



# Water Supply Outlook Overview

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For Immediate Release: May 6, 2005

## **Mountain snowpack below to much below average in Alberta**

Mountain snow accumulations as of May 1, 2005 remain near record lows in the Oldman River basin as a result of January's snowmelt. In the Bow and Red Deer River basins, mountain snowpack levels range from below to much below average, and are below average in the North Saskatchewan and Athabasca River basins. Early snowmelt during March and April has significantly depleted the snowpack at lower and middle elevations of these basins. Snow accumulation for the year is essentially complete.

For the period between May and September 2005, Alberta Environment is forecasting below average to average natural runoff volumes for the Bow, Red Deer and North Saskatchewan River basins, and below to much below average natural runoff volumes for the Milk and Oldman River basins.

As a result of early snowmelt, natural runoff volumes recorded during the period between March and April were above to much above average in most areas of the upper Bow, Red Deer and North Saskatchewan River basins. In the Oldman and Milk River basins, natural runoff volumes between March and April were below to much below average.

Precipitation during April generally ranged from 25 to 50 per cent of normal in western areas of Alberta, from Grande Prairie south to Pincher Creek, including the mountain areas. The Waterton Park area recorded about 60 to 80 per cent of normal precipitation, and the Peace River – High Level area recorded precipitation which varied from below normal to above normal. Southeastern Alberta recorded much below normal precipitation during April, and east central and northeastern Alberta recorded normal to above normal precipitation.

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

- Water storage in major irrigation reservoirs in the Oldman River basin is generally above average, except in the Milk River Ridge Reservoir, which is average, and in Keho Lake, which is below average.
- Water storage is average to above average in the major hydroelectric and irrigation reservoirs of the Bow River basin.
- Water storage levels in the North Saskatchewan and Red Deer River basins are currently above average at the Brazeau Reservoir, Bighorn Reservoir and Glennifer Lake.

- 30 -

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