

So Much Snow!

It seems that spring is finally here, after an extra-long winter, creating an extra-large snowpack.

Snowpack data is collected at various locations throughout our region through snow surveys, either automatically or manually. Values are reported as “percent of normal”.

Since the April 1st [Snow Survey and Water Supply Bulletin](#) was released by the BC River Forecast Centre, the overall snowpack has increased throughout the province due to cool temperatures and several late-season storms. The snow index is above normal across our region, including the Boundary (149%), West Kootenay (127%), East Kootenay (119%), and Upper Columbia (111%) basins. Last year’s data also showed a higher than average spring snowpack—a reversal from lower than average winter conditions. Since 2010, snowpack indices for our region have fluctuated between 61% and 135% of normal. See the recently released [State of the Basin Full Report](#) for more details.

Snow accumulation is an important determinant of the volume and timing of stream flow, and provides a good indication of the amount of water that will be available to serve human and environmental needs over the spring and summer months.

While this year’s snowpack was larger than normal, the trend over the last half century shows an overall decline in both the southern and northern parts of our region. Snowfall amounts depend on weather conditions, and while we may be accustomed to what winter is ‘normally’ like, with the continued progression of climate change, snowfall patterns in our region are expected to change.

Climate projections for our region predict that warmer weather will shift winter precipitation from snowfall to rain, with the greatest effects at lower elevations. Less precipitation as

snowfall can have serious implications for water supply, flooding, landslides, wildfire, and winter tourism.

Fortunately, communities in our region are taking action to prepare for the impacts of climate change. The RDI's [State of Climate Adaptation Pilot Project](#) involved working with four communities to better understand our region's climate vulnerabilities and refine an approach to measuring progress on adaptation. Outcomes from the project include community-level adaptation assessments, a collection of adaptation measurement resources, and important lessons to support adaptation across rural Canada.

Many of us found ourselves praying for snow in November. Now we can only hope that this large snowpack melts gradually, allowing this year's abundance to assist us throughout the coming seasons.



Photo: Fridjon Thorleifsson

[State of the Basin 2017 - Full report now available](#)

The *State of the Basin Initiative* provides a region wide check-up on community and regional well-being in the Columbia Basin-Boundary region. The full report is now available for 2017.

Click [here](#) to see the latest conditions and trends.

A 'made in the Basin' approach to climate adaptation

Columbia Basin-Boundary communities, like other parts of rural Canada, are highly vulnerable to climate change. With the overall goal of building capacity and resilience to climate change, the *State of Climate Adaptation Pilot Project* helped to better understand community level vulnerabilities and refine a suite of indicators to help measure progress on adaptation.

Access project resources [here](#).



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Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute
Selkirk College
301 Frank Beinder Way
Castlegar BC V1N 4L3

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