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ENVIRONMENT

With reservoirs at below average levels, Greater Vernon Water suggests prepping for a dry summer

By Megan Turcato · Global News

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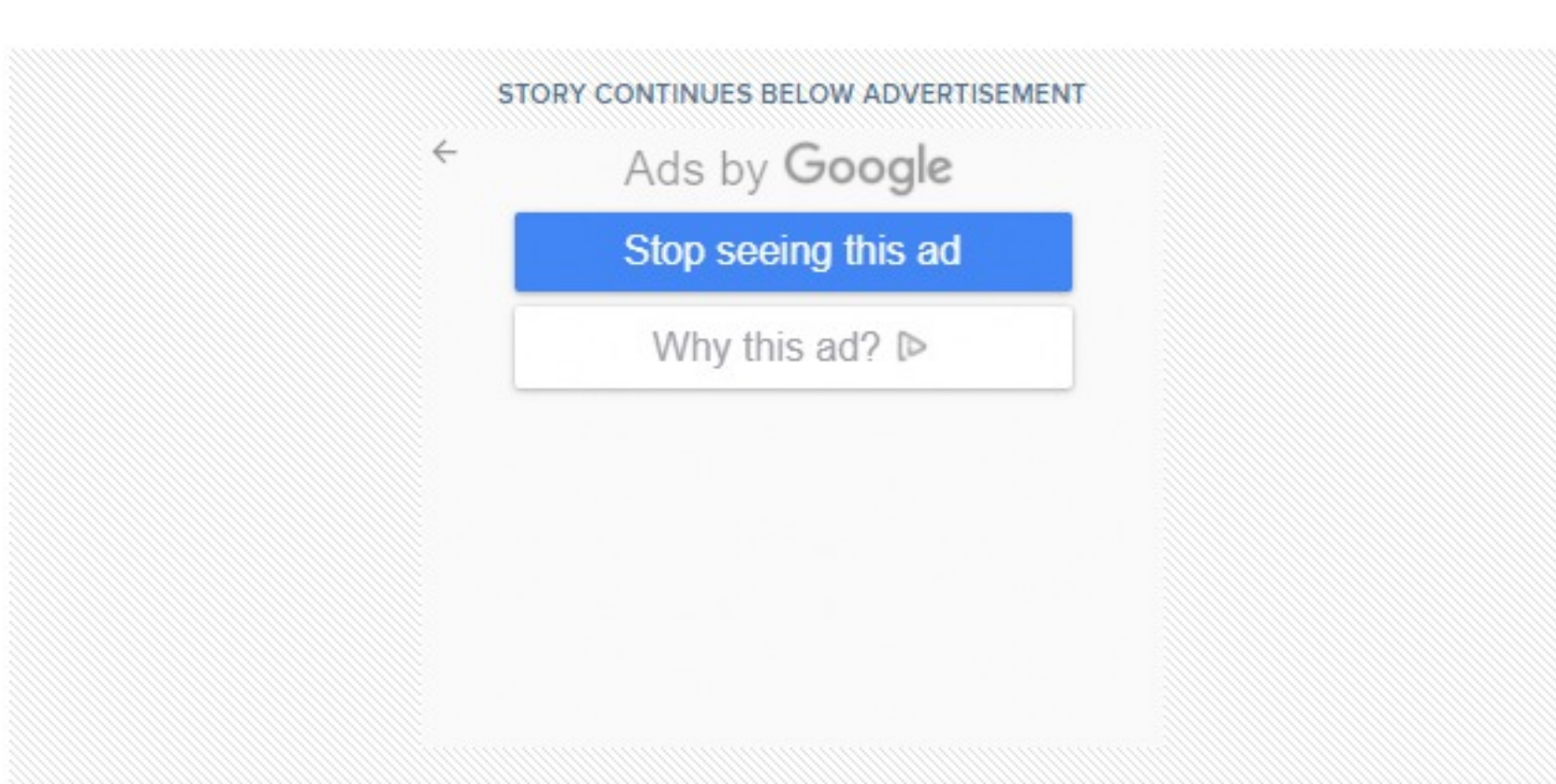
Greater Vernon Water is warning customers to prepare for the possibility of a dry summer ahead.

Thanks to dry conditions this spring, water levels in a key water source for the utility, the Duteau Creek reservoirs, are still in the normal range but at below-average levels.

