

Moisture Situation Update – April 4, 2018

Synopsis:

Across much of the province, February marked the end of a two month long dry spell (**see Map 1**) which included a much warmer than normal December, abruptly followed by a colder than normal January. As a result, by the end of January, snowpacks were poorly developed throughout most of central Alberta, ranging as far north as the Yellowhead Highway (**see Map 2**). This left many wondering if normal winter snowpacks would ever develop, particularly given the early retreat of winter snows experienced over the past two years.

In sharp contrast, during February and March, most areas saw a return to at least near normal precipitation accumulations (**see map 3**) accompanied by a continuation of below normal temperatures, a pattern that is still persisting into early April. Currently, long range forecasts are calling for frigid weather over the next several days, mixed with further snow fall accumulations, followed by a gradual warming, beginning on about April 9th. Now, many of us are anxiously awaiting for the snows to disappear.

For those lands south of Red Deer, snow packs are generally above normal, grading to at least one in 12 year highs across a wide area stretching from Calgary, down through many parts of southern Alberta (**see map 4**). Here, above normal precipitation and weeks of below normal temperatures have allowed snow to accumulate from storm to storm, in contrast to most other years where brief episodes of warm winter weather result in significant melting of accumulated snow packs.

Generally north of Red Deer snow packs are near normal, with some areas grading to near one in 12 year highs in the southwestern and southeastern Peace Regions.

Cool April weather has delayed the spring melt somewhat. However, bear in mind that the sun at this time of year is very warm, the days are significantly longer, and weather patterns in April are notoriously changeable. A week of warm weather with daily highs of 10 C or more is not uncommon at this time of year, and such weather is capable melting half a meter of snow off the landscape within a week. Thus, a return soon, to near normal weather for this time of year, will be sufficient to rapidly melt snows and start the drying process ahead of regular spring seeding operations.

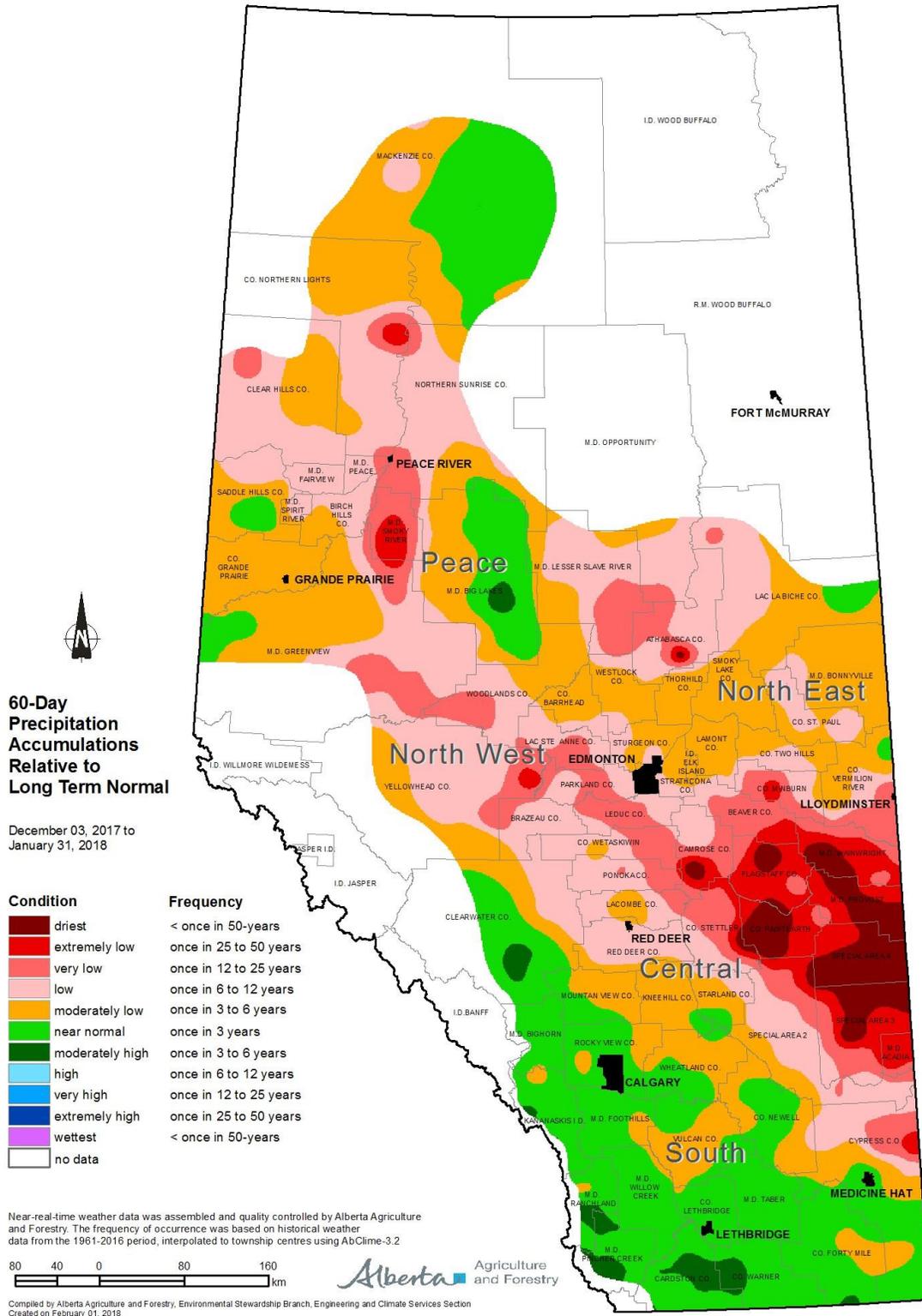
Near-real-time hourly station data can be viewed/downloaded at www.agriculture.alberta.ca/stations

