



# Water Supply Outlook Overview

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For Immediate Release: March 10, 2005

## **February precipitation below normal in Oldman River basin and across Alberta plains**

February precipitation was below to much below normal in the mountains of the Oldman River basin and in most plains areas across Alberta. Fort McMurray and Lloydminster recorded normal precipitation, while in west central Alberta and the town of Peace River, generally above normal precipitation was recorded.

As a result of much below normal February precipitation, near record low snow accumulations were measured again this month in most mountain areas of the Oldman River basin. Forecasted natural runoff volumes for the period between March and September 2005 in the Oldman River basin are below to much below average. Precipitation during the next few months could increase runoff forecasts significantly due to current wet soil moisture conditions. Water storage is above average in the major irrigation reservoirs of the Oldman River basin, except in the Waterton Reservoir, which is average.

In the Bow River basin, mountain snowpack is below average to average. Mountain snow accumulations are average in the North Saskatchewan River basin and above average in the Red Deer River basin. Natural runoff volumes are forecast to be below to much below average for the Milk River basin, below average to average for the Bow River basin, and average for the Red Deer and North Saskatchewan River basins.

In plains areas across the province, snowpack measurements indicate above average to much above average snowpack in the northernmost areas of Alberta and in a band through central Alberta. Plains snowpack elsewhere in the province ranges from little to no snow in southern Alberta to below average to average in much of northwestern Alberta.

Runoff in the plains is expected to be below average to average for most areas in Alberta, but below average to above average in northernmost Alberta, average to above average in areas of northwestern Alberta, above to much above average in west central Alberta, and below to much below average in an area west of Cold Lake. Significant plains snowmelt runoff occurred during the first 10 days of March, especially in areas of west central and northwestern Alberta. This is expected to continue for the next few days, as per the [Spring Runoff Advisory](#) issued earlier this week by Alberta Environment's River Forecast Centre.

### ***Other Highlights (As of March 1, 2005):***

- Water storage is average to above average in the major hydroelectric and irrigation reservoirs of the Bow River basin, except in the Ghost Reservoir, which is below average.
- Water storage levels are currently above average in the North Saskatchewan River basin at the Brazeau Reservoir and at Lake Abraham and in the Red Deer River basin at Dickson dam.

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