

Water Supply Availability Committee/Drought Readiness Council Meeting – June 15, 2022

Phone Conference – Meeting Notes

Attendees

Ryan Andrews – OWRD (Chair)

Curtis Peetz – OEM

Andy Bryant – NWS

Carrie Boudreau – USGS

Jeff Marti – WDOE

Henry Pai – NWRFC

Morgan Gratz-Weiser – GO

Scott Oviatt – NRCS

Jim Johnson – ODA

Jon Rocha – USBR

Salina Hart – USACE

Aaron Borisenko – DEQ

Spencer Sawaske – ODFW

Marc Stewart – USGS

Presentations – update on water supply conditions

Scott Oviatt

- Snowpack
 - Willamette late peak couple weeks near median value - delayed runoff but meltout occurred near typical time
 - Rogue-Umpqua late peak but below median - meltout near typical time
 - Klamath very early peak and then downhill from there - cooler temperatures extended meltout to normal time
 - John Day near normal peak but below median - April snow accumulation extended meltout by a couple weeks past typical time
 - Grande Ronde-Burnt-Powder-Imnaha peak normal time but below median
 - Hood-Sandy-Lower Deschutes peaked later than typical but above median, meltout near normal
 - Upper Deschutes-Crooked late peak below median
 - Umatilla-Walla Walla-Willow peak near typical time and about median - meltout near typical
 - Lake County-Goose Lake peak way early well below median
 - Harney peak normal but well below median and meltout normal
 - Malheur peak normal but well below median
 - Owyhee peak a little later but well below median meltout normal
- Precipitation is 105% of median statewide (6/14) - NE and north central above average, SW below average
- 4/1-6/13 precipitation well above median statewide; not necessarily savior because of typically small amounts of precipitation received during timeframe
- Some improvements to streamflow forecasts in Willamette and Grande Ronde; Prineville, Silvies still areas of concern

Andy Bryant

- Precipitation
 - Portland broke record for April-June total rainfall for 80-year period
 - Near to above normal WY precipitation NW and NE OR
 - Much of state still ongoing drought concerns due to below average precipitation

- Past 60 days precipitation below average in areas of ongoing D3-D4 drought concerns
- Percentile rankings for both April-May and May average to above average throughout much of state; some deficits still in central, southern OR
- Current June precipitation well above average throughout entire PNW
- Rainfall totals in Cascades about as high as four inches for Friday-Sunday period (6/10-6/12)
- Temperatures
 - Temperatures cooler than average in April and May
 - Recent temperatures (past couple weeks) a bit warmer than usual
 - Temperatures more variable, range average to above
 - Some improvements in Drought Monitor
- Forecast
 - Precipitation forecast below average throughout Oregon, more dry days than not
 - 8-14-day outlook below average temperature and below average precipitation statewide
 - Long-term outlook July-September above average temperatures and near average precipitation statewide
 - No major pattern change that would lead to dominant ridging leading to significantly warm temperatures

Henry Pai

- WY naturalized runoff (6/14) deficits in south and central, some eastern
- Seasonal volume forecast (April-September) well above normal most of western OR, some parts near Medford below average as well as central and south, SE OR
- Some seasonal volume forecasts rank top five in NW quadrant
- Willamette at Salem impressive recovery since mid-March; May observed runoff nearly twice the average; June projected well above normal with observed precipitation so far
- Rogue at Raygold May and June tracking above normal conditions
- Umatilla nr Umatilla some potential for flood concern earlier this week; May and June projected well above normal
- Owyhee at Owyhee Dam still showing large deficits due to lack of snowpack

Carrie Boudreau

- 7-day average streamflows average to well above average with some record highs throughout much of state; some below average in SW; 28-day averages similar
- NE OR hydrographs well above and approaching record high daily flows; Meachem Cr, Grande Ronde R, North Fork John Day
- NW OR hydrographs well above average; Nestucca R and Siuslaw R
- SW OR hydrographs variable; Chetco well above average, Rogue just above average; East Fork Ashland Cr just below average
- Upper Klamath Lake approaching levels of 2020
- SE OR hydrographs variable; Donner Und Blitzen above average; Owyhee R average
- Bear Creek below Ashland Creek at Ashland well below average and approaching record flow

