



Spring Risk Outlook Report

April 2026

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Introduction

The 2026 Spring Risk Outlook Report provides an overview of identified environmental risks for the Province of Saskatchewan. The following provincial Ministries, Crowns, and Agencies have contributed the information used in this report:

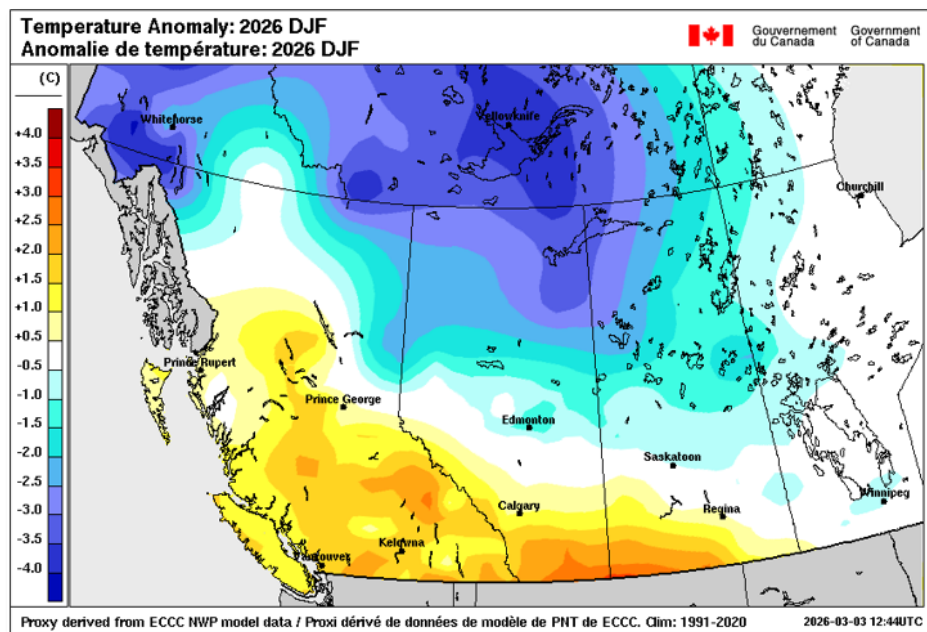
- Environment and Climate Change Canada
- Saskatchewan Water Security Agency
- Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency

Weather

Winter Months

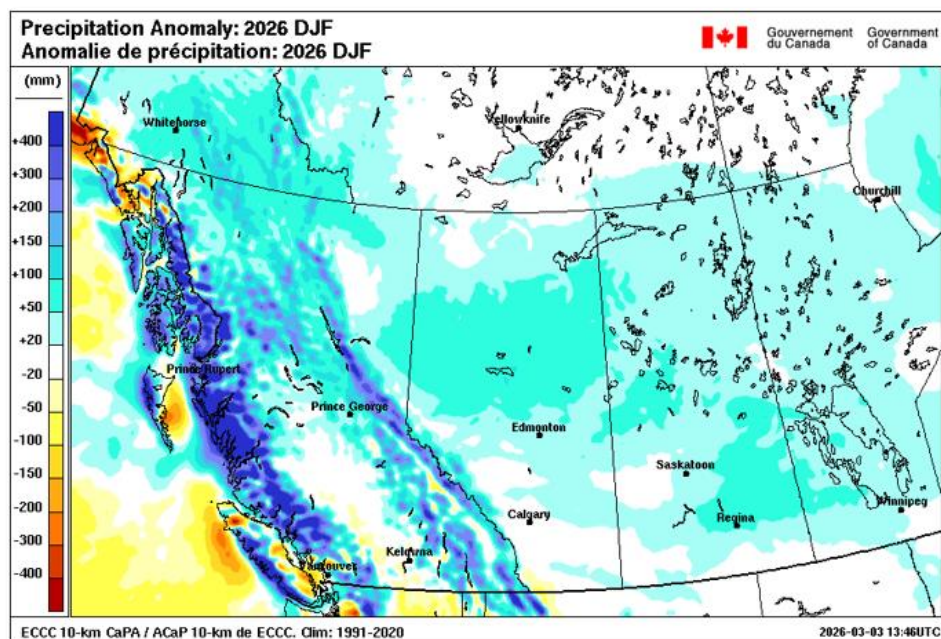
The months of December, January and February, or the winter months, were near average in terms of overall temperature. However, the season was marked by notable fluctuations, with periods of unusually warm weather followed by episodes of anomalously cold conditions. The largest temperature anomaly was Key Lake, which recorded a mean temperature 2.6 degrees Celsius below normal. Two locations, Estevan and Swift Current, experienced some of their warmest winters on record, each ranking within their 22 warmest winters.

Winter Temperature Anomaly (December-January-February)



During the winter months, southern Saskatchewan experienced warmer-than-normal conditions, largely due to a reduced snowpack that eroded through much of the season and the heat persisted over the course of the winter. Northern Saskatchewan has faced, and continues to face, persistently anomalously cold temperatures.

Winter Precipitation Anomaly (December-January-February)

