

Water Availability and Drought Conditions Report

SEPTEMBER 2025

Executive Summary

- This Water Availability and Drought Conditions Report provides an update on conditions throughout Manitoba for September.
- Precipitation conditions over the past month, three-month, and twelve-month periods are as follows:
 - In September most of southern and southwestern and western Manitoba received normal to above-normal rainfall, while the Interlake region, eastern and northern Manitoba experienced moderate to extreme dryness.
 - Over the past three months (July, August, September), much of Manitoba experienced moderate to severe dryness, with the exceptions being southern and parts of southwestern Manitoba, as well as isolated areas in the northwest, which saw normal to above-normal rainfall.
 - Over the past 12 months, Manitoba observed mostly moderately to severely dry precipitation conditions, with small, isolated pockets of normal precipitation conditions in the north and near the US border in the south.
- As of September 30, water levels in rivers and lakes across Manitoba ranged from much below normal (<10 percentile) to normal (25th – 75th percentile) conditions. Rainfall events in September continued reducing the severity of hydrological drought. Most rivers and lakes in southern and western Manitoba are in the normal range for the time of year, while most stations in the eastern and northern regions continue are below normal (10-25 percentile) to much below normal (<10 percentile).
- As of August 31, the Canadian Drought Monitor classified Manitoba's conditions from abnormally dry (D0) to extreme drought (D3). August rainfall substantially reduced the extent of extreme drought (D3) conditions, though pockets persist in the Interlake, and localized northern areas. September rainfall is expected to further ease drought severity in most regions ahead of the late-September assessment.
- There are currently no concerns over reservoir water supplies. Provincial water supply reservoirs are near full supply levels or at typical levels for the time of year.
- Regarding on-farm water supplies, early in September the overall water balance was reported to be well below normal with rivers and dugouts quite low (Crop Report Issue 20, September 9, 2025). Later in September moist and warm conditions helped with fall grazing and rejuvenated pasture growth (Crop Report Issue 23, October 1, 2025). Most producers have been able to secure adequate supplies of winter feed. However, regions that experienced significant dry conditions are facing shortages and are sourcing feed from areas that received the most moisture.
- Manitoba Agriculture's soil moisture map for September 28 indicates mostly optimal to wet conditions across southern Manitoba at depths of 0 to 120 cm, with some pockets of dry or very dry soil. Areas near Selkirk, Lac Du Bonnet, and the Interlake region continue to show dryness, while soil moisture in the west has further improved following September rains and is generally optimal to wet.
- Manitoba's wildfire situation showed further improvement in September. The Manitoba Wildfire Service reports low fire danger across most of the province, with several fires now held or under control. Refer to the fire and travel restriction maps found at: www.gov.mb.ca/conservation_fire/Restrictions/index.html. Several municipalities continue to implement burning restrictions. Visit www.manitoba.ca/wildfire/burn_conditions.html to view current burning restrictions.

Drought Indicators

Precipitation Indicator

Precipitation is assessed to determine the severity of meteorological dryness and is an indirect measurement of agricultural dryness.

Three precipitation indicators are calculated to represent short term (one month; Figure 1), medium term (three months; Figure 2) and long term (12 months; Figure 3) conditions. The indicators compare current monthly precipitation totals to historical data to calculate the per cent of median precipitation that occurred over the past one, three or twelve months. Historical medians are computed from 45 years of data (1971 – 2015).

Due to large distances between meteorological stations in northern Manitoba, the interpolated contours in this region are based on limited observations and should be interpreted with caution.

