

Water Availability and Drought Conditions Report

AUGUST 2026

1. Executive Summary

This Water Availability and Drought Conditions Report provides an update on conditions throughout Manitoba for August 2026.

- Precipitation conditions over the past month, three-month, and twelve-month periods are as follows:
 - In August, northern Manitoba and Red River Basin generally experienced moderately to extremely dry precipitation conditions. Central and western Manitoba received normal to moderately above-normal precipitation. The Assiniboine River Basin experienced a moderately to extremely wet month.
 - Over the past three months, from June to August, most parts of Manitoba experienced normal to extremely wet conditions, except northwestern Manitoba and areas near Island Lake, which received moderately to extremely below-normal precipitation. Likewise, the Red River Basin in the United States and the Winnipeg River Basin in Ontario experienced moderately to extremely dry conditions.
 - Over the past 12 months, most parts of the province generally received moderately below-normal to moderately above-normal precipitation. Areas that experienced severely and extremely dry conditions over the past 12 months include northwestern Manitoba, the Island Lake region, the Winnipeg River Basin, and the upstream portion of the Red River Basin.
- As of August 31, water levels in rivers and lakes across Manitoba generally ranged from normal conditions, between the 25th and 75th percentiles, to much-above-normal conditions, above the 90th percentile. Gauges on the Whiteshell River, Winnipeg River, and Red River recorded below-normal levels, between the 10th and 25th percentiles. The Whitemouth River has much-below-normal levels at the end of August.
- As of August 31, most groundwater levels in southern Manitoba and the Interlake region were within the normal range, between 25th and 75th historical percentiles, and above-normal range, between 75th and 90th percentiles. Exceptions included two groundwater gauges near Steinbach that showed below-normal levels, between the 10th and 25th historical percentiles, and one aquifer in southeastern Manitoba near the U.S. border that recorded much-below-normal levels, below the 10th percentile.
- As of July 31, the Canada-USA Drought Monitor classified areas of eastern Manitoba near the provincial border, northern regions, and the USA portions of the Red River Basin as abnormally dry (D0) to experiencing severe drought (D2). Throughout August the USA Drought Monitor expanded and increased the severity of drought areas in the USA portions of the Souris and Red River Basins.

- There are currently no concerns regarding reservoir water supplies. Provincial water supply reservoirs are either near or above their full supply levels for the month of August due to summer rainfall.
- Manitoba Agriculture's soil moisture map for August 31 indicates mostly optimal to wet conditions across southern Manitoba at depths of 0 to 120 cm. The Interlake region and areas of southeastern Manitoba are showing dry to very dry soil moisture conditions for August. Livestock water supplies remain generally adequate, with dugouts around 75 percent full in some areas, although levels are declining in drier parts of the eastern region.
- As of August 31, the Manitoba Wildfire Service reports low to a moderate fire danger across the province, except the areas south of Churchill and east of Gillam, where fire danger is high to very high. Refer to the fire and travel restriction maps at: www.gov.mb.ca/conservation_fire/Restrictions/index.html. Visit www.manitoba.ca/wildfire/burn_conditions.html to view current burning restrictions.
- Environment and Climate Change Canada's seasonal forecast for September-October-November predicts a 60 to 80 percent likelihood of above-normal temperatures across most of Manitoba. The seasonal forecast also indicates a weak tendency toward below-normal precipitation across northern Manitoba over the next three months.

2. Drought Indicators

2-1. *Precipitation Indicator*

Precipitation is assessed to determine the severity of meteorological dryness and is an indirect measurement of agricultural dryness.

Three precipitation indicators are calculated for Nelson-Churchill River Basin, which contributes to Manitoba waters, to represent short-term (one month; Figure 1), medium-term (three months; Figure 2) and long-term (12 months; Figure 3) conditions. The indicators compare current monthly precipitation totals to historical data to calculate the historical percentile of precipitation that occurred over the past one, three or twelve months. Historical percentiles are derived from 46 years of data (1980–2025) obtained from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Any gaps in recent observed precipitation records are supplemented using High-Resolution Deterministic Precipitation Analysis (HRDPA) data.

Due to large distances between meteorological stations in northern Manitoba, the interpolated contours in this region are based on limited observations and should be interpreted with caution.

Manitoba Drought Monitor - Environment and Climate Change (ECC)
 Historical Percentile of Precipitation from 2026-08-01 to 2026-08-31

