



# Oregon

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor

## Water Resources Department

North Mall Office Building  
725 Summer Street NE, Suite A  
Salem, OR 97301-1271  
503-986-0900  
FAX 503-986-0904

**TO:** Water Resources Commission

**FROM:** Phillip C. Ward, Director

**SUBJECT:** Agenda Item H, September 11, 2009  
Water Resources Commission Meeting

### Director's Report

#### I. Current Events:

Current Water Conditions: Currently, stream flow throughout Oregon ranges from near normal to well below normal. Generally, conditions are best in the rivers and streams along the north boundary of the state. Moving south, stream flow drops to well below normal along the south border.

The August 1 Surface Water Supply Index (SWSI) indicates that for the majority of the state, all but two basins, report average conditions. Klamath Basin and the South Coast Basin report below normal conditions. Irrigation reservoirs throughout the state are below normal.

The USDA reports that 80 percent of the irrigated lands within Oregon have a soil moisture index of "Very Dry."

The U.S. Drought Monitor reports that 56 percent of the state is at near normal conditions, and 44 percent is at "Moderate" drought conditions. A very small portion of the state in west central and south central Oregon borders on "Severe" drought conditions.

The Climate Prediction Center forecasts below normal precipitation for the next three months.

Water Resources Department Presentations: Director Ward briefed several organizations on the outcome of the 2009 Legislative Session from the Department's perspective. Much of the focus was on the funding and next steps for Oregon's "Integrated Water Resources Strategy." Such presentations included the Western States Water Council, Association of Oregon Counties, and Environmental Quality Commission.

#### II. Commission Follow Up

Climate Change Update: In 2007, OWRD entered into an agreement with the Climate Impacts Group at University of Washington to investigate the impacts of climate change on Columbia River tributaries. Other funding partners include Bonneville Power, Northwest Power and Conservation Council, the state of Washington, the state of Idaho, and others. The investigation is designed to produce a comprehensive hydrologic data base for the entire Columbia River basin, providing climate change planning scenarios appropriate for both basin-wide planning efforts and more detailed planning studies in sub-basins.

The following update was provided by Alan Hamlet - lead investigator for CIG: “The model is in a final phase of testing. Calibration was completed about two weeks ago. Results look very good. Model runs should be completed by October. A final draft of the report is in the final stages of internal review, and should be available for review by study collaborators in September. A web site is under construction and should be ready this fall for review of study products.”

Litigation Update: Fred Turek and Casey Jones Jr. v. Phillip C. Ward, in his capacity as Director of Oregon Water Resources Department and the Oregon Water Resources Commission.

A Petition for Judicial Determination of the validity of temporary rule Chapter 690, Division 180, Exempt Groundwater Use Recording Requirements, was recently filed. The Petition was filed with the Oregon Court of Appeals and challenges the authority to adopt the temporary rules as written. The challenge centers on the question of the effective date of Senate Bill 788, whether SB 788 is to be implemented July 1, 2009 as stated in the bill, or after bill signature by the Governor (July 23, 2009). Staff are preparing the record for submission to the Court of Appeals.

Willamette Bi-op Update: As reported at the last Commission meeting, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the corps) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) are working to implement the Willamette Biological Opinion. A number of groups have been formed to address Flow Management, Fish Passage, Water Quality; Hatcheries, Habitat, and Research, Monitoring and Evaluation. The various teams meet at least monthly. Department staff are involved with most of these working groups, since flow is a major issue. The Willamette Configuration Operation Planning (COP) is a multi-year, multi-level study process to evaluate a range of potentially beneficial actions to address impacts to ESA listed species. The Corps is working on the next to final version of the COP document and expects to issue the final version in the fall. The COP will undertake a series of studies to evaluate the feasibility and benefits modifications to the Willamette dams, designed to improve survival and productivity of ESA-listed aquatic species.

The Willamette Action Team for Ecosystem Restoration (WATER) will provide a forum for coordination and recommendations among the governments (federal/state/tribal) working to implement strategies for Endangered Species Act (ESA). The state and federal entities have been working closely on stored water management this summer. After careful management, all recreational facilities were able to operate through Labor Day, despite a concern that Kanes Marina at Detroit would have to close before the Labor Day holiday. However, this was avoided due to much coordination by the federal and state agencies.

**III. Commission/Board Schedules**

	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>
State Land Board	TBA	Oct. 13, 2009
Environmental Quality Commission	Bend	Oct. 22-23,2009
Dept. of Geology and Mineral Industries	TBA	TBA
Parks and Recreation Commission	Joseph/Enterprise	Sept. 17, 2009
Fish and Wildlife Commission	Salem	Oct. 2, 2009
Board of Forestry	Sunriver	Oct. 5-6, 2009
Land Conservation and Development Commission	Hillsboro	Sept. 30, 2009
Board of Agriculture	Astoria	Nov. 19- 20, 2009
Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board	Wallowa Co.	Sept. 15-16, 2009
Water Resources Commission	Salem	Nov. 19-20, 2009