

Update on groundwater



This report is prepared for you by the water management teams within the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) and the Ministry of Environment and Parks (ENV).

In the September 2026 issue:

- WLRS updates
- Provincial Government Groundwater Program regional update
- Provincial Groundwater - Observation Well Network update
- Registering as a Groundwater Wells and Aquifer Application (GWELLS) user to submit well records online
- Groundwater staff contact list

Report non-compliance:

- Have you noticed a well that does not meet the construction standards of the Groundwater Protection Regulation?
- Know of someone who is drilling a well or installing a well pump without being registered?

RAPP
Report All
Poachers and
Polluters

24 Hr Hotline:
1-877-952-RAPP
Cellular Dial #7277
(On Telus Network)

Contact us

The contact information for various groundwater staff across the province is available in every newsletter. We look forward to industry reaching out to us directly with questions.

WLRS updates

B.C. Groundwater Symposium – November 26, 2026

Save the date! This year's B.C. Groundwater Science Symposium is being planned for November 26, 2026. The annual symposium highlights recent groundwater projects undertaken by the government of B.C. More information and event registration will be available in the coming weeks via the [Groundwater Communications & Outreach webpage](#).

Aquifer parameters are now available in GWELLS!

A reminder that well records in GWELLS now have fields for reporting aquifer parameter information from pumping tests, such as hydraulic conductivity, transmissivity and storativity. Currently, close to 700 well records contain pumping test information, providing valuable aquifer information for over 150 provincially mapped aquifers. This is an ongoing initiative and pumping test information continues to be incorporated as it becomes available. All groundwater professionals are encouraged to share pumping test results in their possession (raw data or interpretations) to grow this body of knowledge. Pumping test results can be submitted for inclusions in GWELLS

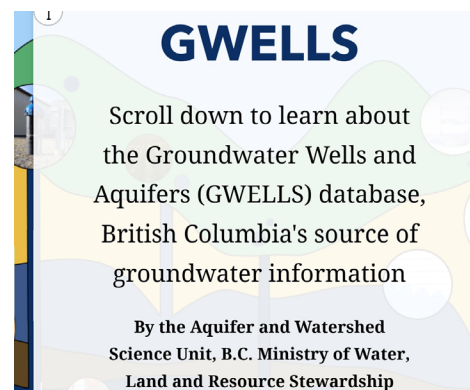
using the [Submission Form for Third Party Data](#). For more information about this initiative contact groundwater@gov.bc.ca.

Water Science Series

Check out the most recent provincial groundwater science reports published in the [Water Science Series!](#)

- [Integrated Field Investigation of the Upper Bulkley River Groundwater Surface Water Interaction](#)
- [Aquifer Characterization and Groundwater Budget Update, Mill Bay B.C.](#)

GWELLS Story Map



The Aquifer and Watershed Science Unit will publish a Story Map on GWELLS, British Columbia's hub for groundwater information. This interactive, visual resource introduces GWELLS, the data it contains and how to access it. Readers will learn how to perform useful functions in GWELLS

while following the life cycle of groundwater data, from collection during well drilling to its use in aquifer mapping and decision-support products. Feel free to share this resource with colleagues, especially those who are new to GWELLS.

Provincial Groundwater Program regional update – South Natural Resource Area

2026 has been a dynamic year for the South Area Groundwater Science and Monitoring Team. We are pleased to provide an update on activities being carried out by groundwater staff in the South Natural Resource Area of WLRS. The South Area includes the Cariboo, Thompson-Okanagan, and Kootenay-Boundary Regions.

Groundwater science

Drought support

Many parts of South Area experienced a below-normal snowpack, early freshet, and hot, dry conditions which set the stage for a challenging drought year. South Area Groundwater Science and Monitoring are actively supporting the provincial drought response through a variety of site and watershed-scale activities. Those supports are intensified within the Kootenay-Boundary and the Thompson-Okanagan regions to provide timely updates on groundwater conditions and inform the application of regulatory tools for managing water use in times of scarcity. Current drought conditions and water scarcity levels can be accessed through the [B.C. Drought Information Portal](#).