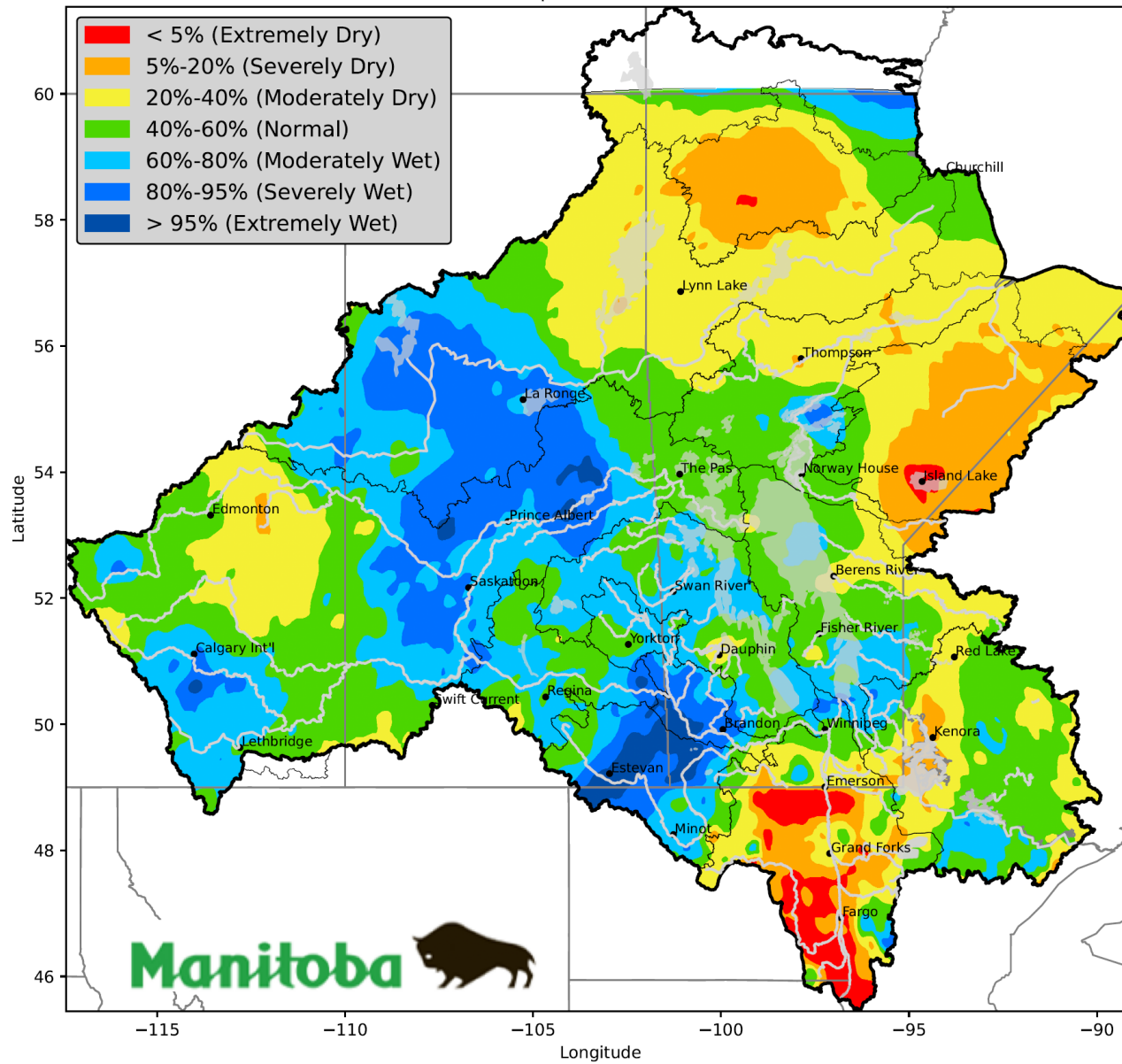


Figure 1: One month (short-term) historical percentile of precipitation indicator.

Manitoba Drought Monitor - Environment and Climate Change (ECC)
 Historical Percentile of Precipitation from 2026-06-01 to 2026-08-31

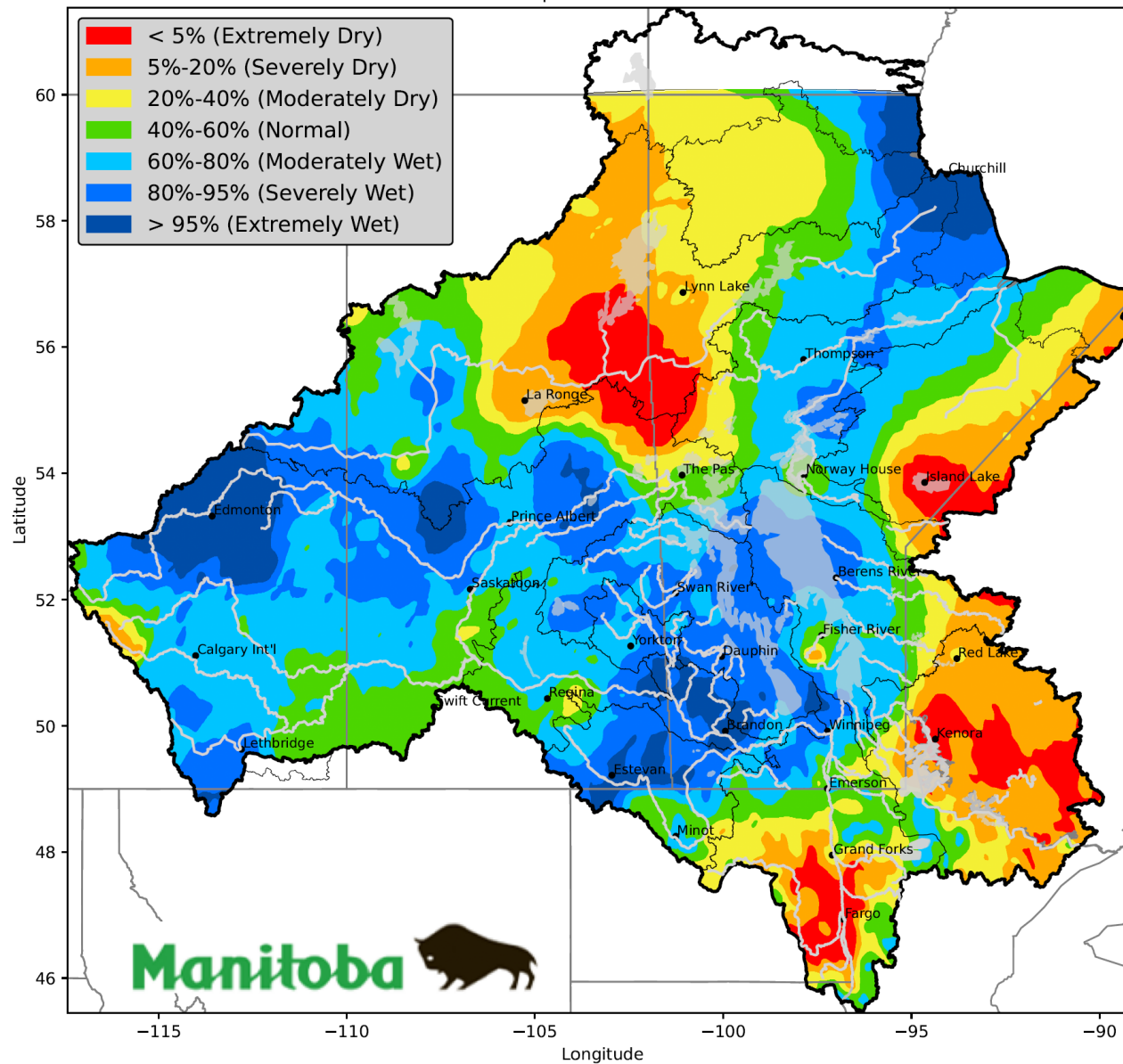


Figure 2: Three month (medium-term) historical percentile of precipitation indicator.

