Oliver/Osoyoos

DROUGHT LEVEL RAISED TO 4

The Okanagan Water Basin has now been declared to be drought level 4

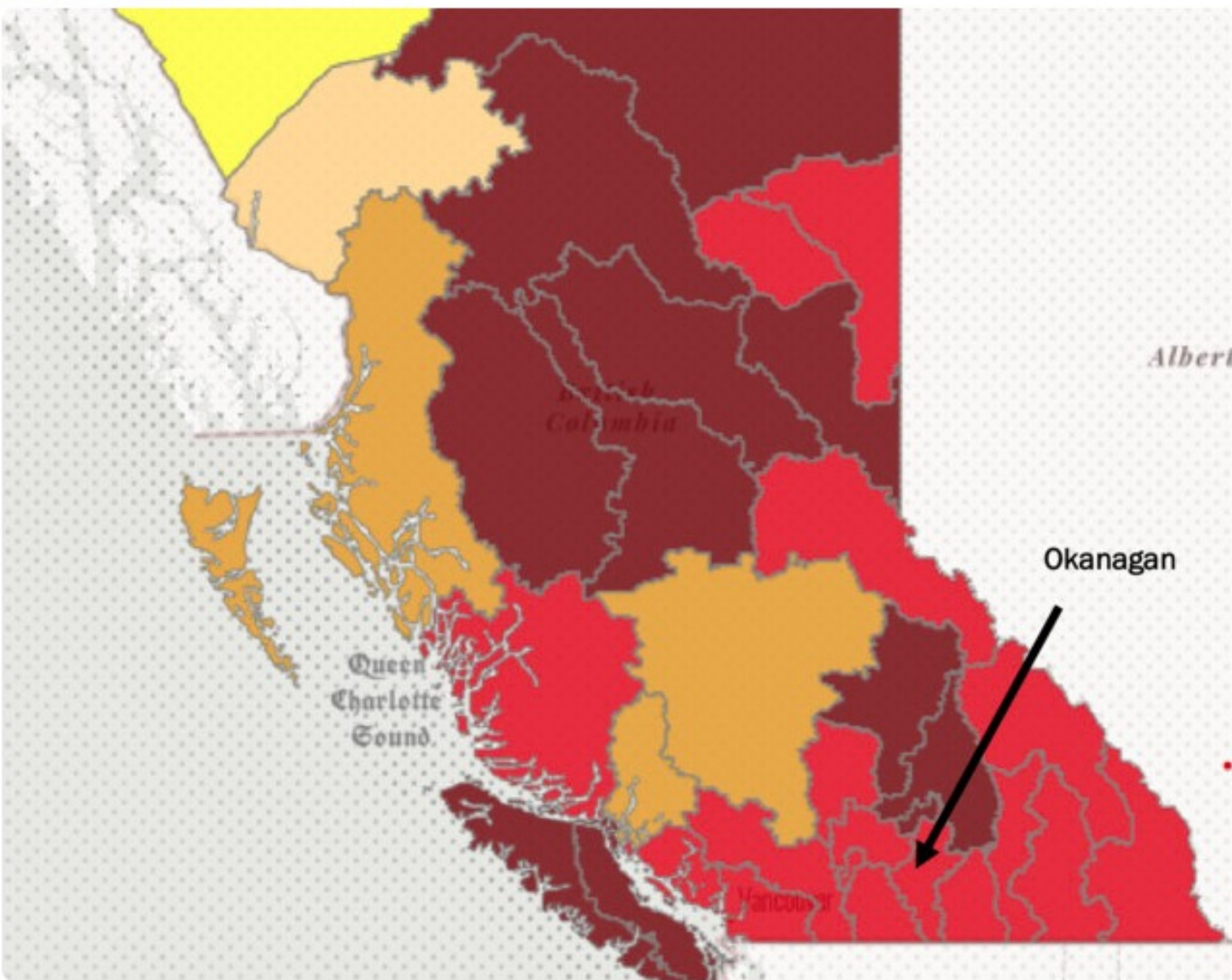Sebastian Kanally - Aug 11, 2023 / 11:59 am

Photo: BC Drought Information Portal
BC?s current drought conditions as of August 8, 2023.

The Okanagan drought level has been raised to level 4 indicating extremley dry conditions.

The Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) says that a lack of precipitation, low streamflows, high water temperatures which can be lethal to fish, in conjunction with sustained warm weather has prompted the BC government to increase the drought level.

Level 4 drought reflects extremely dry conditions with adverse impacts to socio-economic or ecosystems values considered to be likely. Drought conditions in the province are ranked from 0-5.

The OBWB notes that many important fish-bearing streams in the Okanagan are flowing below normal levels and several are completely dry. The forecast is showing continued hot and dry weather and it is unlikely that flows will improve unless there are collective conservation efforts.

OBWB points out that "water conservation is everyone's responsibility."

Continuing to advise that "people and businesses in affected areas should reduce water use wherever possible and observe watering restrictions set by their water purveyor. We need to work together to make sure there is enough water for fish, agriculture, and fighting wildfires."

In Oliver and Osoyoos current water restrictions for both towns are at stage 2. These water restrictions are set using different metrics than just drought conditions, such as consumer demand, infrastructure capacity, and local water supply conditions.

The story of this year's drought levels does not appear to be slowing down and as most of BC's water basins are at "extremely dry" (level 4) or "exceptionally dry" (level 5) with no reprieve in the forecast.

You can learn more about the provincial and federal drought levels here.

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