



Water Supply Outlook Overview

For Immediate Release: January 11, 2005

Alberta snowpack below average to average

In most mountain areas of the Oldman, Bow and Red Deer River basins, snowpack ranges from below average to average for this time of year. Snow accumulation as of January 1 typically accounts for 40 to 50 per cent of the season's total. Plains snowpack in Alberta is generally below average to average.

December precipitation ranged from normal to much above normal in the province north of Calgary but was much below normal in the south. Winter precipitation totals to date remain below to much below normal in the plains areas of Alberta, however plains snowpack is below average to average as little has melted with the recent cold temperatures.

The natural runoff volume for the Milk River basin between March and September 2005 is currently forecast to be approximately 80 per cent of average. Forecasts for the upper North Saskatchewan, Red Deer, Bow and Oldman River basins and for Alberta's plains areas begin in February.

Current El Nino conditions are weak and, as a result, long-range weather forecasts tend to differ for the remainder of winter. Environment Canada is forecasting cold temperatures and above normal precipitation through March for most of Alberta. The U.S. National Weather Service is predicting warm temperatures and an even chance of above normal, below normal, or normal precipitation.

Other Highlights (As of January 1, 2005):

- Water storage in major irrigation reservoirs in the Oldman River basin is generally above average, except in the Waterton Reservoir, which is average.
- Water storage is average in the major hydroelectric and irrigation reservoirs of the Bow River basin, except in Lake Minnewanka, which is above average.
- Water storage in the major reservoir of the Red Deer River basin is above average for this time of year.
- Water storage levels in the North Saskatchewan River basin are currently above average at the Brazeau Reservoir and at Lake Abraham.

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