

## 2013 Athabasca River at Fort McMurray Report No. 17

On Tuesday, April 30, 2013, Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development conducted a river ice observation flight of the Athabasca River. The flight covered the reach from Brule Point to Alexander Island, upstream of Fort McKay, a reach of approximately 160 km.

The Athabasca River continues to breakup. An ice jam that formed downstream of Fort McMurray late yesterday, blocking the confluence of the Clearwater River, released early this afternoon. A subsequent ice run has been occurring for approximately 8 hours and it is expected to continue for several more.

### Observation Details

#### Athabasca River:

- Brule Point to the Highway 63 Bridges - Running ice was observed in this entire reach. No constrictions to impede flow were seen, except for the occasional ice jam remnant. Surface ice concentrations varied in the reach, however they did not diminish significantly towards the end of the flight and the end of the ice run could be determined.
- Highway 63 Bridges to Alexander Island – Flowing ice was observed in this reach as well and the beginning of the ice run was not located.

#### Clearwater River:

- Ice that was pushed upstream into the Clearwater River from the Athabasca River ice jam and a portion of the Clearwater River's original cover has flowed into the Athabasca River. The lower three kilometres of the river is now clear and there is no impediment to flow in this reach. Near the Hangingstone River confluence, open leads are present and the ice cover has shifted. Signs of movement of the ice cover were also observed for a few kilometres upstream of the Hangingstone confluence. Downstream of the Christina River confluence, the open leads are merging. The remainder of the Clearwater River ice cover downstream of the Christina River confluence is intact, but deteriorating.

The most current information with interactive maps and photos is posted on the Alberta Environment web site at <http://www.environment.alberta.ca/forecasting/RiverIce/index.html>

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