



Water Supply Outlook Overview

For Immediate Release: October 18, 2004

2004 run-off below to much below average, but year ends on a wet note

For the period between March and September 2004, natural run-off volumes generally rank among the 11 to 35 lowest volumes in up to 91 years recorded for the same period. However, volumes at the Bighorn Reservoir and in several areas of the Bow River basin were higher, ranging from average to above average.

Earlier this year, dry soil, below average mountain snowpacks, and below to much below normal spring precipitation resulted in very low spring runoff totals. Natural runoff volumes between March and May were the lowest on record at Brazeau Reservoir, second lowest for the North Saskatchewan River at Edmonton, 10th lowest in the Red Deer River, and in most areas of the Oldman River basin, near the 20th lowest on record.

May began a reversal of this dry trend, with precipitation from May through September ranging from near normal to much above normal in the mountains and foothills. In August, much above normal precipitation resulted in most of Alberta receiving above to much above average natural run-off volumes between August and September 2004, with the exception of the Milk River basin. In the Bow River basin, August-September volumes ranked from 9th to 15th highest in 91 years of record at all forecast locations except Banff.

This month's Water Supply Outlook provides a review of recorded and forecasted water supplies in Alberta during the last year.

Highlights of the October Water Supply Outlook include:

- In plains areas of Alberta, precipitation from November 2003 through September 2004 has generally been normal to above normal, except in northeastern Alberta and the High Level area, which has been below to much below normal.

As of October 1, 2004 water storage conditions are:

- Above average in the Oldman River basin, generally greater than at this time last year. Water storage in the major reservoir of the Red Deer River basin is average for this time of year, slightly less than last year.
- Above average in the major hydroelectric and irrigation reservoirs of the Bow River basin, except in Lake McGregor and Spray Lake, which are average. Storage in the Bow River basin is generally greater than at this time last year.
- Above average in the North Saskatchewan River basin at both the Brazeau Reservoir and Lake Abraham, higher than this time last year.
- Higher than at this time last year in the Athabasca River basin.

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