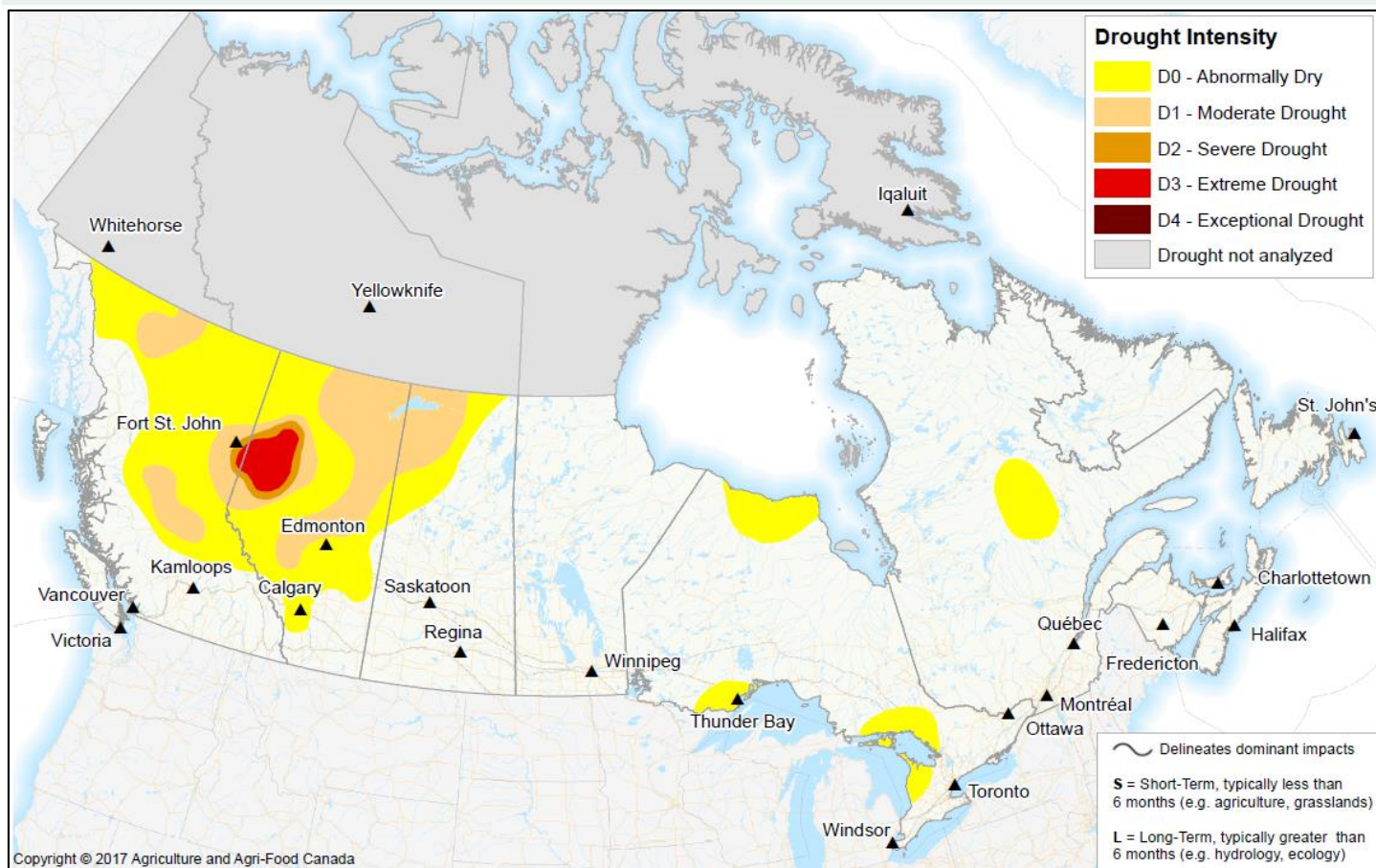


# Canadian Drought Monitor

Conditions as of November 30, 2010



Due to freeze-up and seasonal conditions throughout western Canada, the extent of drought remained largely unchanged at the end of November. Drought severity remained highest in the Peace River region of Alberta and British Columbia. Central Alberta, northwest Alberta, northeast Saskatchewan, and parts of central and northern British Columbia were also affected by drought. Northwest Ontario continued to see improvement in the previous long-term drought conditions that had existed. As of November 30, more than 25% of agricultural areas in Canada were classified as being abnormally dry or in drought, representing an increase of 9% from last month. This is primarily due to the expansion of D0 (Abnormally Dry) areas.

Drought severity remained high in the Peace River Region. Based on the April 1 – November 30, 2010 time period, the Peace River region remains in the driest tenth percentile. Over a 365 day period, some areas within the region have reported precipitation deficits of more than 220 mm



(8.6 in.); that accounts for nearly half a year's potential moisture foregone. With the onset of winter precipitation, precipitation levels stayed below normal, so the D3 (Extreme Drought) designation was expanded slightly northward. Following the extremely dry growing season, well above normal winter precipitation combined with a slow spring thaw is needed to recharge soil moisture reserves. Seasonal predictions show northeast B.C. and northwest Alberta could receive above normal precipitation over the winter and early spring, in keeping with the current La Nina condition. This definitely provides some optimism for recovery.

Precipitation during November has generally been light across most of the drought-affected areas of northern portions of western Canada. Areas with some topography appear to have accumulated more snow, as expected, which should provide some spring moisture. In northwest B.C., precipitation remained well below normal this month, between 40-60% of normal. This has been constant for the past 9 months, with precipitation deficits of more than 200mm (7.9 in.). In northeast Alberta and northwest Saskatchewan, precipitation ranged from 40-60% of normal since September 1. Departures have been between 40 and 80 mm (1.5-3.1 in.) just north of Lake Athabasca in Saskatchewan. As a result of the record fire season and continued reduced precipitation, the D1 (Moderate Drought) designation was expanded. Given that the driest time of year in these regions is normally late winter and early spring (approximately February through April), plentiful winter snowfall is needed to provide adequate forest floor moisture to prevent an early start to the forest fire season.

Other areas of note include portions of the B.C. Interior and west-central Alberta. In the central region of B.C., the D1 (Moderate Drought) area was expanded to include portions northwest of Prince George. Much of this area has 9-month precipitation deficits of more than 120mm (4.7 in.). This region is largely reliant on snow cover during the winter season to replenish the stream flow, lakes and reservoirs. Therefore, as winter progresses, it will be important for this region to receive normal to above normal precipitation to ensure full recovery from drought. In the west-central region of Alberta, the D1 (Moderate Drought) classification persisted. Since November 2009, SPI values stayed between -1.0 and -1.5 and has experienced precipitation deficit of up to 120 mm (4.7 in.). Although this region has begun to receive near normal precipitation in November, soil moisture remains very poor and the drought classification reflects this issue.

The Thunder Bay region of northwest Ontario was further reduced from D1 (Moderate Drought) to D0 (Abnormally Dry), as moisture levels continue to be replenished in this region following another month of above to well above precipitation.

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