

Water Supply Availability Committee/Drought Readiness Council Meeting – August 17, 2022

Phone Conference – Meeting Notes

Attendees

Ryan Andrews – OWRD (Chair)	Scott Oviatt – NRCS
Curtis Peetz – OEM	Tim Holschbach – ODF
Troy Lindquist – NWS (Boise)	Jon Rocha – USBR
Carrie Boudreau – USGS	Matt Warbritton – NRCS
Andy Bryant – NWS	Tom Elliott – DOE
Henry Pai – NWRFC	Spencer Sawaske – ODFW
Larry O’Neill – OCCRI/OCS	Jason Miner - GO

Presentations – update on water supply conditions

Scott Oviatt

- SNOTEL precipitation
 - 103% of median on 7/11
 - 103% of median on 8/16
- Soil moisture
 - Holland Meadows (upper Willamette) last year was below normal; this year about normal
 - High Ridge (Blue Mountains ~ 4900') last year was well below normal; this year about normal
 - Silver Creek (northern Klamath Basin) last year well below normal; this year a little better but just below normal
 - Silvies (Harney County) last year slightly below normal; this year a little worse just below normal

Andy Bryant

- Precipitation
 - Not much has changed recently; beneficiaries are north Cascades and Blue Mountains over past 90 days (includes late May early June precip)
 - Many deficits on east side for July precipitation
- Temperature
 - Record temperatures in July in Oregon and throughout Pacific Northwest; Medford at 114 on 7/29
- Potential for convection over next few days (isolated rainfall, some thunderstorms); not much precipitation forecast for next 10 days (negligible amounts)
- Temperatures likely above average over next 8-14 days throughout Oregon
- 3-month outlook (Sep-Nov) above average temperatures and near normal precipitation statewide
- Water supply
 - Water year runoff looks similar to precipitation maps; average to above average in northwest and northeast Oregon

- Seasonal volume forecast for April-September well above average in most of west and northeast Oregon; well below average elsewhere
- Crooked R nr Prineville 8th lowest forecast volume on record - large volume deficit in January-May
- Umatilla nr Umatilla large surplus in spring volume
- Owyhee at Owyhee Dam missing some spring volume but average in summer
- Rogue at Raygold significant volume deficit in winter and early spring, but bumped by summer volume
- Willamette at Salem similar to Rogue; some winter deficit but much above average in spring

Larry O'Neill

- Drought Monitor holding steady recently (a few one category changes over past 4 weeks)
- Most drought is long term over past couple years
- Flash drought in Malheur and Harney Counties (one-class degradation)
- About 34.5% of state is drought free
- Streamflows have remained remarkably resilient which has helped sustain drought conditions
- Recent heat wave increased evaporative demand in southeast Oregon (indicative of flash drought)
- Creeping into windward side of Cascades and even parts of NW and NE
- Groundwater percentiles (upper 1 meter) really poor in central and most of eastern OR; even parts of western OR in foothills of Cascades
- SPEI index over past 12 months is about normal statewide; much below average over past 24- and 36-month periods
- Spring 2021 was one of driest on record, while spring 2022 was one of wettest on record since 1895
- 3rd warmest July on record for lower 48 states; many Oregon counties in top 5-10 warmest; overall 4th warmest statewide

Carrie Boudreau

- Past 28-days average to well above average for most of west and NE Oregon
- John Day R at Service Creek right in middle of normal range
- Beaver Creek below Quartz Creek below normal
- Long Tom R near Noti well above normal
- Butte Creek at Monitor well above normal
- Chetco R nr Brookings well above normal
- Little River at Peel just below normal
- Upper Klamath Lake started trending downwards early July; about 0.5 feet above 2021 and 2015

Ryan Andrews

- No new drought declarations
- July % of average streamflow well above average in western and northeastern Oregon
 - Well below average in south, southeastern Oregon Water Resources Department

- Not much change in water year streamflow over past month, with exception in Grande Ronde (+6%)
- Streamflow percentiles over past 7- and 28-day periods surprisingly holding steady throughout summer
 - Some well record highs and well above average in western and northeastern Oregon
 - Below to well below average in parts of central and southern Oregon
- Camas Creek in Umatilla County at record low, not much use above gage
- Winberry Creek in Lane County upper end of average
- South Fork Coquille in Coos County well above average
- Miami River in Tillamook County surprisingly well below average; well below other gages in area

Jon Rocha

- Irrigation underway
- Malheur (Warm Springs and Beulah) shut down irrigation last week of July
- Rogue will shut down irrigation this week - leave enough water for ecological flows over winter
- Most other projects will shut down early to mid-September
- Water supply allotments heavily reduced
- Potential for extremely low carryover for most projects
- Owyhee Dam end with similar (little) carryover
- Warm Springs and Beulah exhausted stored water end of July
- Bully Creek still has some water and likely release as long as calls for water exist; early September shut off
- Burnt River filled later due to late spring/early summer precip; good carryover for next year
- Phillips Lake nearly empty; run out near end of August
- Wickiup likely to empty
- Crescent Lake end with little carryover
- Prineville started well below normal; first year users were really limited and end will very little carryover, likely to impact ecological flows
- Emigrant leave enough water to satisfy ecological flows over winter, but likely to shutdown this week
- McKay didn't really have to release water until mid-July; likely significant carryover for next year
- Scoggins dam has good carryover for next year

Selina Hart (emailed notes)

- The Willamette is managing for tributary flows and main stem flows per the 2008 BiOp
 - Had to increase flows in the Middle Fork to meet Albany flow targets
- Cougar delayed refill until 27 May and has been releasing minimum flows
 - This was for fish downstream passage and the ability to still do temperature management

- Started picking up outflows to manage best for fish getting ready to draft the reservoir to the “deep” drawdown elevation of 1505 ft
- Lookout Point is being managed around 887.5 ft (spillway crest) in order to use the low level outlet which will be able to provide cooler water for temperature management
- Rogue is working closely with ODFW for releases and the reservoirs are drafting as inflows have receded
 - Increases were just made at Lost Creek to support fish moving upstream and the warming air temperatures
- Willow Creek drafting as irrigation demands pick up

Discussion

- Next meeting September 14