Assessment of groundwater-surface water interactions in the Bessette Creek watershed, Lumby, B.C.

A groundwater-surface water interaction study in the Bessette Creek watershed has been initiated in partnership with the Okanagan Nation Alliance and other partners. The creek segment upstream of Lumby is an area of recurring water management concern and temporary protection orders have become a regular occurrence to ensure adequate environmental flows at critical times for salmon. This project seeks to increase understanding of the connections and water flow between Provincial Aquifer No. 316, the underlying Provincial Aquifer No. 314, and surface water bodies in the area, to better understand overall water availability in Bessette Creek and inform improved water management for the benefit of all.

Sampling of private wells and surface water tributaries began in March 2026 and will continue seasonally through 2027. The project aims to identify the best tools to characterize groundwater-stream connectivity,



understand proportional discharge from different aquifers to surface water, and determine why low flow consistently occurs in a specific reach of interest.

Groundwater monitoring

Our Groundwater Technician staff operate and maintain the 76 monitoring wells located across the South Area.

PGOWN observation wells OW401 Osoyoos and OW411 West Kelowna are now equipped with satellite telemetry. Real-time level data from OW401, OW411 and other observation wells in the PGOWN can be accessed through the [Groundwater Level Data Interactive Map](#) or the [Real-time Water Data Portal](#).

Groundwater samples collected from PGOWN wells are analyzed for nutrients, metals, general water chemistry, and increasingly stable hydrogen and oxygen isotopes. Results are publicly available in the [Environmental Monitoring Data System \(EnMoDS\) database](#). The latest EnMoDS water chemistry results for PGOWN wells can be easily accessed via a link on the [Groundwater Level Data Interactive Map](#).

Satellite telemetry installation at PGOWN observation well OW117 near Spallumcheen is scheduled for winter 2026. PGOWN operations will be prioritizing improvements to data quality and availability through maintenance, updating aging telemetry infrastructure and well replacement or decommissioning where appropriate.

Groundwater protection and regulatory compliance

South Area Groundwater Protection Officers prioritize protection of B.C. aquifers through the enforcement of the [Groundwater Protection Regulation](#) and relevant parts of the [Water Sustainability Act](#). Staff routinely work with Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) and Natural Resource Officers (NROs) when responding to received enquiries and complaints. Over the past year, common groundwater-related issues included:

- Land-use effects on water quality
- Water scarcity and wells going dry
- Pumping interference between wells
- Flowing artesian wells
- Dug well construction
- Well maintenance, alternative construction specifications and operating best practices
- Practitioners without qualifications
- Abandoned wells

Natural resource and groundwater compliance concerns can be submitted through the [Report All Poachers and Polluters \(RAPP\)](#) system online or via the RAPP hotline (toll-free in B.C.): 1-877-952-7277 (1-877-952-RAPP).

Staffing changes

After an extraordinary career as B.C.'s longest-serving Groundwater Protection Officer, Laurie Lyons is retiring. Over the years, she became a familiar and respected figure among drillers, pump installers and groundwater professionals across the province. Her contributions extended from operating part of the provincial groundwater monitoring network in South Area to important groundwater initiatives in the Salmon and Nicola River watersheds, among many others. Laurie's experience, deep knowledge and pragmatic approach to groundwater protection have left a lasting impact on groundwater management in B.C. We wish her all the best in retirement and will greatly miss her expertise and valued presence.

Regional Hydrogeologist Melissa Wade is enjoying a six-month sabbatical, returning in November 2026. Regional Hydrogeologists David Thomson, Stephanie Drake and John Pogson are providing coverage in her absence.