Note: Data has about a two hour lag and is displayed in MST.

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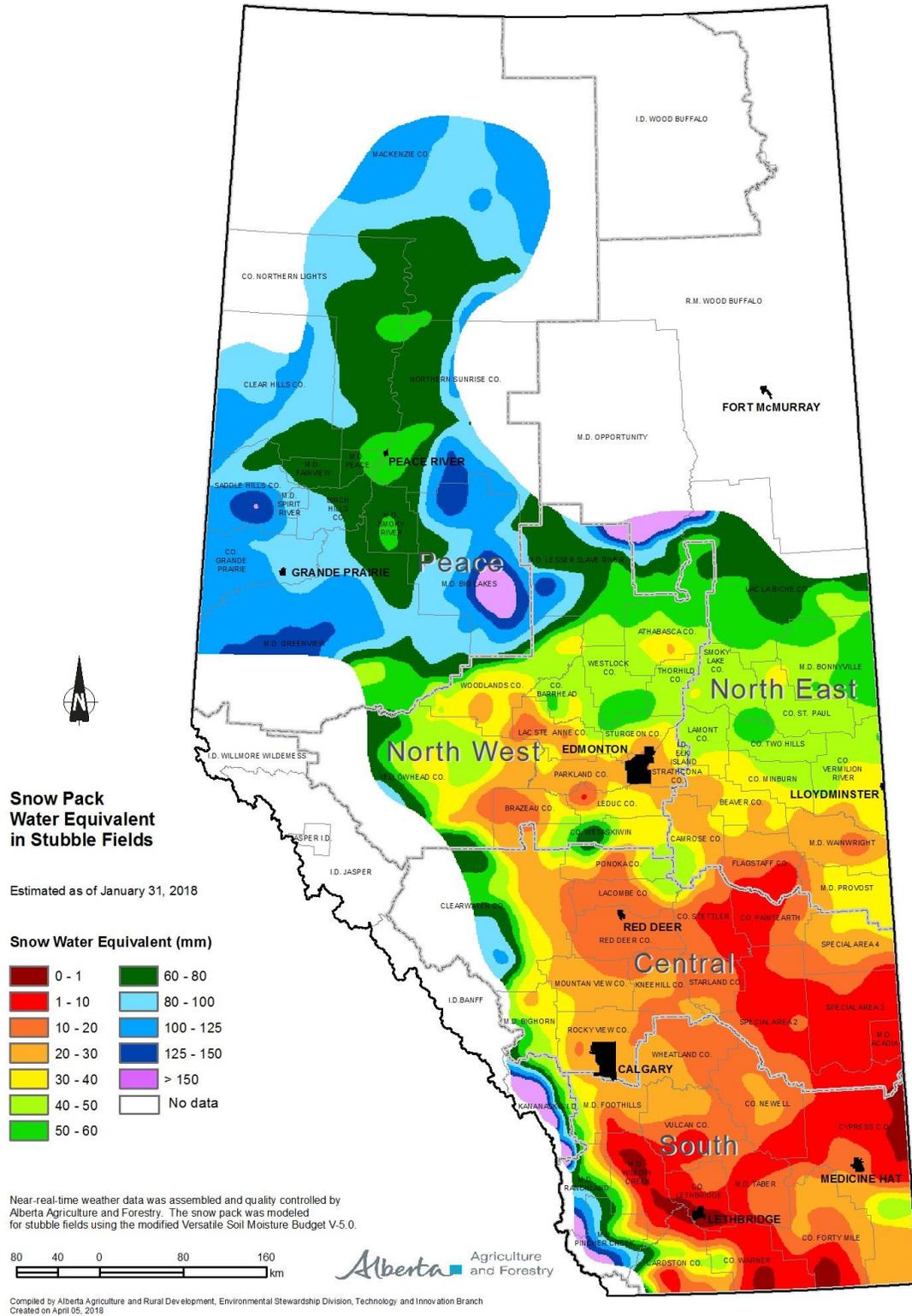
Map 1