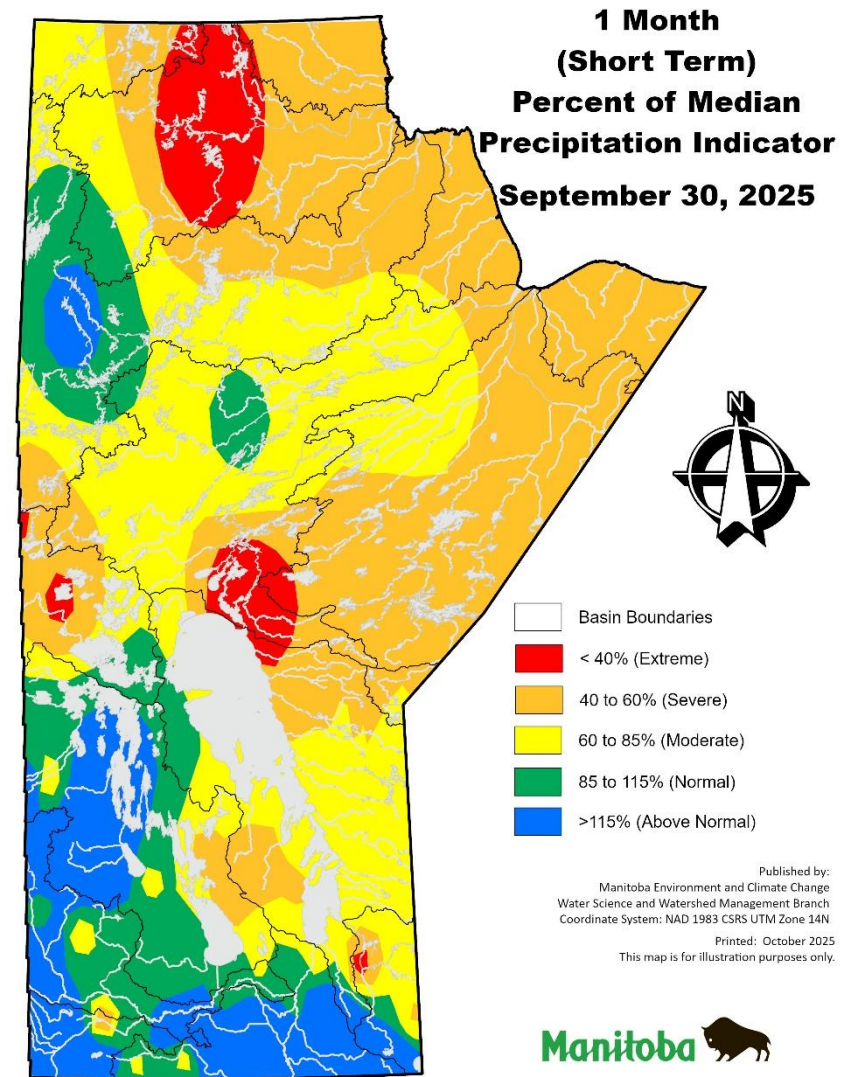


Figure 1: One month (short term) per cent of median precipitation indicator.

