

Aquatic Ecosystems Drought Monitoring

Across British Columbia, many groups collect invaluable information on stream conditions, fish presence, and watershed health during low-flow periods. A new project aims to **amplify and connect that fantastic work**, to expand our understanding of how and where drought is affecting aquatic ecosystems — especially salmon habitat — across the province.

The project is led by **Pacific Salmon Foundation, First Nations Fisheries Council, the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada**, building on partnerships established through the [Salmon Emergency Action Support Table \(SEAS\)](#). This group continues to fund emergency mitigation projects and efforts to build watershed resilience to climate hazards.

Why this matters

Making this information publicly available helps:

- Inform **real-time drought response decisions and actions**
- Build a **long-term record of drought impacts** on aquatic ecosystems
- Identify **areas of drought vulnerability and resilience** to support **short- and long-term planning** for watershed management
- Drive **salmon habitat restoration** efforts and recovery planning
- Share **partner knowledge** and monitoring observations to **strengthen the collective picture** of drought impacts across BC

All contributed data will be **quality-checked and published on the BC Drought Portal**

👉 <https://droughtportal.gov.bc.ca/>

If this sounds like something your organization could support, **find out more:**

Register for Webinars: Link to follow shortly

Contact us: Recovery.restoration@gov.bc.ca

<https://psf.ca/work/climate-adaptation-program/>

<https://psf.ca/blog/smarter-drought-monitoring-for-salmon/>

What the monitoring looks like

Participation is intentionally flexible to build on what partners already do. Depending on capacity and interest, contributions could include:

- Visual or measured observations of fish and aquatic habitat
- Stream flow connectivity and signs of water scarcity (e.g., dry reaches, isolated pools)
- Water temperature and basic water chemistry (where available)
- Observations of stranded or stressed fish, migration barriers, and available refuge habitat

What we can offer

- We'll provide clear protocols, technical guidance, and access to a simple Survey123 reporting tool to support consistent data sharing.
- Training sessions and technical support in contributing data.
- A shared hosting portal where data can be viewed and exported.
- Access to resources, contacts and project support through the SEAS table.

Drought response actions

- Emergency interventions such as flow releases on regulated systems, flow and groundwater reconnection for isolated pools, beaver dam management
- Regulatory responses such as [curtailing licensed water use](#), [angling closures](#) related to temperatures,
- Outreach to licensed water users to maximize [conservation efforts](#), [compliance and enforcement](#) of unauthorized water users