Water Supply Outlook

February 2026

FEBRUARY 2026

Classification: Public

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by Stephen Foster GOA, River Forecast Centre

Water Supply Outlook | Environment and Protected Areas
 | Published: February 2026

Summary

The February Water Supply Outlook forecasts are predicting normal to above normal March to September river volumes in the Milk, Oldman, Bow, Red Deer, and North Saskatchewan River basins. These March to September volumes are predicted to be above or well above the river volumes observed in 2025.

Winter precipitation thus far ranges between below normal to above normal across much of the south and central regions. While winter precipitation conditions have been above normal across northern regions and along the length of the Rocky Mountains. This precipitation pattern is reflected in Alberta's February mountain snow surveys.

Basin wide storage for large reservoirs is below normal to normal in the Red Deer and Bow River basins, and normal to above normal in the Oldman & South Saskatchewan River basins.

The Water Supply Outlook is available here: https://rivers.alberta.ca/Contents/WaterSupply/2026/2/

Contents

1. Mountain Runoff Forecast

North Saskatchewan River basin: Above normal

Red Deer River basin: Above normal

Bow River basin: Normal to above normal

Oldman River basin: Normal to above normal

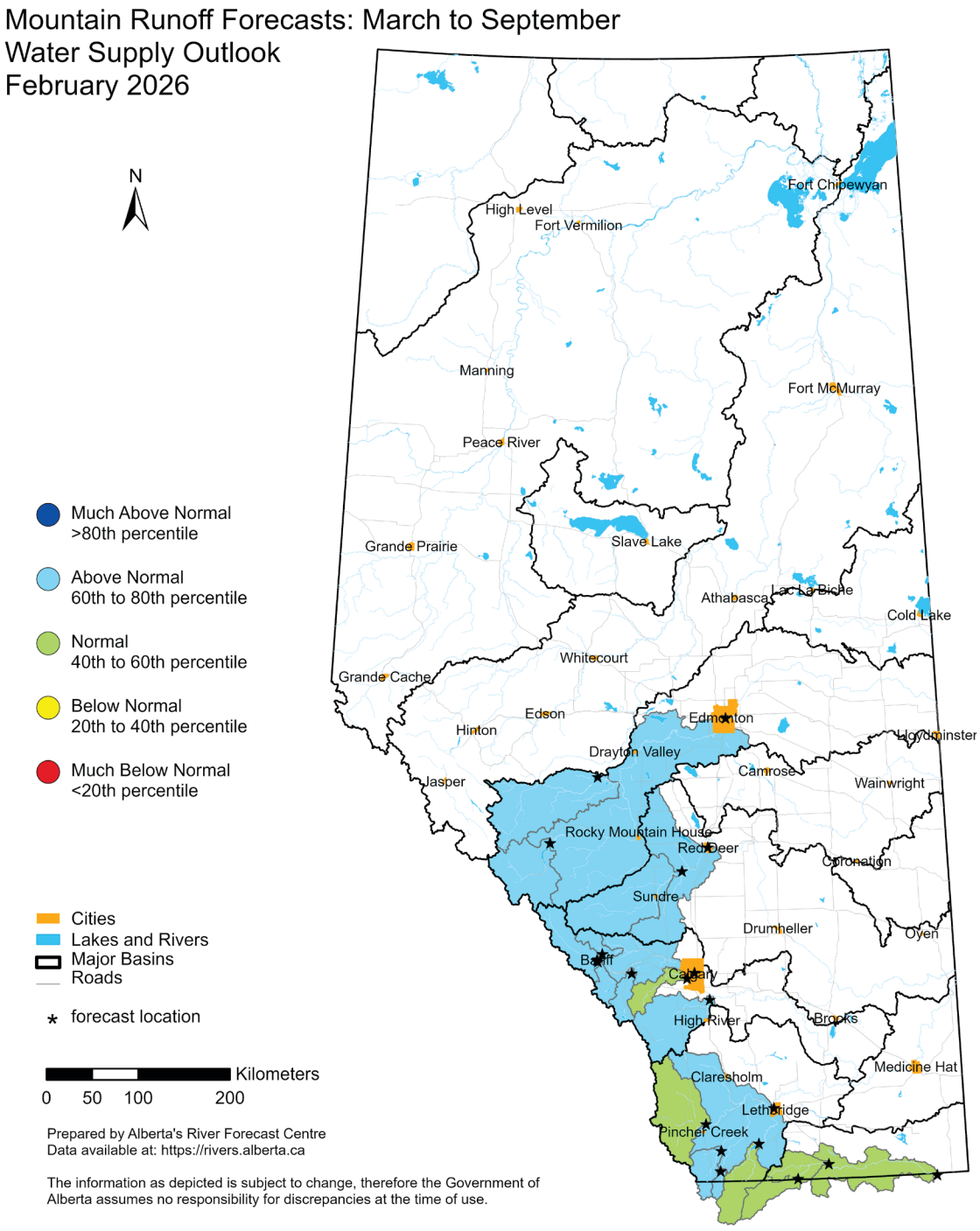
Milk River basin: Normal

Precipitation can have a major impact on water supply between now and the end of September. These forecasts assume that precipitation over the remainder of the forecast period will be normal. Quantile values illustrate some of the possible variation in future precipitation amounts.

Observed and forecasted natural flow volumes are preliminary and subject to change. Since more information becomes known over time, forecast ranges will narrow. Streamflow volume forecasts are updated monthly from February to August.

The Mountain Runoff Forecast is a seasonal decision-making tool and is not intended to guide day-to-day operations. The forecasts are statistical regressions between predictors and estimated monthly natural streamflow at select locations for the period from March to September. The natural flow volumes used in these regressions are the official historical natural flow volumes calculated by EPA's regional hydrologists. These calculations account for reservoir operations, precipitation/evaporation at the reservoirs, and all documented withdrawals and diversions. The suite of predictors includes snow courses surveyed near the first of the month, snow pillow values on the first of the month, accumulated winter precipitation at stations located throughout the forecast basin and fall flow volumes for the 30-year normal period from 1981 to 2009.

Figure 1: Mountain Runoff Forecast Descriptions



2. Mountain Runoff Forecast Comparisons

North Saskatchewan River basin forecasts:

- Ranked between 58th and 65th out of 100 years of record
- Similar to or above the 2025 observed March-September volumes

Red Deer River basin forecasts:

- Ranked 65th and 72nd out of 99 years of record
- Well above the 2025 observed March-September volumes

Bow River basin forecasts:

- Ranked between 39th and 65th out of 99 years of record
- Most are above the 2025 observed March-September volumes, except Elbow River basin

