

# WLRS' ROLE in DRINKING WATER AND WATERSHED PROTECTION

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Coastal Water Suppliers Association

Presenters: Julia Berardinucci, Director, Water Resource Stewardship & Meghan McKee, Water Policy Advisor

Watershed Stewardship & Security Branch

Ministry of Water, Land & Resource Stewardship

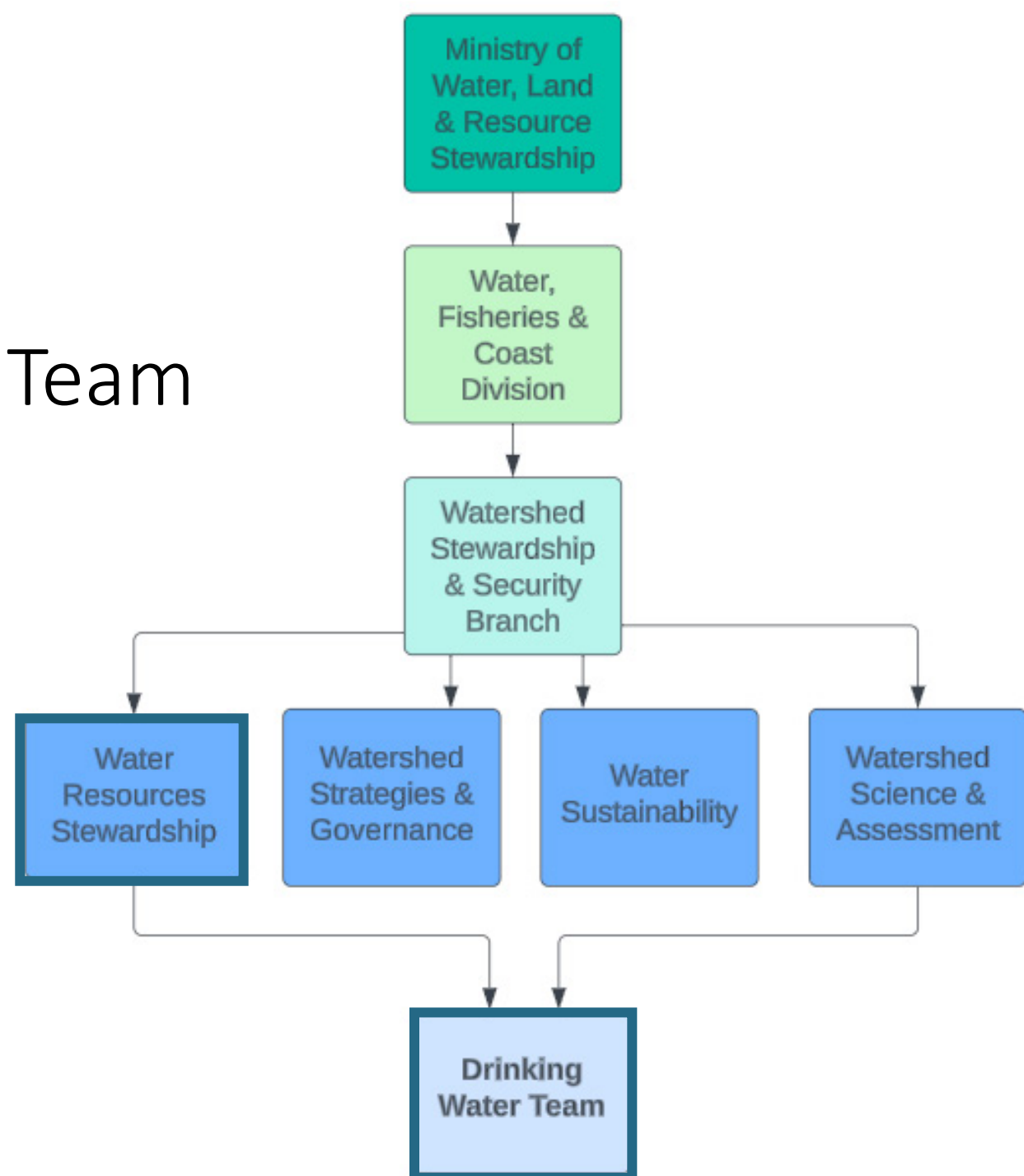
# OVERVIEW

- WLRs Drinking Water Mandate
- WLRs Drinking Water Team
- Watershed Security Strategy
- Provincial Drought Response 2024
- Drinking Water Projects