Manitoba Drought Monitor - Environment and Climate Change (ECC)
 Historical Percentile of Precipitation from 2025-09-01 to 2026-08-31

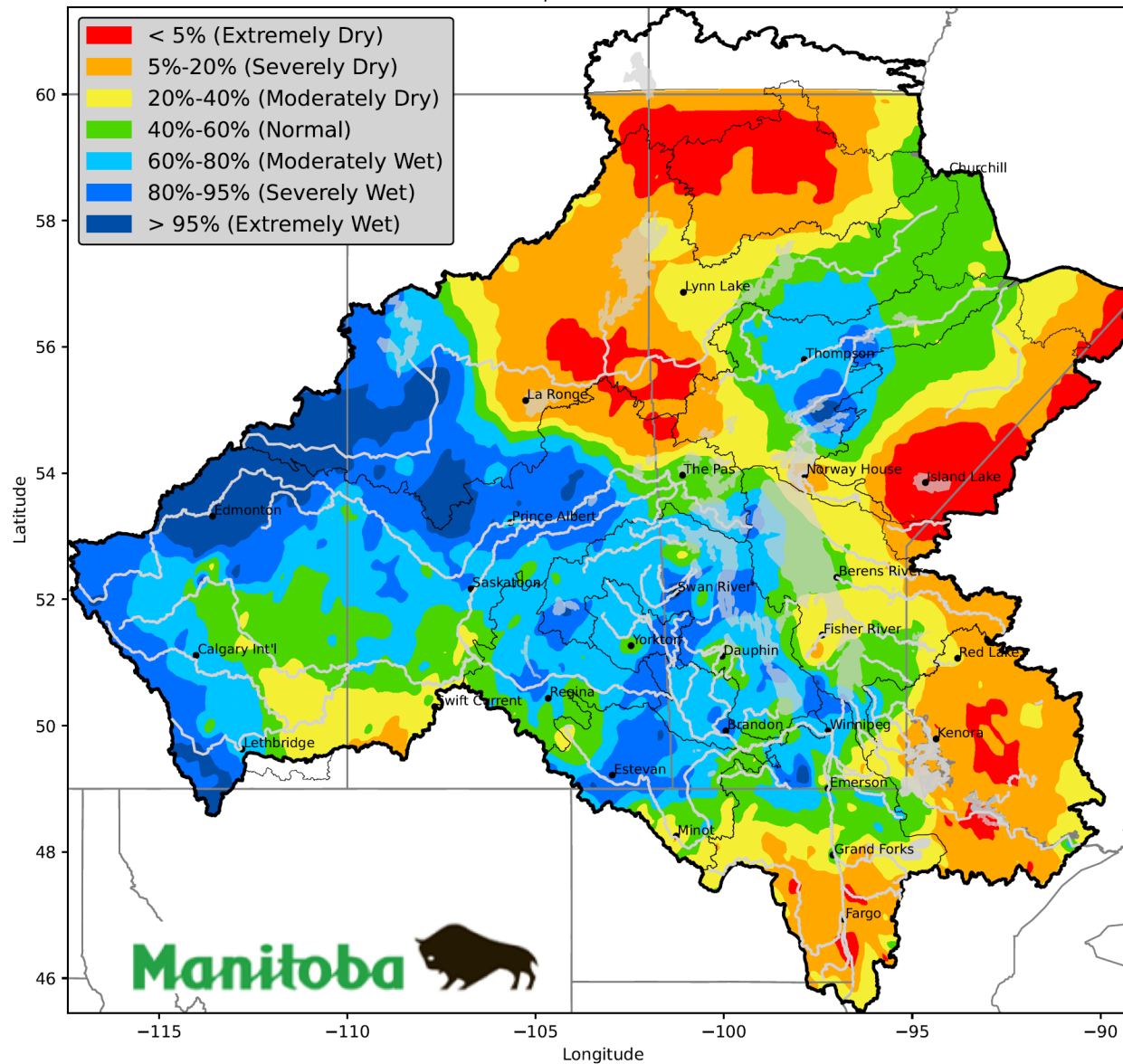


Figure 3: Twelve month (long-term) historical percentile of precipitation indicator.

2-2. Streamflow & Lake Level Indicator

The streamflow and lake level indicator is based on average daily flows and levels compared to historical values for that particular day.

This indicator is used to determine the severity of hydrological dryness in a watershed and is summarized on Figure 4, representing hydrological conditions for August 31. Except for the Red River at Ste. Agathe and three gauges in the Winnipeg River Basin, which are recording below-normal to much-below-normal levels, all other locations in Figure 4 are experiencing normal to much-above-normal conditions.

Streamflow and lake level percentile plots for all the rivers and lakes included on Figure 4 are available on the [Manitoba Drought Monitor website](#) under the [Drought Indicator Map](#) tab.