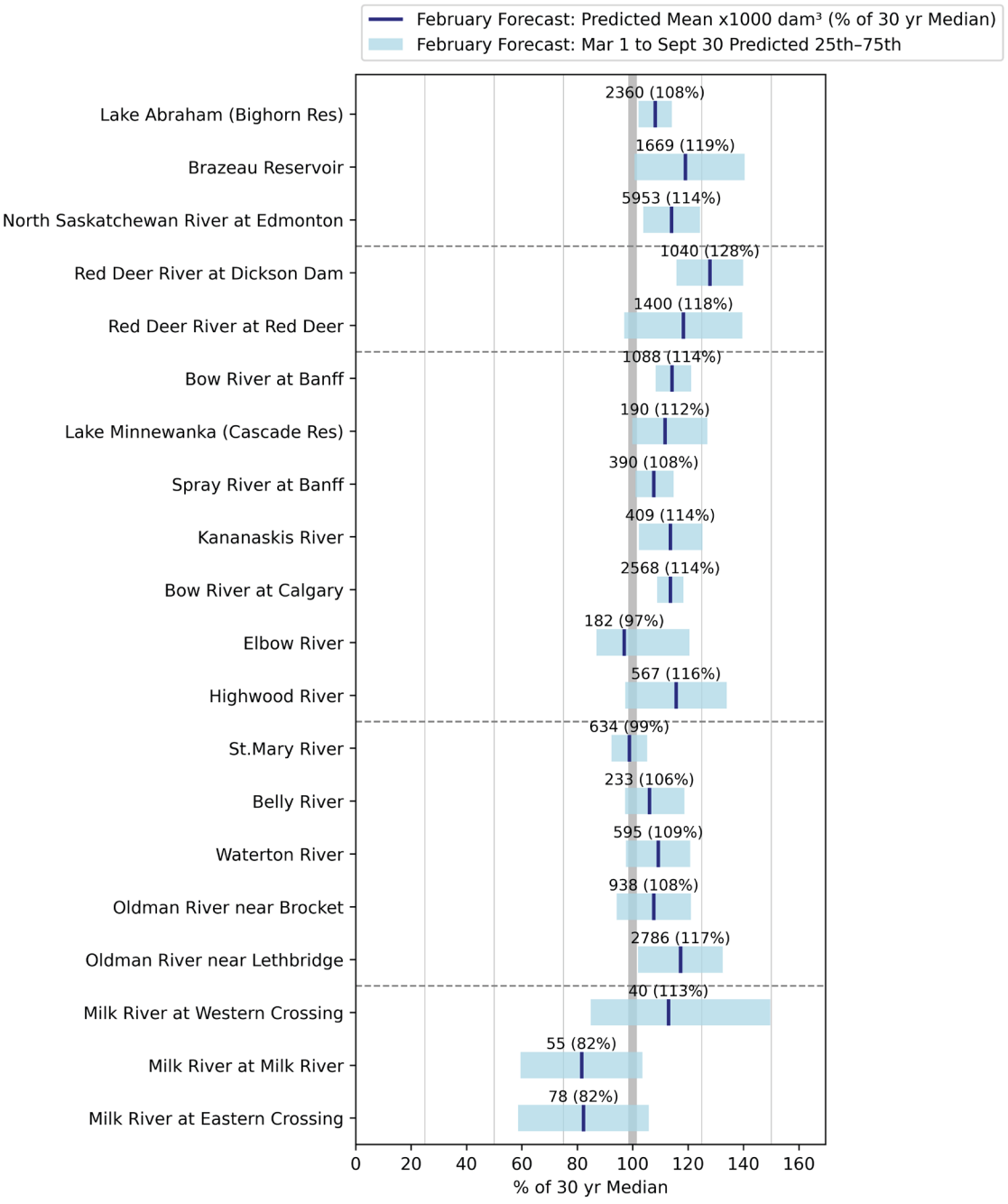
Oldman River basin forecasts:

- Ranked between 28th and 52nd out of 99 years of record
- Well above the 2025 observed March-September volumes

Milk River basin forecasts:

- Ranked between 26th and 31st out of 99 years of record
- Well above the 2025 observed March-September volumes

Figure 2: March to September Forecast Comparison Plots



3. Reservoir Storage

Detailed reservoir storage volume information can be found in tables at the end of this report and in daily updates to the Reservoir Storage Summary Report available on the Alberta River Basins website.

Summary of reservoir storage status (basin totals):

North-Central Region (54% full): Basin total is above normal for this time of year. Since the previous month, volumes have decreased by 20%.

Red Deer River basin (65% full): Basin total is below for this time of year. Since the previous month, volumes have decreased by 17%.

Bow River basin (69% full): Basin total is above normal for this time of year. Since the previous month, volumes have decreased by 5%.

Oldman & South Saskatchewan River basins (66% full): Basin total is normal for this time of year. Since the previous month, volumes have increased by 4%.

Figure 3: Reservoir Storage Summary Map: Bow River and Red Deer River Basin Reservoirs