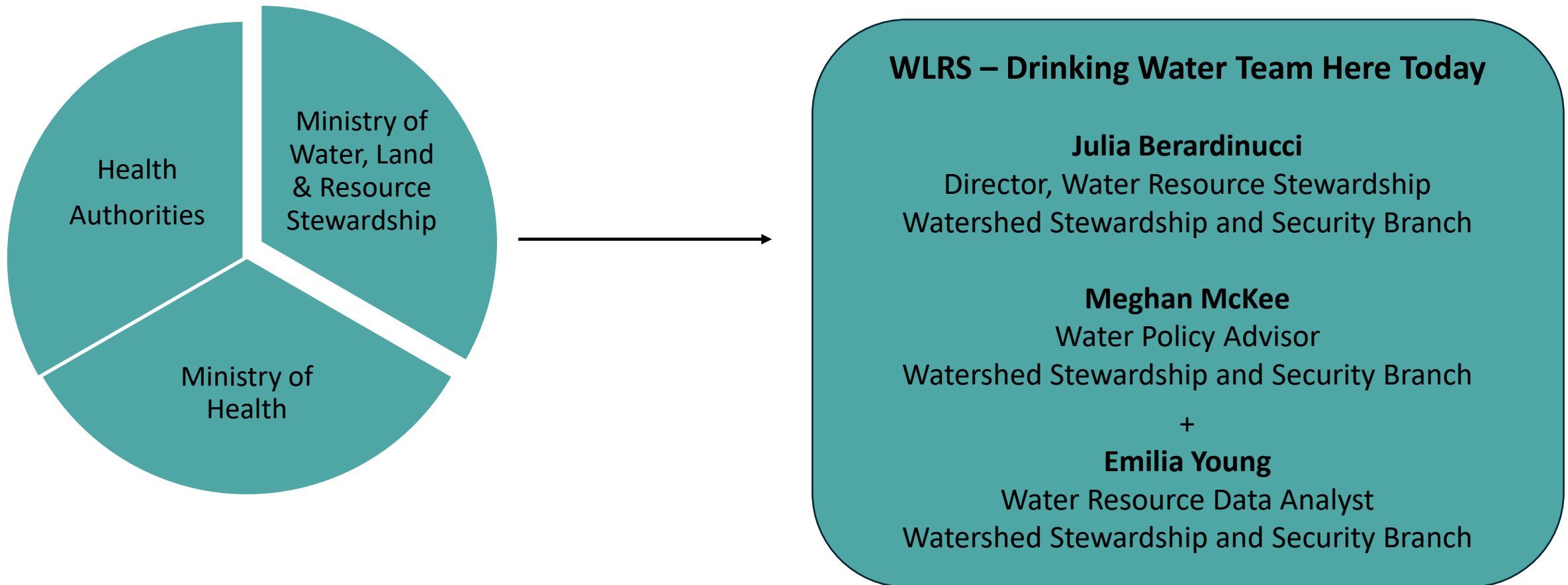
# WLRS's Drinking Water Mandate

- The Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) was formed in 2022
- Assigned mandate of leadership in water policy and strategies including protection of drinking water from source to tap
- WLRS is responsible for advancing work to better protect drinking water sources and improve drought preparation
- Committed to increasing resilience to climate change impacts
- Values working in partnership with others to be successful in this work