[The Duteau Creek reservoirs](#) typically provide more than half of the utility's water each year.

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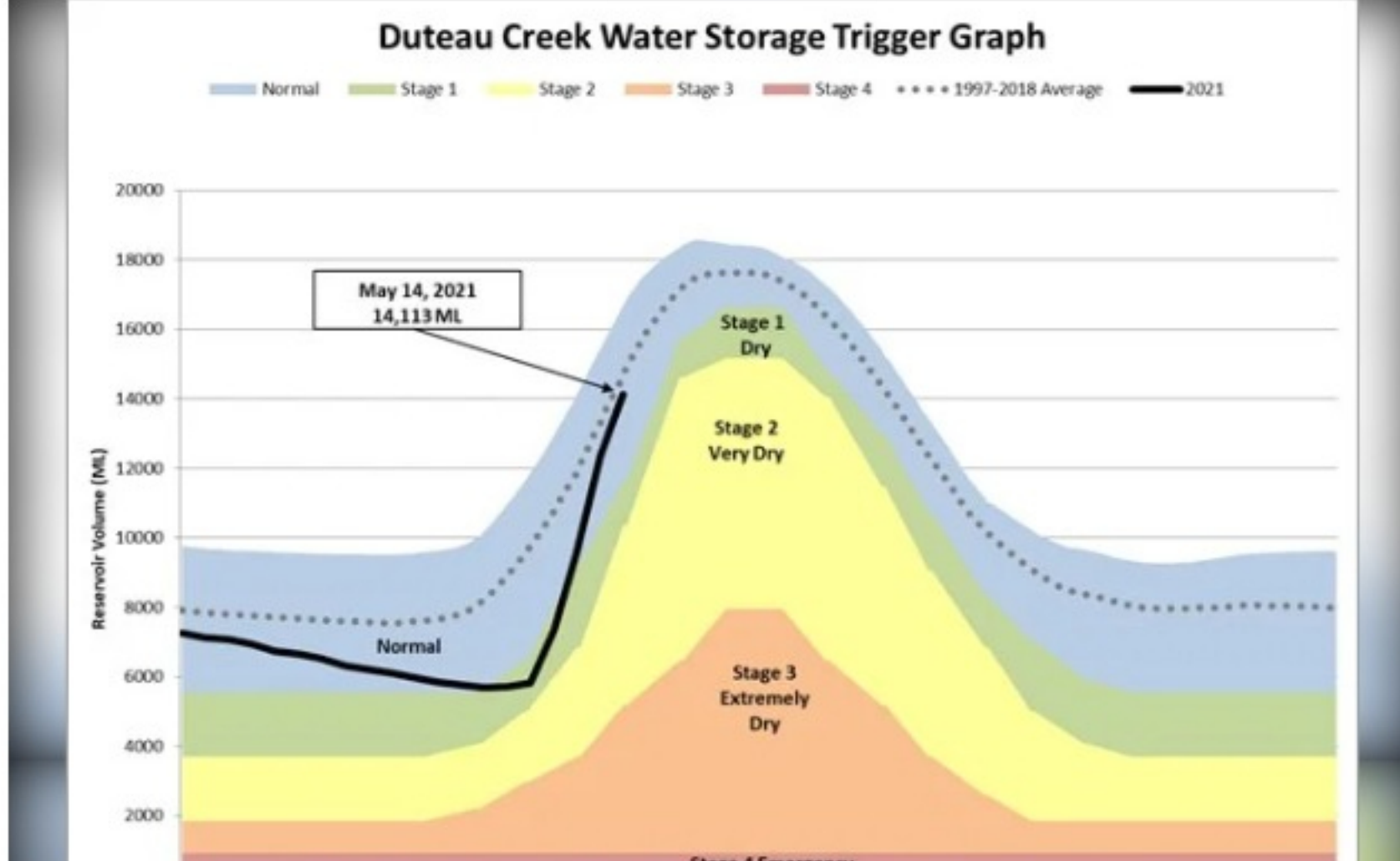
"We just wanted to raise awareness amongst residents that we are seeing really dry conditions this spring, and we've actually had a really low amount of precipitation down here in the valley," said Jennifer Miles a water sustainability coordinator for the Regional District of North Okanagan, which operates the water utility.