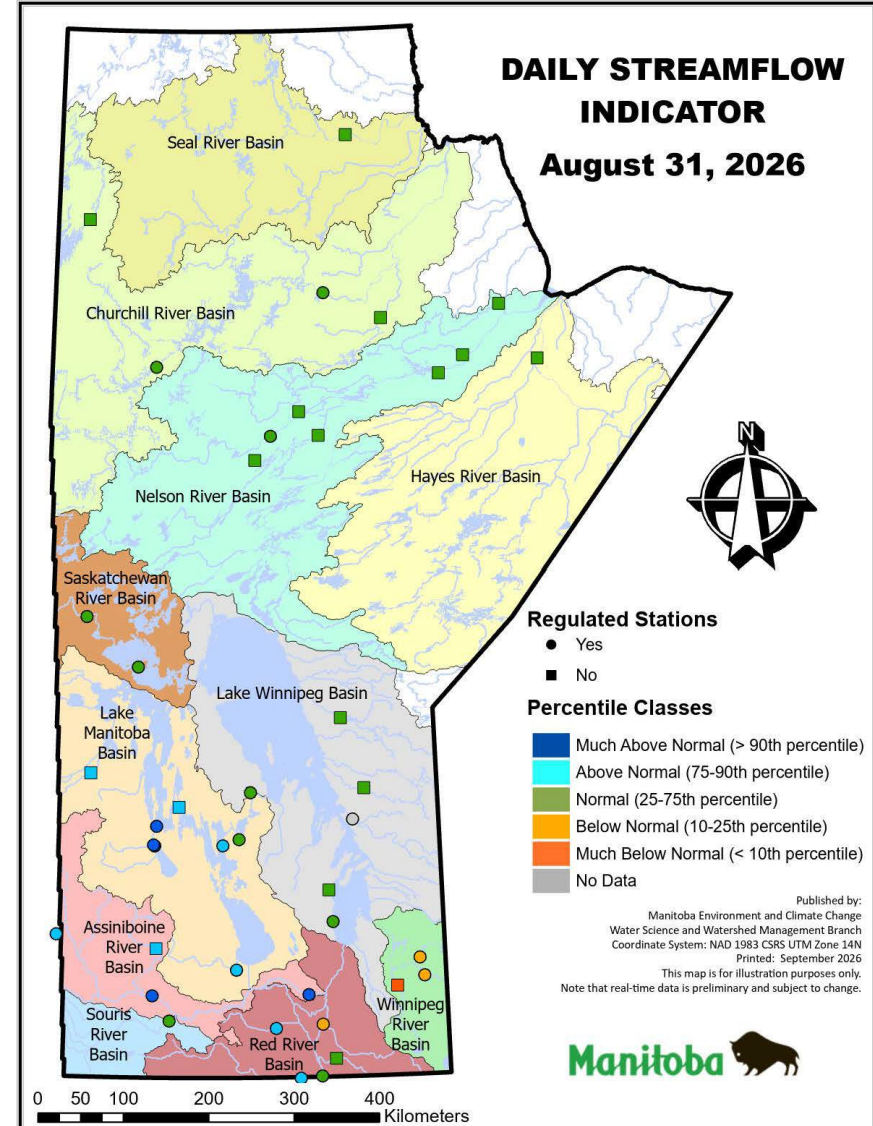


Figure 4: Daily streamflow and lake level indicator for August 31.

2-3. Groundwater Indicator

Groundwater level indicator is based on average daily levels compared to historical values for that day.

This indicator is used to monitor the impact of meteorological and hydrological dryness on the aquifers in the province and is summarized in Figure 5, representing the groundwater conditions for August 31. Two aquifers near Steinbach and one aquifer in southeast Manitoba near the USA border show below-normal and much-below-normal groundwater levels. The rest of real-time groundwater level gauges show normal conditions.

In general, groundwater level responses to precipitation fluctuations lag considerably behind surface water responses, so even prolonged periods of below-normal precipitation may not have a significant negative impact on groundwater levels.

Groundwater level percentile plots for all the aquifers included on Figure 5 are available on the [Manitoba Drought Monitor website](#) under the [Drought Indicator Map](#) tab.

