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## INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Ministry of Environment

### **WATER CONSERVATION URGED IN SOUTHERN INTERIOR**

VICTORIA – Concerns about fish populations and water supplies has prompted a request for proactive water conservation in the Southern Interior, Environment Minister Barry Penner said today.

The dry July weather is starting to affect stream flows in the Southern Interior. A high-pressure ridge over the province brought dry, above-average temperatures to the Southern Interior in mid-August. Some rainfall since then has helped stabilize flows in some streams, but stream and aquifer levels are starting to fall in a number of areas.

Low stream levels can translate to shortages of water for drinking, irrigation and aquatic life. Low water levels can strand fish and create migration barriers, and warmer water temperatures can be lethal for fish and other aquatic species. In addition, low flows can deplete groundwater supplies because surface and groundwater “feed” each other.

The Thompson-Nicola, Shuswap and Tulameen water basins are currently classified as Drought Level 2 (dry conditions). Although most streams in these basins are not at critical flow levels, there is a potential for negative effects on fish populations for certain streams if the dropping stream and aquifer level trends continue.

The Ministry of Environment is working closely with Fisheries and Oceans Canada to monitor stream conditions. Monitoring in the Salmon, Bessette, West Kettle, and Fortune watersheds has indicated a potential for flow-related issues to develop. Adult chinook salmon are preparing to move upstream to spawn in both the Salmon and Bessette rivers where a continued drop in stream flows may require additional water conservation measures for protection purposes.

The current weather forecast anticipates some precipitation and below-average temperatures in the next week. This should help stabilize streams in the Southern Interior, depending on the amount of rain received. However, as a precautionary measure, Penner is asking British Columbians for their help in reducing water use in the specified streams by adopting voluntary water conservation measures.

For additional information on water supply and streamflow conditions, go to:  
<http://bcrcfc.env.gov.bc.ca/bulletins/>

For more information on drought conditions and the B.C. Drought Response Plan, go to:  
[http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wsd/public\\_safety/drought\\_info](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wsd/public_safety/drought_info).

Living Water Smart: B.C.'s Water Plan outlines the government's vision and plan to keep B.C.'s water healthy and secure for the future. For more information, go to:  
<http://www.livingwatersmart.ca/>.

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