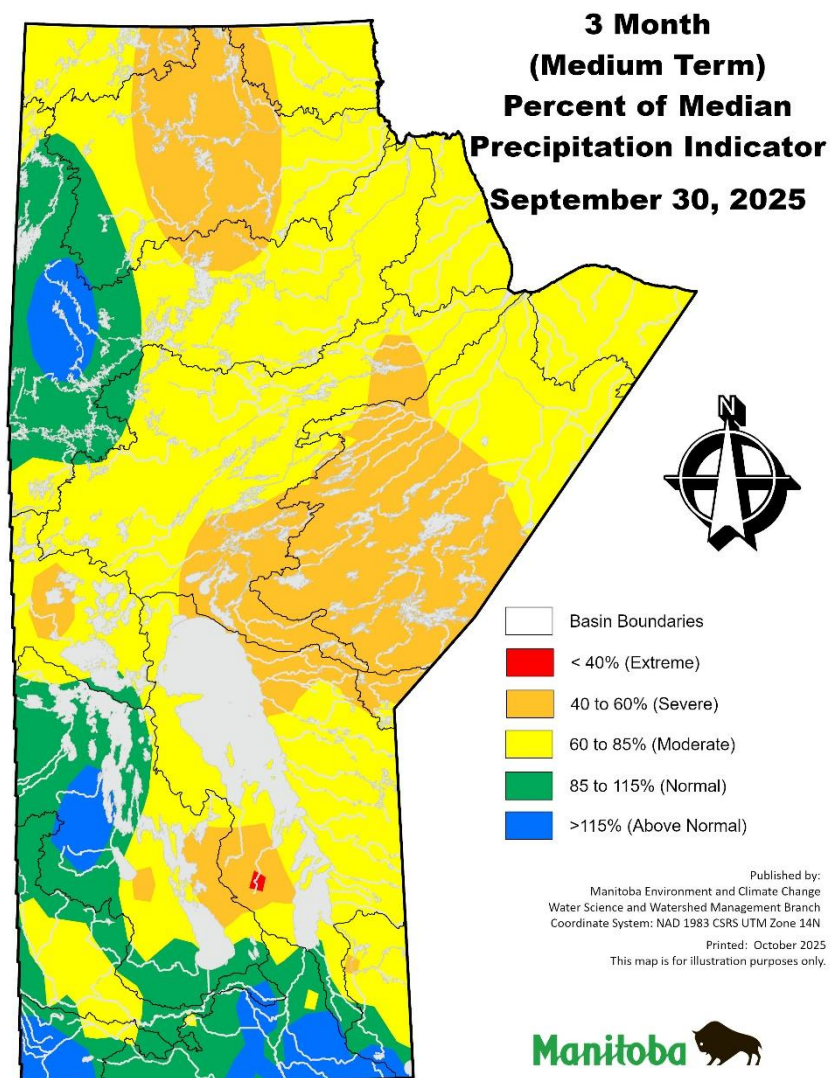


Figure 2: Three month (medium term) per cent of median precipitation indicator.

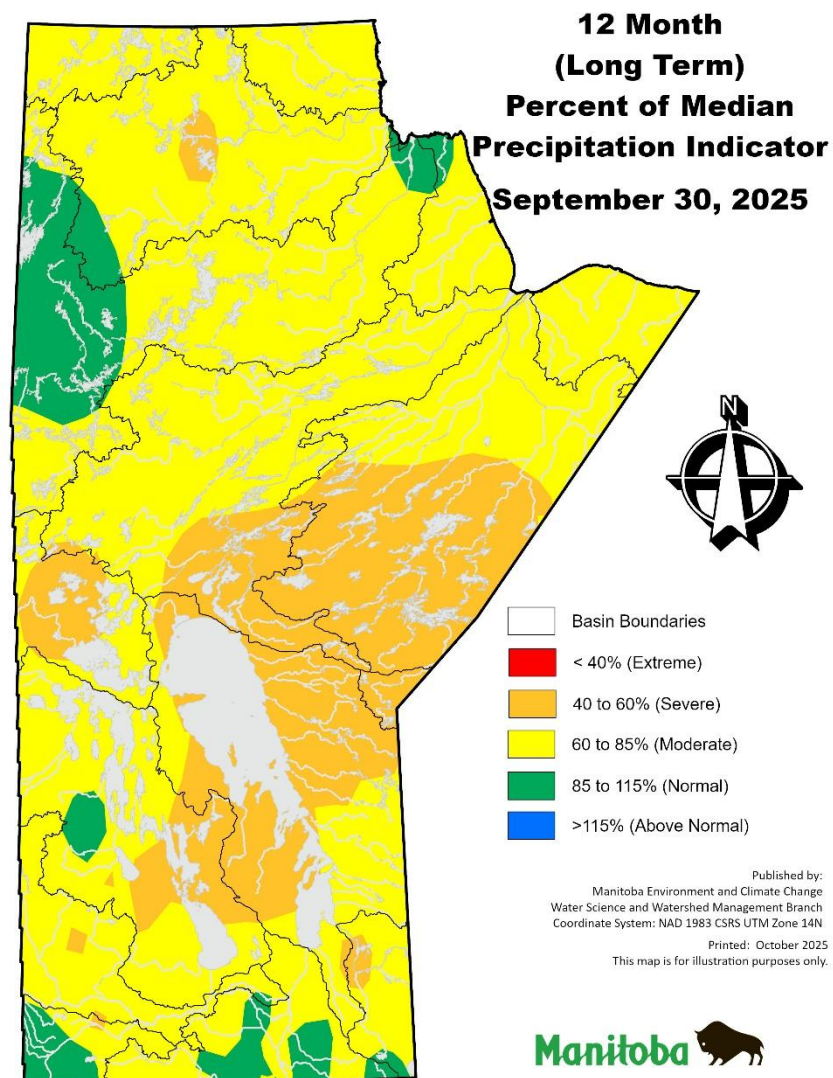


Figure 3: Twelve month (long term) per cent of median precipitation indicator.

