

ENVIRONMENT

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Okanagan moves into drought level two as hot, dry summer continues



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The Okanagan is now at a level-two drought rating, the provincial government announced on Friday.

In response, the Okanagan Basin Water Board put out a drought bulletin, calling the announcement a precautionary measure.

In part, the bulletin said, "while Okanagan water purveyors are generally experiencing average supply conditions, regional drought conditions have escalated after weeks of hot, dry conditions. Kokanee and other fish species need sufficient flows in the fall to successfully spawn, and fisheries scientists are becoming concerned about flows in several Okanagan streams, especially if the current weather patterns continue."



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There are four levels of drought in B.C.: 1, which is normal; 2, which is dry; 3, very dry; and 4, extremely dry.

Technically, the Okanagan moved into level two on August 9th, as did the Similkameen and Kettle regions. However, the Kettle region moved into level three on Aug. 17th.

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There are six regions in B.C. that are in level four: Four in northern B.C. (Northeast, Northwest, Stikine and Skeena-Nass) plus West Vancouver Island and East Vancouver Island.

The Skagit, Lower Fraser and South Coast sections are in level three, as is the South Thompson and Nicola regions.

"The B.C. government has elevated the Okanagan to a level-two drought rating due to low flows in several important local streams," the province said in a press release. "The province is encouraging everyone to use water wisely and ensure local drought management plans are ready to activate if needed."

For more on provincial drought levels, click [here](#).

A map of the affected areas is available online: <http://ow.ly/BY7z30lpci0>

According to the provincial government, rain is projected for some parts of the province, in particular the Peace Region and across the North, but is not expected to significantly diminish drought levels.

As drought levels increase, maximum voluntary water conservation is strongly encouraged to maintain water supplies. The province says it has the ability to regulate water usage, including temporary suspension of water licences or short-term water approvals, should it become necessary, to protect flows for fish and for priority water users.

However, the hot and dry conditions that have elevated drought levels have also triggered widespread wildfires throughout the province. In recognition of the need to protect personal property and businesses from these devastating fires, residents are advised that the use of water from streams, lakes or aquifers to extinguish a fire may be necessary and is authorized under the Water Sustainability Act.

There are no regions in the province that remain at level one normal streamflow levels. However, because of the variance of conditions within each region, some individual streams may be lower than others. Both tributaries and larger main-stem rivers are now experiencing rapidly dropping stream levels. Many streams are now at record lows.

VIDEO LINK: <https://globalnews.ca/news/4407865/okanagan-moves-into-drought-level-two-as-hot-dry-summer-continues/>

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