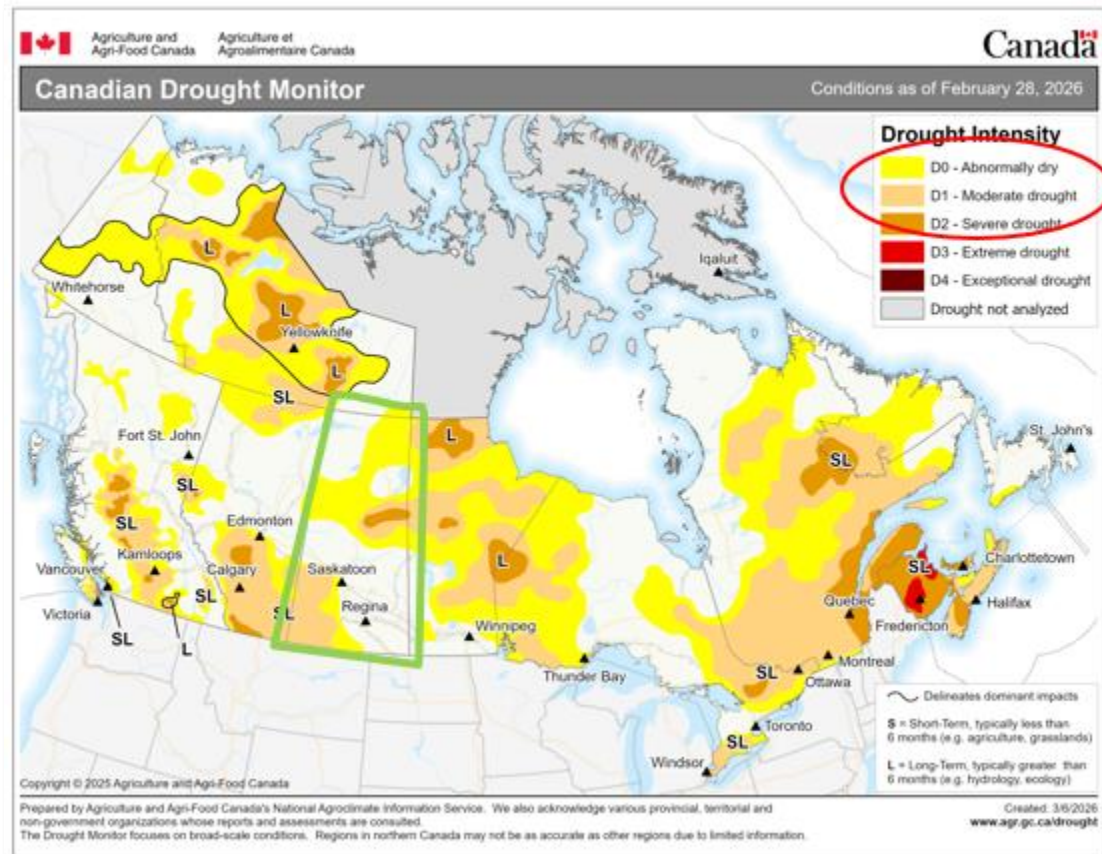


Precipitation is recorded as the total amount of melted snow, rain or freezing rain. The amount of snow that melts down to measurable precipitation is contingent on the temperature. Colder conditions, typically between -10 and -18 Celsius, produce lighter, fluffier snow with a lower water content, resulting in comparatively smaller amounts of measurable precipitation.

Over the winter months, North Battleford received 40% of its normal precipitation, ranking this season as the eleventh driest winter on record. Moose Jaw received 76% of its normal precipitation, which ranks it as the eighteenth driest winter on record. Saskatoon received 87% of its normal precipitation which ranks it as the thirty-sixth driest winter on record as well as Regina, which ranks it as the forty-first driest winter on record. Precipitation data for Swift Current was unavailable due to a station malfunction; however, overall precipitation for the area was assessed to be below normal.

Northern regions of the province recorded slightly above-normal precipitation amounts. Meadow Lake received 158% of its normal winter precipitation, making this the seventh wettest winter on record for the area. In contrast, southern Saskatchewan experienced below-normal precipitation, resulting in drier conditions. Central and northern Saskatchewan, however, saw above-normal amounts. Overall, the province demonstrated a strong recovery in precipitation levels.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Drought Map



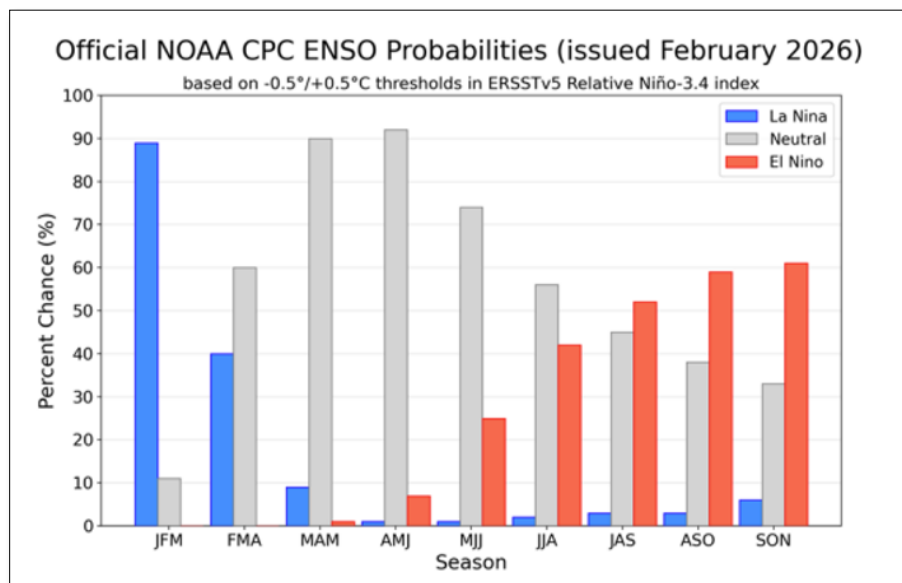
The Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) Drought Map, produced on February 28, 2026 highlights regions of the province experiencing abnormally dry to moderate drought conditions. Overall, the assessment indicates that provincial conditions remain largely consistent and similar with those observed in 2025.

Spring Outlook

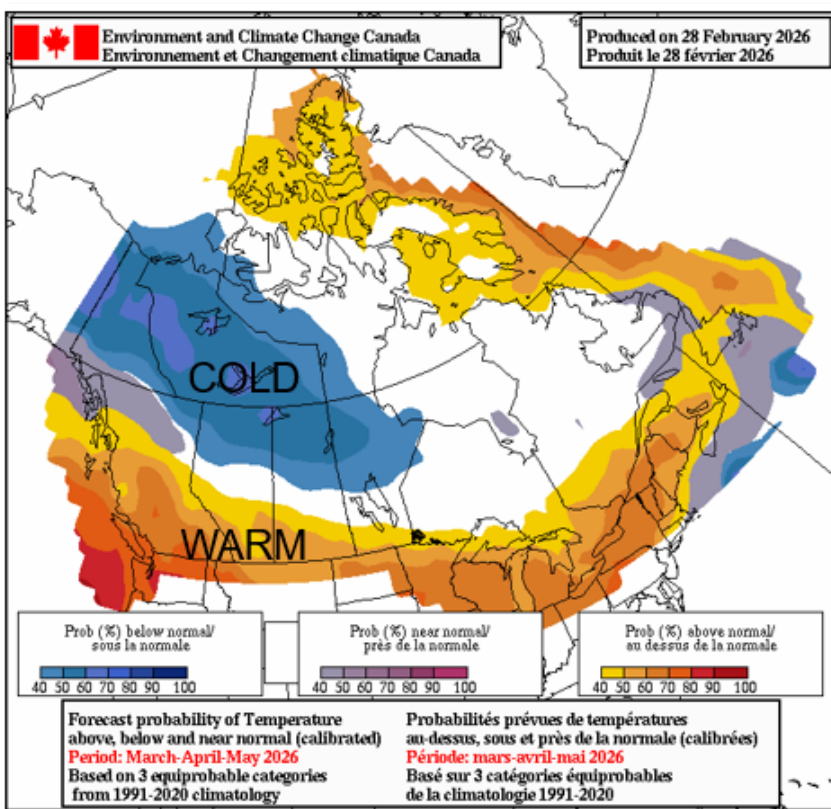
El Nino, La Nina, and La Nada refer to the sea surface temperature anomaly off the coast of South America. El Nino is characterized by above average sea surface temperatures, where as La Nina is characterized by below average sea surface temperatures. La Nada or neutral conditions means sea surface temperatures are near average and this is called the ENSO Indices. Saskatchewan experienced a La Nina winter.

