

Okanagan reaches Level 2 drought rating

The province is encouraging everyone to use water wisely.

KATHY MICHAELS / Aug. 24, 2018 9:30 a.m. / NEWS



The provincial government elevated the Okanagan to a Level 2 drought rating due to low flows in several important local streams.

The province is encouraging everyone to use water wisely and ensure local drought management plans are ready to activate if needed.

In the Okanagan Water Basin Board's latest Okanagan Drought Bulletin, they say Okanagan water purveyors are generally experiencing average supply conditions, but 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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The province is sending letters to water users on those streams.

Given that water demand has also increased in many communities in August, the board is asking water purveyors to take a close look at current reservoir levels and downstream flows and consider ramping up communications with customers, increasing watering restrictions, or implementing other conservation measures as needed. Once again, the province is also asking licensees with upstream storage to closely follow their release schedule requirements to avoid low flows downstream and potential impacts to fish.

All independent licensees on streams, and all groundwater users who are on aquifers that may be connected to streams, are encouraged to monitor their withdrawals and ensure they are using water efficiently.

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