Miles said that dry weather has already prompted some to bring out sprinklers earlier than usual to compensate.

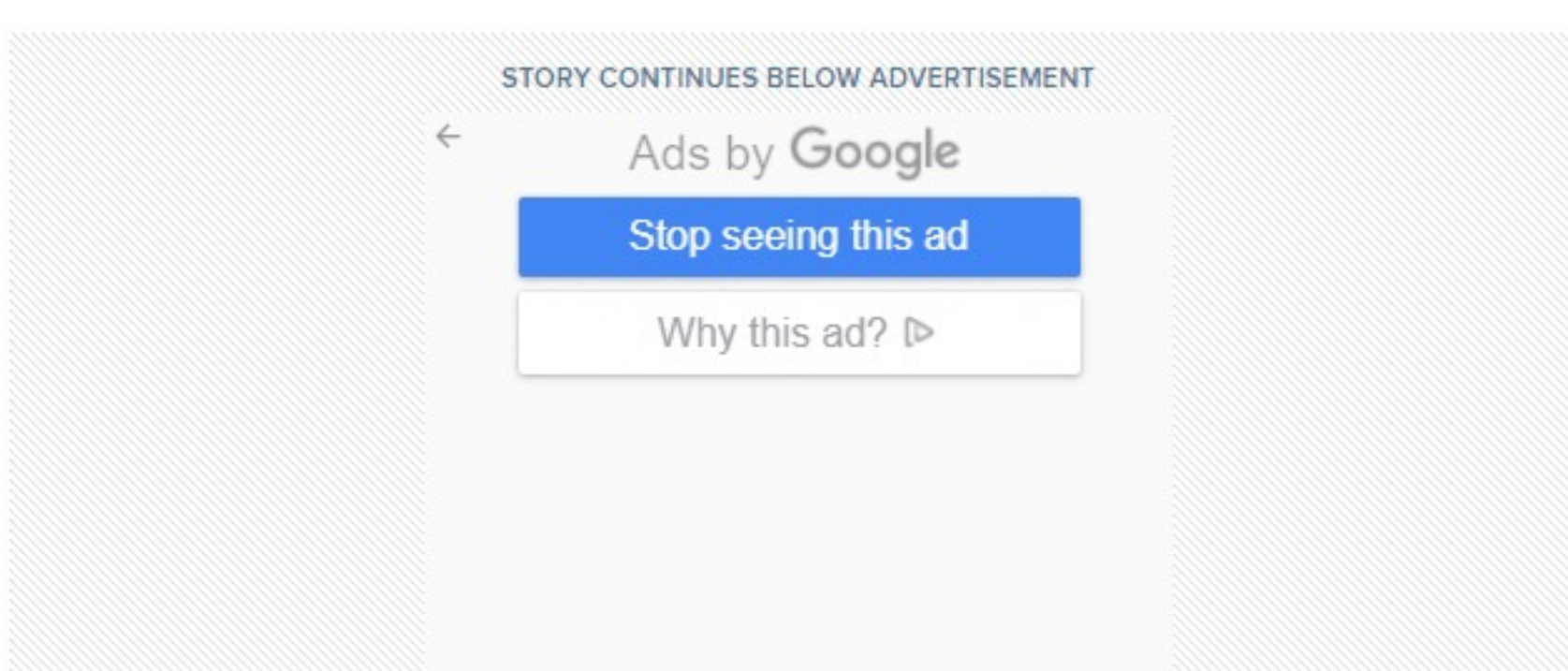
"We are wanting to help everyone keep in mind that we live in a normally dry climate, and we really want to encourage folks to do their best to use water wisely," Miles said.

Drier than normal weather is also in the forecast for June, the utility said.



Weather conditions in June, typically the area's wettest month, will be a major factor in determining what water levels in the reservoirs look like through summer.

"While we usually receive significant rain in June to help fill our reservoirs, this year's forecast indicates there is a high chance of getting less than our normal June precipitation," the utility said in a media release.

