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## **Dry summer skies lead to near record low mountain run-off volumes**

Run-off volumes during the July through September 2003 period ranked from lowest to 12th lowest over 85 years of record, following much-below-normal precipitation this summer (May through September) in the mountains and foothills. These summer volumes are generally similar to or slightly greater than those seen in the very dry summer of 2002 in the Red Deer and North Saskatchewan River basins and the very dry summer of 2001 in basins to the south.

Despite unusually high spring run-off (second to fifth highest on record) in the Red Deer and North Saskatchewan River basins, and good soil moisture in the south entering the spring, the lack of summer precipitation resulted in near record low summer volumes.

This month's Water Supply Outlook also contains a review of recorded and forecasted water supplies in Alberta. For the March through September 2003 period, natural run-off volumes in the Oldman, Milk and Bow River basins generally rank among the 12 to 25 lowest volumes in 85 years of record over the same period. Volumes in the Red Deer River basin were near average, and volumes in the North Saskatchewan River basin varied from much-below-average to near-average.

**Highlights** of the October Water Supply Outlook include:

- In plains areas of Alberta, precipitation this year has generally been slightly above normal in central regions and well below normal in northern and southern areas.
- As of October 1, 2003, water storage in major irrigation reservoirs in the Oldman River basin is generally below average, but much greater than at this time in 2001. Water storage in the major reservoir of the Red Deer River basin is above average for this time of year, similar to last year.
- Water storage is below average to average as of October 1, 2003 in the major hydroelectric and irrigation reservoirs of the Bow River basin, except in the Glenmore and Travers Reservoir which are above average. Storage in the Bow River basin is greater than in the drought year of 2001.
- Water storage levels in the North Saskatchewan River basin are below average at the Brazeau Reservoir (approximately 25 per cent less water stored than in 2002), and average at Lake Abraham.
- Water storage in the Athabasca River basin at the South Heart Reservoir is below average.

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