

Water Supply Availability Committee/Drought Readiness Council Meeting – September 13, 2023

Phone Conference – Meeting Notes

Attendees

Ryan Andrews – OWRD (Chair)
Andy Bryant – NWS
Curtis Peetz – OEM
Cameron Greenwood – OWRD
Larry O’Neill – OCCRI/OSU
Spencer Sawaske – ODFW
Marc Stewart – USGS
Steve Parrett – DEQ

Tom Elliott – ODOE
Jim Johnson – ODA
Henry Pai – NWRFC
Matt Warbritton – NRCS
Andy Martin – USACE
Peter Cooper – USBR
Stacy McCarter – ODF
Carrie Boudreau – USGS

Presentations – update on water supply conditions

Matt Warbritton

- Precipitation Conditions
 - Since May 8th, PNW precipitation levels are significantly low in comparison to the rest of the west. This is especially true for the Cascades and Blue Mountains, whereas portions of eastern Oregon are doing better.
 - Since the beginning of August, Cascades are continuing to receive minimal precipitation with some improvement in the Deschutes basin. Eastern OR continues to have better conditions with the Blue Mountains having a significant improvement.
 - Little has changed as far as WYTD precipitation from last meeting (7/17), Umatilla-Walla Walla-Willow basin received a good amount to bring it to near normal
- Soil Moisture
 - Southern Oregon: Silver Creek, Silvies, Billie Creek Divide, Quartz Mountain
 - All sites are above normal except for Silver Creek
 - Northern and Central/Eastern Oregon: Clackamas Lake, Snow Mountain, Bourne
 - Clackamas Lake is near normal, Snow Mountain is well below normal
Bourne site is well above normal
 - North Eastern Oregon: High Ridge, Schneider Meadows
 - Both sites are slightly to moderately below normal

Henry Pai

- For water year to date, many sites in western Oregon are showing below to well below normal streamflow conditions
- Eastern Oregon is generally showing normal to well above normal streamflow conditions
- Lincoln County - mostly D2 (severe drought)
 - Siletz River at Siletz, OR
 - Well below normal for the past 3 months leading into August

- Discrepancy between Apr-Sep (107%) and Oct-Sep (83%) forecast.
- Douglas County - mostly D1 (moderate drought)
 - Umpqua River near Eklton, OR
 - Well below normal for past 2 months leading into August, May was closer to normal due to snowmelt contributions.

Larry O'Neill

- USDM
 - This month most recent drought monitor issue shows ~50% of state is experiencing moderate drought (D1) and ~18% of the state is experiencing severe drought (D2).
 - Since last month, most of the state has experienced no change in drought status, with some degradation in western and northeast Oregon as well as some improvement in south central Oregon.
- North America and regional conditions
 - Monsoon hasn't materialized due to a ridge of high pressure in the west which has shut off the southerly flow into the SW causing drier conditions in much of the US west.
 - Anomalous ridge of high pressure caused significantly lower cloud cover contributing to warmer temperatures from increased solar radiation.
- Evaporative Demand Drought Index (EDDI)
 - Evaporative demand drought index shows higher evaporative demand in areas where less cloud cover is occurring.
 - South Willamette Valley and western Oregon are significantly dry.
 - Oregon is ranked 19th driest, Douglas County is 6th driest and Lincoln County at its driest ranking.
 - 36th driest water year on record
- Standardized Precipitation-Evapotranspiration Index (SPEI)
 - Douglas County
 - Drought signal on short time scale (3-month)and long time scales (12+months)
 - Water year SPEI shows only moderate drought
 - Lincoln County
 - Drought signal mainly on 3-month time scale, with exceptional drought has developed
 - Longer time scales are either neutral or abnormally dry

Carrie Boudreau

- Water availability report shows a statewide decrease in gaging cites.
- Runoff for state based on 7 day average is at cusp of normal to below normal
- NE Oregon
 - John Day River – currently at normal, just above last years flows
 - Meacham Creek – below normal to normal
- NW Oregon
 - Wilson River – well below normal and well below last year flows

- Nestucca River – trending and hitting new lows, confirmed by measurements in July
- Siletz River (Lincoln County) – well below normal
- Alsea River – below normal
- SW Oregon
 - Chetco River – well below normal
 - Bigge Butte Creek – well below normal, consistent with last year flows
 - Umpqua River (Douglas County) – well below normal
 - Littler River – well below normal
 - S. Umpqua River – well below normal
- SE Oregon
 - Donner und Blitzen River – normal to slightly above normal
 - Owyhee River – normal to slightly above normal

Ryan Andrews

- Drought Declarations
 - Nine counties with Executive Orders for drought declarations under ORS 536
 - Gilliam County request for drought declaration forwarded to Governor’s Office
 - Douglas and Lincoln Counties requesting drought declarations
- Streamflow Conditions
 - July percent of average stream flow, SW to NW OR , north of this has been pretty poor conditions for stream flow
 - Aside from SE Oregon, state is below to well below average streamflow for water year to date.
 - 28-day streamflow percentiles west of Cascades are generally below average with record low flows ranging from Douglas County to the north Willamette Valley.
- Douglas County
 - Boulder and Umpqua Rivers are below to well below normal
- Lincoln County
 - Siletz River well below normal
 - Yaquina River was recently below normal with recent improvement

Peter Cooper

- Compared to recent years storage supply looks good
- Many facilities in or near historical interquartile normal range
 - Malheur and Burnt are at the upper end of normal
 - Crooked, Owyhee, Powder, and Umatilla are at or below median in normal range
 - Deschutes and Rogue are catching up with the lower end of normal
 - Scoggins is well below normal
- Reservoirs have been drafting at near normal pace with exception of Malheur which has had a slower than normal draft with higher than normal inflow and lower demand.

Andy Martin

- Willamette River Basin

- Temp as of 8/15 is warm, 3+ degrees warmer than usual downstream from Albany. Not much cold water left in reservoirs
- Rogue Basin
 - Increasing out flows and res drafts with rising river basin temps. Plenty of storage for the remainder of the season

Discussion

- Next meeting proposed September 13