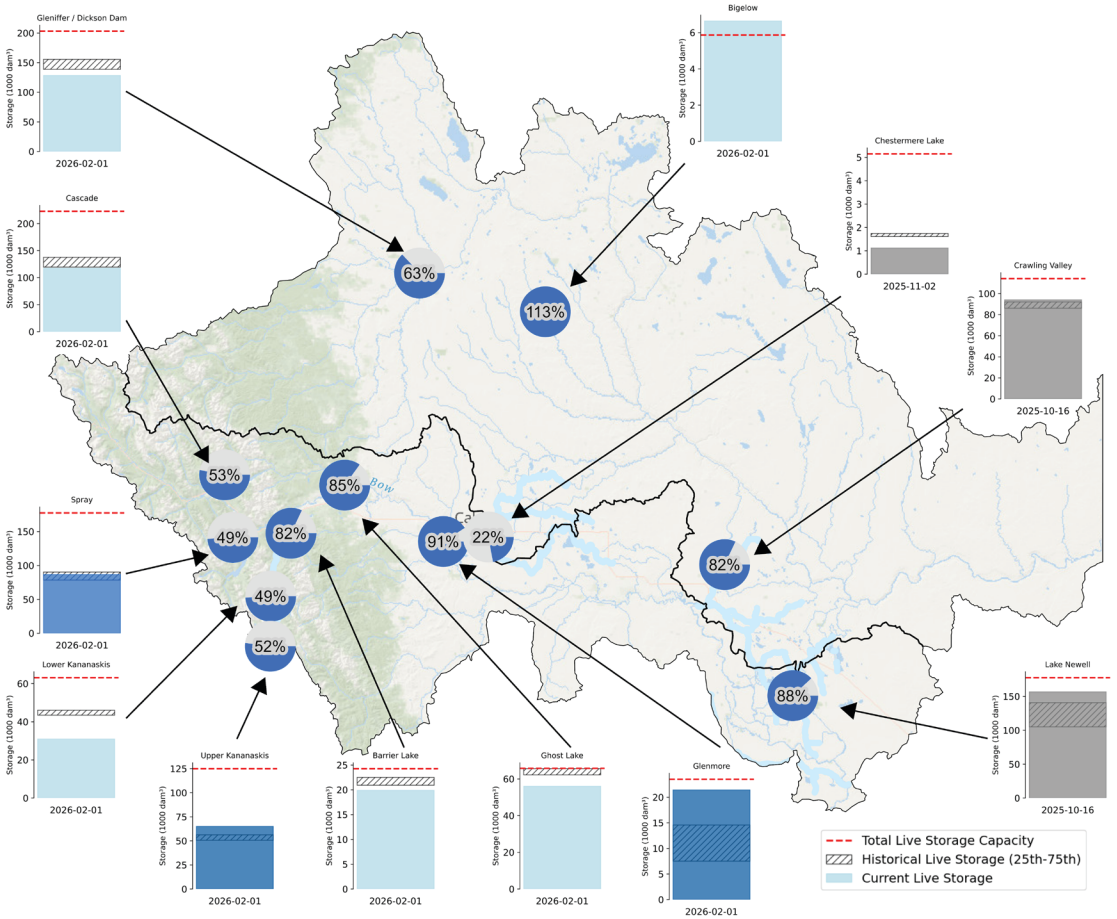
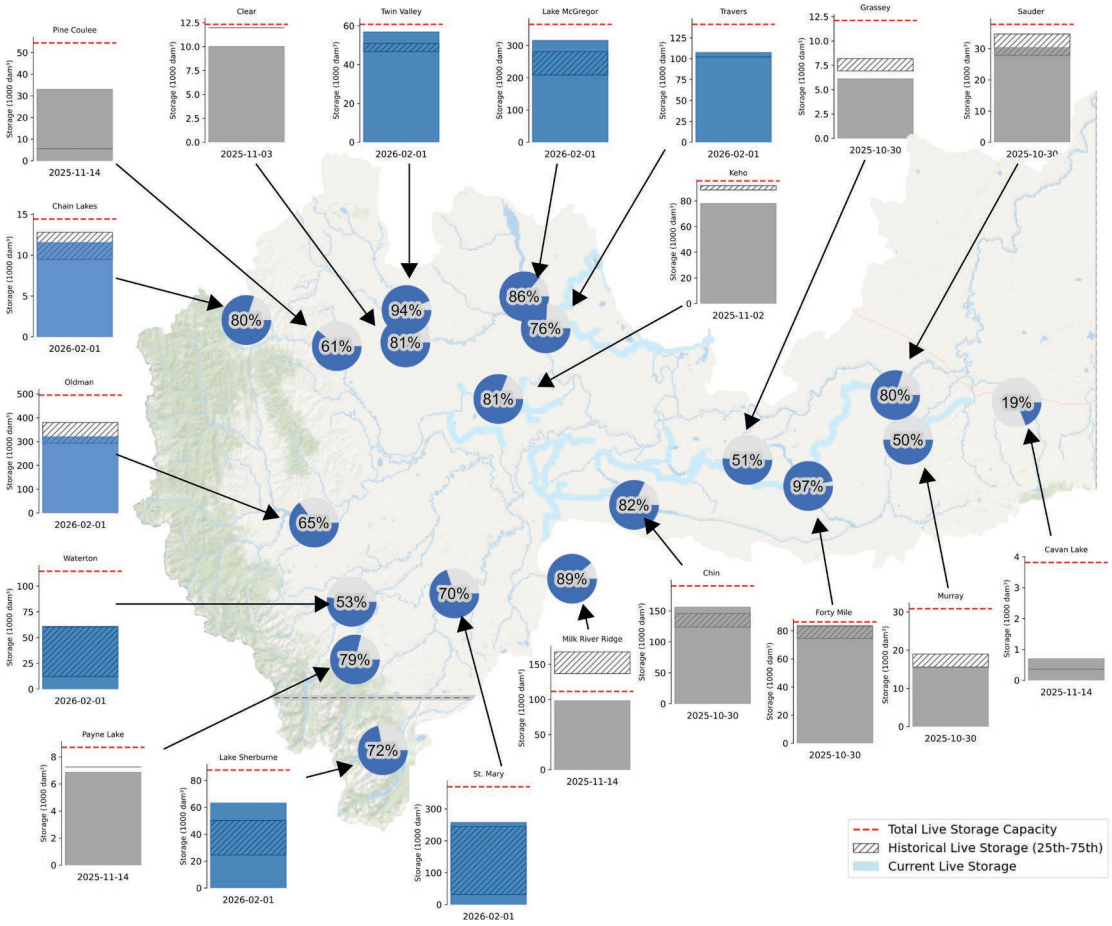


Figure 4: Reservoir Storage Summary Map: Oldman River and South Saskatchewan River Basin Reservoirs



4. Snow Conditions

Twenty-nine mountain snowpack sites were surveyed around the beginning of February. Of the 20 sites that have more than 20 years of historical records, 16 had snowpack conditions that were above normal or much above normal.

Oldman River Basin: much below normal to above normal; ranging from 45% at Westcastle II to 111% at Gardiner Creek; on average 44 mm higher than last year (6 Alberta sites surveyed)

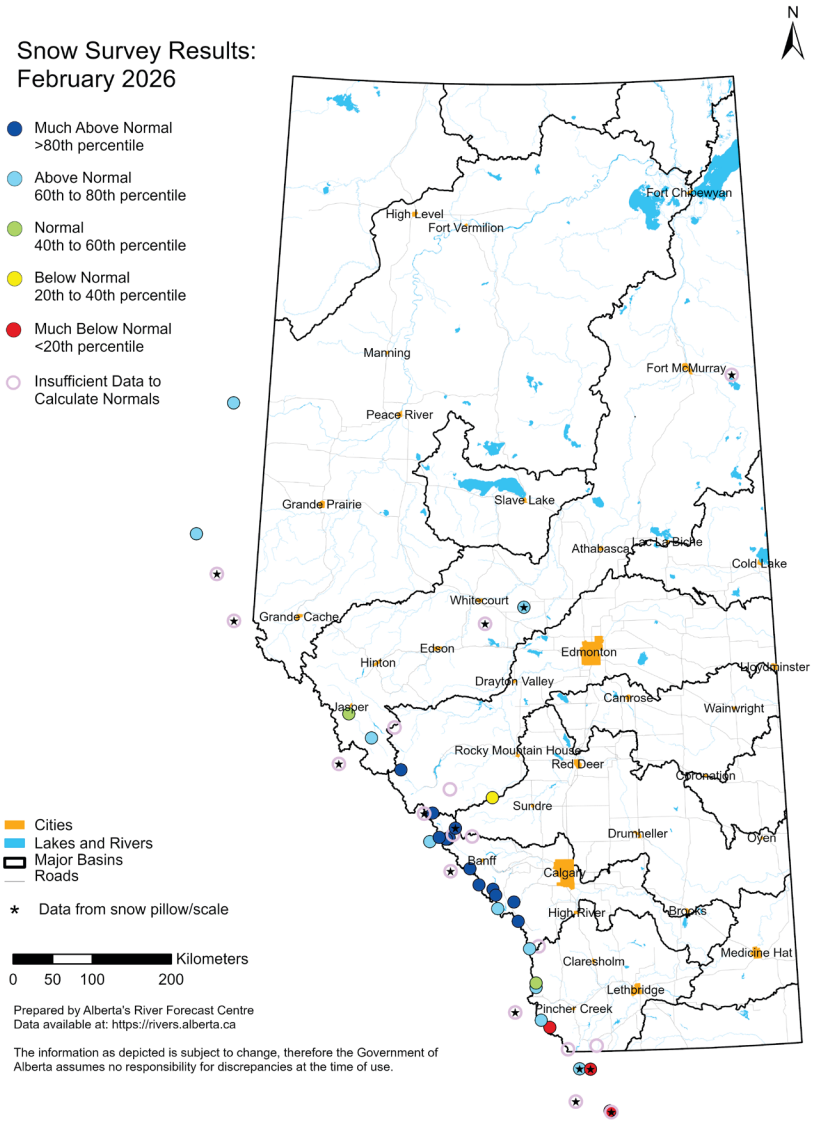
Bow River Basin: above normal to much above normal; ranging from 111% at Mount Odlum to 163% at Pipestone Upper; on average 172 mm higher than last year (17 Alberta sites surveyed)

Red Deer River Basin: no sites surveyed

North Saskatchewan River Basin: below normal to much above normal; ranging from 67% at Southesk to 177% at Nigel Creek; on average 121 mm higher than last year (4 Alberta sites surveyed)

Athabasca River Basin: normal to above normal; ranging from 105% at Marmot-Jasper to 110% at Sunwapta Falls; on average 76 mm higher than last year (2 Alberta sites surveyed)

Figure 5: Modelled Snow Water Equivalent (SWE)



5. Seasonal Precipitation

January did not see the same high frequency of precipitation events that was observed in December. January precipitation was well below normal across much of the south and central regions and precipitation was below normal to above normal across the northern regions.

