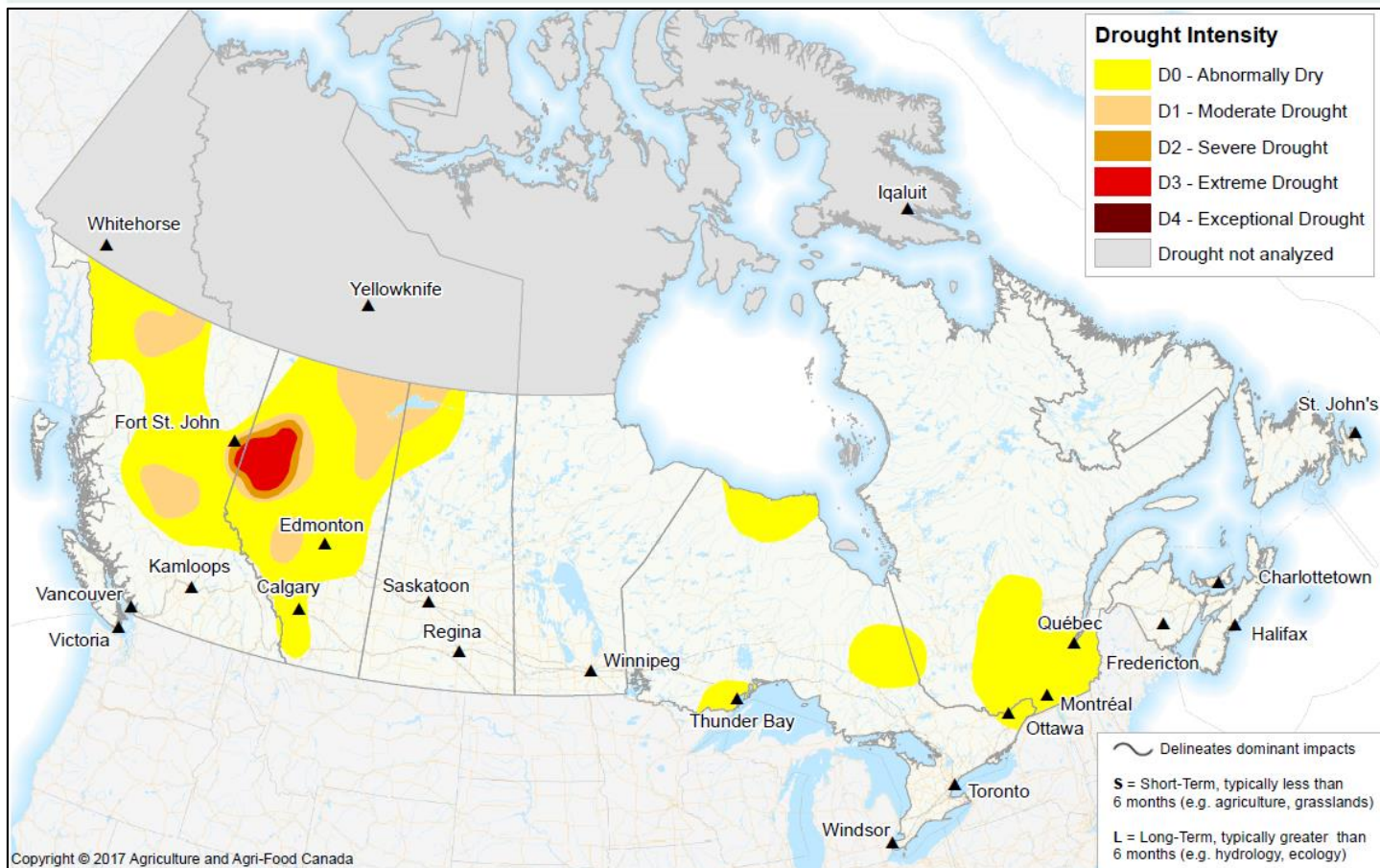


# Canadian Drought Monitor

Conditions as of January 31, 2011



The severity and extent of drought in Western Canada decreased during the month of January, especially in southern regions due to above normal precipitation.

Drought however persisted in central and northwest Alberta, northeast Saskatchewan, and parts of northern British Columbia. Parts of Central Canada have been drier than normal over the last couple of months, warranting the emergence of an Abnormally Dry (D0) classification for these regions. As of January 31, the percentage of area in Canada classified as abnormally dry or in drought was just over 23%, with the majority represented by D0 (Abnormally Dry) at 18%.

## Pacific Region (BC)



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The most severe drought remained in the Peace River region of northeast B.C. and northwest Alberta. For the 2010 growing season (April to October), parts of the Peace River region remained in the driest tenth percentile. So far this winter snowfall has been a little better than average with much of the region reporting snow water equivalents of 10-25 mm (0.5-1.0 in.) more. However, some areas have precipitation deficits of more than 220 mm (8.6 in) over the past year, and Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI) values remained at the bottom of the scale, at less than -2.0. In British Columbia, a D1 area in the central Prince George region remained as precipitation continued to be well below normal. Over nine month's precipitation deficits in this region are greater than 120 mm (4.7 in). Currently, mountain snow pack in the Prince George area is about 50% of normal which may result in a worsening situation this spring. This region is very dependent on the snow pack to replenish water supplies. Significant amounts of snow are required through the early spring to help this region recover.

## **Prairie Region (AB, SK, MB)**

Above normal snow pack raises the possibility of adequate spring runoff and soil moisture recharge, and reducing the drought severity. However, above normal spring precipitation is still needed to help pull the Peace River region out of this significant drought. The D3 (Extreme Drought) designation continued for a sixth consecutive month. Seasonal predictions for northeast British Columbia and northwest Alberta indicate above normal precipitation levels for the remainder of the winter and early spring based on the current La Niña conditions. This definitely provides some cautious optimism for recovery. Areas classified D1 (Moderate Drought) persisted throughout west-central Alberta. These regions have had SPI values between -1.0 and -1.5 and precipitation deficits of up to 120 mm (4.7 in) over the past year although winter precipitation is near normal. The drought severity and extent will likely improve once the near normal snowpack begins to melt. A D1 classification also endured in the boreal region of northeast Alberta and northwest Saskatchewan. During the summer and fall last year, forest fires were rampant in these regions due to reduced precipitation. Precipitation levels remain 40 to 60% of normal over the past four months, and snowpack is 50% of normal in some places. A region in east-central Alberta that was assigned D1 in December was downgraded following a reassessment of conditions that showed snowpack to be higher than originally reported.

## **Central Region (ON, QC)**

Snowfall has been below normal in eastern Ontario and southern Quebec. The Ottawa area is about 65% of normal to the end of January. Further east, the Montreal region has also missed the heavy storms that brought high snowfall to Atlantic regions this winter. Low snowfall was also reported in the Timmins area of northeast Ontario and the Lac-St- Jean region of central Quebec. As a result, these regions were classified D0 (Abnormally Dry).

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