

# Arrowsmith dam reservoir water levels dropping

■ City of Parksville, DFO to reduce water flows in Englishman River

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*NEWS REPORTER*

Water flowing from the Arrowsmith dam could be curbed before the end of the month.

"Given the very dry year the reservoir levels are very low," said Mel Sheng, a habitat restoration biologist with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

"We want to make sure that the water level lasts until October," he said, and if the amount of water flowing into Englishman River isn't lowered the reservoir could, "run out of water in the next month.

"This is something that we have to do," said Sheng.

Currently, water flows through the dam and into the Englishman River at the rate of 1.6 cubic metres per second.

Once the process starts, which will be either this week or next, the rate will be lowered to 1.2 cubic meters per second.

"We're not going to run out of water," said Brian Hackwood, director of operations for the City of Parksville, but he also said that the reduction in water flow needs to be done.

"Nothing else is putting into our watershed except that dam."

The City and the DFO are just waiting for approval from the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection before going ahead with the plan.

Hackwood said restricting the flow of water through the dam will allow for "ample drinking water supply and keeps river levels high for fish."

Less water flowing into the river will not have an effect on Parksville's water supply. Two years ago, Hackwood said, the dam was drained and it had no effect on the drinking water, but the fishery would have liked the water level in the river higher. Sheng said that during the process — to reduce the water flow — fish habitats will be monitored.

In the short term the action will mean that there will be less water in the river, but it will mean more water, — and more time until upgrades need to be done to the dam system — in the long run.



**Brian Hackwood**

...city isn't going to run out of drinking water