2017 Athabasca River at Fort McMurray
Report No. 09

On Thursday, April 13, 2017, an observation flight of the Athabasca River basin was conducted by Alberta Environment and Parks. The flight covered an approximately 65 km reach of the Athabasca River from Crooked Rapids to Inglis Island (downstream of Fort McMurray), as well as 32 km of the Clearwater River. The River Ice Advisory remains in place in advance of river breakup in Fort McMurray.

Incoming ice runs have lengthened the ice jam that is lodged at the Fort McMurray Water Treatment Plant by 5 km (increasing the length to 20 km long). There has been some shifting of the ice cover upstream of the bridges, but downstream of the bridges ice conditions remain largely unchanged. Downstream of the Clearwater River confluence, approximately 3 km of intact ice cover remains with developing open leads. Downstream of Grant Island, there is a mostly open channel for 12 km.

The Clearwater River ice cover has started to break up in Fort McMurray. Sheets of ice have begun to shift and collect in the bends of the river. Water levels are normal for this time of year on the Clearwater River.

Observation Details

Athabasca River:

- Crooked Rapids to Moberly Rapids in Fort McMurray (37 km reach) – Trace amounts of incoming ice is accumulating against the 16 km ice jam that stretches from Moberly Rapids in Fort McMurray to above Mountain Rapids. The jam has lengthened by 1 km since yesterday afternoon as a result of incoming ice.
- Moberly Rapids, through Fort McMurray to Inglis Island (27 km reach) – There has been some movement of the ice cover immediately downstream of the ice jam lodged at the Fort McMurray Water Treatment Plant. A short section of open water is downstream of the jam, with a short section of ice accumulated against the intact ice cover at the bridges. Open leads continue to develop in the intact ice cover that extends from the bridges to the upstream end of Grant Island (3 km long). The open channel downstream of this has continued to lengthen. Only two short sections of shifted ice sheets remain between Grant Island and Inglis Island.

Clearwater River:

- Clearwater River to the confluence of the Christina River (32 km) – The ice cover has begun to break up in Fort McMurray. Sheets of ice have begun to shift downstream near the confluence, and in bends of the river. Closer to Draper, the ice cover is more intact, however there is a section of open water and small ice accumulation at the confluence with the Christina River.

Media inquiries may be directed to:
Alberta Environment and Parks,
Communications
780-427-8636
For toll-free access outside Edmonton, please dial 780-310-0000.

River Ice Observation Report

River Forecast Centre

April 12, 2017

NOTE:

Our main website has changed. Starting this year, the most current observation information, data and advisories will be posted to the new Alberta Rivers website at: https://rivers.alberta.ca/. Ice observation report information can be found by selecting 'Ice Observation Reports' in the main menu, and by selecting the Athabasca River tab. Photos and ice cover information are displayed on the map, and can be viewed by turning on the 'Ice' layer. This information is also available through the Alberta Rivers app for iOS and Andriod.

Although observation report information, data and advisories are still being posted to the old website (http://www.environment.alberta.ca/forecasting/RiverIce/index.html), this service will discontinued following breakup in spring of 2017. For ice cover maps, please go to https://rivers.alberta.ca/.

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Location Reference Guide:

River	Location Name	Reference River km	Km from Fort McMurray
Athabasca River (upstream of Fort McMurray)	Mouth of the Pembina River	851	556
	Mouth of the Lesser Slave River	794	499
	Town of Athabasca	687	392
	Mouth of the Calling River	610	315
	Pelican Rapids	496	201
	Rapides du Joli Fou	460	165
	Grand Rapids	425	130
	Brule Rapids	386	91
	Boiler Rapids	355	60
	Middle Rapids	349	54
	Long Rapids	344	49
	Crooked Rapids	332	37
	Rock Rapids	331	36
	Little Cascade Rapids	326	31
	Cascade Rapids	321	26
	Mountain Rapids	307	12
	Moberly Rapids	298	3
	Hwy 63 Bridges in Fort McMurray	295	0
Athabasca River (downstream of Fort McMurray)	Mouth of the Clearwater River	293	2
	Grant Island	291	4
	Poplar Island	285	10
	Stony Island	278	17
	Suncor Bridge	264	31

River	Location Name	River km (measured from mouth of river)
Clearwater River	Mouth	0
	River Vista Ski Area	26
	Mouth of the Christina River	30

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