

For Immediate Release: June 14, 2006

Record temperatures in May result in above average snowmelt runoff in Bow, Oldman

Despite below to much below average precipitation this spring, early snowmelt due to very warm weather in mid May resulted in above to much above average natural runoff volumes in much of the Bow River basin and at the Bighorn Reservoir, and average to above average natural runoff volumes in the Oldman River basin for the March through May period. However, in areas where snowpack was below to much below average in May, melt has been insufficient to overcome the lack of precipitation, and as a result natural runoff volumes were below to much below average for the March through May period in the Milk, Highwood, Elbow, Red Deer, and remainder of the North Saskatchewan River basin.

With snowmelt occurring a few weeks earlier than usual this year, remaining mountain snowpacks as of June 1, 2006 are generally below average south of Calgary to the border, and below to much below average to the north. However, wet soil conditions from last year's heavy rains provide good potential for runoff from rainfall that may occur this summer. As a result, Alberta Environment is forecasting natural runoff volumes ranging from below average to average for the period between June and September 2006.

Total natural runoff volumes for the water year (March to September 2006) are expected to range from below average to average.

Other Highlights (As of June 1):

- Precipitation during May was below to much below normal in the southwestern quarter of Alberta and in northernmost areas along the border with the Northwest Territories, but above to much above normal in the rest of the province.
- Water storage in major irrigation reservoirs in the Oldman River basin ranges from average to above average.
- Water storage is average in the major hydroelectric and irrigation reservoirs of the Bow River basin, except for the Travers and Barrier Reservoirs, which are below average, and the Lower and Upper Kananaskis Lakes which are above average.
- Water storage levels in the North Saskatchewan and Red Deer River basins are currently average at the Brazeau Reservoir and Glennifer Lake, and above average at the Bighorn Reservoir.

- 30 -

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