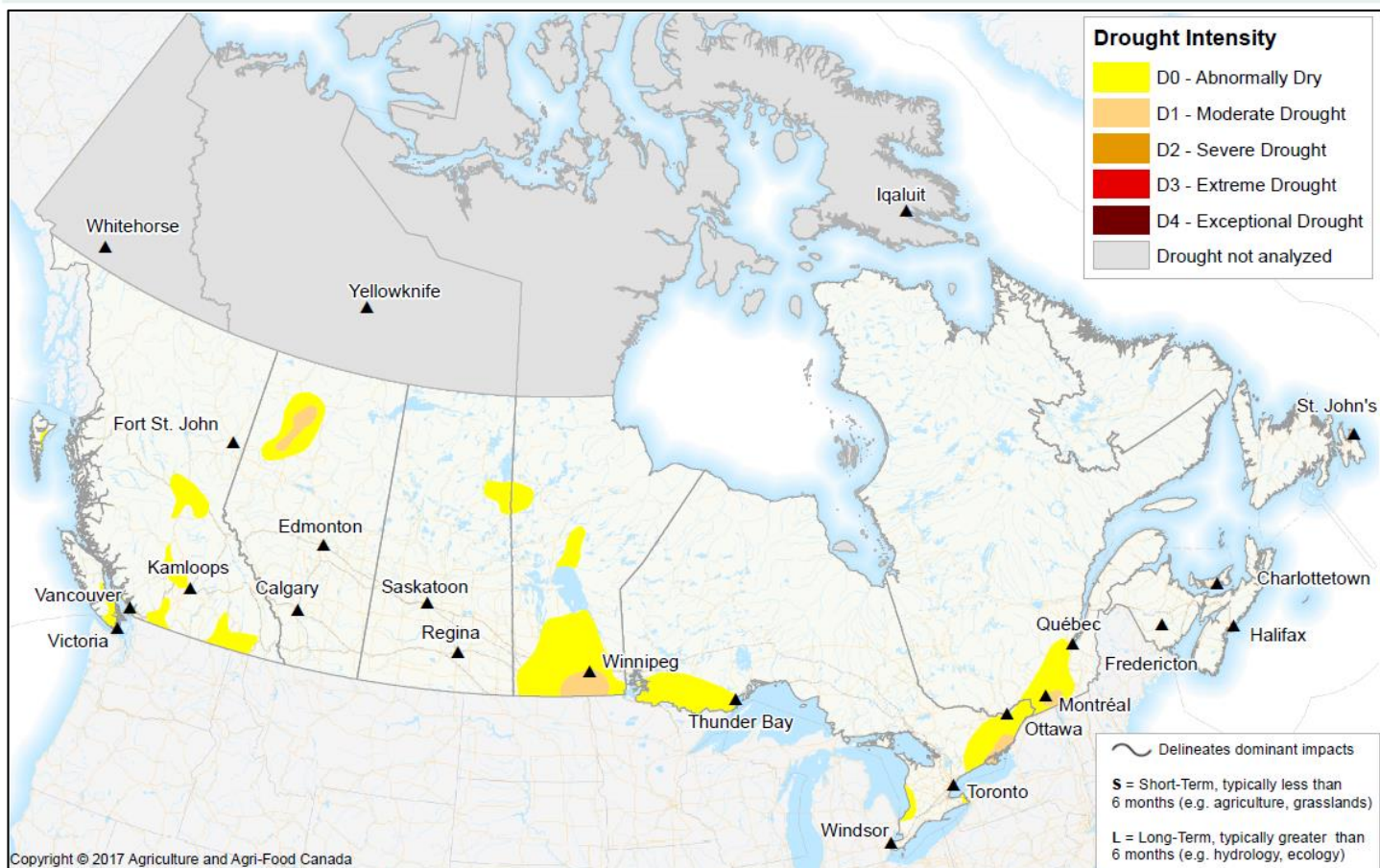


Canadian Drought Monitor

Conditions as of February 28, 2015



This February dealt Canadians a wide variety of condition, from bitter cold and record breaking snowfall in the Maritimes, to mild temperatures and an absence of snowpack in the west. While there was some variance in drought conditions across Canada, soils throughout most of the country remained frozen preventing more dramatic changes in soil moisture and drought condition.

Pacific Region (BC)

Through February a number of abnormally dry pockets emerged in British Columbia. The province experienced temperatures up to 5 degrees above average and precipitation 20 to 60 mm below normal. This meant that what little precipitation they saw was rain rather than snow.



As a result, the snow water equivalent was below 50% of normal in 4 of the province's major river basins: the Lower Fraser, the South Coast, the Vancouver Island and the Skagit basins. Without a significant increase in precipitation during the coming months, the abnormally dry pockets in these valleys will likely intensify. Vancouver Island and the Coast can expect a full recovery this spring if they receive approximately half of the normal precipitation. However, low snow pack could lead to early fuel exposure and subsequent drying. Prince George should also see an improvement in conditions, as the area west of it reached more than 140% of normal precipitation in February. This should resolve the water deficits from 2014 to begin the growing season on a positive note.

Prairie Region (AB, SK, MB)

Looking westwards, February in southern Manitoba was dry, with most of the southern half of the province experiencing well below average levels of precipitation. Cumulative dry conditions over the last four months have led to the expansion of the abnormally dry conditions D0, as well as the intensification of the Moderate drought D1 in the region. Substantial precipitation will be needed this spring to recharge the parched soil. Further west, conditions throughout most of Saskatchewan and Alberta predict near-normal spring runoff and adequate soil moisture although there are a few regions throughout western Saskatchewan and eastern Alberta that are being watched, due to the lack of snow cover. Areas along the central grain belt that went into the winter with low soil moisture have received sufficient snow-pack to be recharge with spring run-off. Further south, less snow was received; however this was offset by fully charged sub-soil from wet autumn conditions. One exception to the positive conditions in the western prairies is the northern Peace country in Alberta. The region is experiencing a long-term moderate drought, following several years of below normal precipitation. The area's soil moisture reserves and snow packs are below normal for this time of year, suggesting that the drought conditions will likely carry through spring.

Central Region (ON, QC)

Eastern Ontario and Quebec saw a continuation of January's cold dry conditions. Much of the region had monthly mean temperatures more than 5 degrees below normal and precipitation up to 50mm below average. The Quebec City-Windsor corridor experienced a particularly dry February, with record dry conditions near Montreal, Kingston, as well as in most of south western Ontario. These low levels of precipitation, which progressed throughout February, have caused the expansion and intensification of the Abnormally Dry D0 area surrounding Kingston and Montreal. Although, the region has experience near record low precipitation over the past couple months, there is limited concern at this time for drought since the precipitation that fell throughout the earlier winter remains in the snow and is expected to provide adequate moisture to the soils and adequate runoff in the spring. The lack of precipitation in western Ontario led to the emergence of an abnormally dry pocket D0, north of Sarnia along Lake Michigan. Similarly this region has stored water in the snowpack that will likely provide

adequate spring moisture to reduce any big drought concerns. As well, wet conditions prior to freeze up prevented the area from seeing a much more extensive drought.

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