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Shut down again

Producers claim province ignored local advice

TOM WALKER

WESTWOLD – The province says it listened to local growers before it shut off forage irrigation in the Salmon River and Bessette Creek watersheds last month, but producers say the move was yet another example of the province ignoring local perspectives.

BC Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) minister Randene Neill issued the orders on September 8, saying “stream flows in both

Irrigation ban ▶



Corkscrew harvest

BC's wine grape harvest was in full swing last month, with yields starting to recover following the decimating 2024 freeze event. Driving forklift is the first step to driving a corkscrew into a finished bottle and enjoying the results. These grapes from Summerland were destined for a Naramata winery. Read more of the harvest on page 3. MYRNA STARK LEADER

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Groundwater consultation launched

PETER MITHAM

VICTORIA – The province is floating the idea of licensing exemptions for low-volume groundwater users as part of multiple public consultations launched September 22.

A total of 16 themes under the Water Sustainability Act are up for discussion this fall, including the idea of allowing non-residential groundwater users drawing two cubic metres a day or less to do so without provincial authorization. The amount is sufficient for a 40-head

livestock operation, according to the province.

“The intention would be to only allow this diversion and use without an authorization within aquifers where water is available,” the province says.

Should an aquifer be deemed fully allocated, unlicensed users could lose access, meaning a licence is still the recommended option for securing water use.

The four-week consultation wraps up October 17.

“If this proposal proceeds, the specific rules, criteria and conditions for this type of low-

volume non-domestic groundwater use are still being developed, and public feedback will help shape the final approach,” the province says.

The BC Agriculture Council (BCAC) says it's consulting with members on whether the threshold for the exemption makes sense.

The idea borrows from a recommendation of the Premier's Task Force on Agriculture and Food Economy earlier this year,

Backlog ▶

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