

For Immediate Release: May 18, 2007

Near record mountain snowpack in northern and central Alberta

Mountain snow accumulation measurements as of May 1, 2007 indicate snowpack in the upper Bow, Red Deer, North Saskatchewan, and Athabasca River basins range from highest to seventh highest in the past twenty to forty years. Snowpack in the Peace River basin is much above average. Snowpack in southern areas declines to above average in the Elbow and Highwood River basins, and below average in the Oldman River basin.

As a result of the near record snowpack, there is a high risk of significant runoff in the mountain areas of the upper Bow, Red Deer, North Saskatchewan, and Athabasca River basins. High streamflows are likely, mainly within the Banff and Jasper National Parks, depending upon when and how quickly the snow melts. Alberta Environment will be monitoring these areas closely, and will issue advisories as necessary.

For the period between May and September 2007, Alberta Environment is forecasting natural runoff volumes to be above average for the North Saskatchewan, Red Deer, upper Bow and Kananaskis River basins, average for the Elbow and Highwood River basins, below average to average for the Oldman River basin, and below average for the Milk River basin.

As a result of melting of large snowpacks and wet soil conditions, natural runoff volumes recorded during March and April were above to much above average in most areas of the North Saskatchewan, Red Deer, Bow and Oldman River basins. In the Milk River basin, natural runoff volumes recorded so far have been generally below average.

Other Highlights (As of May 1):

- Precipitation during April was generally much above normal in the plains areas of southern and central Alberta, and highly variable elsewhere.
- Water storage in major irrigation reservoirs in the Oldman River basin is generally above average.
- Water storage is average in the major hydroelectric and irrigation reservoirs of the Bow River basin, except for Lake Minnewanka, which is above average.
- Water storage levels in the North Saskatchewan and Red Deer River basins are currently average at the Brazeau Reservoir and Glennifer Lake, and above average at the Bighorn Reservoir.
- Water storage in the Athabasca River basin is above average following the storm in early May.

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Media Contact:
Communications Division, Alberta Environment
Phone: (780) 427-6267