There has been a shift to a La Nada as of late February, early March. These neutral conditions are expected to persist through the spring and continue into late summer or early fall. As a result, long-range forecasting becomes more challenging, and confidence in extended trends is reduced. Some climate models still suggest that El Nino conditions could redevelop and persist into the next winter season.

ENSO Probabilities

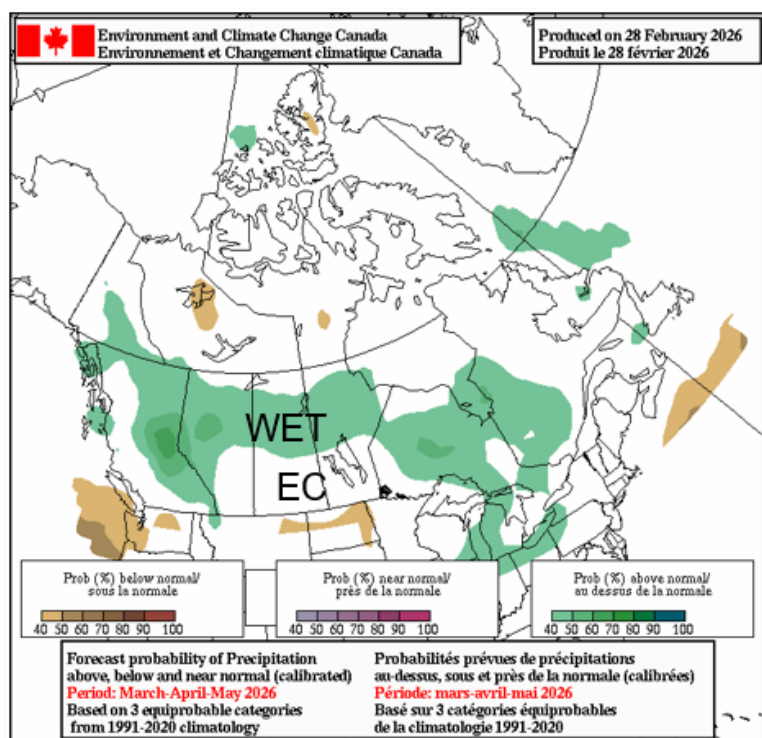


Spring Temperature (March–April–May)



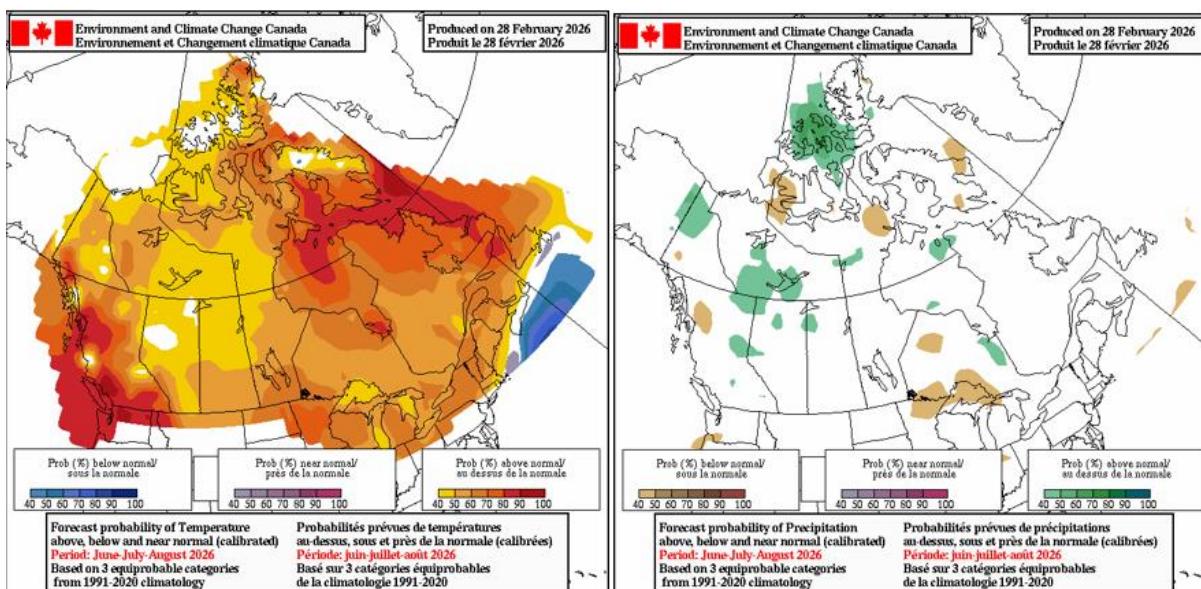
Colder than average spring conditions are forecast in the north and warmer than average in the south for the months of March, April and May.

Spring Precipitation (March-April-May)



In this graphic the white areas represent regions where there is an equal chance of above or below normal precipitation across most of the province. In contrast, the green area in northern Saskatchewan indicates increased probability of higher-than-normal precipitation.

Temperature and Precipitation (June-July-August)



The forecast for June-July-August, or the summer months, carries a higher degree of uncertainty due to the extended lead time. Nevertheless, the temperature outlook (left map) indicates an increased likelihood of above-average temperatures across the region.

The precipitation outlook (right map) shows equal chances of near normal precipitation, suggesting that neutral conditions are expected to persist throughout the summer with thunderstorms being highly variable.