- Sprague R nr Chiloquin below average flows
- Below average 14-day flows

Ryan Andrews

- Currently 17 counties with Executive Orders under ORS 536
- 29 counties with USDA Crop Disaster Designations due to drought conditions
- May streamflows above to well above average western and northern OR
 - Central and eastern OR below to well below average
- Water year to date improved in many basins over past month
- 7- and 28-day streamflow percentiles range average to record highs throughout much of state
 - Some parts of central and southern OR continue to lag behind
- Crooked River hydrograph finally average to above average over past month (WYTD = 27%)
- John Day R at McDonald Ferry average to well above average since early May (WYTD = 63%)
- Minam R trending upwards to record high flow over past few weeks (WYTD = 81%)
- N Powder R similar to Minam (WYTD = 77%)
- S Umpqua R at Tiller average to record high since mid-April (WYTD = 71%)
- S Fk Rogue R nr Prospect trending upwards since early April (WYTD = 99%)

Jon Rocha

- Wet conditions suppressed demand for most basins or delayed onset of demand
- Irrigation is underway
- Minor flood risk management at McKay and Scoggins
- Water supply allotments are heavily reduced (Owyhee 50%; Malheur 30 to 60%) due to anticipation of below average year next year
- Most reservoirs drafting
- Owyhee since mid-May flatlined storage due to decreased demand and increased flows
- Malheur demand projected to pick up again in few days and looking at short irrigation seasons
- Bully Creek likely to turn on soon
- Prineville Reservoir demand spiked up during start up but with some dips coinciding with cooler, wetter conditions; turns back on as soon as warm, dry conditions start; releasing about 100 cfs
- McKay fill since early May; back-to-back rain events caused flood control; gone to bankfull several times due to rain events
- Scoggins operations similar; full since late April and matching inflows
- Rogue operations exhaust supply, last year tried to start late and turn off as rain events occurred to save water and prevent high value crops from withering; looking at longer irrigation season this year due to rain

Salina Hart

- Very eventful weekend; regulating on Saturday
- Willamette system crested at most projects

- Fall Creek, Cottage Grove, and Dorena above rule curve
- Filled above ungated portion of spillway at Cottage Grove and Dorena; first time since 1964
- Managing in areas with bankfull
- Injunction operations managing pools differently, such as at Cougar
- Didn't start filling at Cougar til May 27th; holding minimum flows to store water
- All reservoirs are full except for management operations keeping some just below
- Held normal releases in Rogue; a bit below summer pool elevations; managing for fish habitat needs
- Willow Creek evacuating water from recent rain events

Jim Johnson

- Slower growth rates on some hay crops; delayed hay cuttings - usually doing first hay cuttings now
- Willamette Valley fieldwork slowed down; later plantings
- Weather great for dryland wheat in northcentral and Umatilla; great pasture
- CRP federal program grounds looking great (grasslands)
- Valley some issues with lodging; rain knocking grass seed flat; tough for management (spraying and harvesting)
- Issues with grassy weed control; normally don't come out this early
- Issues with fungus and fungicide applications

Jeff Marti

- Last year Washington State April-May fourth driest; this year fourth wettest
- Expected lingering drought conditions so extended drought conditions in eastern Washington; based upon river forecasts which was expected below statutory thresholds, will talk soon about rescinding declaration for some watersheds
- Wheat up 85% from last year
- Cherries down due to cooler, wetter weather

Discussion

- How does this weather affect fire season?
- Shortens window and delays onset
- Fuel moistures really high in Valley and Cascades (thousand-hours) due to large vegetations
- Fine fuels due to rain, if dry out and hot late in season then more susceptible
- Next meeting July 13