Provincial Groundwater Observation Well Network update

For more than 60 years, PGOWN has provided a window into the province's aquifers, tracking groundwater levels across a diverse range of hydrogeologic settings. From heavily used aquifers in the lower mainland to remote monitoring locations in the Interior and North, the network captures the long-term records needed to understand how groundwater responds to seasonal recharge, drought, climate variability and groundwater use.

There have been over 500 observation wells in the program's history, with 240 active stations today. The network is currently monitoring 177 mapped aquifers across the province, with an additional six unmapped aquifers also being monitored at present.

Approximately two-thirds of active PGOWN stations are equipped with telemetry providing hourly water level data that is updated daily, thereby improving data utility and quality. For example, telemeterized stations will allow for drought forecasting via River Forecast Centre modelling (to be released soon).



Sampling at Observation Well 458 in Langley (WLRS).

Do you have questions about the PGOWN?

Contact groundwater@gov.bc.ca.

Learn more about the PGOWN by using the [Groundwater Level Data Interactive Map](#).

Registering as a GWELLS user to submit well records online

Get access in three easy steps:

1. Visit the GWELLS [BCeID registration page](#) to obtain either a Basic BCeID account or Business BCeID account. (Note, if you already have a Basic or Business BCeID account, you do not need to create a new one to access GWELLS)
2. After obtaining your BCeID, go to [GWELLS](#) and select the login button (top right of the application screen).
3. Once you have logged in, email gwells@gov.bc.ca to request access for your BCeID user account.

Once access has been granted, you will be able to enter and submit groundwater well reports through GWELLS.

Contact information of groundwater staff with statutory authority

Office		Name	Statutory Designation	Phone	Email
Coast Area	Nanaimo	Jessica Doyle, P. Geo.	Assistant Water Manager	778-693-3035	Jessica.Doyle@gov.bc.ca
		Nicole Fulcher	Officer	250-739-8339	Nicole.Fulcher@gov.bc.ca
	Courtenay	Colin McKenzie, P. Geo.	Officer	250-331-4455	Colin.McKenzie@gov.bc.ca
	Surrey	Michele Lepitre, P. Geo.	Assistant Water Manager	778-572-2168	Michele.Lepitre@gov.bc.ca
		Elyse Sandl, P. Geo.	Assistant Water Manager	236-468-3876	Elyse.Sandl@gov.bc.ca
		Jeanette Klassen, P. Geo.	Assistant Water Manager	604-660-7369	Jeanette.Klassen@gov.bc.ca
		Kumar K C	Officer	778-572-2162	Kumar.K.C@gov.bc.ca
South Area	Penticton	John Pogson, P. Geo.	Assistant Water Manager	778-622-6876	John.Pogson@gov.bc.ca
		Jeff Corrie	Officer	778-622-6973	Jeff.Corrie@gov.bc.ca
		Laura Maclaren	Officer	778-476-9008	Laura.Maclaren@gov.bc.ca
	Vernon	David Thomson, P. Geo.	Assistant Water Manager	778-943-6924	David.Thomson@gov.bc.ca
	Kamloops	Stephanie Drake, P. Eng.	Assistant Water Manager	236-425-9263	Stephanie.Drake@gov.bc.ca
North Area	Prince George	Jun Yin, P. Geo.	Assistant Water Manager	778-693-3015	Jun.Yin@gov.bc.ca
	Smithers	Johanna Wick, P. Geo.	Assistant Water Manager	778-693-2671	Johanna.Wick@gov.bc.ca
Victoria		Amy Sloma, P. Eng.	Deputy Comptroller	778-698-4866	Amy.Sloma@gov.bc.ca
		QiuHong Su	Officer (Sr. Groundwater Data Specialist)	778-693-2768	QiuHong.Su@gov.bc.ca
		Alexander Roudenko	Officer (Groundwater Data Specialist)	250-387-3944	Alexander.Roudenko@gov.bc.ca

For general enquiries, contact groundwater@gov.bc.ca.



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