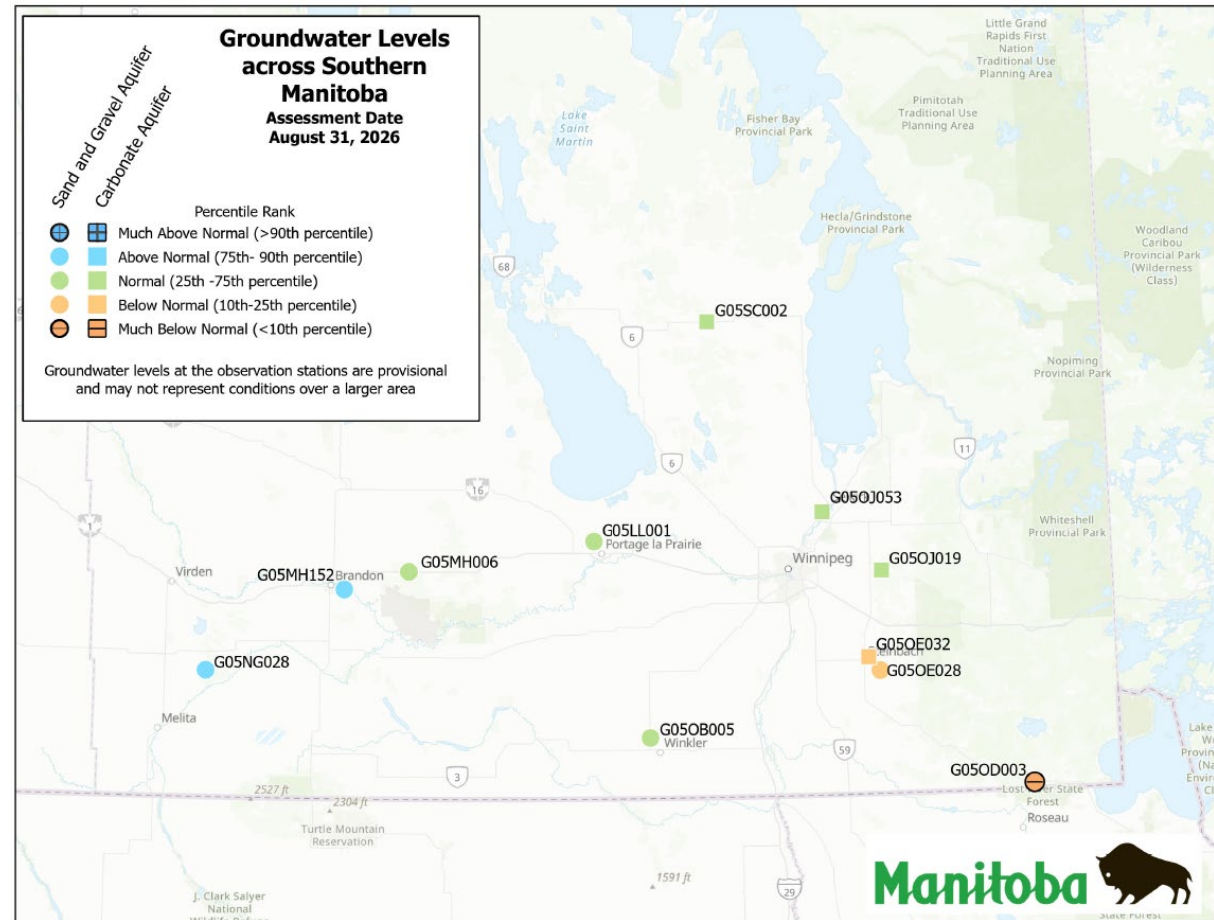


Figure 5: Groundwater indicator on August 31 for select groundwater monitoring sites.

2-4. Canada and United States Drought Monitors

The Canadian Drought Monitor and the United States Drought Monitor map the extent and intensity of drought conditions across Canada and the continental United States.

Drought Monitor assessments are based on a suite of drought indicators, impacts data and local reports as interpreted by federal, provincial/state and academic scientists.

The Canadian and United States Drought Monitor maps use the following classification system:

- D0 (Abnormally Dry) – represents an event that occurs every three to five years;
- D1 (Moderate Drought) – five to 10 year event;
- D2 (Severe Drought) – 10 to 20 year event;
- D3 (Extreme Drought) – 20 to 50 year event;
- D4 (Exceptional Drought) – 50+ year event.

Additionally, the map indicates the duration of drought as either short-term (S; less than six months) or long-term (L; more than six months) (Figure 6).

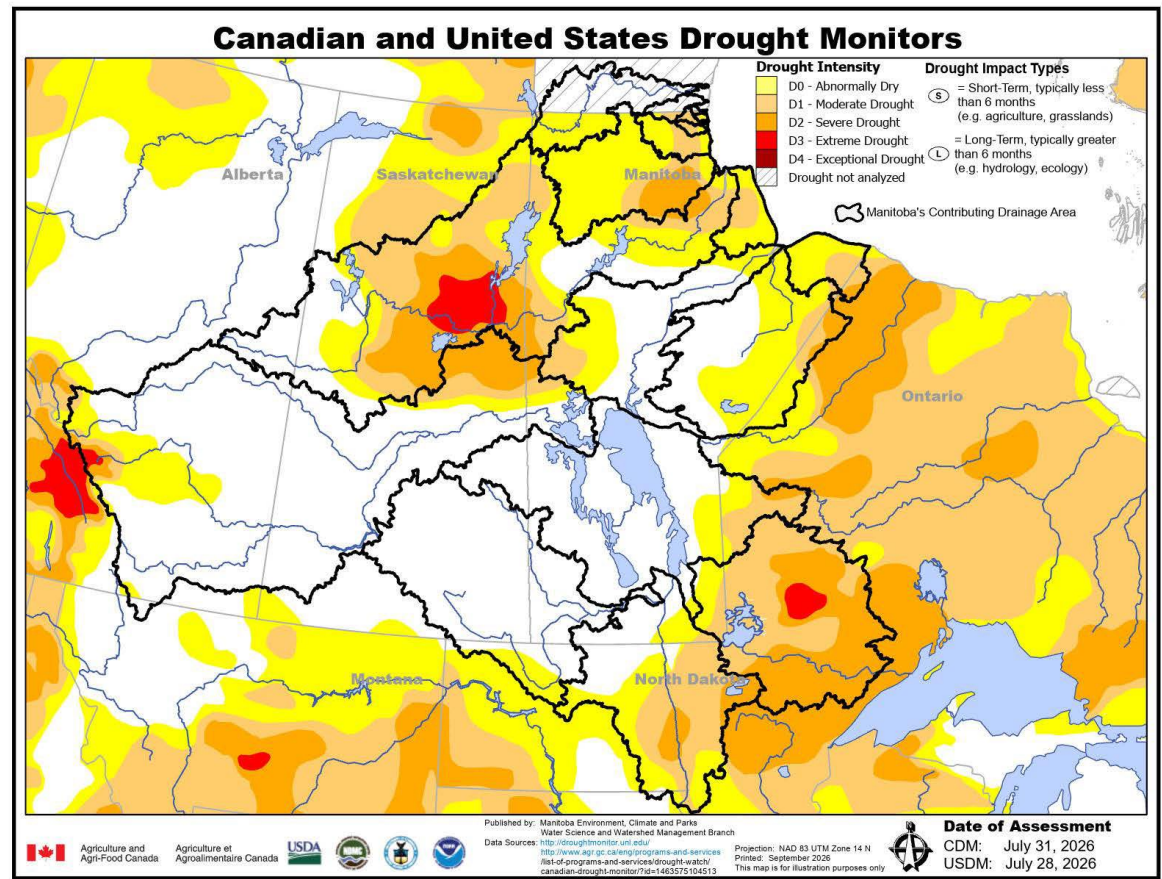


Figure 6: Canadian and United States Drought Monitors' classification of short-term (S) and long-term (L) drought conditions assessed as of July 31.

3. Water Availability

3-1. Reservoir Conditions

Table 1: Water Supply Reservoir Levels and Storages – August 31 (Southern and Western Manitoba).