Winter precipitation thus far is between below normal and above normal across the south and central regions, and winter precipitation is above normal across northern regions and along the length of the Rocky Mountains.

Accumulated precipitation and percent of normal maps are available on the Alberta River Basins website and the Alberta Rivers app: previous month, winter, fall and summer seasonal amounts and the complete water year.

https://rivers.alberta.ca/Contents/PrecipitationMaps/2026/2/

Figure 6: Past Month Precipitation as Percent of Normal

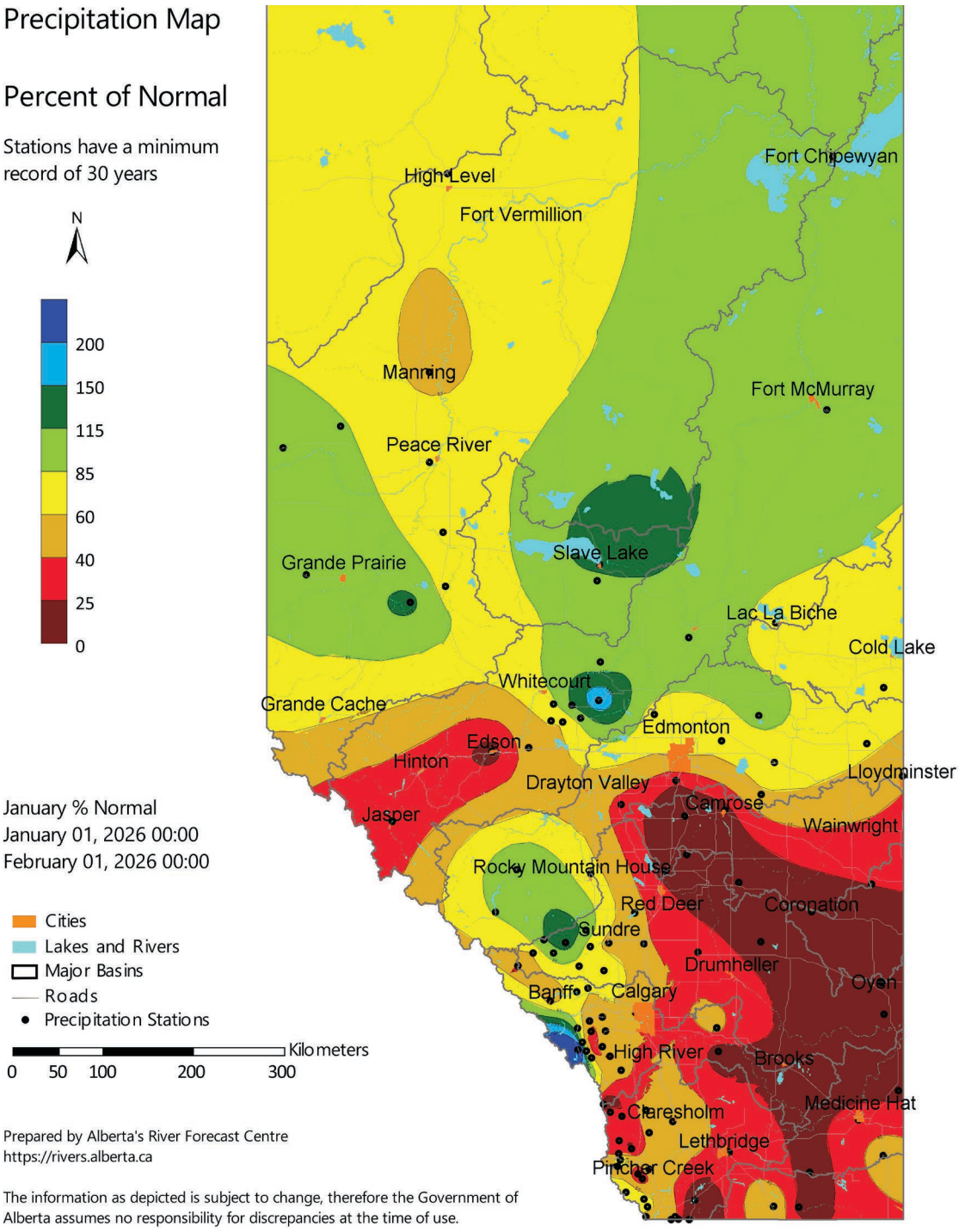
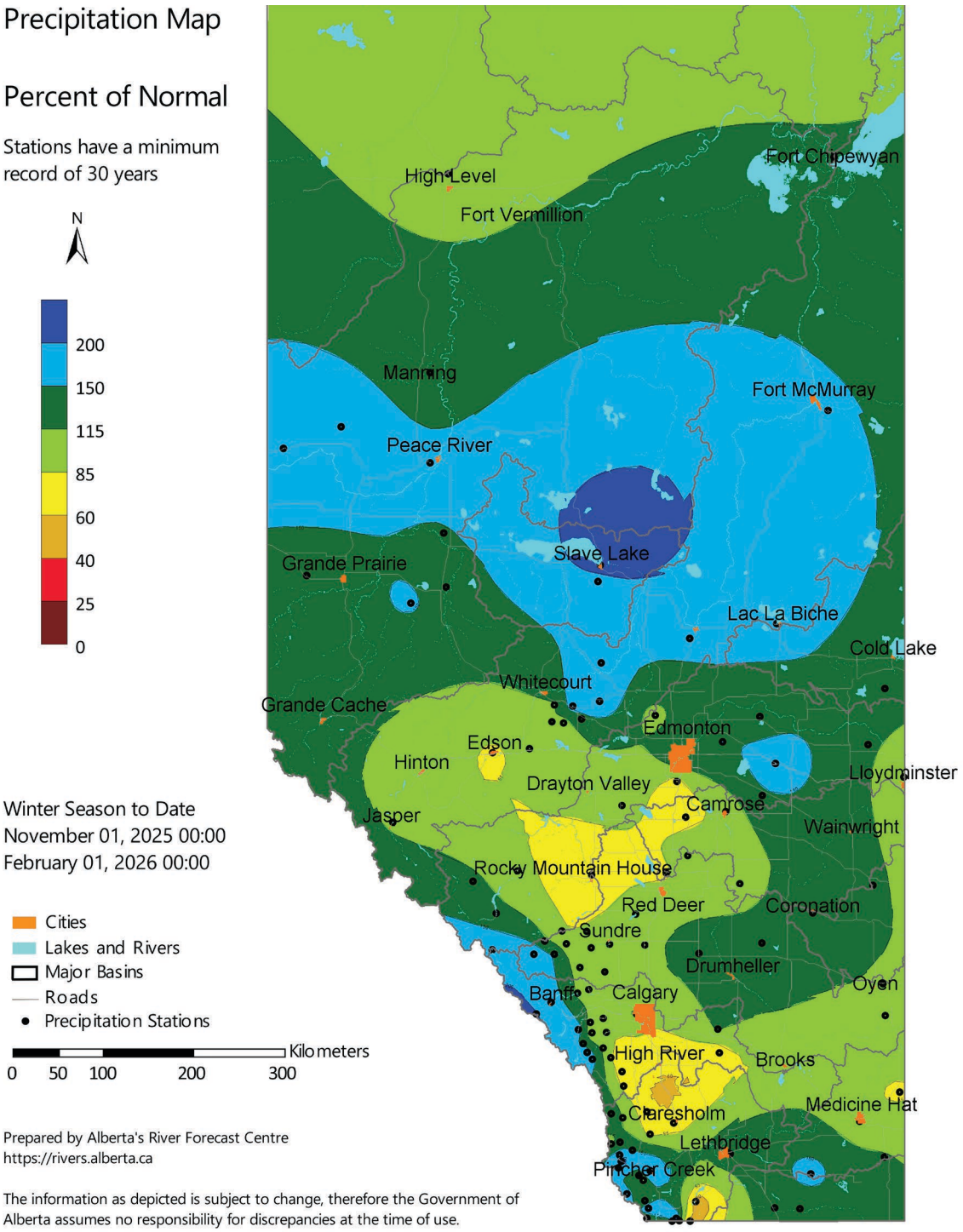