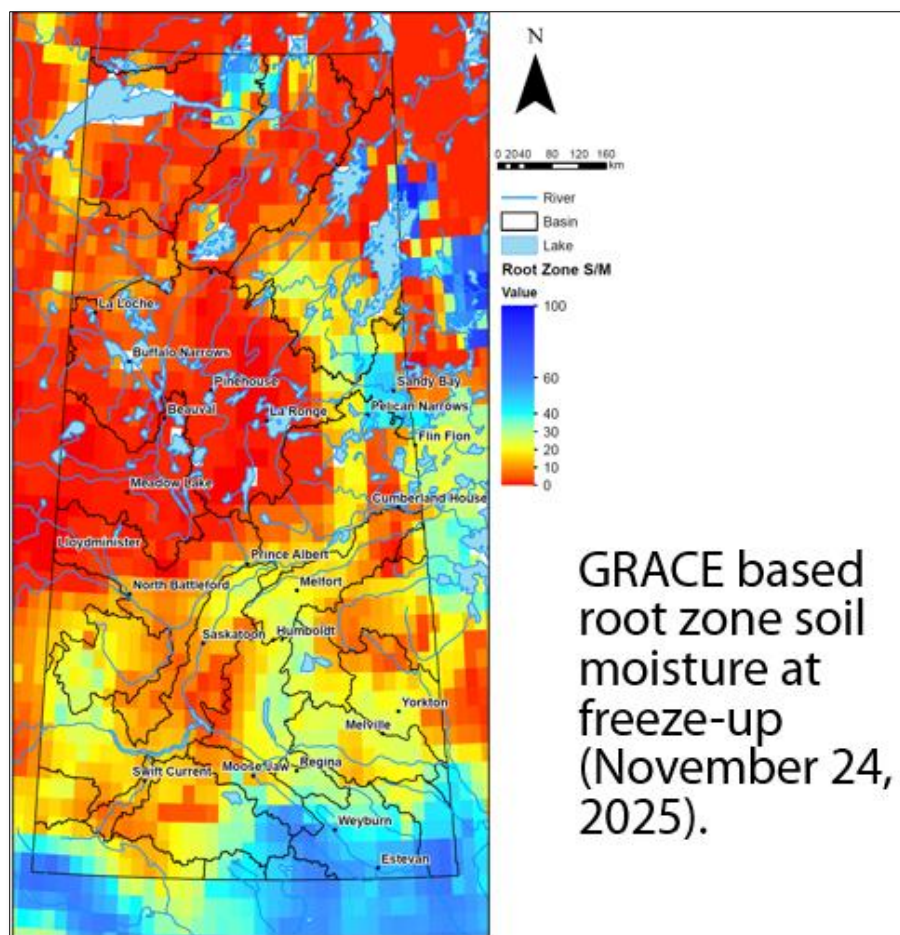
Spring Run-Off and Current Conditions

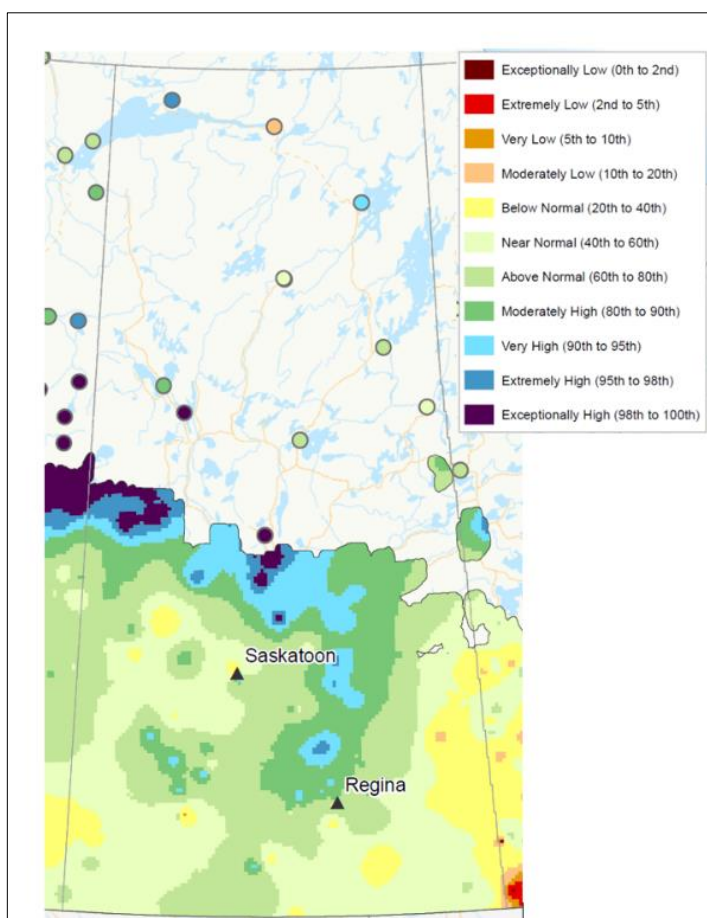
Spring forecasting is influenced by multiple factors, including antecedent conditions, snow water equivalent, and melt conditions.

2025 fall soil moisture conditions generally ranged from being exceptionally dry in the north to being moderately wet in the south and somewhere in between in the central/south parts of the province.

Fall precipitation ranged from well below normal across the southeast, southwest, and some northern areas of Saskatchewan to above normal in west central areas.

Other areas of the province received near normal precipitation.

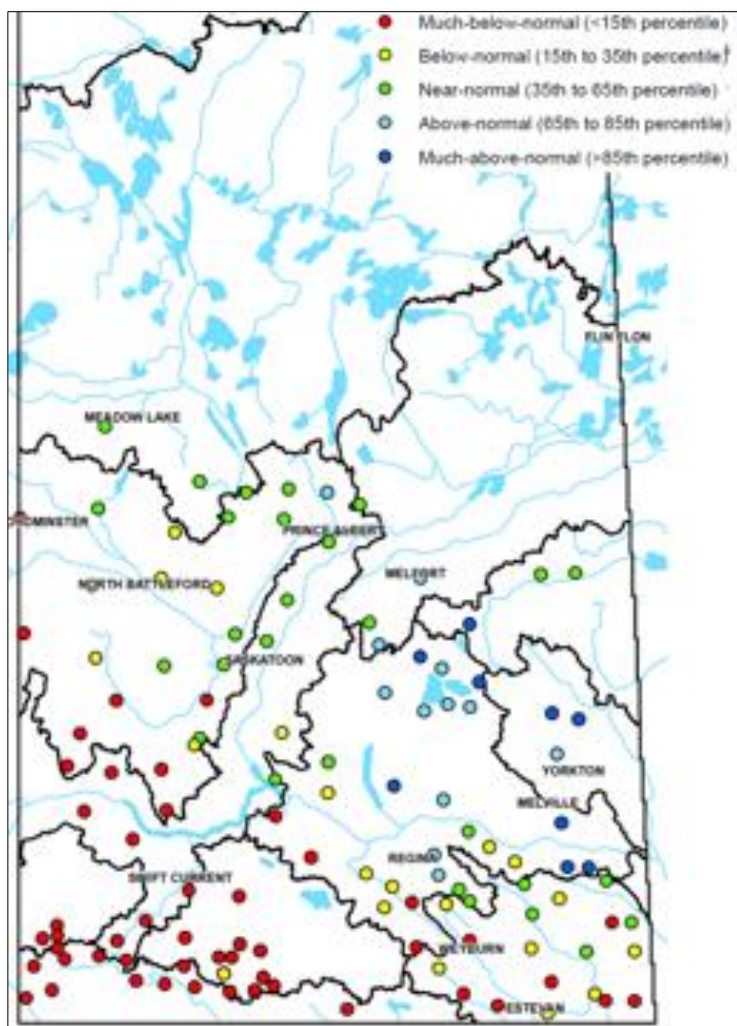




Precipitation percentile from November 1, 2025 to March 1, 2026. Map courtesy of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

Most of the province received near normal to above normal precipitation this winter, with some noticeable areas receiving below normal precipitation near the Saskatchewan-Manitoba border in the south.

