

March 31, 2020

**PROVINCE RELEASES
SECOND 2020 SPRING THAW OUTLOOK**

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**Conditions Favourable
At this Time: Schuler**

With the annual spring run-off approaching, the province continues to watch the Red River Valley in anticipation of potential high-water situations, Infrastructure Minister Ron Schuler said today as he released the second Spring Thaw Outlook of 2020.

“Our outlook remains similar to the first outlook we released in late February and our focus continues to be on the Red River this spring,” said Schuler. “Forecasters are expecting a significant inflow of water from the northern United States and they expect high water levels similar to last spring, barring a major early April storm with substantial precipitation or a fast melt.”

The second Spring Thaw Outlook of 2020 reports the Assiniboine River basin and other rivers are expected to remain mostly in-bank, with possible over-bank high water covering agricultural land at a few locations.

Manitoba Infrastructure’s Hydrologic Forecast Centre reports with favourable conditions, water levels similar to the spring of 2019 are expected. Last year, the Red River Floodway was put into service but Provincial Trunk Highway (PTH) 75 from Winnipeg south to Emerson remained open.

Average weather conditions in spring 2020 would result in water levels similar to 2006 on the Red River, according to forecasters. In that year, PTH 75 was closed for 18 days. Unfavourable weather could lead to a run-off nearing 2011

levels. In 2011, PTH 75 was closed for 28 days.

The minister noted the province has invested nearly \$80 million in flood mitigation measures through the Red River Valley over the past four years. Projects include:

- \$31 million for raising northbound lanes of PTH 75 south from St. Jean Baptiste to Morris to 2009 flood levels and improving drainage;
- \$15.5 million for reconstructing the Plum River bridge in the northbound lanes of PTH 75 near St. Jean Baptiste;
- \$10.3 million for reconstructing the Marsh River bridge on PTH 23 east of Morris;
- \$4.2 million for reconstructing the Little Morris River bridge on PR 422 near Rosenfeld;
- a \$1.3-million project will raise PR 205 in the vicinity of Rosenort and this ongoing project is scheduled for completion in October 2020;
- a \$1-million project will raise PR 422 in the vicinity of Rosenort, scheduled to be completed in October 2020;
- a \$8.3-million bridge is under construction over the Aux Marais River on PR 201 with a scheduled completion date of fall 2020;
- a \$7.8-million concrete culvert replacement project is underway over the Kronsgart Drain on PTH 75 and is expected to be completed by fall 2020; and
- a \$1-million steel culvert replacement project for the Aubigny Drain on PR 246 is complete and open to traffic.

The minister noted that considerable provincial resources are involved in the fight against the spread of COVID-19 and officials have contingency plans in place if the approaching spring thaw requires preparations for high water management.

The delivery of emergency services continues with appropriate personal protection during this COVID-19 episode and any high water response will be developed with COVID-19 in mind. Safe work procedures are being finalized to ensure the safety of all response workers and maintain social distancing in

producing sandbags and building dikes if required, the minister said.

“The government has also recently announced the most emergency-ready budget in Manitoba history with additional financial provisions for COVID-19 and any other emergencies we may face,” said Schuler. “Manitobans have dealt with many emergencies in the past, and we will be prepared for any high-water event that may develop over the coming weeks.”

The second 2020 Spring Thaw Outlook report will be available at www.gov.mb.ca/mit/floodinfo/index.html.