

LOW STREAM FLOW ADVISORY - OKANAGAN REGION

WATER CONSERVATION MEASURES REQUESTED

WATER LEVELS BELOW NORMAL

Most streams, rivers and lakes in the Okanagan, Similkameen and Kettle river basins are currently experiencing very low flows.

Similar to 2003, the low stream flows are a result of a below normal snowpack, reduced rainfall and prolonged hot weather. The long term forecast is for continued hot and dry weather and water levels are expected to continue to drop.



IMPLICATIONS

Low stream and lake levels can lead to water shortages, creating hardship for people, industry, agriculture and fish.

Potential implications include:

- Critical shortage of water for drinking, irrigation and aquatic life
- Warmer water temperatures, which may lead to poor drinking water quality and which could be lethal for fish and other aquatic species
- Low water levels that can strand fish and create migration barriers
- Low flows can deplete groundwater supplies, as surface and groundwater “feed” each other

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Water conservation is everyone’s responsibility. The Ministry of Environment, along with its partner agencies, is urging all British Columbians to conserve water during these critical low flows. Everyone is encouraged to examine their water use and use water wisely.

Water conservation tips

At home:

- Limit lawn and outdoor watering
- Don’t water during the heat of the day or when it’s windy
- Plant drought tolerant vegetation
- Take shorter showers and don’t leave the tap running
- Install water-efficient shower heads and toilets

Water conservation tips cont.

On the farm:

- Implement an irrigation scheduling program using real-time weather data
- Schedule irrigation to match crop needs and soil storage capacity
- Improve water system efficiencies and check for leaks

NEXT STEPS

The Government of British Columbia and Fisheries and Oceans Canada are monitoring water levels and identifying streams and watersheds that require specific low stream flow advisories and more stringent water conservation measures. Local governments, water suppliers and water licence holders who draw water from these streams will be advised accordingly.

If stream flows remain low and if water conservation measures are not effective, additional restrictions based on priority water licence rights may be imposed. On flow-sensitive fish streams or where water community supplies must be protected, the Government of British Columbia and Fisheries and Oceans Canada may request that Stop Work Diversion Initiatives be put in place.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Province of British Columbia Drought Information

http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wsd/public_safety/drought_info/index.html

Environment Canada Water Conservation

http://www.ec.gc.ca/water/en/manage/effic/e_weff.htm

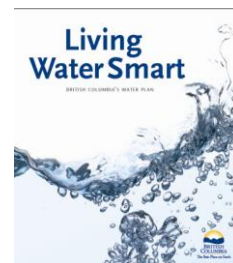
Province of British Columbia Agriculture Drought Strategies

<http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/publist/Water.htm#drought>

Farm West

www.farmwest.com

www.livingwatersmart.ca



CONTACTS

Ministry of Environment -Penticton Regional Office:
250-490-8200

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) office
www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/Contact_e.htm