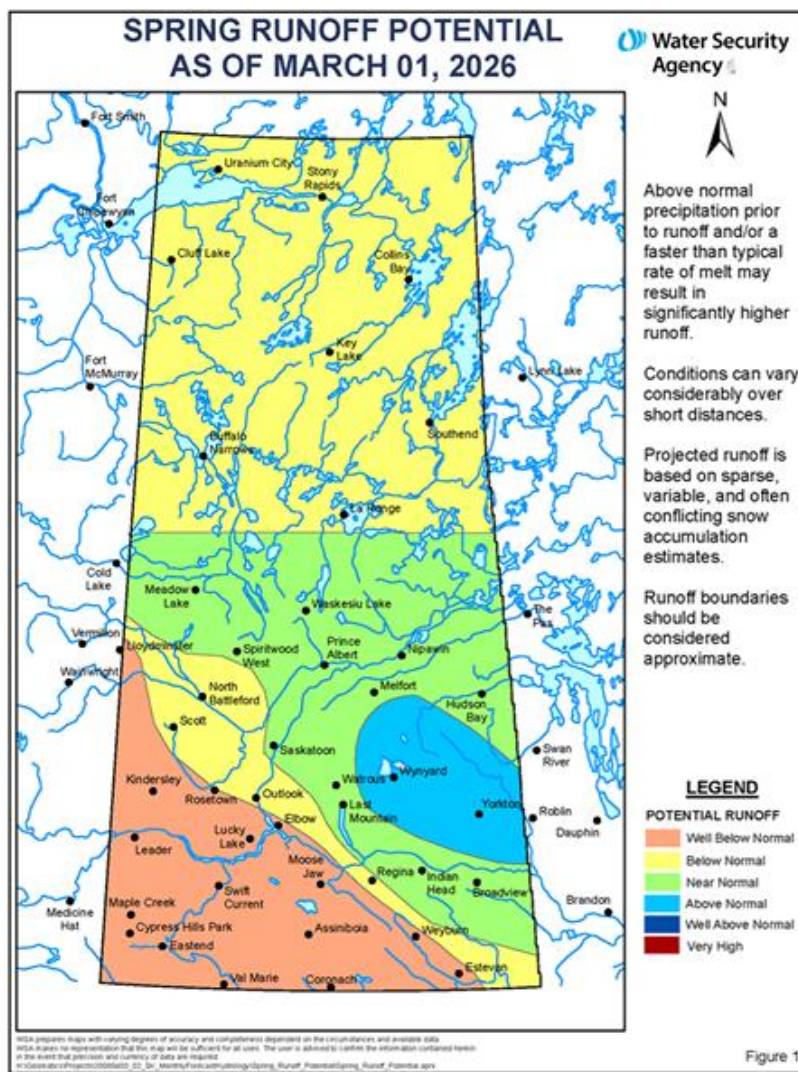
Snow Water Equivalent results show the current snowpack ranges from being much below normal in the southwest, south Saskatchewan River Basin upstream of Lake Diefenbaker, and some areas in the southeast, to much above normal in areas around Yorkton. Other areas of the province currently have a near normal snowpack.



Significant mid-winter warming resulted in complete snowpack loss in the southwest and some areas of the southeast. A mid-February snowstorm resulted in a thin snowpack in these areas.

February 23-27, 2026 Snow Water Equivalent compared to historical data.

Spring Runoff Potential as of March 01, 2026



Runoff across most of the northern and southwestern Saskatchewan is anticipated to be below to well below normal, due to dry soil conditions at the time of freeze-up, variable winter precipitation, and intermittent mid-winter melt events.

Most of the central Saskatchewan and parts of the southeast are expected to see a near normal runoff response, reflecting near normal snowpack combined with generally normal to slightly wetter fall conditions.

In the area near Yorkton and Wynyard, an above normal runoff response is expected due to above normal winter precipitation.

Above normal precipitation prior to runoff (especially if it occurs as rainfall), and/or a faster than normal melt, could result in significantly higher runoff than presently forecast.

