

For Immediate Release: April 16, 2008

Snowpack above to much above average from Cold Lake to Peace River to High Level

Snow accumulations measured as of April 1, 2008 in a band across the province from the Cold Lake area to the Peace River region and north to the High Level area were among the 10 highest in 35 years of record at many locations.

However, soil moisture in many of these areas was below average going into spring, and the recent warm spell in April has depleted some of the snowpack. Significantly high runoff is still possible, particularly in the High Level area, if snowpack melts very quickly or significant precipitation occurs during April.

Snowpack in the Grande Prairie – Edson area was below average to average, and snowmelt runoff is expected to be below average to average. Average snow accumulations were measured at most locations in the Fort Chipewyan and Edmonton – Lloydminster areas. Average to above average snowmelt runoff is forecast for the Fort Chipewyan area. As of April 15, the snowpack in most plains areas of the province south of Cold Lake and Whitecourt has melted, though some snow remains at the top of the Cypress Hills.

In the mountains, snow accumulations as of April 1, 2008 are generally average to above average in the Oldman River basin, average in the Athabasca River basin, below average to average in the Bow and North Saskatchewan River basins, and below to much below average in the Red Deer River basin. The snowpack in the upper Peace River basin, in British Columbia, is generally above average.

Mountain snowpack is an important source of water supply to reservoirs in the spring. Accumulations at this time of year are typically nearing the seasonal total in the Oldman River basin and are normally 80 to 95 per cent of the season's total in mountain areas north of this basin.

As of April 1, 2008, below average natural runoff volumes are forecast from the mountains for this year (March - September 2008) in the North Saskatchewan River basin and for the Bow River at Banff and Calgary, and slightly below average volumes are forecast for the Highwood, Red Deer and Milk River basins. Near average natural runoff volumes are forecast for the Oldman River basin and the Kananaskis - Elbow River area. As it is still early in the year, precipitation over the next several months could affect these forecasts significantly.

Other Highlights (as of April 1, 2008):

- Water storage in the major irrigation and hydroelectric reservoirs of southern and central Alberta is generally below normal, except with the exception of the Oldman and Milk River Ridge Reservoirs, where storage is normal.
- Most areas of the province south of Slave Lake recorded precipitation which was 20 to 60 per cent of average for March. Precipitation to the north was generally below normal to normal, except below to much below normal in the Fort Chipewyan area and above to much above normal in Peace River and in the Fort McMurray and High Level areas.