



Water officials work on drought-proofing region

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Local News

National, provincial, and local water officials are talking about the dreaded "D" word... drought.

The first of several meetings took place Thursday morning.

Allan Chapman with BC's River Forecast Centre says, "As a result of the warm weather from about Christmas to today, we experienced a lot of melt of the low-elevation snow, and the mid-elevation snow."

Chapman says, "Overall, the assessment of snow in the Okanagan is it's probably worse now than it was at this date last year."

Dr. Anna Warwick Sears with the Okanagan Basin Water Board says, "In general, the precipitation will come more as rain and less as snow - we'll have hotter summers and more evaporation. So... we're going to end up with higher demand and less available water supply."

Environment Canada Meteorologist Doug Lundquist says it's important for pay attention to the weather - specifically between spring and early summer:

"Monsoonal rains... it's a critical period for us, because - particularly if the winter snow and rain tend to be low, we want to see the rains in the middle of May to July."

Lundquist says that could help ward off the risk of a forest fire in the Okanagan:

"Certainly, if we have less rain in May-July, I would think it would affect the hydrological process around southern British Columbia."

He says over the next few months, "we're somewhere between an 80-90% chance that we're going to have less than normal precipitation."

Water officials will continue to work together in order to hammer out a "drought proofing" plan for the Okanagan.

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