# WLRS Drinking Water Team



# Who are we? Where do we fit in?



# Watershed Security Strategy

**First Nations' rights**  
– furthering  
commitments to  
reconciliation

**Watershed  
governance** –  
evolving how we  
make decisions

**Watershed health +  
policy and law** –  
improving how we  
act

**Map and monitor  
watersheds** –  
assessing watershed  
health

**Foundation of data, information, education, communication and change  
management** – changing our culture

**2020** – Mandate to  
develop Strategy

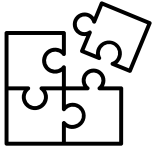
**2023** – Intentions Paper  
engagement

**Later 2024 and beyond** –  
Implementation and  
action planning, including  
priority setting

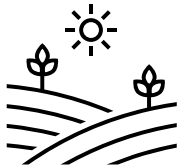
**2022** – Discussion Paper  
engagement + what we heard

**Early 2024** – Final  
approvals, launch with  
First Nations

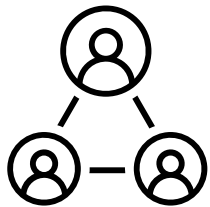
# Provincial 2024 Approach to Drought



Earlier preparation, cross-organizational coordination and communication



Improving our understanding of drought conditions and impact



Whole-of-Government approach – streamlined internal governance structure

# 2024 Drought Outlook

- **Challenging to accurately predict drought into this summer;** much depends on snow and rain conditions through spring and summer
- **Early indicators strongly suggest drought conditions will persist into 2024**
  - Low snowpack, with March 1 average tied for second lowest on record
  - Streamflow and groundwater levels remain relatively low in many areas and are slow to recharge from 2023 season
  - El Niño winter (warm) conditions promote low snowpack and early freshet
- **B.C. is preparing for an elevated risk of drought in 2024**



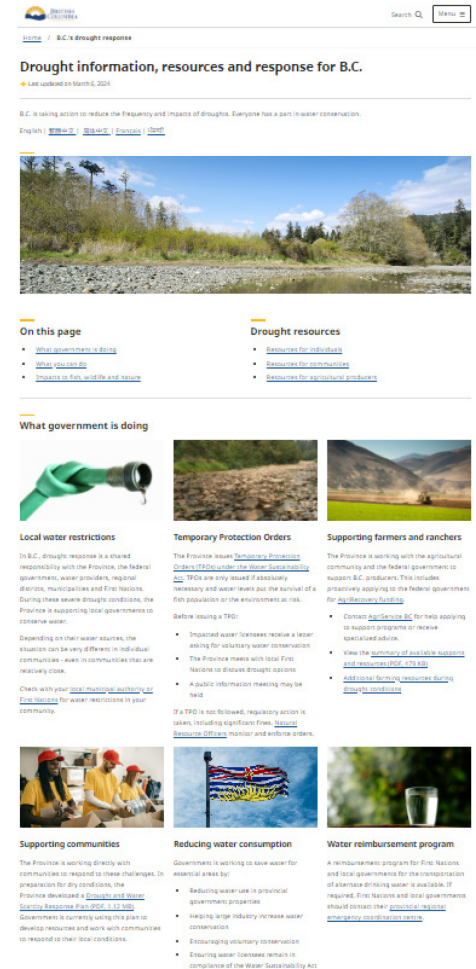
# Staying Informed

Single landing page BC Gov drought information  
[www.gov.bc.ca/drought](http://www.gov.bc.ca/drought)