Streamflow & Lake Level Indicator

The streamflow and lake level indicator is based on average daily flows and levels compared to historical values for that particular day.

This indicator is used to determine the severity of hydrological dryness in a watershed and is summarized on Figure 4, representing hydrological conditions for September 30.

Streamflow and lake level percentile plots for all of the rivers and lakes included on Figure 4 are available on the [Manitoba Drought Monitor website](#) under the *Drought Indicator Map* tab.

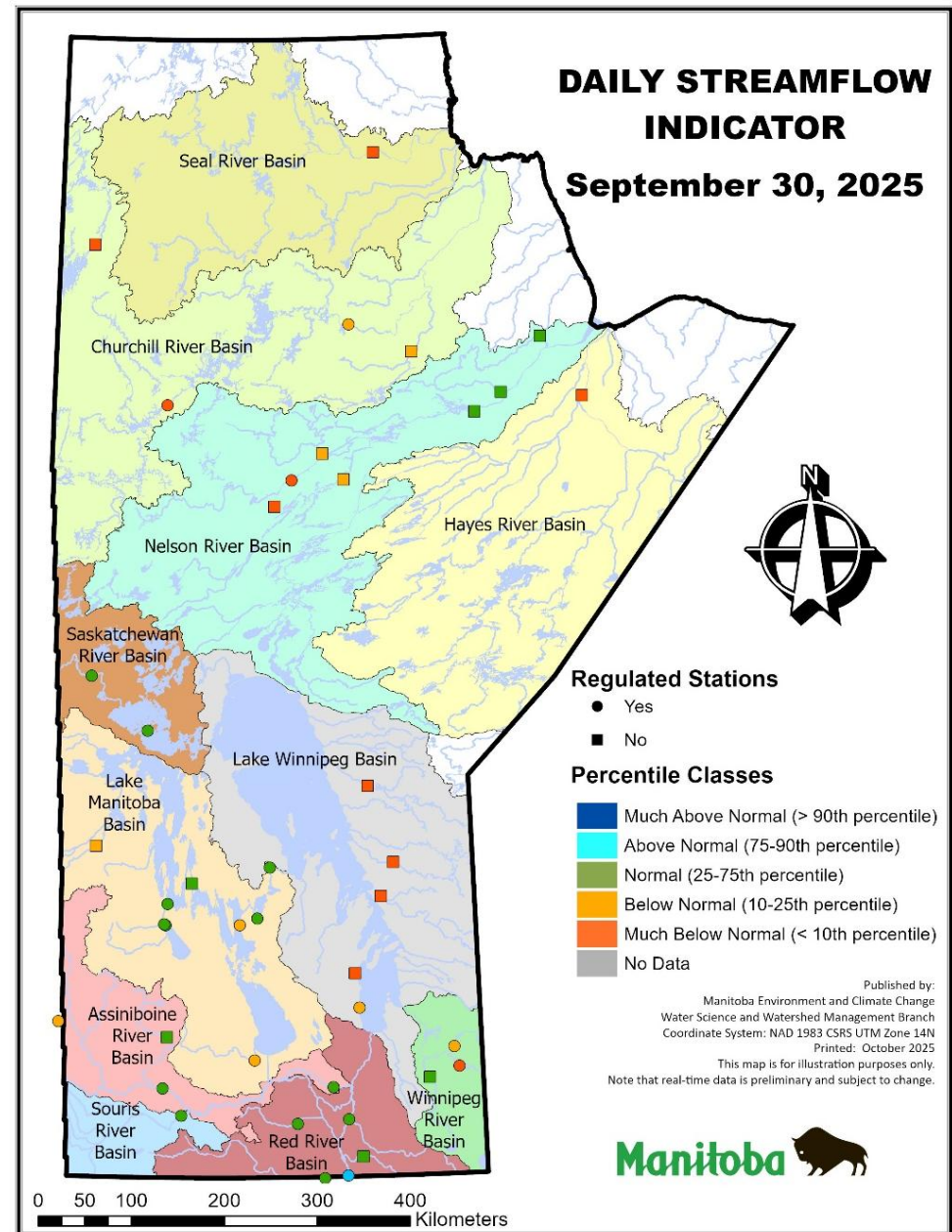


Figure 4: Daily streamflow and lake level indicator for September 30, 2025.