Figure 7: Winter Precipitation as Percent of Normal



6. Drought Conditions

As of December 31, 2025, drought conditions ranged from:

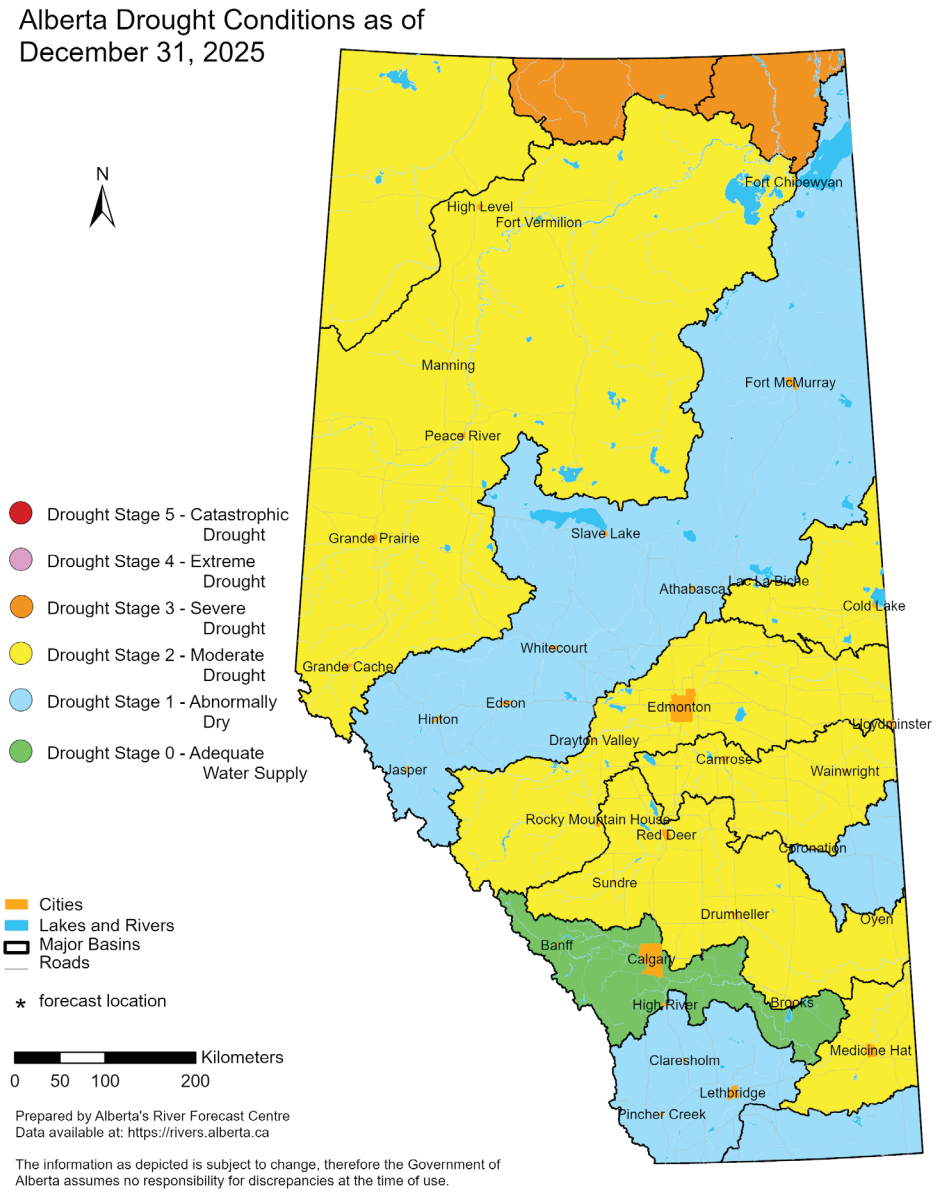
Stage 3: Severe Drought to

Stage 0: Adequate Water Supply

Drought conditions improved for almost all basins across the province following the near normal to above normal amounts of precipitation observed in December.

From November 31, 2025 drought conditions did not change for the South Saskatchewan River basin (Cypress Hills), as well as the Sounding River basin (along Saskatchewan Border), and the Buffalo River basin (north).

Figure 8: Alberta Drought Conditions



7. Long-Range Weather Outlooks

Environment and Climate Change Canada (issued January 31, 2026):
The Feb-Mar-Apr period forecast indicates a likelihood for above normal temperatures, especially in south and central regions. Above normal precipitation across most of the province is somewhat likely. https://weather.gc.ca/saisons/

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) (issued on January 15, 2026): Below normal temperature and above normal precipitation is likely in southern Alberta for the Feb-Mar-Apr period. https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long_range/seasonal.php

Climate Indicators (NOAA) (issued January 8, 2026): La Niña persists, followed by a 75% chance of a transition to ENSO-neutral during January-March 2026. ENSO-neutral is likely through at least Northern Hemisphere late spring 2026. https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/enso_advisory/ensodisc.pdf

Figure 9: ECCC Forecast Probability of Temperature - above, below and near normal (calibrated)

