

Hydropower: Have you Heard?

August 2025



We're pleased to share the inaugural edition of Vale Base Metals' **Hydropower: Have You Heard?** - a new series beginning with this update on the Nairn Falls Generating Station (GS) spillway project, to help share information and keep lines of communication open about our hydropower facilities.

Nairn Falls GS Spillway Replacement Update

What & Why? Vale Base Metals (VBM) is replacing the existing spillway with a new gated spillway that will improve dam safety and the station's ability to manage larger flood events.

Progress Update? A new access road into the station was constructed in 2021 followed by a new bridge and temporary dam in 2022. Demolition of the existing spillway started in 2024, and this summer we'll continue with rock removal to improve flow in the north channel and start building the new spillway.

How long will the work take? As homeowners often experience with home renovation projects, our project has undergone some unanticipated delays and changes that have impacted timelines. The target date for operation of the new spillway is set for **March 2027**. We'll then need to take some time for the removal of the temporary works like the cofferdam later in 2027.

What might I notice?

Water levels will remain in compliance with the Spanish & Vermilion Rivers Water Management Plan, but they might be a little different than typical during different phases of construction.

For the safety of workers and the river, we're using a cofferdam to isolate the work area. Gates are closed in July, and during high flow events in the summer and fall, you may notice that water levels get a bit higher upstream between High Falls and Nairn Falls than they would if water was moving through both river channels.

Each year by April 1, we remove all equipment and clean the work area before opening the gates on the temporary cofferdam. We're required to leave the gates open until July 15 (for the fish!), and depending on the summer conditions, water levels might get a bit lower than typical on the river leading up to that date.

Nairn Falls GS – July 11, 2025



Did you know? We only work in the water between July 16 and March 31, to protect spawning fish and to ensure that spring flows can be safely passed.

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Nairn Falls GS Spillway Replacement Update (cont'd)

What about the fish?

When the new spillway is operating, environmental modeling predicted possible changes to the suitability of spawning habitat upstream and downstream of the Nairn Falls GS, so VBM will construct spawning habitat enhancement areas to support the local Walleye and Lake Sturgeon populations.

We'll be using rock removed from the spillway channel to build up spawning beds, and you can expect to see this work happening in 2026.

To reach the shore near the new spawning beds, we'll also need to construct temporary access roads, and that work is planned for this year. Please be careful around operating equipment and be mindful that these access points are being constructed on private lands.

Spillway replacement work area – July 2025



There are new boats on the water - why?

Those boats with their easy-to-spot operators wearing high visibility orange clothing are environmental consultants working with VBM to monitor river conditions – taking shoreline videos, measuring bathymetry, catching (and releasing) fish, etc. They'll be monitoring before, during, and after the spillway replacement work, as we're committed to understanding the environment we work in and making sure the predictions made during environmental assessments are realized and that there are no unanticipated impacts.

Did you know?

Lake Sturgeon and Walleye have been observed in all monitoring rounds and the first recorded collection of Lake Sturgeon eggs below Nairn Falls was from VBM's construction monitoring.

Has the water level on Agnew Lake changed?

The current level on Agnew Lake has been lowered a bit as compared to previous summers to allow for extra space in the event of another large summer storm like the one experienced in mid-July. A few inches lower on Agnew Lake means that we can better mitigate against flooding downstream while the river is constrained during this phase of construction at Nairn Falls.

The Spanish & Vermilion Rivers Water Management Plan has a summer target level for Agnew Lake at 859.5' (+6"/-12")

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