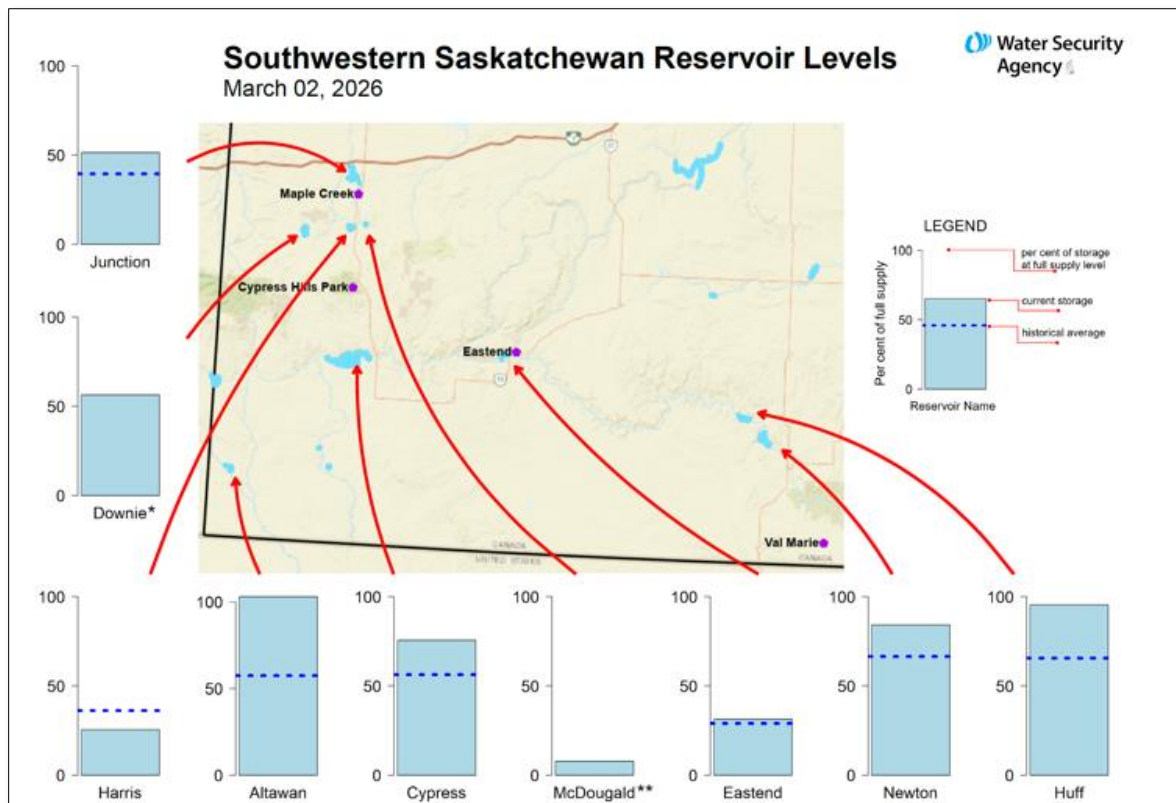
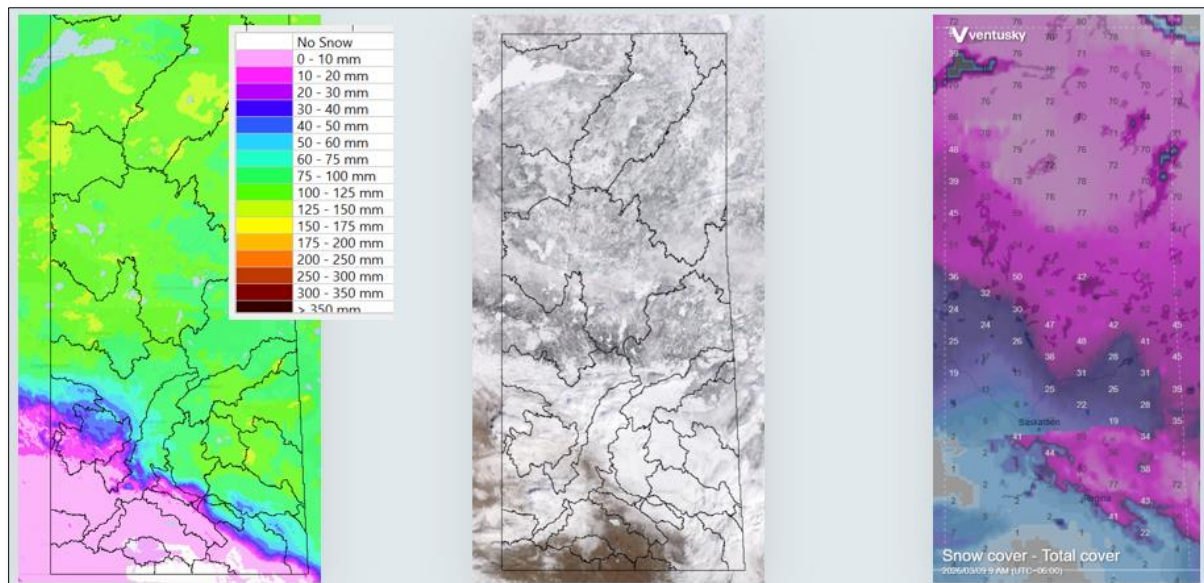
Below normal precipitation prior to runoff and/or a slow melt, can result in significantly lower runoff than presently forecast.

Earlier than normal snow cover depletion, followed by significant rain events, can result in significantly higher spring runoff than the present forecast because of wet and partially frozen soils.

The above map is based on local prairie runoff, and it does not consider potential mountain runoff to large systems such as Saskatchewan River Basin. This forecast is based on limited data and should be used as a general guide for large geographical areas. Local conditions may vary significantly from the regional conditions and boundaries. This map should be considered approximate.

Spring Runoff as of March 9, 2026

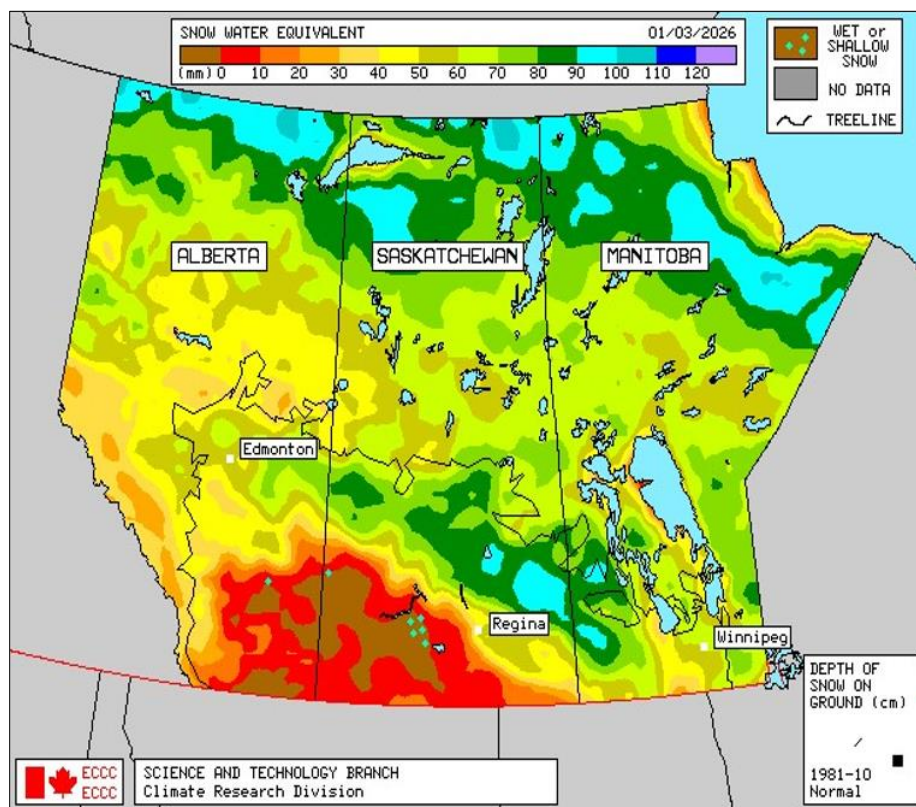
Runoff has begun in parts of southwestern Saskatchewan. The reservoirs in the southwest are filling. However, there has been no significant runoff yet.



