Manitoba Hydro Fall 2026 Water & Freeze-up Outlook for Churchill, Burntwood and Nelson Rivers

#1 November 2, 2026

Churchill River (Southern Indian Lake to Hudson Bay)

Fall freeze-up on the Lower Churchill River began the week of October 26, with ice formation observed at Goose Creek, Red Head Rapids, and CR30 near Churchill.

Inflow to Southern Indian Lake (SIL) from Saskatchewan is 38,000 cubic feet per second (cfs), which is above average for this time of year. At this time last year, inflow was 19,600 cfs.

The current water level on SIL is 847.7 ft. A significant precipitation event, the largest recorded at this time of year in more than 40 years, raised the lake level by about 4 inches near the end of October.

Much of the Churchill River flow is diverted out of SIL through the Churchill River Diversion via the Notigi Control Structure to the Rat and Burntwood Rivers. To reduce the elevation of SIL, outflows at Missi Falls were increased from 4,250 to 7,000 cfs. Notigi will continue to operate around the maximum outflow of 34,000 cfs throughout the winter months.

The increase in Missi Falls flow is expected to result in a minor increase of water levels at Red Head Rapids over the next month as water from Missi Falls reaches the area in November, then will gradually decline in December and is expected to then to remain steady until spring. The current water level at the CR30 Pumphouse is around 17.4 ft.

Partridge Breast Lake is 795.7 ft, compared to 794.5 ft last year. Northern Indian Lake is 771.7 ft, compared to 770.1 ft last year. Fidler Lake is 754.9 ft, compared to 752.3 ft last year. Billard Lake is at 618.1 ft, compared to 616.4 ft last year.

Burntwood and Nelson Rivers

Freeze-up for the Burntwood and Nelson Rivers is expected to begin in mid-November.



Lake Winnipeg Outflow is 87,500 cfs, compared to 59,200 cfs last year. Cross Lake is 680.7 ft, compared to 678.4 ft last year. Sipiwesk Lake is at 609.2 ft, compared to 606.1 ft last year. Split lake is at 548.5 ft, compared to 545.0 ft last year.

Water levels on Cross, Sipiwesk, and Split Lake will continue to rise through the start of winter due to outflow increases at Jenpeg Generating Station.

Due to frequent and unpredictable changes in water levels and flow conditions, waterways and ice can be dangerous to the public. This is especially true in the areas immediately upstream and downstream of hydroelectric facilities and control structures. Manitoba Hydro strongly encourages resource users to use extreme caution on waterways.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:
WCE@hydro.mb.ca

To request accessible formats visit:
www.hydro.mb.ca/accessibility

More information on water levels and flows (forecasts and current) are available on our website at:
www.hydro.mb.ca/waterlevels

The Outlook is based on a combination of current and forecasted weather data from Environment and Climate Change Canada; recent and historic streamflow conditions based on both federal and Manitoba Hydro data; and Manitoba Hydro regulation models for Reindeer Lake and SIL.

Note that flows on the Lower Churchill River are influenced by upstream inflows, control structure operations, precipitation, temperatures, and inflows from local tributaries. Conditions can change rapidly if a large rainfall or snowfall event occurs or ice jamming. Outlook information will be updated as conditions change.

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