
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RDNO Provides Update on Water Supply Challenges

Since implementing Stage 3 watering restrictions, Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO) staff have been working to address ongoing water supply challenges, support impacted residents and agricultural producers, and identify both immediate and long-term solutions to improve water system resilience.

The RDNO recognizes the significant impacts these restrictions are having on residents, farmers, ranchers, and businesses throughout the region. Staff understand this is a difficult and stressful time and want the community to know that extensive work has been underway.

"While Stage 3 restrictions were necessary to protect our water supply, we recognize the hardship they create," said Stacey Raftus, RDNO Communications Officer. "Our staff, partners, and contractors have been working to explore options to increase water supply, support agriculture, and help our communities through this challenging period."

Emergency Coordination and Agricultural Support

To strengthen response efforts, the RDNO has activated an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and assigned a task number through Emergency Management and Climate Readiness, allowing staff to investigate available provincial support and coordinate with partner agencies.

Recognizing the region's dependence on agriculture, the RDNO is working closely with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and has hired two dedicated Agricultural positions to support outreach, communication, and coordination with producers.

The RDNO has also retained an irrigation specialist to work with major agricultural water users on irrigation scheduling strategies to maximize water efficiency while minimizing impacts on crop production.

Increasing Available Water Supply

Staff continue to pursue opportunities to supplement water supplies throughout the system, including:

- Bringing the Antwerp Deep Well online to help offset declining levels in Duteau Reservoir.
- Investigating the feasibility of bringing the Antwerp Shallow Well online.
- Advancing approvals, engineering, and operational planning to explore connecting the City of Vernon Water Reclamation Centre's Spray Irrigation Program with Goose Lake Reservoir.

- Assessing the potential to transfer water from Swan Lake to Goose Lake Reservoir.
- Working closely with the City of Vernon and District of Coldstream on water conservation plans and priorities.

These initiatives require regulatory review, engineering assessment, and operational planning. Staff continue to advance this work as quickly as possible while ensuring necessary provincial and federal approvals and environmental considerations are addressed.

Looking Ahead

While these measures are intended to help address immediate concerns, the RDNO is also focused on longer-term solutions to strengthen water supply reliability and improve drought resilience. Staff continue to work collaboratively with provincial agencies, local governments, the agricultural sector, and community partners to reduce the impacts of future drought events.

The RDNO also recognizes that prolonged drought conditions and water restrictions can place significant stress on individuals, families, and businesses, particularly within the agricultural community. Mental health and wellness resources are available for farmers and ranchers through the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

"Water shortages affect more than our landscapes and crops - they affect people," said Raftus. "We encourage everyone to take care of themselves, reach out for support when needed, and continue checking in on friends, neighbors, and fellow community members."

The RDNO will continue to provide updates as additional information becomes available. For more information, visit www.rdno.ca/waterrestrictions.