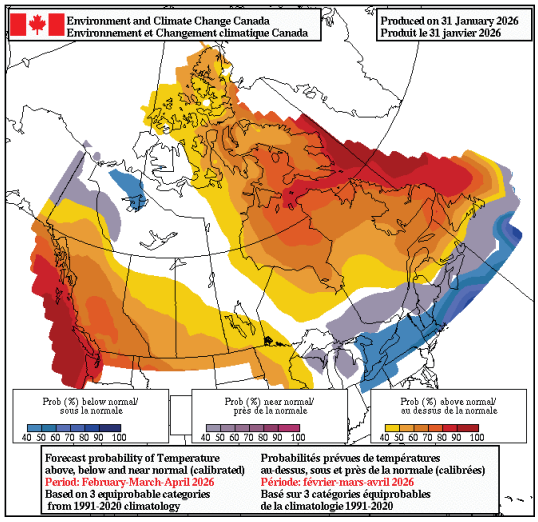
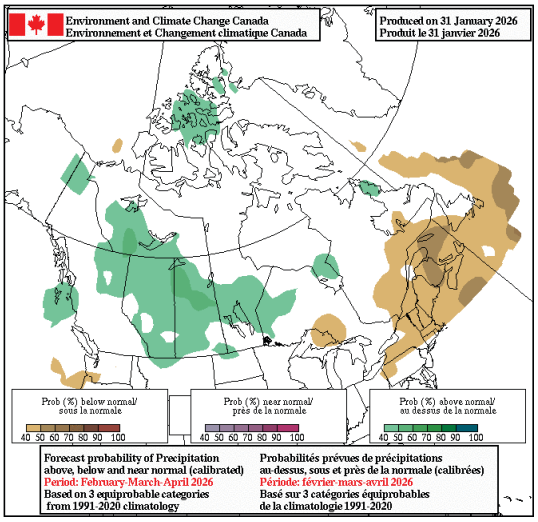


Figure 10: ECCC Forecast Probability of Precipitation - above, below and near normal (calibrated)

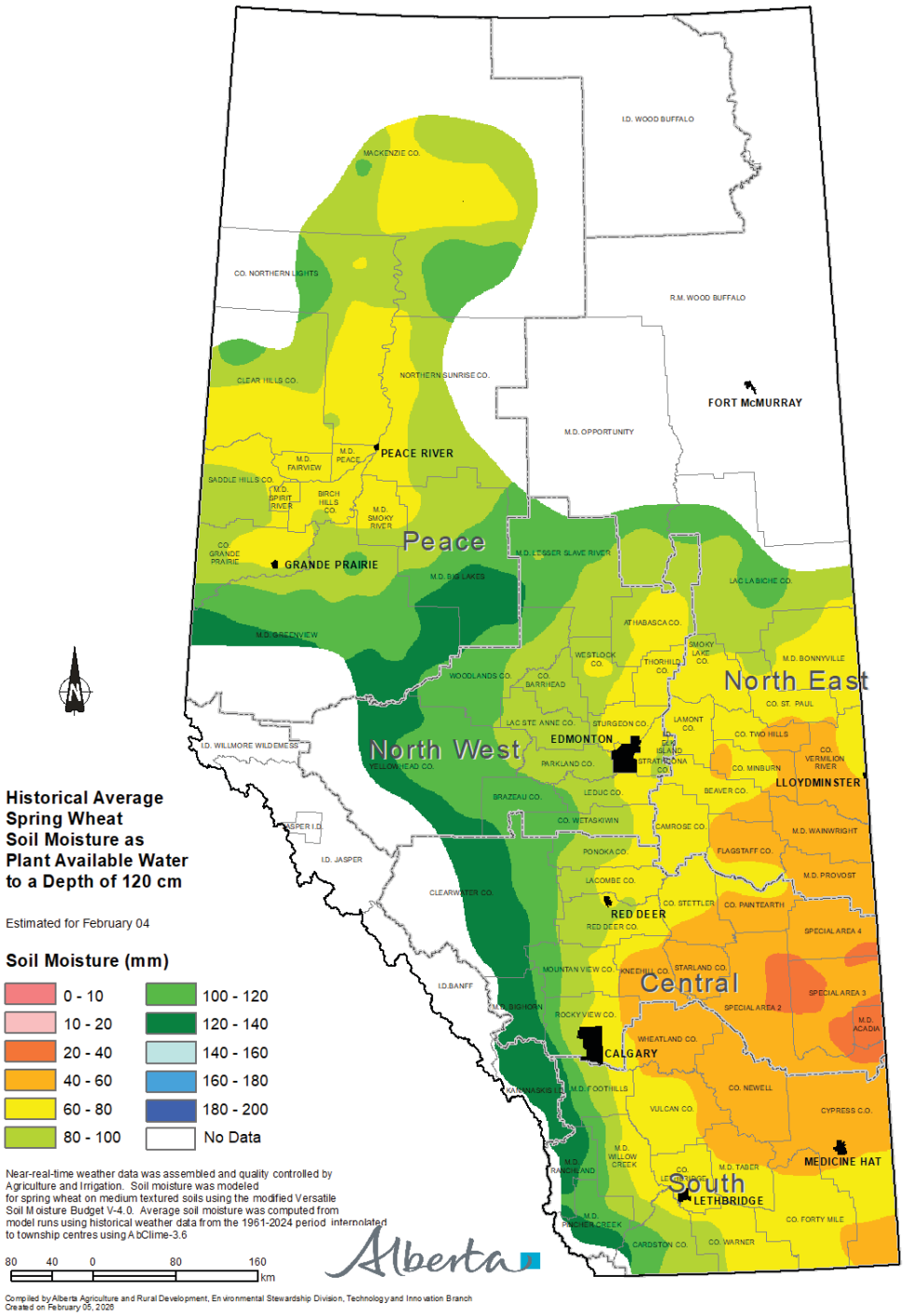


8. Soil Moisture Maps

Compiled by Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation. Soil moisture was modeled for spring wheat on medium textured soils.

https://agriculture.alberta.ca/acis/climate-maps.jsp

Figure 11: Spring Wheat Soil Moisture Reserves Relative to Long Term Normal



Visit weatherdata.ca for additional maps and meteorological data

9. Table: Provincial Reservoir Storage Summary

	Station ID	Storage (dam^3)	Max Storage (dam^3)	% of Max Storage	Compared to Normal Range	Change from 12-Dec-2025 (dam^3)	Change from 12-Dec-2025 (%)	Water Elevation (m)	Day of Reading
Peace River Basin									
Williston Lake at Lost Cabin	07EF002	27,067,048	39,472,000	69%	NORMAL	-1,232,995	-4%	33.24	2026-02-01
Athabasca Basin									
Paddle River	07BB914	16,376	38,875	42%	NORMAL	-293	-2%	695.62	2026-02-01
South Heart	07BF008	30,612	41,848	73%	ABOVE	0	0%	625.17	2025-11-14
	Total	16,376	38,875	42%	NORMAL	-293	-2%		
North Saskatchewan Basin									
Bighorn	TAU-001	853,981	1,409,900	61%	ABOVE	-112,499	-12%	-	2026-02-01
Brazeau	05DD006	176,376	486,300	36%	BELOW	-91,359	-34%	956.79	2026-02-01
	Total	1,030,357	1,896,200	54%	ABOVE	-203,858	-20%		
Battle Basin									
Driedmeat Lake	05FA020	-	-	-%	-	-	-%	684.66	2026-02-01
Red Deer Basin									
Berry Creek / Carolside	05CH014	13,653	18,500	74%	BELOW	0	0%	732.96	2025-11-14
Bigelow	05CE901	6,643	5,869	113%	-	2,721	69%	882.64	2026-02-01
Forster / Deadfish	05CH013	2,608	3,700	71%	-	0	0%	704.91	2025-11-14
Gleniffer / Dickson Dam	05CB006	128,363	203,100	63%	BELOW	-25,049	-16%	943.06	2026-02-01
Snake Lake	WMO-002	13,555	18,521	73%	ABOVE	0	0%	-	2025-10-16
	Total	135,006	208,969	65%	BELOW	-22,328	-17%		
Bow Basin: Headwaters									
Barrier Lake	05BF024	19,881	24,255	82%	BELOW	2,221	13%	1374.71	2026-02-01
Cascade	TAU-002	117,279	222,600	53%	BELOW	-15,077	-11%	-	2026-02-01
Ghost Lake	05BE005	56,003	65,730	85%	BELOW	133	0%	1190.9	2026-02-01
Glenmore	05BJ008	21,424	23,502	91%	ABOVE	-604	-3%	1076.35	2026-02-01
Lower Kananaskis	05BF009	30,950	63,100	49%	BELOW	-5,012	-14%	1661.39	2026-02-01
Spray	05BC006	86,691	177,500	49%	NORMAL	-20,863	-19%	1692.1	2026-02-01
Upper Kananaskis	05BF005	64,962	124,947	52%	ABOVE	-5,902	-8%	1694.42	2026-02-01
	Total	397,190	701,634	57%	NORMAL	-45,104	-11%		
Bow Basin: Mainstem									
Bassano	05BM907	6,213	-	-%	-	0	0%	-	2025-10-16
Chestermere Lake	05BM904	1,120	5,150	22%	BELOW	0	0%	1023.86	2025-11-02
Crawling Valley	05BM908	94,125	114,200	82%	ABOVE	0	0%	-	2025-10-16
Lake Newell	05BN901	156,718	177,600	88%	ABOVE	0	0%	-	2025-10-16