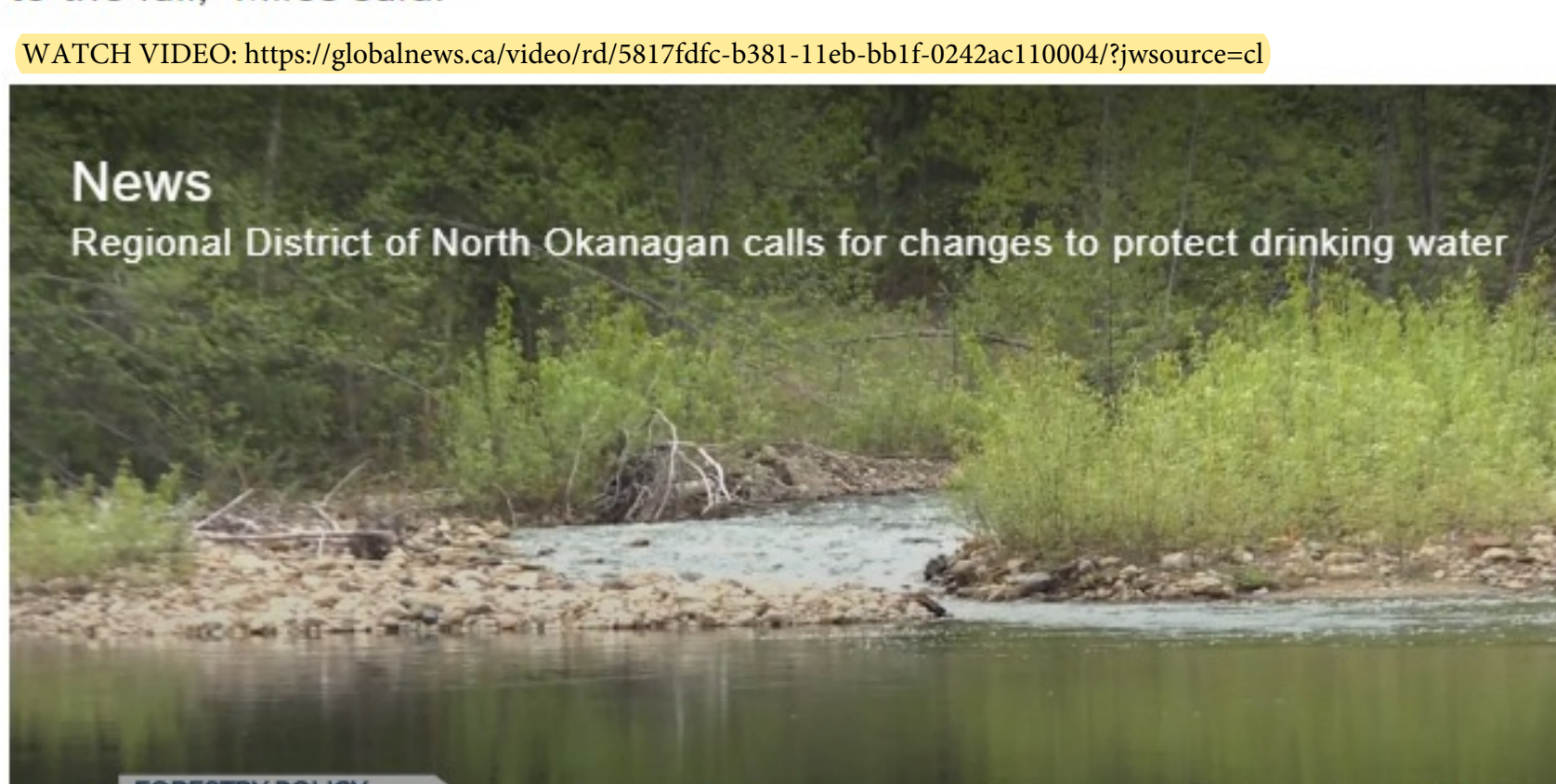


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However, there is no cause for alarm, according to the utility.

"Even if our June rains aren't as substantial as we'd like them to be, our reservoirs are at a good level right now that everything should get us through to the fall," Miles said.

