Water Supply Availability Committee/Drought Readiness Council Meeting – March 11th, 2026

Phone Conference – Meeting Notes

Attendees

Cameron Greenwood – OWRD
Curtis Peetz – OEM
Jason Ward – NRCS
Leah Pope – NWS
Larry O'Neill – OCS
Carrie Boudreau – USGS
Rod Owre – USGS
Corinne Horner – USBR
David Weidinger – USBR
Kathy Warner – USACE
Andy Martin – USACE
Chantal Wikstrom – OHA
Nick Sirovatka – ODA
Shane Cossel – ODEQ
Spencer Sawaske – ODFW
Jordan Beamer – OWRD

Conditions Updates
Jason Ward, NRCS

- Snowpack
  - As of 3/10, snow water equivalent (SWE) was 29% of median and 24% of median peak.
  - Statewide SWE is well below normal in all basins, ranging from 20% (Owyhee Basin) to 46% (Grande Ronde-Burnt-Powder-Imnaha).
  - Snow drought (NOAA: less than or equal to 20th percentile) is present throughout Oregon with most stations measuring below the 15th percentile.
  - Many stations are recording either their lowest or second lowest SWE measurements.
- Precipitation
  - As of 3/10, statewide precipitation was 86% of the median.
  - As of 3/10 water year-to-date (WYTD) precipitation was below normal for most of the state with near normal precipitation recorded in the Hood-Sandy-Lower Deschutes, Lake County-Goose Lake, and Harney basins.
  - Precipitation in February was above normal in western and southern parts of Oregon. In northern parts of central and eastern Oregon, precipitation was near normal.
  - From 3/1-3/10, precipitation has been variable, ranging from below to above normal.
  - Precipitation percentiles for the WYTD indicate well below normal conditions for most of the Cascades and Blue Mountains with some normal to above normal precipitation recorded in northern parts of the Oregon Cascades.
- Soil Moisture
  - Soil moisture products (GRACE, Topofire, SPoRT-LiS) show some agreement indicating drier-than-normal conditions in parts of western, northeastern, central, and southeastern Oregon.
- Water Supply Outlook
  - March 1st streamflow volume forecasts indicate below to well below normal conditions in Oregon.

Leah Pope, NWS

- Precipitation
  - Precipitation in February was near to above normal for much of the state. Above normal precipitation was recorded in northern and southern parts of the state and for much of western Oregon. In parts of northwestern Oregon and in parts of the Cascades and Walla Walla mountains, below normal precipitation was recorded.

    - Water year-to-date (WYTD) precipitation has generally been below normal for much of the state, especially in and around the Cascades and Blue mountains. Portions of northcentral and southcentral Oregon have recorded above normal precipitation.
- Temperature
    - Temperatures in February were generally above normal, with the highest temperature anomalies in eastern Oregon and the lowest in western Oregon.
    - WYTD temperatures have generally been above normal statewide. The most notable temperature anomalies have been in eastern Oregon, where temperatures were up to 5°F above normal.
- Outlook
    - NWRFC 10-day precipitation outlook (ending 3/21) indicates above normal precipitation in parts of northwestern and northeastern Oregon. In southwestern Oregon and for much of central and eastern Oregon, outlooks indicate below normal precipitation.
    - 8-14 day outlook (3/18-3/24) indicates probabilities leaning towards above normal temperatures statewide. The outlook also indicates above normal precipitation is likely for northern parts of the state and below normal for southern portions of the state. The remainder of the state is likely to receive near normal precipitation**.**
    - Seasonal temperature forecasts through June indicate probabilities leaning towards above normal temperatures statewide. The likelihood of above normal temperatures increases from June onward.
    - Seasonal precipitation forecasts through June indicate probabilities leaning towards below normal precipitation for most of the state from April through August.
- Streamflow Forecast
    - Overall river peaks in Oregon are likely to be lower than the 30-year normal depending on elevation, temperature, and snow accumulation, with a low likelihood of exceeding flood stage.
    - As of March 11th, there are 4 basins in Oregon with a 10% probability of peak flow exceeding threshold: Grand Ronde at Troy, Wilson River near Tillamook, Pudding River at Aurora, and Imnaha River at Imnaha.
    - The water supply forecast for the spring and summer of 2026 is near to below average for northwest and southwest Oregon watersheds, including the Columbia River, and below to well below average for central and eastern Oregon watersheds.

Larry O'Neill, OCS

- USDM
    - As of 3/3, about 21% of Oregon is in moderate or severe drought and another 48% is abnormally dry.
- Temperature
    - February was Oregon's 10th warmest since 1895. The statewide anomaly was 4.8° F above normal.
    - Temperatures over winter (Dec-Feb) were tied (with 1934) for the warmest winter on record.
    - Temperatures over the water year (Oct-Feb) were the second warmest on record. Average temperatures were 4.9 °F above normal.

- Precipitation
    - Precipitation in February was near normal for most of the state.
    - Precipitation over the winter (Dec-Feb) was near normal for much of the state. However, in parts of western and southwestern Oregon precipitation was below normal. Wheeler and Baker counties also recorded below normal precipitation.

