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GOLDILOCKS SUMMER?

# Okanagan Basin Water Board report foresees Goldilocks summer: not too hot, not too cold

Jon Manchester - Jul 2, 2022 / 4:00 am



Photo: Ed Burke

The Okanagan appears to be heading for a "Goldilocks" summer, according to the Okanagan Basin Water Board.

In a report to the board, executive director Anna Warwick Sears says Environment Canada projections point to B.C. having more moderate temperatures than the rest of Canada, and that B.C. will have "Goldilocks weather: not too hot, not too cold."

"After a very wet month of June, with higher-than-normal streamflows and higher-than-expected lake levels, conditions are finally moderating," writes Warwick Sears.

Meanwhile, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's seasonal forecast for July to September is leaning "weakly" toward higher-than-normal temperatures and lower-than-normal precipitation.

In other water board news, high water levels and murky conditions postponed a milfoil survey of Swan Lake to assess the aquatic weed's growth.

A survey at the end of last summer observed mostly native northern milfoil in the North Okanagan lake – although it is difficult to differentiate without genetic testing.

Northern milfoil does not cause the same harms as Eurasian milfoil and does not form dense mats on the surface of the water.

Another survey on Swan Lake is planned for mid-July.

Water board staff also recently met with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada co-ordinators and Ministry of Forests staff to discuss drought monitoring.

Agri-Food Canada's Canadian Drought Monitor and the provincial government use different drought classification schemes.

The province uses a rating system of drought levels 0 to 5, while local water suppliers use stages based on their own drought response plans, and stage numbers vary by region.

The CDM reports on drought conditions using drought ratings D0 to D4.

Several times in 2020 and 2021, potentially confusing information was almost released to the media.

"The meeting went very well, and everyone agreed that future collaboration is essential. We will meet monthly throughout the summer to discuss drought conditions and co-ordinate communications," a report to water board directors states.