Visit weatherdata.ca for additional maps and meteorological data

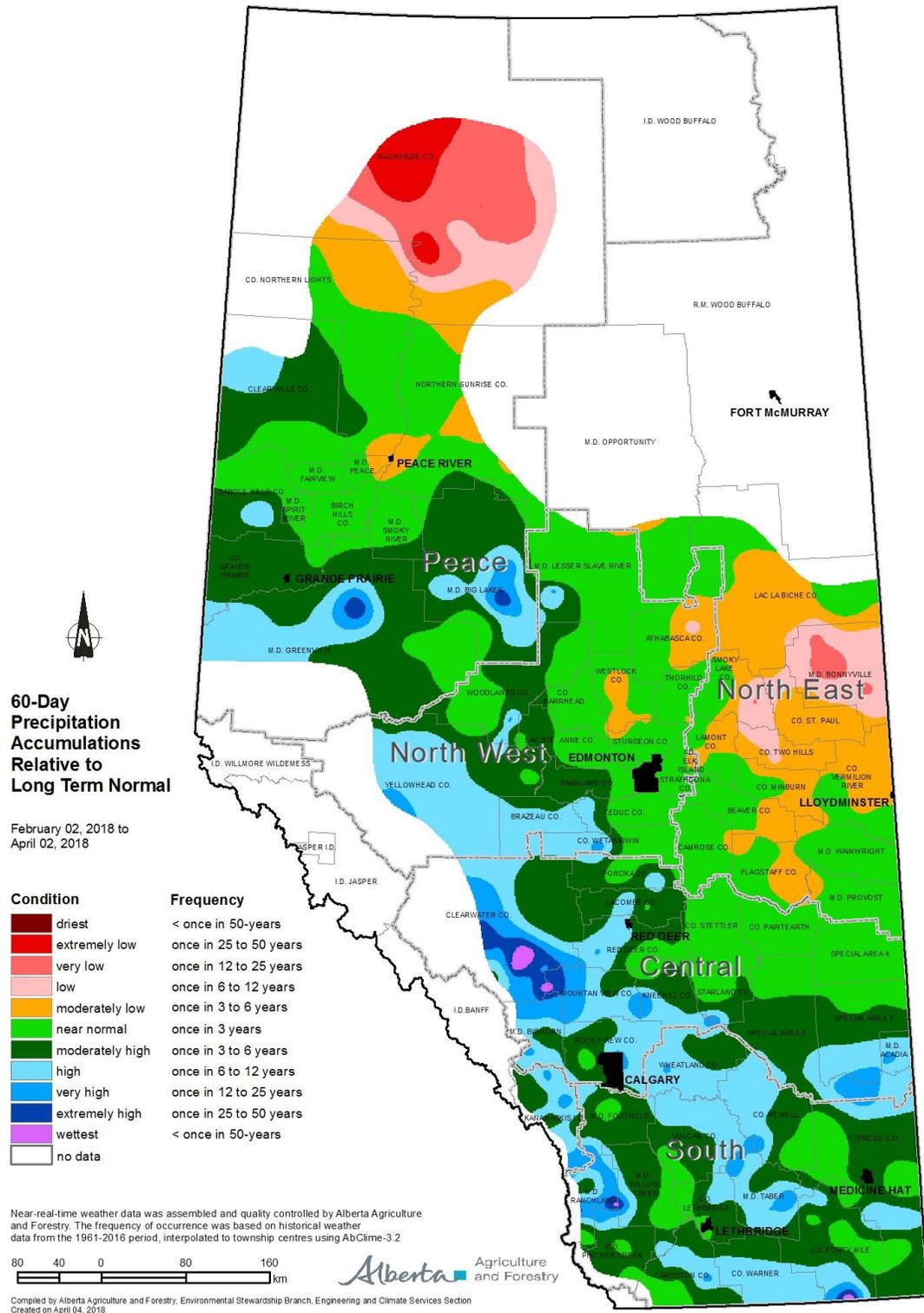
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Map 2



