displays numerous small fluctuations which several notable temporary decreases which line up with the changes in pH seen as this station (Figure 6). This indicates that the instrument was either temporality pulled from the well or something else occurred in the aquifer to affect both parameters.
- Minor fluctuations at MW5/6 could be due to the well being shallower and potentially influenced by climate changes around the well head.

Table 6: Specific Conductance ($\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$) & TDS (g/L) Summary Statistics from the Well Network

	MW5/6	FMW10	FMW12		MW5/6	FMW10	FMW12
SPECIFIC CONDUCTANCE				TOTAL DISSOLVED SOLIDS			
MIN.	65.34	430.43	333.14	MIN.	0.04	0.28	0.22
MAX.	138.0	518.78	348.2	MAX.	0.09	0.34	0.23
MEDIAN	113.28	466.96	341.35	MEDIAN	0.07	0.30	0.22

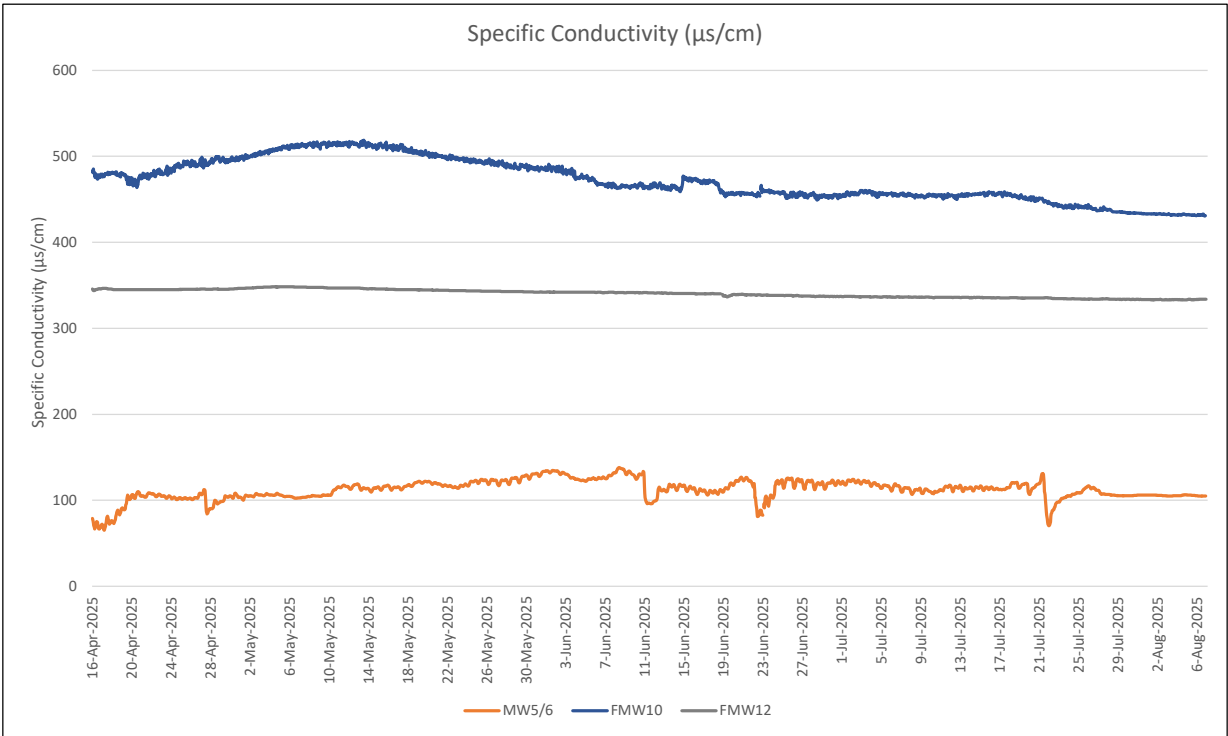


Figure 6: Specific Conductivity – Northern Harvest Smolt Ltd. Network

- After the initial acclimatization period, total dissolved solids (TDS) ranged from 0.04 mg/L to 0.34 mg/L within the well network (Table 6).
- TDS varied minimally throughout the network, though FMW10 showed the same slight increase until mid-May followed by a steady decrease for the remainder of the deployment. This is expected as TDS is calculated from the specific conductance measurement (Figure 7).