    - Precipitation over the water year (Oct-Feb) was below normal for most of the state, with an average deficit of 3.35 inches.
    - Precipitation deficits spanning back to April 2025 have developed in nearly every county, particularly along a NE-SW diagonal running through the state.
    - Over the last 24 months, northern Oregon has been drier than normal while southern Oregon has generally been near normal.
    - The last 12 months have been the 14th driest in Baker County since 1896.
    - The last 12 months have been the 20th driest in Deschutes County since 1896.
    - The last 12 months have been the 9th driest in Umatilla County since 1896.
- SPEI
    - 5-month SPEI values indicate moderate drought conditions are present for much of the state. In southcentral and in parts of northcentral Oregon, conditions are normal if not wetter than normal.
    - 12-month SPEI values indicate moderate to severe drought conditions are present for much of the state. In parts of central and northeastern Oregon extreme drought conditions are present.

Carrie Boudreau, USGS

- 28-day average streamflow conditions (through 3/9) across most of Oregon were below normal.
- 7-day average streamflow conditions (through 3/10) across much of Oregon were below normal with some gages recording near normal conditions.
- Northeastern Oregon
    - John Day River: near normal conditions
    - Grande Ronde River: near normal conditions
    - Umatilla River: near normal conditions
- Northwestern Oregon
    - Nehalem River: just below normal conditions
    - Siletz River: near normal conditions
- Southwestern Oregon
    - Chetco River: near normal conditions
    - South Umpqua River: near normal conditions
- Upper Klamath Lake – elevation currently 4142.4 ft
    - Williamson River: near normal conditions
    - Link River: below normal conditions
- Southeastern Oregon
    - Donner und Blitzen River: near normal conditions
    - Owyhee River: below normal conditions
- Duration hydrograph of 7-day average runoff for Oregon indicates below normal conditions.

Cameron Greenwood, OWRD

- Streamflow conditions in February were below normal for most of the state, especially in the Umatilla Basin (47% of normal). In the Goose & Summer Lakes and Powder basins, streamflow conditions were near normal.
- Streamflow conditions over the water year-to-date (WYTD) have been below normal for much of the state, especially in the South Coast and Umpqua basins where WYTD streamflow is 55% and 68% of normal, respectively.
- Recent streamflow conditions over the last seven days (through 3/9) were near normal for much of the state with some below normal streamflow recorded in parts of northwestern and central Oregon. Conditions over the last 28 days (through 3/9) have also been near normal for much of the state with below normal flows also recorded in parts of northwestern and central Oregon.

- Powder River – Powder Basin (Baker County)
  - Streamflow conditions are near normal
- Whychus Creek – Deschutes Basin (Deschutes County)
  - Streamflow conditions are above normal
- Deschutes River – Deschutes Basin (Deschutes County)
  - Streamflow conditions are near normal
- Camas Creek – John Day Basin (Umatilla County)
  - Streamflow conditions are near normal
- McKay Creek – Umatilla Basin (Umatilla County)
  - Streamflow conditions are near normal
- Umatilla River – Umatilla Basin (Umatilla County)
  - Streamflow conditions are near normal

Corinne Horner, USBR

- Operation Activities
  - March water supply forecasts – similar to February forecasts except significant decreases in Crooked and Umatilla forecasts.
  - FRM operations at Scoggins with current AR.
  - Dry year coordination with NMFS/USFWS in Crooked.
  - Low flood risk in most basins, managing for water supply.
- Water Supply Notes
  - Refill unlikely in many basins – Owyhee, Malheur, Baker, Crooked/Deschutes, Rogue, Umatilla.
  - Near normal storage contents across much of OR due to good carryover will help provide a normal irrigation season (except Umatilla).

Kathy Warner, USACE

- Willamette Basin
  - On average, all projects are 35% above the minimum and below the rule curve by 16.7%.
  - Current IRRM restrictions in effect for Hills Creek, Lookout Point and Detroit.
    - Hills Creek maximum conservation pool reduced by 10 ft to 1521 ft.
    - Lookout Point maximum conservation pool reduced by 5 ft to 921 ft.
    - Detroit maximum conservation pool reduced by 5 ft to 1558.5 ft.
  - All projects Managing to rule curve or minimum tributary BiOp flows unless noted below
    - Middle Fork
      - Hills Creek: Prioritize Lookout Point spring spill operation and refill, Lookout Point/Dexter 30 day free flow spill and continued spill, mainstream augmentation, temperature management, deep drawdown operation.
      - Fall Creek: Using fish horns; 200 cfs for mainstem augmentation
    - Coast Fork
      - Dorena and Cottage Grove storing above rule curve (10%-15% encroachment) to aid April mainstem augmentation flows.
    - McKenzie
      - Blue River: Mainstem augmentation during summer.
      - Cougar: Delayed refill. Need storage for temperature tower above 1571 ft.
    - North and South Santiam

- Green Peter: Spring spill for juvenile fish passage and deep draw down in fall should affect summer storage.
- Foster: Delayed refill ending in mid-May to get back to full pool by Memorial Day weekend.

Drought Readiness Council
Drought Declaration Requests

- Baker County – Conditions support a state drought declaration. DRC in support of recommending Baker County's drought declaration request to the Governor's Office.
- Deschutes County - Conditions support a state drought declaration. DRC in support of recommending Deschutes County's drought declaration request to the Governor's Office.
- Umatilla County - Conditions support a state drought declaration. DRC in support of recommending Umatilla County's drought declaration request to the Governor's Office.