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## **2012 Athabasca River at Fort McMurray Report No. 05**

On Sunday, April 15, 2012, an observation flight of the Athabasca River basin was conducted by Alberta Environment and Water. The flight covered the Athabasca River from just upstream of Boiler Rapids (approximately 60 km upstream of Fort McMurray) to Stony Island (approximately 17 km downstream of Fort McMurray). The observation flight also covered an approximately 30 km reach of the Clearwater River, from its confluence with the Athabasca River to the Christina River.

Yesterday's snowfall still covers much of the ice cover, although thermal deterioration of the ice cover was still apparent. Open leads are continuing to lengthen and enlarge as the ice cover melts in place. Small accumulations were observed at the downstream end of open leads, but no backwater was evident.

### **Observation Details**

#### **Athabasca River:**

- Boiler Rapids to the Clearwater River Confluence – A long open lead extends through Boiler, Middle and Long Rapids. Small ice accumulations were present throughout this reach with water spilling onto the ice cover downstream. Small open sections of water were observed upstream of both Crooked and Rock Rapids. Small ice accumulations observed yesterday downstream of the rapid sections were still in place. Little Cascade and Cascade Rapids continue to develop and are open across the entire channel width. The ice cover downstream of Cascade Rapids is dotted with pockets of pooling water and developing open leads. An open lead extending through Moberly rapids has grown to approximately 1.5 km and continues to lengthen downstream. The ice cover remains intact downstream of Moberly Rapids through to the confluence of the Clearwater River. An open lead has developed directly downstream of the Grant McEwan Bridge along the left bank of the river.
- Clearwater River Confluence to Stony Island – The ice cover downstream of the Clearwater River confluence continues to deteriorate thermally. The open leads along both banks of the Athabasca River continue to lengthen and widen.

#### **Clearwater River:**

- The Clearwater River continues to melt in place, although the cooler temperatures over the weekend have slowed the development of the open leads present. The confluence with the Christina River continues to show many signs of thermal deterioration. No signs of movement of the ice cover were observed.

The next observation flight is scheduled for Monday, April 16.

The most current information with interactive maps and photos is posted on the Alberta Environment and Water web site at <http://www.environment.alberta.ca/forecasting/RiverIce/index.html>