Canada and United States Drought Monitors

The Canadian Drought Monitor and the United States Drought Monitor map the extent and intensity of drought conditions across Canada and the continental United States.

Drought Monitor assessments are based on a suite of drought indicators, impacts data and local reports as interpreted by federal, provincial/state and academic scientists.

The Canadian and United States Drought Monitor maps use the following classification system:

- D0 (Abnormally Dry) – represents an event that occurs every three to five years;
- D1 (Moderate Drought) – five to 10 year event;
- D2 (Severe Drought) – 10 to 20 year event;
- D3 (Extreme Drought) – 20 to 50 year event; and
- D4 (Exceptional Drought) – 50+ year event.

Additionally, the map indicates the duration of drought as either short-term (S; less than six months) or long-term (L; more than six months) (Figure 5).

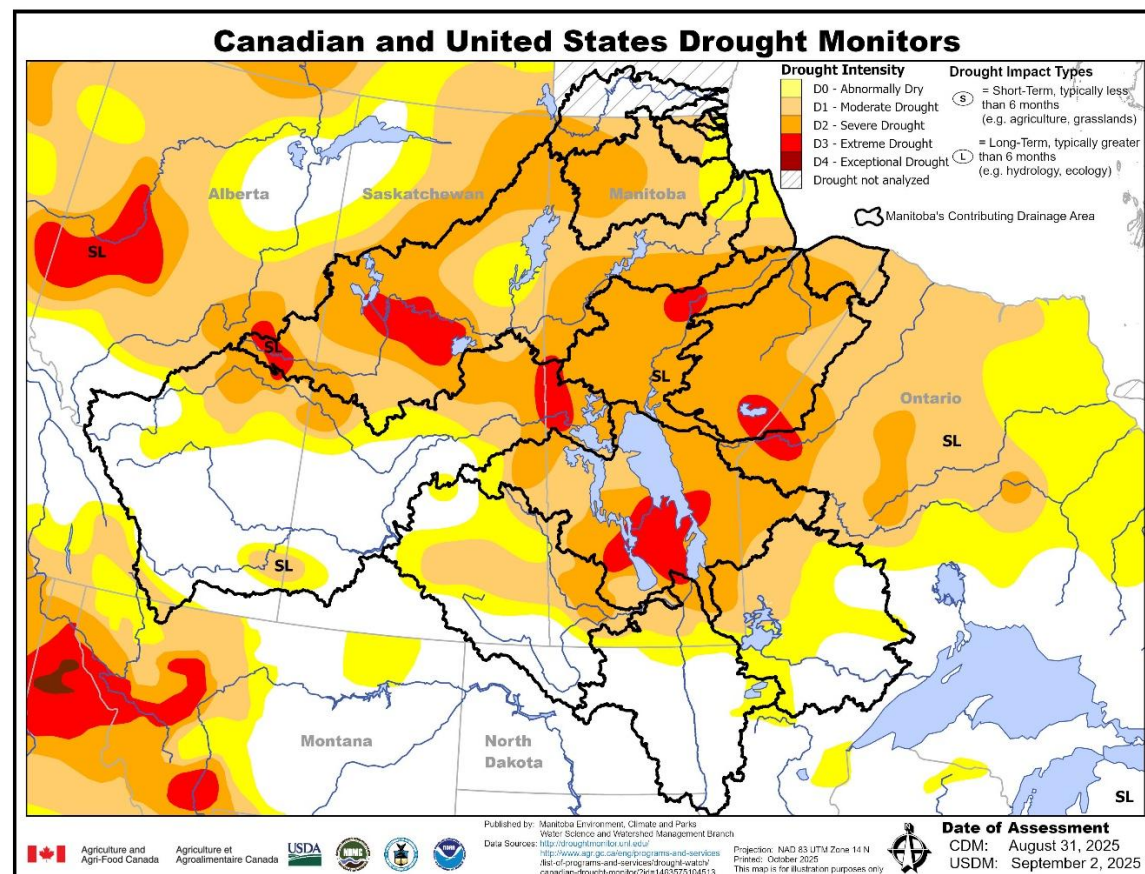


Figure 5: Canadian and United States Drought Monitors' classification of short-term (S) and long-term (L) drought conditions assessed as of August 31, 2025.