Wildfire Preparedness

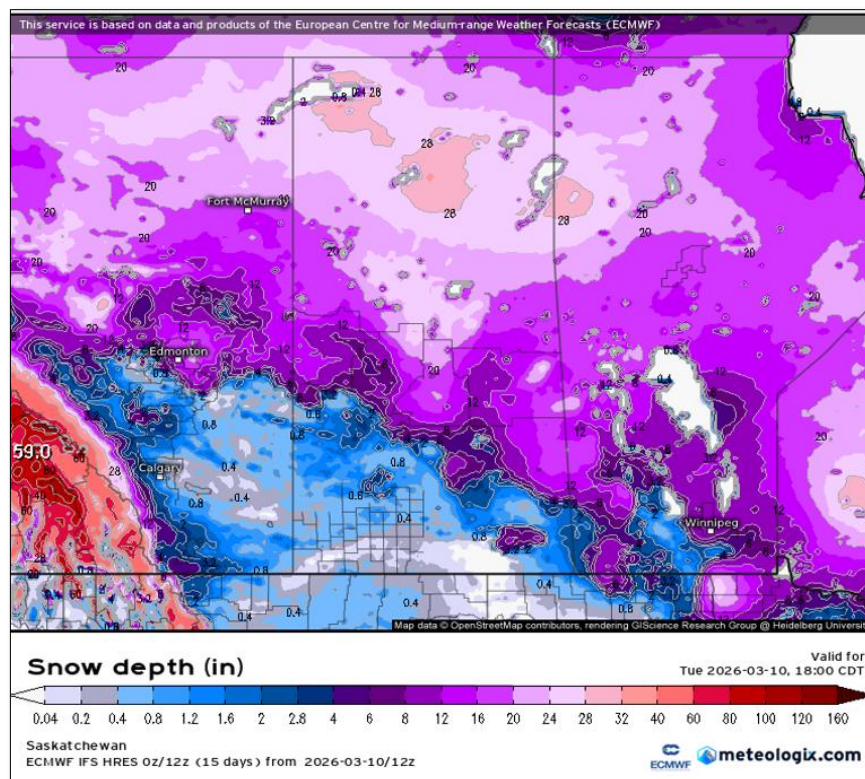
Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency (SPSA) monitors all hazard impacts including spring runoff and summer weather trends to mitigate, plan and prepare for forecasted spring impacts and wildfire risk.

The SPSA is monitoring the snowmelt runoff and snowpack indicators provided by Saskatchewan Water Security Agency to assist in determining areas that may encounter overland flooding or localized flooding due to ice jamming. At the time of this report, neither are anticipated at this time based on current conditions.



The SPSA will work with any community that may be affected by supplying flood mitigation equipment as required.

The Snow Water Equivalent map shows that snow is covering a majority of the province except for parts of the southwest corner. The highest amount of water equivalent is north of Regina with snow water equivalent values of 80 to 100mm.



*Snow Depth Map updated
March 10, 2026*

Northern Saskatchewan
28" to 32" = 71 to 82 cm

Central Saskatchewan
12" to 24" = 30 to 60 cm

Southern Saskatchewan
0.2" to 2" = 1 to 5 cm

Temperature Anomaly/Probability – March, April, May

The cool air is in the north central and northern sections with probabilities of 40-60% below normal. The southern portion seeing probabilities of anywhere between 40-60% above normal temperatures.

Climatology suggests that the southern half of Saskatchewan will experience an early start to the thunderstorm season, beginning mid April and run into September. The northern half of the province will experience a normal start to the thunderstorm season, beginning mid-May through to August. The peak of convective activity (storms) usually occur from June until August.

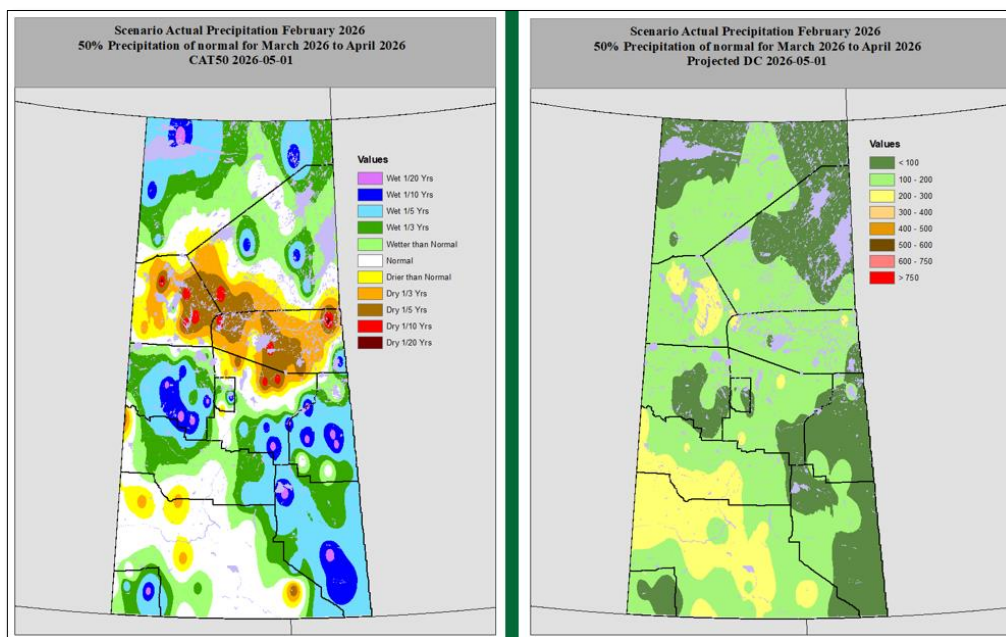
Precipitation Anomaly/Probability – March, April, May

Northern Saskatchewan is expected to receive between 30-50 mm of precipitation during the month of March. Central Saskatchewan is expected to receive between 30-50 mm in March. Southern Saskatchewan is expected to receive between 15-30 mm in March.

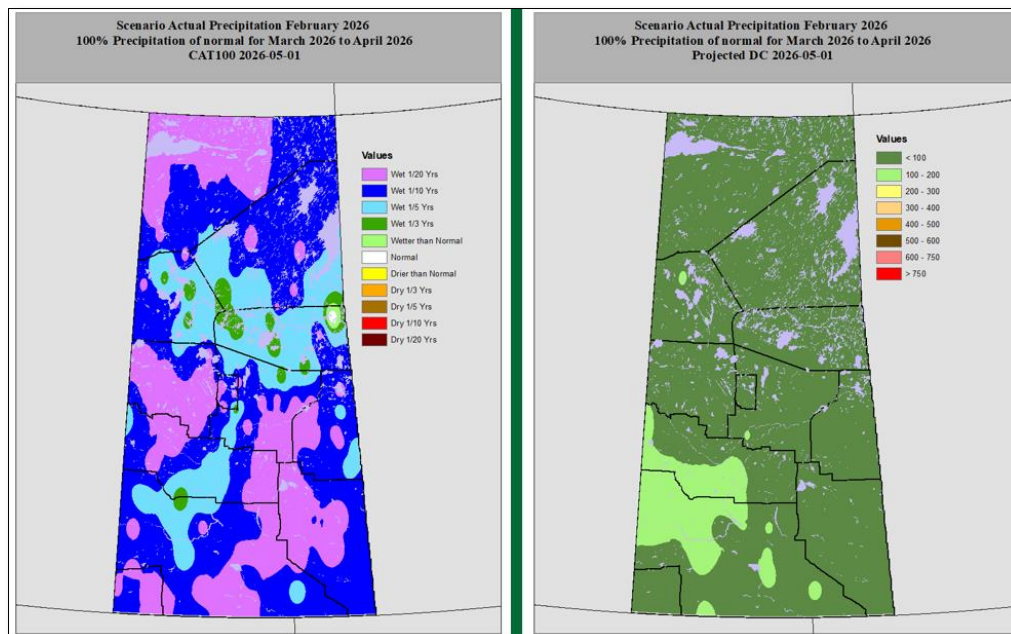
In the central and northern portions of the province expect wetter than normal conditions with some dry conditions along the southern border. Probability is anywhere between 40-50% for the northern section to be above normal and along the southern border anywhere up to 30% below normal.