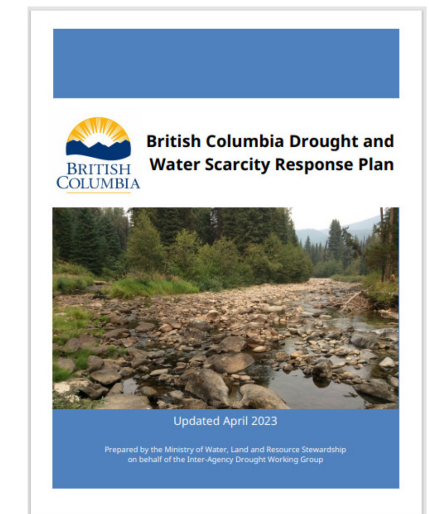
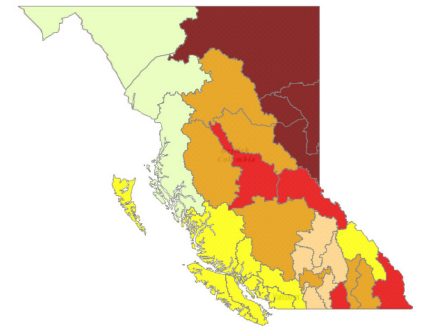
Drought levels are updated throughout the season on the  
B.C. Drought Information Portal

Provincial drought levels are described in the  
British Columbia Drought and Water Scarcity Response Plan

Guidance for water suppliers is available in the Dealing with  
Drought: Handbook for Water Suppliers



The screenshot shows the 'Drought information, resources and response for B.C.' page. It features a search bar, a navigation menu, and a main content area with sections for 'On this page', 'Drought resources', 'What government is doing', 'Local water restrictions', 'Temporary Protection Orders', 'Supporting farmers and ranchers', 'Supporting communities', 'Reducing water consumption', and 'Water reimbursement program'. Each section includes brief text and links to related resources.



The cover of the 'British Columbia Drought and Water Scarcity Response Plan' features the BC logo and a photograph of a dry riverbed. It includes the text 'Updated April 2023' and 'Prepared by the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship on behalf of the Inter-Agency Drought Working Group'.

# Drinking Water Projects

- Communications focused on water supplier drought preparation
- Mapping drinking water systems in BC
- Provincial Source Drinking Water Risk Assessment Framework
- Drinking Water Supply Dashboard