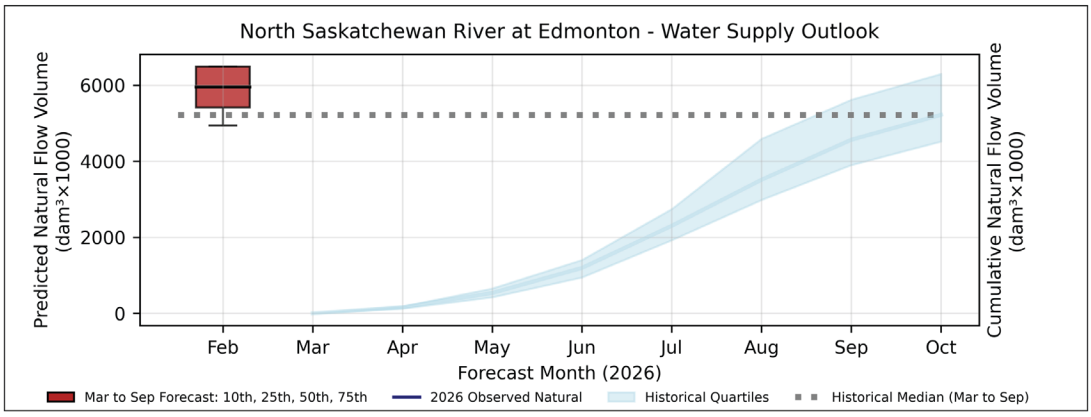
	Station ID	Storage (dam^3)	Max Storage (dam^3)	% of Max Storage	Compared to Normal Range	Change from 12-Dec-2025 (dam^3)	Change from 12-Dec-2025 (%)	Water Elevation (m)	Day of Reading
Bow Basin: Little Bow Basin									
Clear	05AC901	10,020	12,325	81%	BELOW	0	0%	965.66	2025-11-03
Lake McGregor	05AC022	315,853	365,500	86%	ABOVE	-381	0%	873.41	2026-02-01
Little Bow	05AC922	31,361	43,704	72%	-	-121	0%	854.67	2026-02-01
Travers	05AC921	107,408	141,139	76%	ABOVE	-330	0%	854.67	2026-02-01
Twin Valley	05AC940	56,813	60,710	94%	ABOVE	-183	0%	964.3	2026-02-01
	Total	511,435	611,053	84%	ABOVE	-1,015	0%		
Bow Basin Total									
	Total	908,625	1,312,687	69%	ABOVE	-46,119	-5%		
Oldman Basin: Upper Oldman, Willow and Keho									
Chain Lakes	05AB037	11,531	14,413	80%	NORMAL	-659	-5%	1296.14	2026-02-01
Keho	05AC919	77,968	95,600	81%	BELOW	0	0%	963.46	2025-11-02
Oldman	05AA921	320,016	495,056	65%	NORMAL	8,733	3%	-	2026-02-01
Pine Coulee	05AB044	33,043	54,446	61%	ABOVE	0	0%	1048.58	2025-11-14
	Total	331,547	509,469	65%	NORMAL	8,074	2%		
South Sask Basin & Oldman Basin: St Mary									
Cavan Lake	05AH048	702	3,815	19%	ABOVE	0	0%	806.16	2025-11-14
Chin	05AG901	155,949	190,300	82%	ABOVE	0	0%	-	2025-10-30
Forty Mile	05AH923	83,847	86,340	97%	ABOVE	0	0%	-	2025-10-30
Grassey	05AG903	6,117	12,100	51%	BELOW	0	0%	-	2025-10-30
Lake Sherburne	05AE036	63,272	87,700	72%	ABOVE	1,777	3%	1455.99	2026-02-01
Milk River Ridge	05AF030	98,225	111,500	89%	BELOW	0	0%	1031.42	2025-11-14
Murray	05AH924	15,501	30,825	50%	BELOW	0	0%	-	2025-10-30
Payne Lake	05AD940	6,861	8,703	79%	BELOW	0	0%	1342.76	2025-11-14
Sauder	05AJ907	30,371	37,795	80%	NORMAL	0	0%	-	2025-10-30
St. Mary	05AE025	257,600	369,304	70%	ABOVE	18,679	8%	110-9	2026-02-01
Waterton	05AD026	60,897	114,418	53%	ABOVE	-607	-1%	1179.9	2026-02-01
	Total	381,769	571,422	67%	ABOVE	19,849	5%		
Oldman & South Sask Basin Total									
	Total	713,316	1,080,891	66%	NORMAL	27,923	4%		

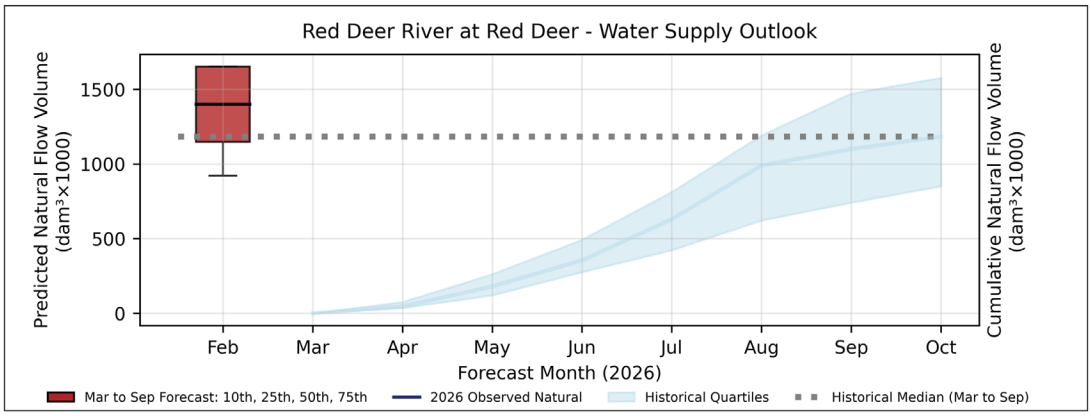
10. Table: Mountain Runoff Volume Forecast for March 1 to Sept 30, 2026