Water Supply Reservoir Levels and Storages - August 31, 2026								
Lake or Reservoir	Community Supplied	Target Level (feet)	Latest Observed Level (feet)	Observed date	Supply Status (Recent - Target) (feet)	Storage at Target Level (acre-feet)	Storage at Observed Level (acre-feet)	Supply Status (observed storage/target storage) (%)
Lake of the Prairies (Shellmouth)* ¹	Brandon, Portage, Cartier Regional Water Co-op	1,402.5	1409.45	August 31, 2026	+6.95	300,000	402,985	134%
Lake Wahtopanah (Rivers)*	Rivers	1,536.0	1536.64	August 31, 2026	+0.64	24,500	25,943	106%
Minnewasta (Morden)*	Morden	1,082.0	1080.62	August 31, 2026	-1.38	3,150	2,922	93%
Stephenfield*	Carman, Pembina Valley Water Co-op	972.0	971.08	August 31, 2026	-0.92	3,810	3,381	89%
Vermilion*	Dauphin	1,274.0	1274.05	August 31, 2026	+0.05	2,600	2,612	100%
Goudney (Pilot Mound)*		1,482.0	1480.98	August 31, 2026	-1.02	450	379	84%
Jackson Lake*		1,174.0	1172.85	August 31, 2026	-1.15	2,990	2,701	90%
Manitou (Mary Jane)*		1,537.0	1536.51	August 31, 2026	-0.49	1,150	1,106	96%
Turtlehead (Deloraine)*	Deloraine	1,772.0	1771.45	August 31, 2026	-0.55	1,400	1,372	98%
Lake Irwin*		1,178.0	1177.73	August 31, 2026	-0.27	3,800	3,636	96%
Minnedosa* ¹		1,681.5	1682.11	August 18, 2026	+0.61	1,558	1,718	110%
Boissevain*	Boissevain	1,697.0	1698.18	August 31, 2026	+1.18	505	606	120%
Elgin*		1,532.0	1532.20	August 31, 2026	+0.20	520	534	103%
St. Malo*		840.0	840.08	August 31, 2026	+0.08	1,770	1,783	101%
Kenton Reservoir		1,448.0	1447.88	August 31, 2026	-0.12	600	591	99%
Killarney Lake		1,615.0	1615.39	August 31, 2026	+0.39	7,360	7,539	102%
¹ Summer target level and storage								
* Real-time water level gauge								

3-2. On-Farm Water Supply

On-farm water supply updates from Manitoba Agriculture's Crop Report (September 1) are as follows:

- Most agricultural regions are showing optimal to wet soil moisture conditions at 0-120 cm depths. Interlake and southeast Manitoba start to show dry to very dry soil moisture pockets.
- Livestock water supplies remain adequate across most of the region, with dugouts generally maintaining sufficient water levels. In some areas, dugouts are estimated to be approximately 75 percent full, and recent rainfall has helped improve water supplies. However, declining dugout levels are being reported in some of the drier areas of the eastern region.

3-3. Soil Moisture

A regional representation of soil moisture conditions for the top 120 cm relative to the field capacity is shown on Figure 7.

The colours on the map represent measured soil moisture values from automated instruments at sites across Manitoba. Qualitative range (very dry to very wet) is based on the amount of current soil moisture relative to field capacity. Field Capacity is defined as the maximum amount of moisture the soil can hold when drainage due to gravity stops.

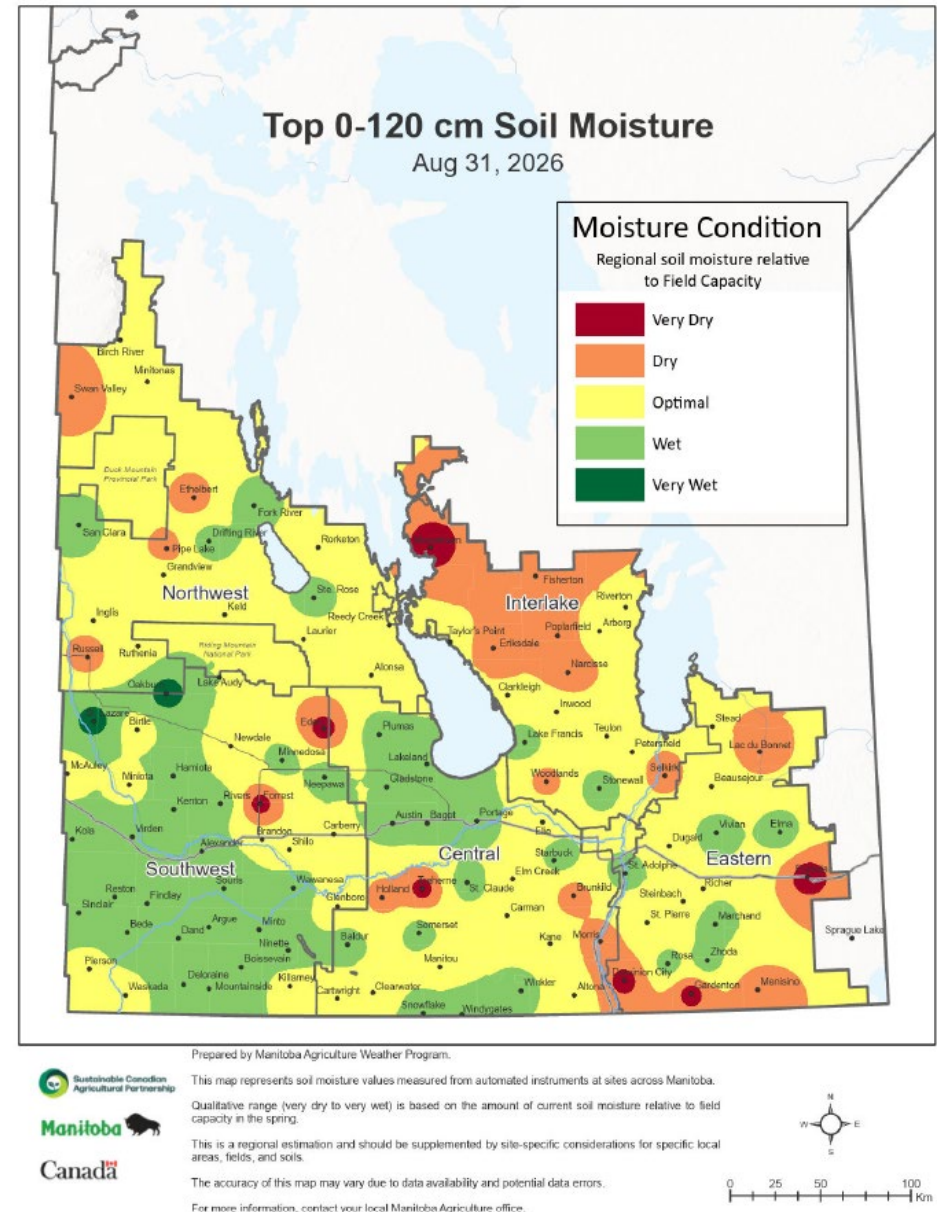


Figure 7: Manitoba Agriculture's August 31 mapping of soil moisture conditions in the top 0 – 120 cm.

