



Kelowna

Level 2 drought warning

Jon Manchester - Jun 11, 2019 / 4:42 pm



Photo: Water Canada

UPDATE: 4:40 p.m.

The Okanagan has been raised to a Level 2 drought rating.

Corinne Jackson of the Okanagan Basin Water Board says the precautionary measure is based on low snowpack, early snowmelt and forecasts calling for a hot, dry summer.

Residents are encouraged to use water wisely and have local drought management plans ready to activate, if needed.

The Okanagan Drought Bulletin shows much of B.C. has been raised to Level 2. Only the Columbia region is at Level 1 or normal. Vancouver Island and the far northeast of the province are already at Level 3, or "very dry."

"Along with 2015 and 2016, this year is amongst the lowest snowpacks observed in B.C. over the past 40 years. Persistent warm weather and limited precipitation in May brought the Okanagan's snowpack to 4% of normal as of June 1. With diminished snowpacks and early melt, there is an increased likelihood of low flow conditions this summer," the water board says.

ORIGINAL: noon

Long stretches of warm weather this spring and too few rainy days are raising alarms about drought across British Columbia.

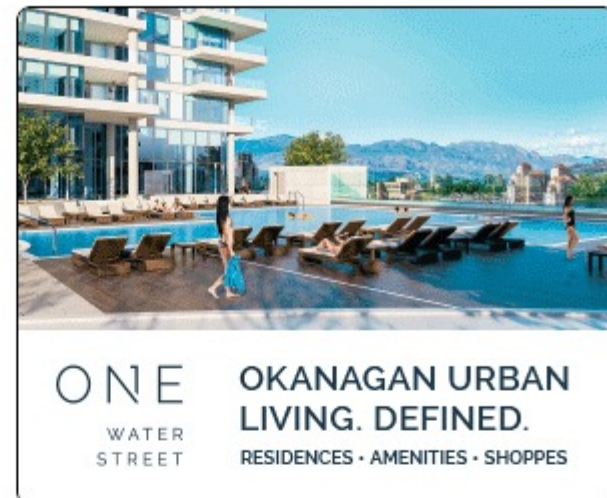
Drought levels have been raised already for parts of the province, and Dave Campbell with the B.C. River Forecast Centre says the current forecast points to drought conditions provincially in the coming weeks.

Campbell says the snow pack levels from last winter are half of what they would normally be and between 55 per cent and 100 per cent of the snow pack that feeds many of the provincial waterways has already melted.

He says if the dry spell continues and spring rains don't arrive soon, B.C. will start to experience increasing drought conditions by the end of June.

Last year, dry weather contributed to B.C.'s record wildfire season, with more than 2,100 fires consuming more than 13,000 square kilometres of forests, grasslands and property.

Richard Kennett, an owner of Bucky's Sports Shop in Duncan, B.C., says local fishing streams and salmon spawning waterways are already at low levels and he worries salmon will not be able to get to their spawning grounds this year.



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