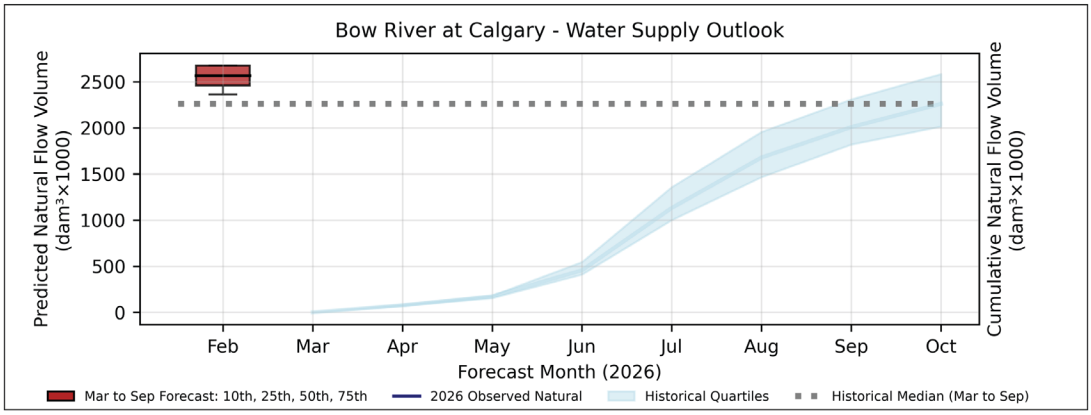
Locations	Volume in dam³	Volume as % of Median	Probable Range as % of Median	Potential Minimum as % of Median	Forecast Ranking (Lowest to Highest Years)	Forecast Description	Recorded (Natural) Mar 1 to Sept 30, 2025 Volume as % of Median
North Saskatchewan River Basin							
Lake Abraham (Bighorn Res)	2,360,000	108	102-114	97	65/99	Above Normal	108
Brazeau Reservoir	1,669,000	119	101-140	84	58/99	Above Normal	101
North Saskatchewan River at Edmonton	5,953,000	114	104-124	95	58/99	Above Normal	100
Red Deer River Basin							
Red Deer River at Dickson Dam	1,040,000	128	116-140	105	72/99	Above Normal	81
Red Deer River at Red Deer	1,400,000	118	97-140	78	65/99	Above Normal	70
Bow River Basin							
Bow River at Banff	1,088,000	114	108-121	103	58/99	Above Normal	95
Lake Minnewanka (Cascade Res)	190,000	112	100-127	89	54/99	Above Normal	79
Spray River at Banff	390,000	108	101-115	95	61/99	Above Normal	81
Kananaskis River	409,000	114	102-125	92	54/99	Above Normal	87
Bow River at Calgary	2,568,000	114	109-118	105	65/99	Above Normal	89
Elbow River	182,000	97	87-121	78	39/99	Normal	114
Highwood River	567,000	116	97-134	81	47/99	Above Normal	97
Oldman River Basin							
St.Mary River	634,000	99	92-105	87	28/99	Normal	66
Belly River	233,000	106	97-119	89	43/95	Above Normal	72
Waterton River	595,000	109	98-121	87	52/99	Above Normal	75
Oldman River near Brocket	938,000	108	94-121	82	38/99	Normal	62
Oldman River near Lethbridge	2,786,000	117	102-133	88	49/98	Above Normal	61
Milk River Basin							
Milk River at Western Crossing	40,000	113	85-150	60	31/99	Normal	29
Milk River at Milk River	55,000	82	60-104	40	26/99	Normal	23
Milk River at Eastern Crossing	78,000	82	59-106	37	31/99	Normal	30

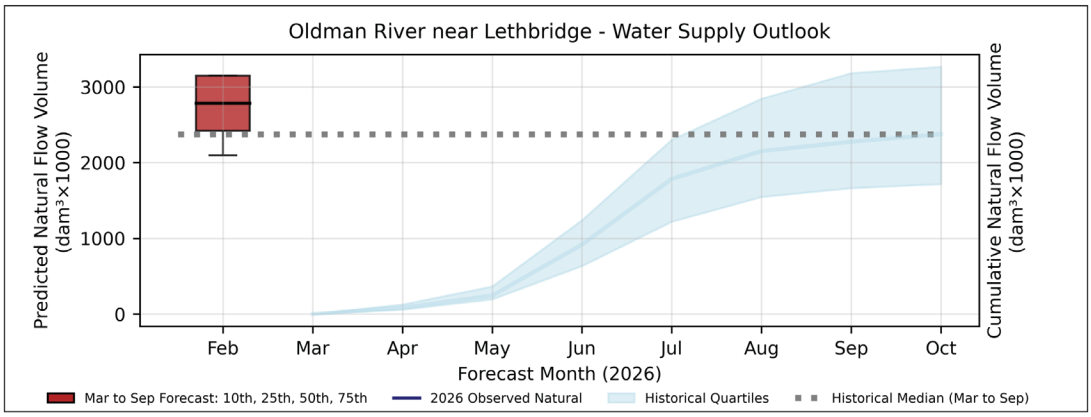
11. Water Supply Outlook Figures

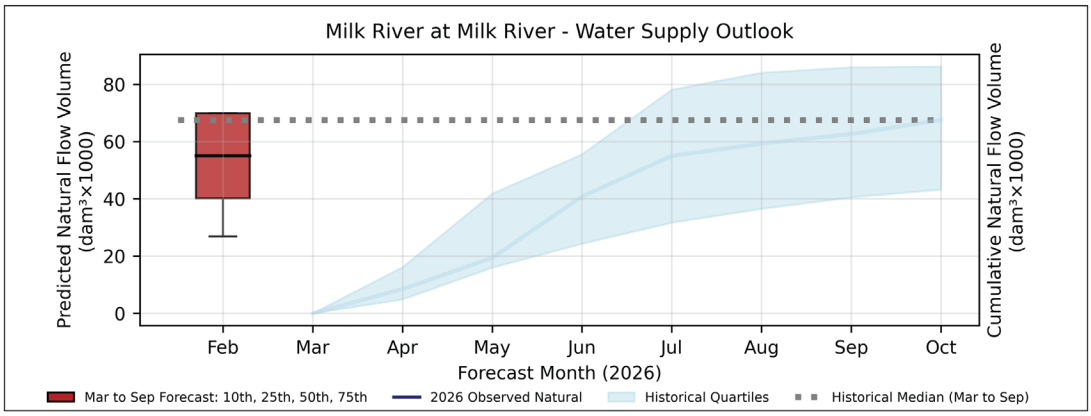
Water Supply Outlook Forecasts, Historical and Measured Accumulative Volume: The red box plots display the 10th, 25th, 50th, and 75th percentiles for the March to September monthly natural volume forecasts. The dark red box represents the current month's forecast, while the lighter red boxes show earlier forecasts (if applicable). The solid blue line tracks the current year's cumulative monthly volume. The dashed horizontal line indicates the historical 30-year median cumulative volume from March to September. The shaded grey area shows the historical 25th to 75th percentile range for cumulative volume.









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