4. Wildfires

As of August 31, the Manitoba Wildfire Service reports low to moderate fire danger across Manitoba, except the areas south of Churchill and east of Gillam that show high to very high fire danger.

Figure 8 shows the map of Canada fire weather index. Fire weather index represents the expected intensity of a fire spreading through a coniferous forest, including the likely flame size. It is commonly used to assess how difficult a fire may be to control, with higher values indicating greater fire intensity and larger flames.

Refer to the fire and travel restriction maps found at:

www.gov.mb.ca/conservation_fire/Restrictions/index.html.

Several municipalities continue to implement burning restrictions. Visit

www.manitoba.ca/wildfire/burn_conditions.html to view current burning restrictions.

For further information on the Manitoba Wildfire Service, situation updates, restrictions and other important wildfire links, go to www.gov.mb.ca/wildfire or follow the Manitoba government on X (formerly Twitter) at <https://x.com/mbgov>.

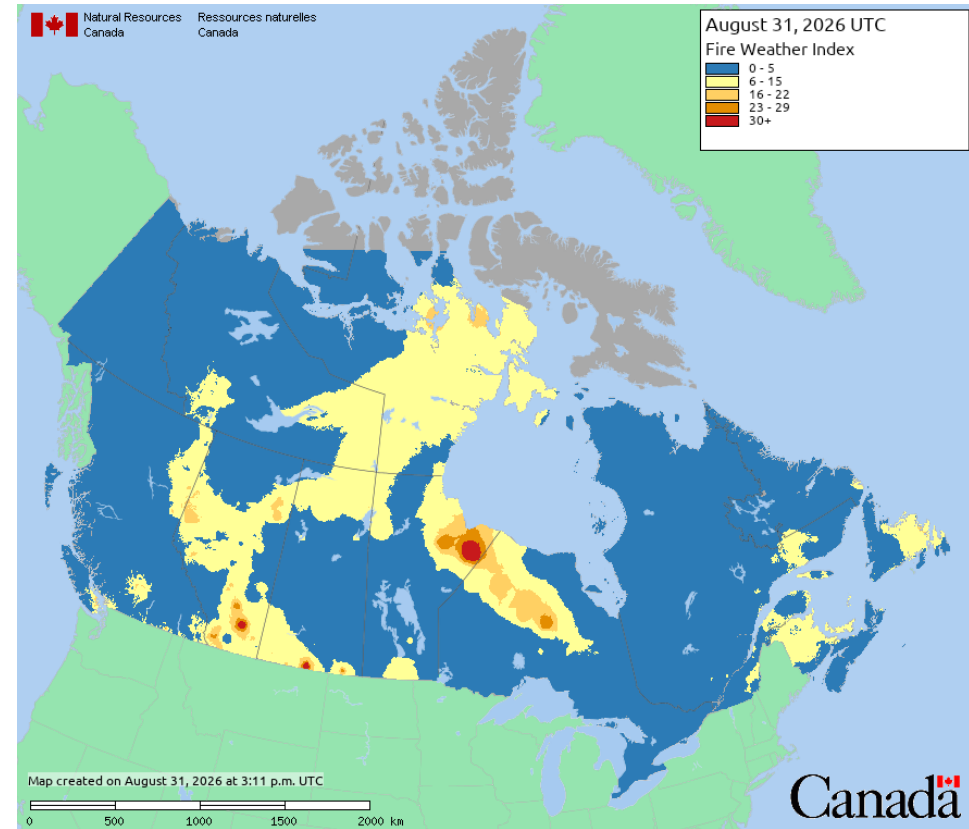


Figure 8: Fire Weather Index mapping by Natural Resources Canada.

5. Impacts due to Dry Conditions

There have been no significant impacts due to dry conditions in August.

6. Future Weather

Environment and Climate Change Canada's seasonal forecast for the next three months, September to November, indicates 60 to 80 percent likelihood of above-normal temperatures across most of Manitoba (Figure 9). Seasonal precipitation forecast during the same period indicates a weak signal of below-normal precipitation for the north Manitoba (Figure 10).

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration indicates that El Niño conditions are currently present. El Niño continues and will strengthen, with more than 90 percent chance, during the fall and winter 2026-2027. During an El Niño condition, it will be more likely to get milder-than-normal winter, with a tendency toward less severe cold outbreaks and potentially lower snowpack.