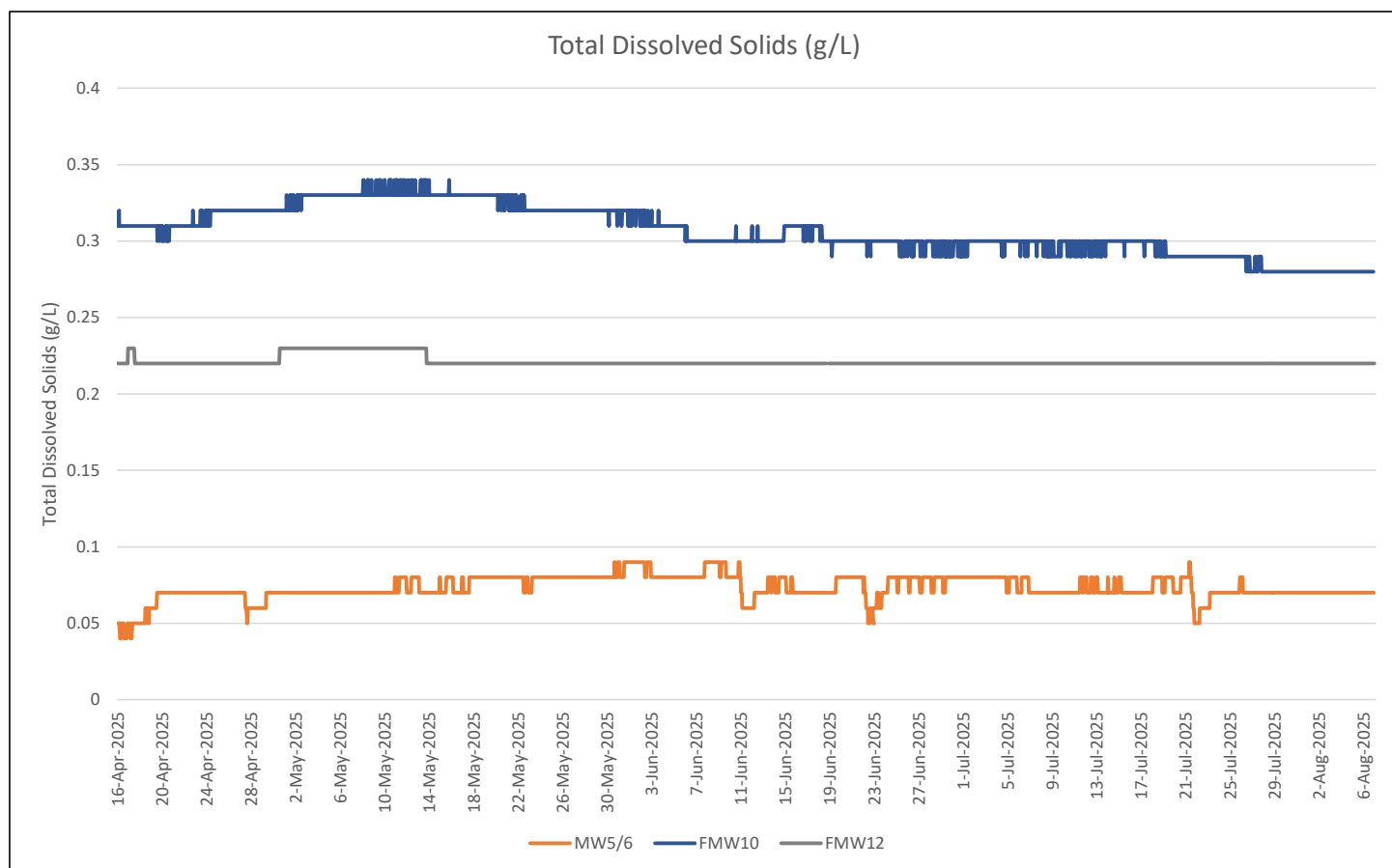


Figure 7: Total Dissolved Solids – Northern Harvest Smolt Ltd. Network

Oxidation – Reduction Potential (ORP)

- After the initial acclimatization period, oxidation-reduction potential (ORP) ranged from -75.74 mV to 446.72 mV within the well network (Table 7).
- Over the duration of this deployment, all three wells were generally in an oxidative state except for MW5/6 which occasionally dipped below zero in June and July and FMW12 which dipped below zero once in late June. MW5/6 also recorded the greatest variation within the network (Figure 8).

Table 7: Oxidation-Reduction Potential (ORP) Summary Statistics from the Well Network