Water Availability

Reservoir Conditions

Table 1: Water Supply Reservoir Levels and Storages – September 30, 2025 (Southern and Western Manitoba).

Water Supply Reservoir Levels and Storages - September 30, 2025								
Lake or Reservoir	Community Supplied	Target Level (feet)	Latest Observed Level (feet)	Observed date	Supply Status (Recent - Target) (feet)	Storage at Target Level (acre-feet)	Storage at Observed Level (acre-feet)	Supply Status (observed storage/target storage) (%)
Lake of the Prairies (Shellmouth)* ¹	Brandon, Portage, Cartier Regional Water Co-op	1,402.5	1402.23	September 30, 2025	-0.27	300,000	296,675	99%
Lake Wahtopanah (Rivers)*	Rivers	1,536.0	1535.57	September 30, 2025	-0.43	24,500	24,029	98%
Minnewasta (Morden)*	Morden	1,082.0	1080.97	September 30, 2025	-1.03	3,150	2,980	95%
Stephenfield*	Carman, Pembina Valley Water Co-op	972.0	969.01	September 30, 2025	-2.99	3,810	2,642	69%
Vermilion*	Dauphin	1,274.0	1274.59	September 22, 2025	+0.59	2,600	2,739	105%
Goudney (Pilot Mound)*		1,482.0	1482.10	September 30, 2025	+0.10	450	455	101%
Jackson Lake*		1,174.0	1172.02	September 30, 2025	-1.98	2,990	2,498	84%
Manitou (Mary Jane)*		1,537.0	1536.26	September 30, 2025	-0.74	1,150	1,084	94%
Turtlehead (Deloraine)*	Deloraine	1,772.0	1770.24	September 30, 2025	-1.76	1,400	1,304	93%
Lake Irwin*		1,178.0	1177.84	September 30, 2025	-0.16	3,800	3,702	97%
Minnedosa* ¹		1,681.5	1681.28	September 30, 2025	-0.22	1,558	1,493	96%
Boissevain*	Boissevain	1,697.0	1698.14	September 30, 2025	+1.14	505	602	119%
Elgin*		1,532.0	1531.83	September 30, 2025	-0.17	520	508	98%
St. Malo*		840.0	840.22	September 23, 2025	+0.22	1,770	1,806	102%
Kenton Reservoir		1,448.0	1447.09	September 30, 2025	-0.91	600	531	89%
Killarney Lake		1,615.0	1614.67	September 30, 2025	-0.33	7,360	7,208	98%
¹ Summer target level and storage * Real-time water level gauge								

On-Farm Water Supply

On-farm water supply updates from Manitoba Agriculture's Crop Report are as follows:

- Despite recent rains, overall water balance is well below normal. Rivers and dugouts are quite low. (Report Issue 20, September 9, 2025)
- Moist and warm conditions have helped with fall grazing and rejuvenating pasture growth. (Report Issue 23, October 1, 2025)

Soil Moisture

A regional representation of soil moisture conditions for the top 120 cm relative to the field capacity is shown on Figure 6.

The colours on the map represent measured soil moisture values from automated instruments at sites across Manitoba. Qualitative range (very dry to very wet) is based on the amount of current soil moisture relative to field capacity. Field Capacity is defined as the maximum amount of moisture the soil can hold when drainage due to gravity stops.