**DROUGHT PREP  
COMMUNICATIONS**



**MAP 5,000 DRINKING WATER  
SYSTEMS**

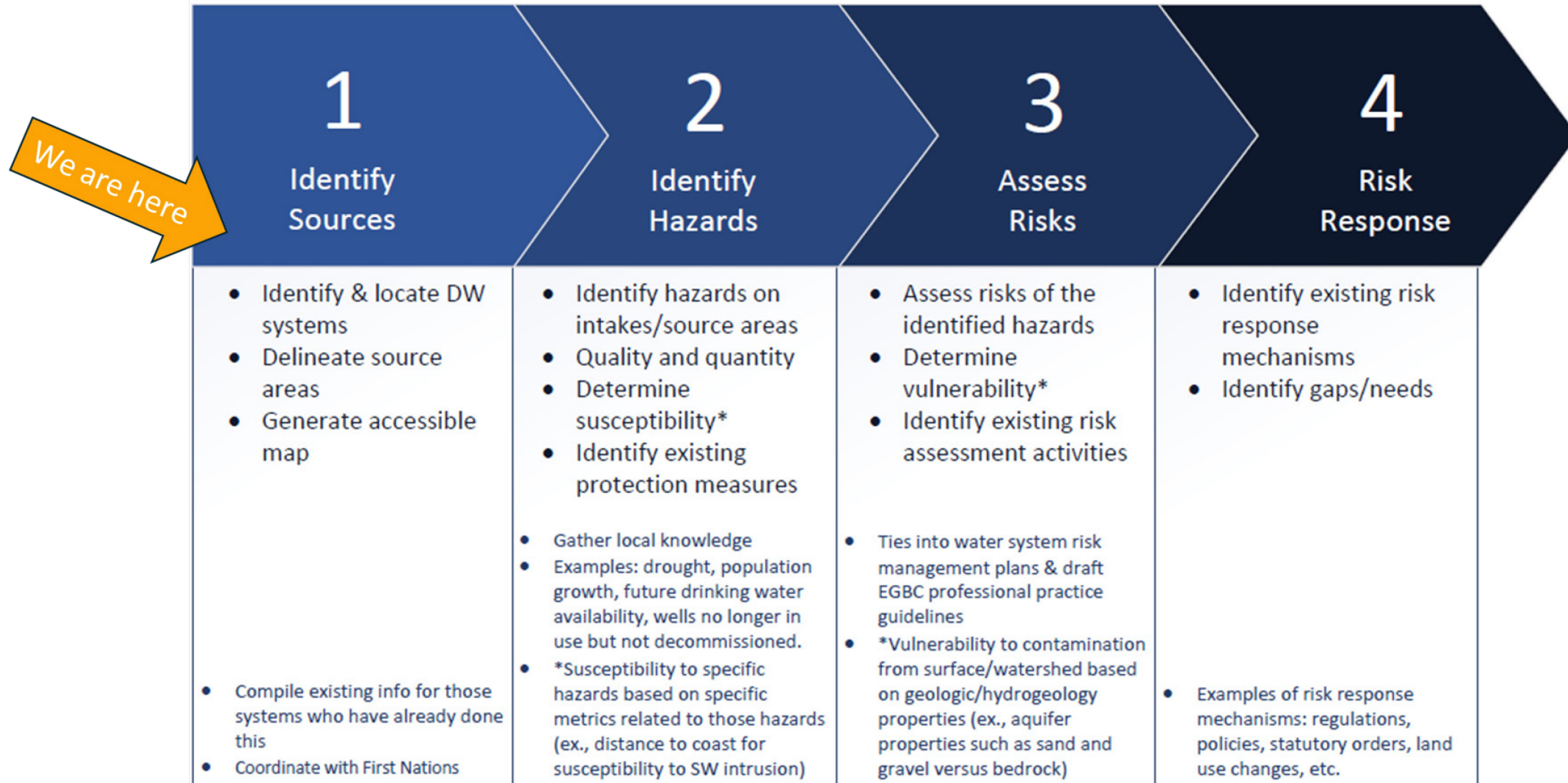


**IMPROVE SOURCE DRINKING  
WATER & DROUGHT RISK INFO**



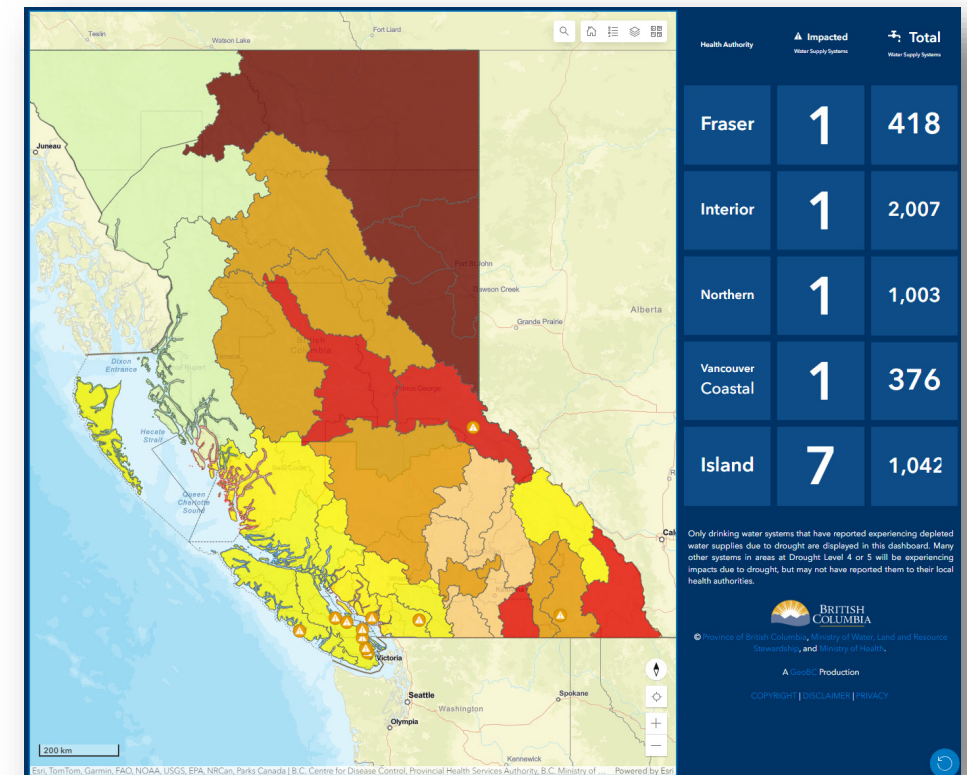
**DESIGN INTERNAL TOOLS**

# Provincial Source Drinking Water Risk Assessment Framework



# What is the Drinking Water Supply Dashboard?

- Spatial tool for government to visualize status of drinking water supply
- Platform for water suppliers to directly provide WLRS Drinking Water Team information on the status of their water supply
- Potential early warning system for government to understand what communities are vulnerable to running out of water



# Drinking Water Supply Survey

- Targeted drinking water status survey to: Local governments, improvement districts and water utilities.
- Survey offers place to communicate water supply quantity concerns.
- Survey responses provide early warning system for numbers of water systems and population at risk.

**Current Status** ▾

Is your water system currently impacted by water supply shortage?

Yes  No

What is your current source of water?