	MW5/6	FMW10	FMW12
MIN.	-75.74	380	-4.84
MAX.	425.39	446.72	381.79
MEDIAN	73.57	436.71	375.79

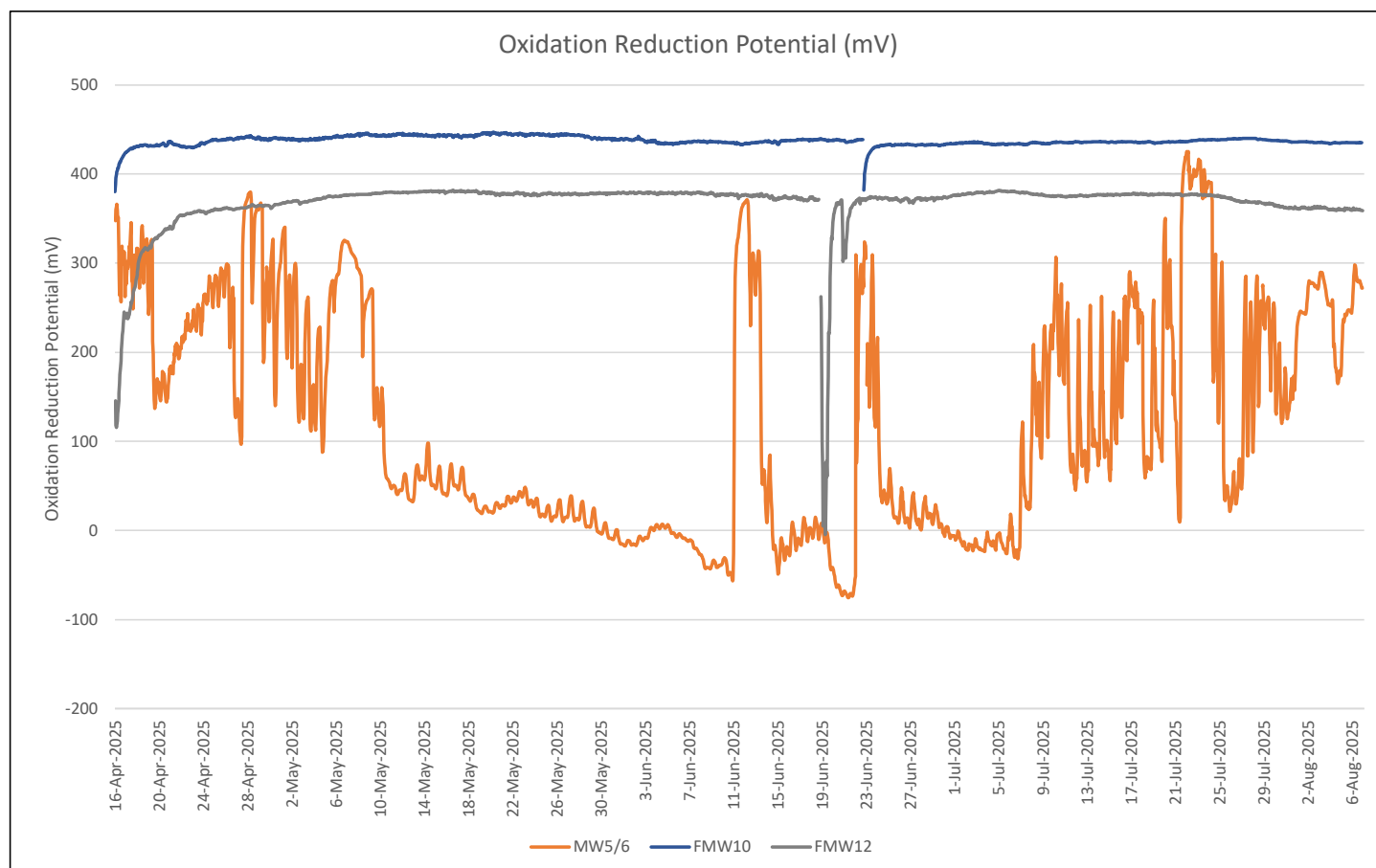


Figure 8: Oxidation-Reduction Potential (ORP) – Northern Harvest Smolt Ltd. Network

Conclusions

- The Real Time Water Quality and Quantity Monitoring Network at Northern Harvest Smolt Ltd was established on November 6, 2019 when instruments were initially deployed at each of the three wells in the network: MW5/6, FMW10 and FMW12.
- During this second deployment of 2025, data was monitored closely to determine if the instruments were accurately placed in the well casings and if there were other issues such as sensor errors.
- QAQC rankings ranged from 'Excellent' to 'Poor' within the well network.
- Water temperature at FMW12 varied little, while FMW10 slightly decreased. At MW5/6, water temperature gradually increased until late July when it began to level off. Changes at MW5/6 are likely due to the well being shallow and influenced by climatic changes.
- During the deployment, water levels at all wells within the network displayed moderate variations concurrently of one another throughout the deployment.
- pH at FMW10 and FMW12 was slightly basic while MW5/6 was slightly acidic. Several sudden drops occurred at MW5/6 and FMW12 which may be related to instrument removal for grab sample collection or other changes in the aquifer.
- During the deployment, specific conductivity at FMW12 displays little variation. MW5/6 displays numerous small daily fluctuations with several large temporary drops that align with similar changes in pH. FMW10 showed an increasing trend until mid-May before steadily decreasing.
- Based on ORP values, all three wells generally remained in an oxidative state except for MW5/6 which periodically dipped below zero between June and July and FMW12 which dipped below zero once in late June. MW5/6 also recorded the greatest variation within the network.
- For this deployment, the instruments performed well after the acclimation period.

Path Forward

- Staff will continue to monitor the data daily for issues.
- If necessary, deployment techniques will be evaluated and modified, ensuring secure and suitable conditions for RTWQ monitoring.
- ECC will continue to work on its Automatic Data Retrieval System (ADRS), to incorporate new capabilities in data management and data display.
- Open communication lines will continue to be maintained between ECC and Northern Harvest Smolt Ltd to respond to emerging issues on a proactive basis. Northern Harvest Smolt Ltd will receive deployment reports and an annual report, summarizing the events of the deployment season.

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Appendix 1: Air Temperature and Precipitation at Stephenville, NL