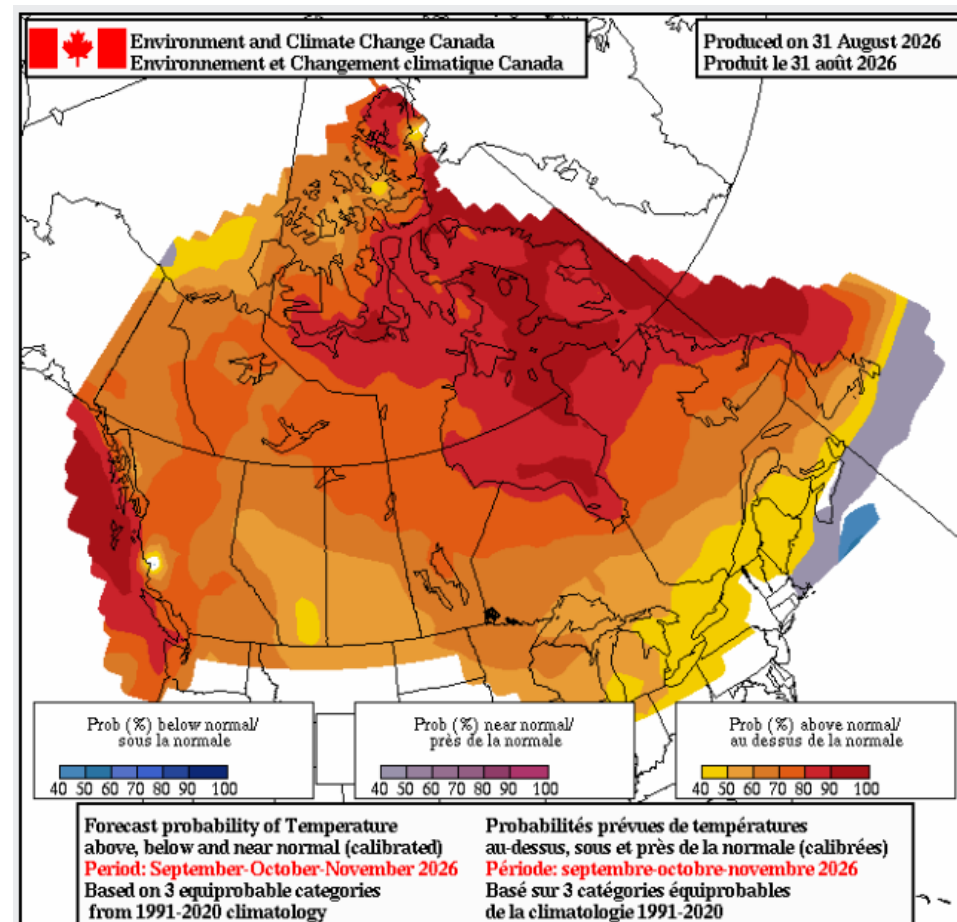


Figure 9: Environment and Climate Change Canada's forecast probability of temperature for next three months (September-October-November)

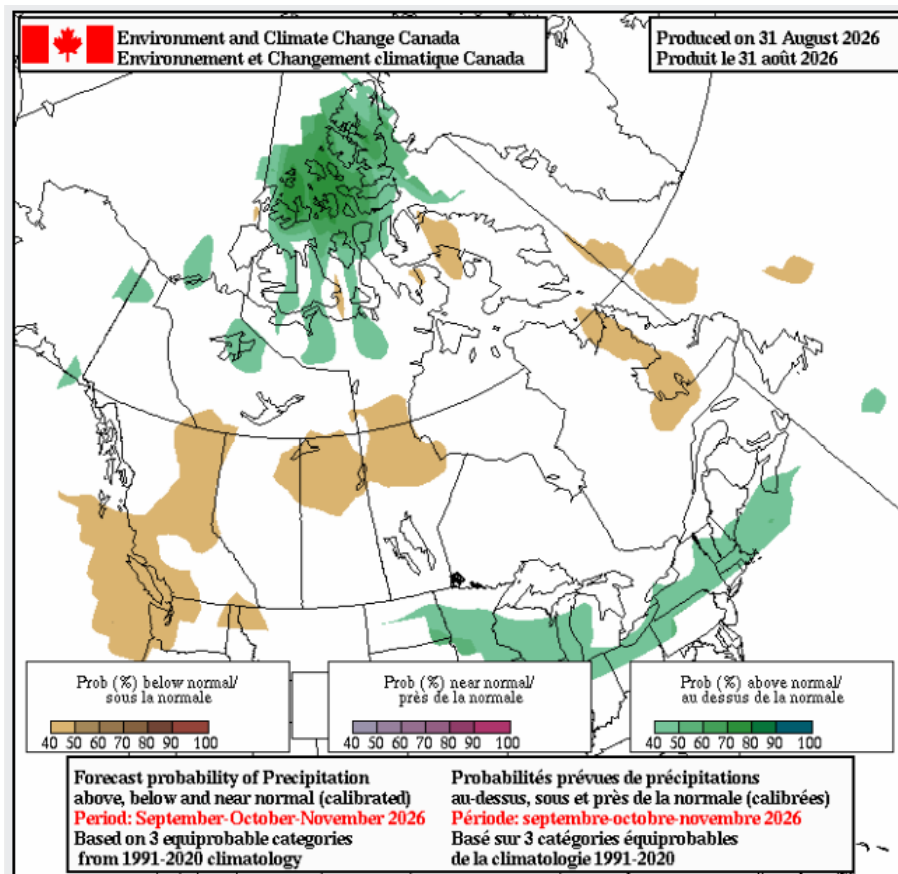


Figure 10: Environment and Climate Change Canada's forecast probability of precipitation for next three months (September-October-November)

Past reports, drought mapping and other information and resources are available on the [Manitoba Drought Monitor](#) website.

For further information, or to request information in an accessible version, please contact:

Shahram Sahraei, Ph.D., P.Eng.
Senior Water Supply Engineer, Surface Water Management Section
Water Science and Watershed Management Branch
Environment and Climate Change
Box 14, 14 Fultz Blvd.
Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3Y 0L6
E-mail: shahram.sahraei@gov.mb.ca
Ph: (431) 277-9194

7. Acknowledgements

This report was prepared with information from the following sources which are gratefully acknowledged:

Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure:

Hydrologic Forecast Centre:

<https://www.manitoba.ca/floodinfo/>

Manitoba Wildfire Service:

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/sd/fire>

Manitoba Agriculture:

Crop Reports:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/crops/seasonal-reports/crop-report/index.html>

Topsoil moisture conditions:

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/weather/weather-conditions-and-reports.html>

Environment and Climate Change Canada:

Flow and lake level information:

http://www.wateroffice.ec.gc.ca/index_e.html

Seasonal forecast probability of temperature and precipitation:

<https://climate-scenarios.canada.ca/?page=cansips-prob>

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada:

Canadian drought monitor:

<https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/agriculture-and-environment/drought-watch-and-agroclimate/canadian-drought-monitor>

Natural Resources Canada:

Canada wildland fire information system:

<https://cwfis.cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/en/>

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration:

United States drought monitor:

<https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

El Niño and La Niña information:

<https://www.weather.gov/twc/enso>