Drought Code (DC) is a numeric rating of the average moisture content of deep, compact organic layers. This code is a useful indicator of seasonal drought effects on forest fuels and the amount of smoldering in deep duff layers and large logs. DC Values include Moderate: 0-300; High 300-500; Extreme 500+.

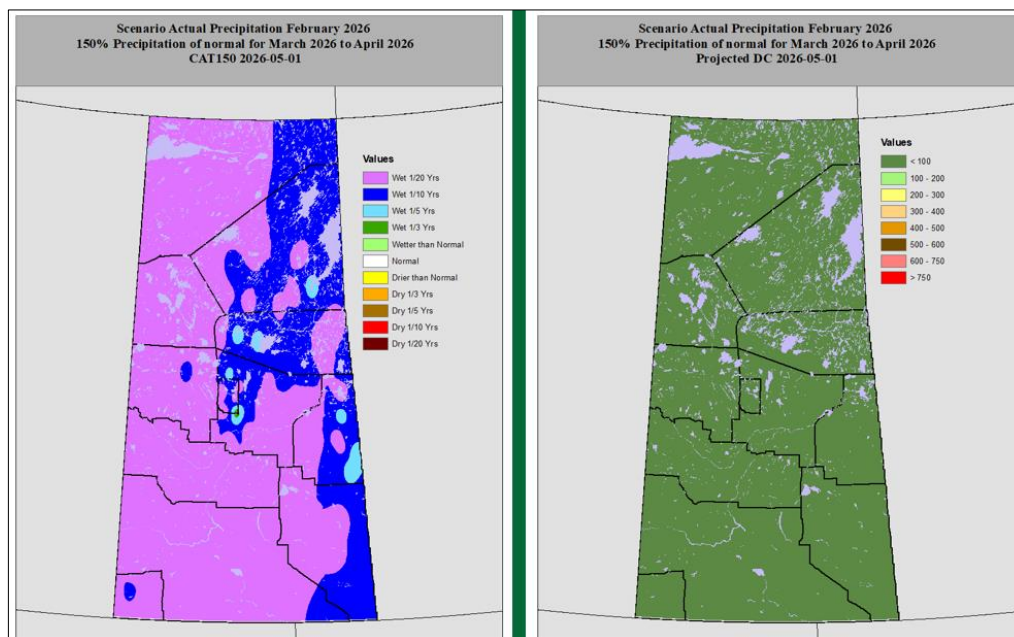
Drought code values if 50 per cent of normal precipitation occurs during March and April.



Drought code values if 100 per cent of normal precipitation occurs during March and April.



Drought code values if 150 per cent of normal precipitation occurs during March and April.



Summer Outlook

June, July, and August

The Meteologix weather forecast (global Euro/ECMWF forecasts) is showing that in the months of May and June the north will see cooler than normal temperatures which will transition to normal temperatures in central and above normal temperatures in the south. The North American Multi-Model Ensemble (NMME) forecast is showing that the province will see warmer than normal temperatures throughout the province for the months of June, July, and August.

June is expected to be dryer than normal throughout the majority of the province except for southeast regions according to the Meteologix forecast. July will bring wetter than normal precipitation in central and southern regions with the north seeing dryer than normal. The NMME forecast is showing the province will see more normal precipitation with a little dryer than normal in the northwest region.

July, August, September

Both the Meteologix and NMME forecasts are predicting slightly above normal temperatures with September bringing more normal temperatures to central and northern regions and above normal temperatures throughout the south.

The NMME ensemble is forecasting July/August/September will see normal conditions for precipitation values within the province. The Meteologix weather is forecasting that August and September will see a transition to dryer than normal throughout central and southern portions of the province and wetter than normal conditions in the north.

The SPSA is ensuring preparedness for the upcoming wildfire season with firebase startup dates of March 22nd. Type 1 Crew startup dates of April 5th, and Type 2 Crew startup dates of April 13th. Year-round Emergency Response Teams (ERT) and Emergency Services Officers (ESO) are also available to provide an all-hazard response to incidents as required. Aircraft start dates vary between April 5th and May 10rd.

The severity of the 2026 wildfire season will largely be dependent on short-term weather trends, such as extended periods of heat, wind and rain events. Extended hot windy days, often followed by severe weather, such as lightning or plow winds/tornadoes, can quickly escalate fire hazards and result in multiple wildfire starts. Weather indices will be analyzed daily to forecast, prepare and preposition equipment as required.

The SPSA continues to raise public awareness regarding environmental conditions (drought, flood, fire hazards and spring burning) through the SPSA public website, which includes items such as the fire ban map, weather information and fire hazard maps.

Conclusion

With the beginning of traditional peak response season, the province continues to face risks. Forecasts and risk assessments are subject to change as the season progresses and more data becomes available. Information contained in this report should be used only as a guide and not as a replacement for an all-hazards risk and vulnerability assessment.

Saskatchewan experienced a La Nina (below average) winter bringing in cooler temperatures and a variety of adverse weather extremes transitioning to La Nada (neutral) as of late February, early March. The La Nada is expected to persist through the summer causing variable weather. For the late summer and beyond there is a chance of El Nino (above average) forming and persisting into the next winter season which could bring in warmer and dryer weather.

The northern and central regions experienced strong moisture recovery over the winter, accompanied by cooler temperatures. In contrast the southwest remained extremely warm and dry. Drought conditions intensified and most of the area saw little to no snowpack throughout the winter season.

Overall conditions have improved compared to last year in the north and central, but moisture is needed for the south. Wildfire risk continues to exist within the entire province with lots of ignition potential.

Although many areas have a risk of wildfire activity occurring, fires cannot occur without ignition. Half of all wildfires are caused by human activity and are preventable. It is important to be aware of any fire bans which may be in place and use caution.

The SPSA Emergency and Community Support (ECS) is prepared to provide assistance with any required supports, supplemented as needed with staff from Ministries, Crowns and Agencies.