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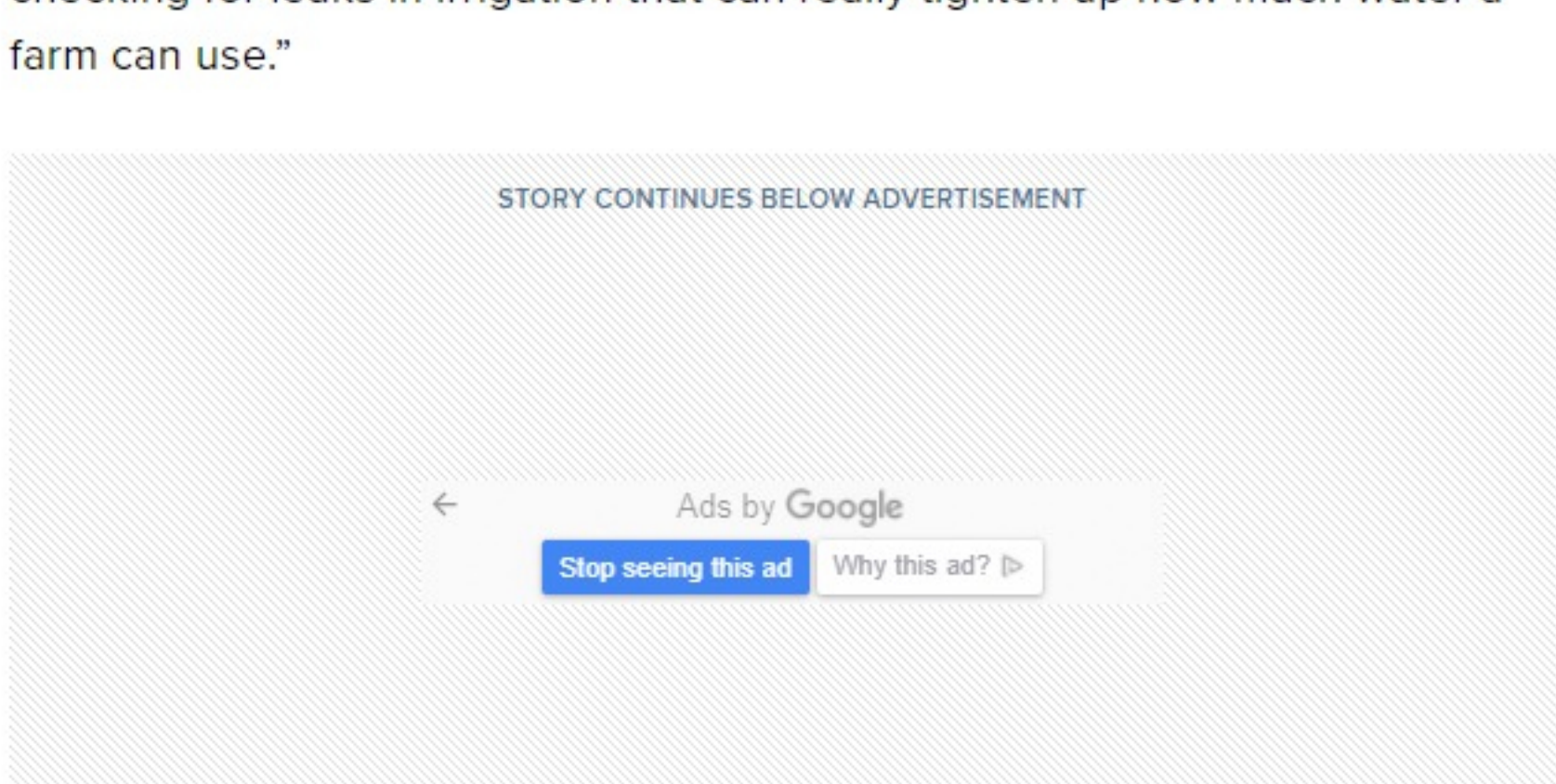


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While the utility isn't sounding alarm bells, it does want to notify customers of a possible dry season so they can prepare.

"Especially with our farm, we have a lot of folks who really rely on irrigation to make a living," Miles said.

"So we like to provide this update now, so they are aware of the potential dryness and they can modify their farm operations. And it can be as simple as checking for leaks in irrigation that can really tighten up how much water a farm can use."



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The utility is also urging customers to consider other options to minimize their water use, including planting vegetation that requires less water.

"A lot of the plants that we have don't really make sense for our normally dry Okanagan climate, and [there is a lot of great options for colourful, vibrant plants \[that require less water\]](#)," Miles said.

More water conservation tips are available on the [regional district's website](#).