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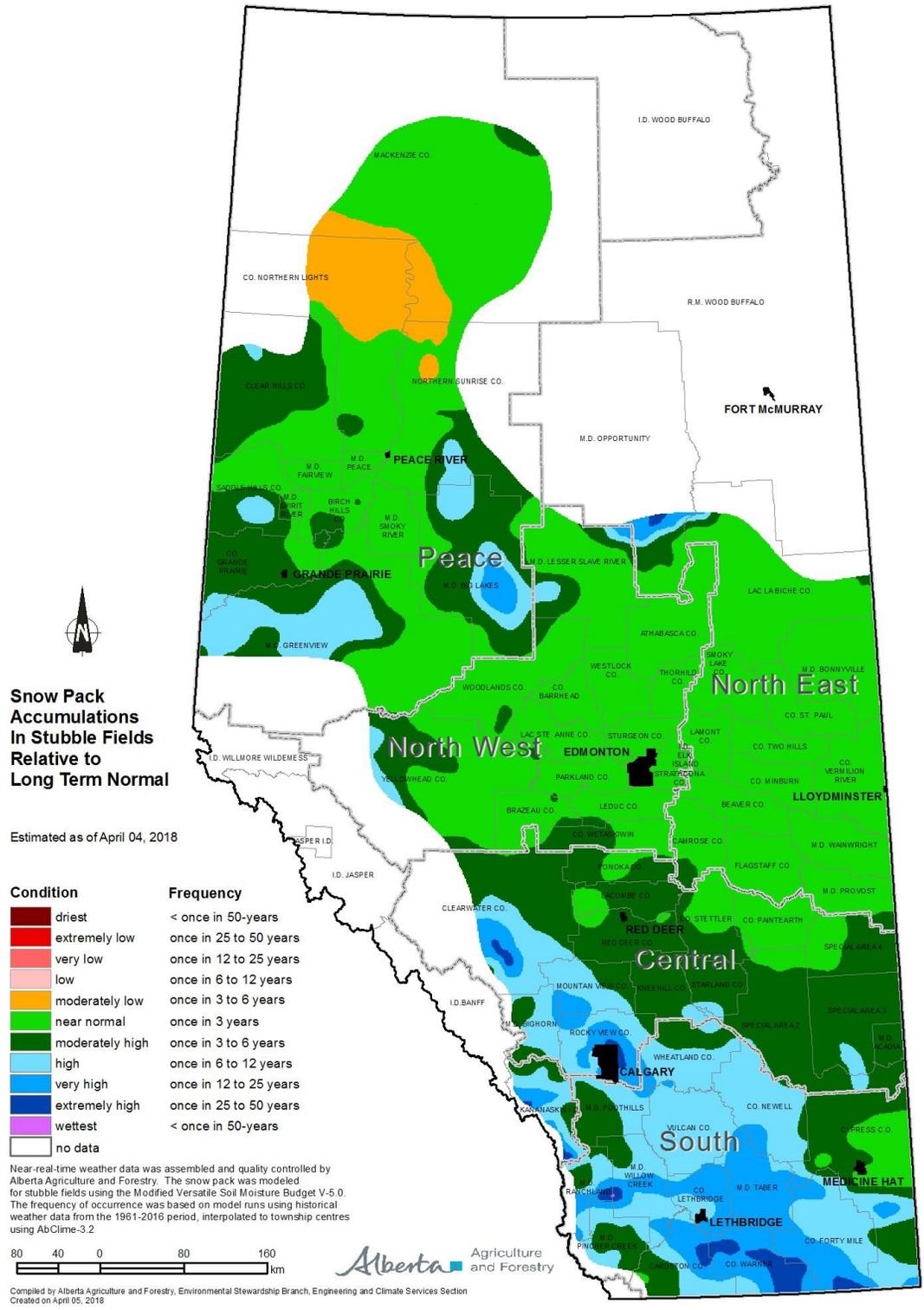
Map 3



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Map 4



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