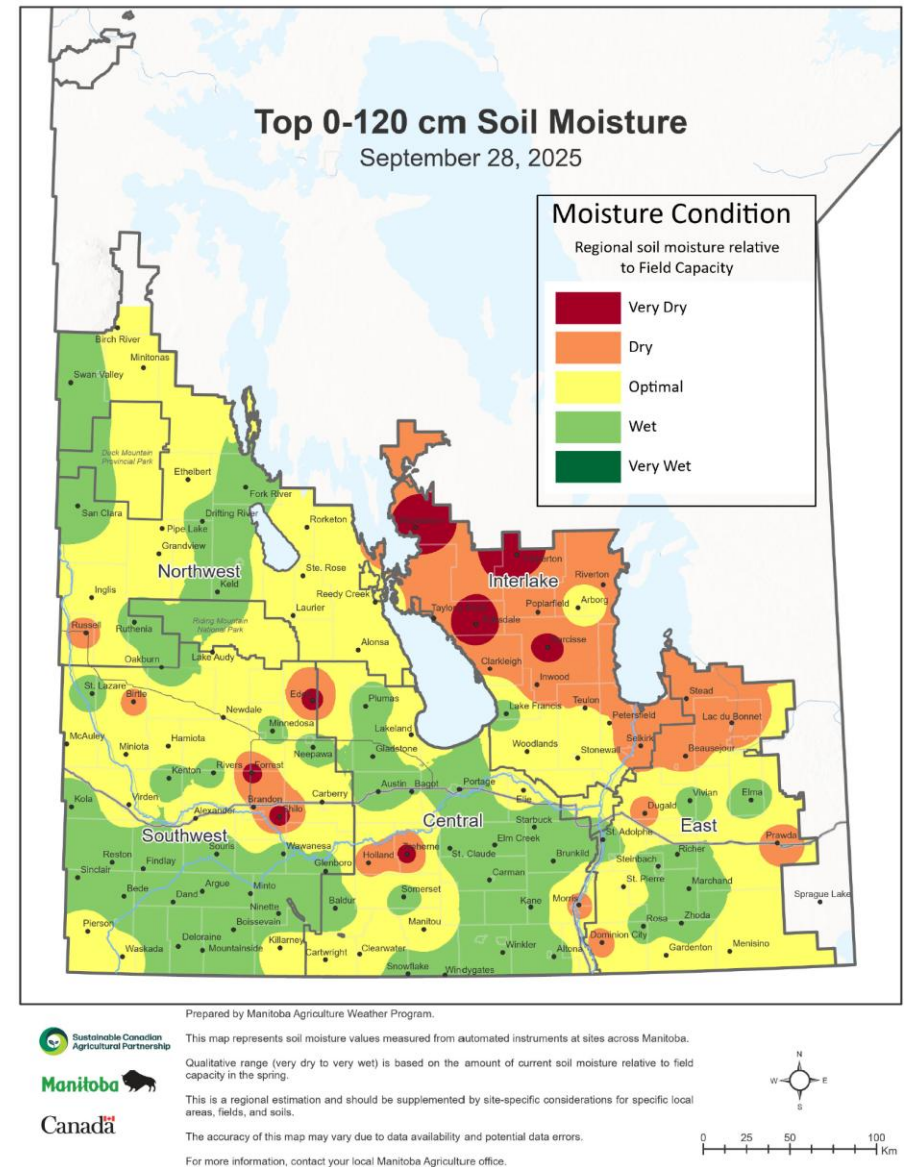


Figure 6: Manitoba Agriculture's September 28, 2025 mapping of soil moisture conditions in the top 0 – 120 cm.

Wildfires

The Manitoba Wildfire Service reports low to moderate fire danger across most of the province, with several fires now held or under control.

As of September 30 the fire weather risk produced by Natural Resources Canada is mostly low to high across most of Manitoba (Figure 7). Manitobans and visitors are urged to exercise caution and comply with all posted restrictions to prevent wildfires.

Refer to the fire and travel restriction maps found at: www.gov.mb.ca/conservation_fire/Restrictions/index.html. Several municipalities continue to implement burning restrictions. Visit www.manitoba.ca/wildfire/burn_conditions.html to view current burning restrictions.

For further information on the Manitoba Wildfire Service, situation updates, restrictions and other important wildfire links, go to www.gov.mb.ca/wildfire or follow the Manitoba government on X (formerly Twitter) at <https://twitter.com/mbgov>.

