



# Water Supply Outlook Overview

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For immediate release: June 7, 2002

## **Spring snowstorms dramatically improve water supply conditions**

For the fourth straight month, seasonal water supplies in the mountain and foothill regions have dramatically improved as a result of significant precipitation. Two major snowstorms in southern Alberta last month added to an already significant mountain snowpack, which is an important source of water supply to reservoirs in the province. Eastern and northern areas of the province, however, did not see the same significant precipitation accumulations in May and remain very dry as a result.

Below-normal temperatures this spring have resulted in very little depletion of the higher elevation snowpack in the Bow, Red Deer and North Saskatchewan River headwaters. The peak snowmelt runoff from the middle elevations of the Oldman River headwaters occurred during the last week of May. Typically the peak snowmelt runoff from the mountain areas occurs in late May or in early June.

As a result of the above-normal precipitation this spring, near average natural runoff volumes as of June 1, 2002 are forecast for a majority of the mountain fed rivers for the March to September 2002 period. However, the late spring has resulted in most areas of the province recording below-average to much-below-average natural runoff volumes for the March to May 2002 period. Therefore, the remaining portion of the runoff season (June to September) is forecast to have average to above-average natural runoff volumes. Forecast runoff this year is substantially higher than the recorded March to September 2001 natural runoff volumes.

As of June 1, 2002, water storage levels in the major irrigation and hydroelectric reservoirs in the Oldman, Bow and Red Deer River basins are below-normal, with the exception of Keho Reservoir, which is above-normal and Lake Newell, Crawling Valley Reservoir and Waterton Reservoir, which are normal for this time of the year. Water storage in the North Saskatchewan River basin's major hydroelectric reservoirs is normal for this time of the year. Storage levels increased substantially in the Oldman River basin, particularly in the last week of May, as a result of snowmelt from the mountain and foothill region. Reservoir levels in all basins will continue to increase in June as a result of snowmelt from the higher elevations.

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