



## Water Supply Outlook Overview

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### **February snow improves water supply but more still needed**

Water supply forecasts for many parts of southern Alberta continue to improve as significant February snowfall boosts mountain snowpack, Alberta Environment forecasters say.

However, much more is needed to ensure adequate runoff in most river basins. The severe dry conditions over the past two years has resulted in extreme soil moisture deficits. Snow in elevations below 6,000 feet is generally below-average for this time of year.

Currently, Alberta Environment is forecasting much-below-average natural runoff volumes in the Milk River basin, below-average to much-below-average in the Oldman River basin and below-average volumes for the Bow, Red Deer and North Saskatchewan River basins.

Near normal runoff is currently forecast for the Grande Prairie-Peace River area.

Typically the accumulation of snow in the mountains for this time of the year accounts for nearly three-quarters of the seasonal total. Water supplies province-wide are forecast to be better than last year.

Encouragingly, Environment Canada has improved its long-lead precipitation forecast, which now indicates above-normal precipitation for the March to May period for the entire province. The forecast for the summer period (June to August) is for above-normal precipitation in southern Alberta and normal precipitation elsewhere.

Some highlights of March's Water Supply Outlook include:

- Near average mountain snow accumulation (above 6,000 feet) for this time of year, with the exception of the headwaters of the Oldman River basin, which is below-average in some parts and the Highwood and Kananaskis River headwaters, which are above-average.
- Generally below-normal winter precipitation for this time of year in the Plains area (elevations below 4,000 feet).
- Near average snowpack for this time of the year in the Red Deer-Calgary-Lethbridge areas and the Grande Prairie-Peace River area.
- Current snow accumulation in the headwaters of the Bow River basin is 1.5 times the seasonal maximum recorded last year.

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- Below-normal water storage for this time of the year in the major irrigation reservoirs in the Oldman and Red Deer River basins, with the exception of Keho Lake, which is normal.
- Normal water storage for this time of year in the major hydroelectric reservoirs in the Bow and North Saskatchewan River basins, with the exceptions of Spray Lake, Lower Kananaskis Lake, Lake McGregor and Travers Reservoir, which are below-normal.