Surface Water - (river, creek, stream, lake, reservoir)

Groundwater (wells or springs)

Trucking

Unknown

Other

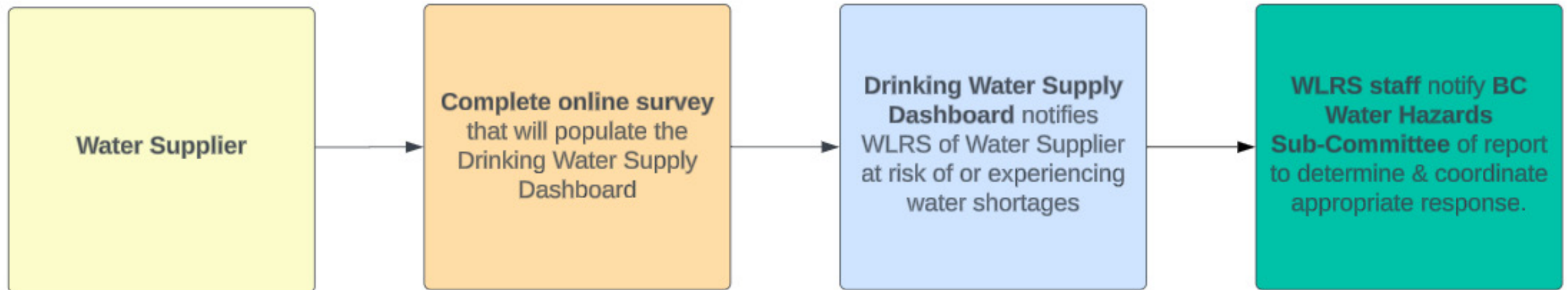
Do you have water storage?

Yes  No

What is your water storage volumn in gallon(US)?

[Tank volumn calculator](#), [Unit converter](#)

# Reporting Water Supply Status Information



- Accountability to receive and respond to changing conditions lies with (internal to Province) an Executive Director committee – Water Hazards Sub-Committee
- The Water Hazards Sub-Committee is a cross-ministry committee formed to improve structure and optimization of resources for year-round drought planning and response

# Benefits to Water Suppliers

- Clear pathway for water suppliers advise BC of water supply risk
- Inform prioritization and funding of future work to increase drought resilience
- Identify systems in need of technical assistance/expertise
- Identify the need to use innovative policy tools to protect drinking water supplies

# Thank you

[www.gov.bc.ca/drought](http://www.gov.bc.ca/drought)

Julia.Berardinucci@gov.bc.ca  
Meghan.McKee@gov.bc.ca