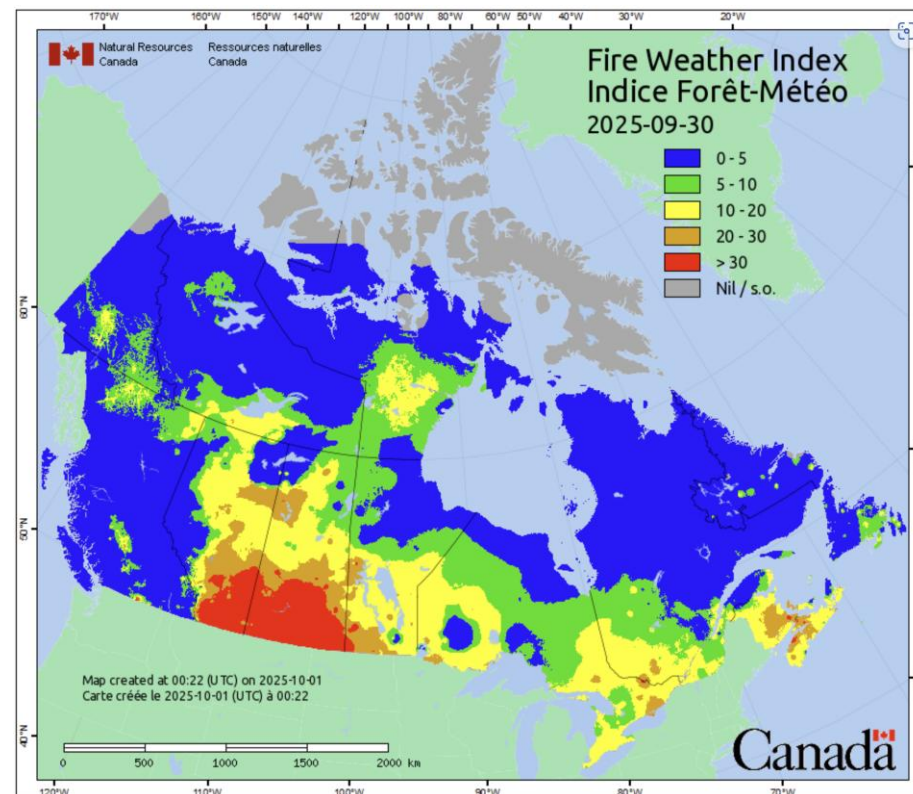


Figure 7: Fire Weather Index mapping by Natural Resources Canada.

Impacts due to Dry Conditions

The most significant impact due to meteorological drought conditions is severe wildfire risk and active fires across much of Manitoba. Wildfire risk continues to stay low due to September precipitation.

Hydrological drought is present in eastern and northern areas where rivers and lakes have fallen below their normal range for this time of year. September precipitation helped reduce the severity of drought, but more precipitation will still be needed to prevent hydrological drought from developing further.

Volunteer crops and weeds are actively growing with warm weather and recent improvements to soil moisture. Moist and warm conditions have also helped with fall grazing and rejuvenating pasture growth and most producers have been able to secure adequate supplies of winter feed. However, regions that experienced significant dry conditions are facing shortages and are supplementing feed or sourcing hay from areas that received most moisture.

Past reports, drought mapping and other information and resources are available on the [Manitoba Drought Monitor](#) website.

For further information, please contact:

Shahram Sahraei, Ph.D., P.Eng.
Senior Water Supply Engineer, Surface Water Management Section
Water Science and Watershed Management Branch
Environment and Climate Change
Box 14, 14 Fultz Blvd.
Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3Y 0L6
E-mail: shahram.sahraei@gov.mb.ca
Ph: (431) 277-9194

Acknowledgements

This report was prepared with information from the following sources which are gratefully acknowledged:

Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure:

Reservoir level information:

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/mit/floodinfo/index.html>

Manitoba Wildfire Service:

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/sd/fire/>

Manitoba Agriculture:

Crop Reports:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/crops/seasonal-reports/crop-report-archive/index.html>

Topsoil moisture conditions:

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/weather/weather-conditions-and-reports.html>

Environment and Climate Change Canada:

Flow and lake level information:

http://www.wateroffice.ec.gc.ca/index_e.html

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada:

Canadian Drought Monitor:

<https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/agriculture-and-environment/drought-watch-and-agroclimate/canadian-drought-monitor>

United States Drought Monitor:

<https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>