

B.C. Drought Preparedness - Province of BC drought response 2024 overview

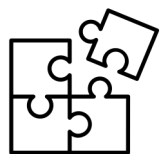
*UBCM - B.C.'s Climate Hazard Landscape
April 3, 2024*

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Water Management Branch / Watershed Stewardship and Security Branch
Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

2024 Drought Outlook

- **Challenging to accurately predict drought into this summer;** much depends on snow and rain conditions through spring and summer
- **Early indicators strongly suggest drought conditions will persist into 2024**
 - Low snowpack, with March 1 average tied for second lowest on record
 - Streamflow and groundwater levels remain relatively low in many areas and are slow to recharge from 2023 season
 - El Niño winter (warm) conditions promote low snowpack and early freshet
- **B.C. is preparing for an elevated risk of drought in 2024**

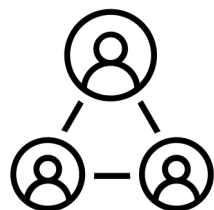
Provincial 2024 Approach to Drought



Earlier preparation, cross-organizational coordination and communication



Improving our understanding of drought conditions and impact



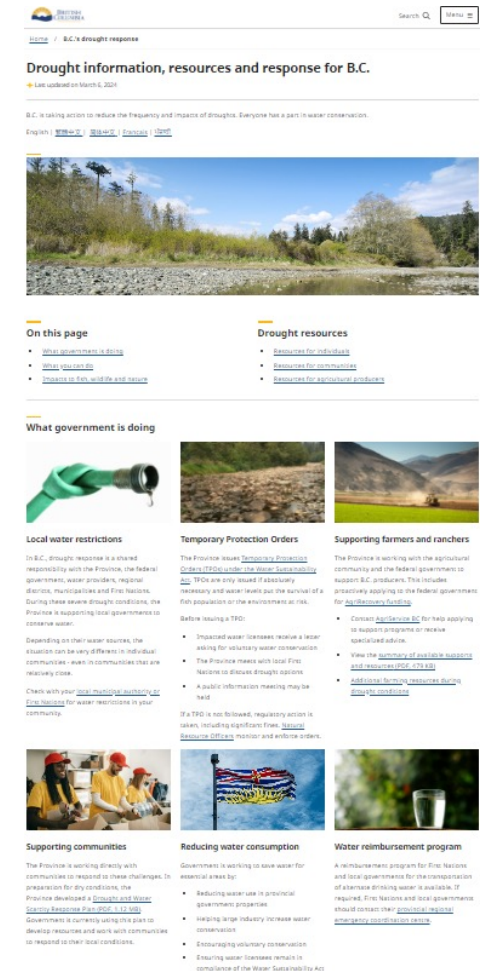
Whole-of-Government approach – streamlined internal governance structure

Staying Informed

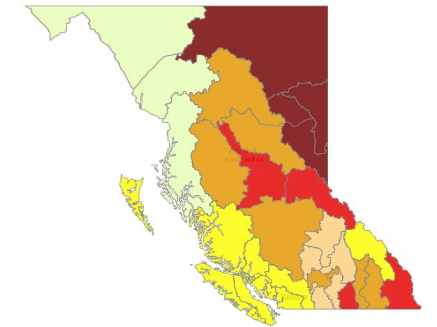
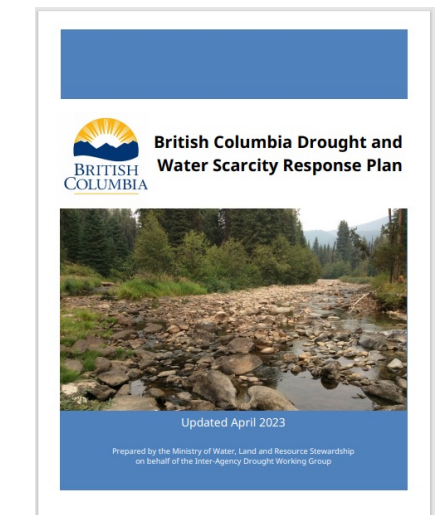
Single landing page for BC Gov drought information
www.gov.bc.ca/drought

Drought levels are updated throughout the season on the
 B.C. Drought Information Portal

Provincial drought levels are described in the
 British Columbia Drought and Water Scarcity Response Plan



The screenshot shows the 'Drought information, resources and response for B.C.' page. It includes a navigation menu, a search bar, and a main heading. Below the heading is a large image of a dry riverbed. The page is organized into sections: 'On this page' with links to 'What government is doing', 'What you can do', and 'Supporting local water users'; 'Drought resources' with links for 'Resources for individuals', 'Resources for communities', and 'Resources for agricultural producers'; 'What government is doing' with sub-sections for 'Local water restrictions', 'Temporary Protection Orders', and 'Supporting farmers and ranchers'; 'Supporting communities'; 'Reducing water consumption'; and 'Water reimbursement program'. Each section contains brief text and links to further information.

The cover of the 'British Columbia Drought and Water Scarcity Response Plan' features the British Columbia logo and a photograph of a dry riverbed. The text on the cover includes the title, the date 'Updated April 2023', and the preparer: 'Prepared by the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship on behalf of the Inter-Agency Drought Working Group'.

Investments in Drought Resilience

Current Ongoing Investments

- \$513M/3 yrs. Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy, including for local governments and agriculture resilience
- \$250M/5-year BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund
- \$15M for Pacific Salmon Foundation and First Nations Fisheries Council to work on emergency interventions for salmon
- \$115.4M available for remaining intakes of the Community Emergency Preparedness Fund
- \$20 M Agriculture Water Infrastructure Program
- Watershed Security Fund – upcoming intake for watershed restoration projects

New - Budget 2024

- \$83M to increase funding for the Agriculture Water Infrastructure Program
- \$50M for the purchase and installation of water metering in select communities
- \$14M for Cowichan Lake weir
- \$10 million to raise dam height on Saint Mary Lake on Salt Spring Island

Drinking Water

Current projects:

- Communications focused on water supplier drought preparation
- Mapping drinking water systems in BC
- Drinking Water Supply Dashboard



**DROUGHT PREP
COMMUNICATIONS**



**MAP 5,000 DRINKING WATER
SYSTEMS**



DESIGN INTERNAL TOOLS

Community Drinking Water Supply Project

- WLRS is compiling a drinking water system dataset (spatial layer) to improve provincial understanding of drinking water systems.
- Water suppliers will be contacted by WLRS via email on a regular basis throughout the drought season.
- The email will include a link to a survey where water suppliers can enter their water supply status information. That data will be used to populate the Drinking Water Supply Dashboard (internal government tool).
- Survey results will be used to identify communities that are vulnerable to running out of water due to drought and provide early warning to government decision-makers.

Drinking Water Supply Dashboard

Benefits to water suppliers of providing water supply status data to WLRs:

- Clear pathway for water suppliers advise BC of water supply risk
- Inform prioritization and funding of future work to increase drought resilience
- Identify systems in need of technical assistance/expertise
- Identify the need to use innovative policy tools to protect drinking water supplies



www.gov.bc.ca/drought