



Media Release

For Immediate Release

DATE: November 13, 2025

Summerland Moves to Drought Level 4

SUMMERLAND – With a continued lack of precipitation and dry conditions in the headwaters, the community will now move to Drought Level 4, the same as the general drought condition of the broader region. Significant near-term 2025 impacts are not anticipated at Drought Level 4 given the irrigation season is over, and residential watering has largely concluded. If conditions don't improve in the coming months, the 2026 season could see further actions to reduce water use through voluntary or regulatory measures.

Summerland staff monitor headwaters snowpack and reservoir levels. By June 2025, the reservoir system entered "storage" meaning the freshet water was no longer spilling at the reservoir, a full 5 weeks earlier than average. This combined with minimal rainfall and early consumption patterns pushed the community to Drought Level 2 as defined in the Summerland Drought Response Plan. Staff also worked with the province to make reductions to flow requirements on Trout Creek during the summer months, retaining extra water in the system.

Through summer, the continued dry conditions in the British Columbia southern Interior prompted the provincial government to rapidly increase from a general drought level 0 to level 4 within just seven weeks (between August 21, 2005 and October 9, 2025).

Similarly, by early October as a precaution, the District had moved to Drought Level 3. Irrigation shut off (starting October 14) and more recent moisture in the watershed have together helped curtail the decrease of the impounded water held in storage; however, Summerland reservoir level monitoring indicates that levels remain low. Moving to Drought Level 4 now will further reduce the volume of water released into Trout Creek while continuing to meet the minimum levels required by the province for environmental purposes.

Summerland owns and operates 11 reservoirs west of the community which are used to store water for community needs, including drinking water, agricultural and residential uses such as watering properties. Reservoir levels are influenced heavily by environmental conditions and precipitation levels, as well as downstream consumption. Staff work closely with the provincial government to meet regulatory requirements for dam safety and maintenance, but also for outflow requirements into Trout Creek and Okanagan Lake.

Quote:

"Drought conditions are not uncommon in the Okanagan, and even with our dams, Summerland is not immune to the same environmental factors that affect water quantity in the region. We are acting now to ensure that we start 2026 in the best position possible for our community members while maintaining our environmental obligations as a key water steward in the area."

~ Mayor Doug Holmes

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