

Water Supply Availability Committee/Drought Readiness Council Meeting – May 20th, 2026

MS Teams Meeting – Meeting Notes

Attendees

Cameron Greenwood – OWRD
Matt Warbritton – NRCS
Leah Pope - NWS
Sonali Chokshi – NWRFC
Larry O’Neill – OCS
Carrie Boudreau – USGS

Corinne Horner – USBR
Andy Martin – USACE
Tom Elliot – ODOE
Nick Sirovatka – ODA
Shane Cossel – ODEQ
Spencer Sawaske – ODFW

Conditions Updates

Matt Warbritton, NRCS

- Snowpack
 - As of 5/19, statewide snowpack (as snow water equivalent [SWE]) was 4% of median and 1% of the median peak. Current rates of meltout are on track to tie with 2015 for the earliest meltout.
- Precipitation
 - As of 5/19, statewide precipitation is 85% of median but is in the 18th percentile.
 - All major basins in Oregon are measure below normal (70-89%) except for the Hood-Sandy-Lower Deschutes and Umatilla-Walla Walla-Willow basins which are near normal (90-109%).
 - Across most of the Blue Mountains and Cascades, excluding northern Cascades in the Mt. Hood region, water year-to-date (WYTD) precipitation is at or below the 15th percentile.
 - Month-to-date precipitation for May is below (50-89%) to well below (<50%) normal for all major basins in Oregon.
- Soil Moisture
 - Soil moisture products (GRACE, SPoRT-LiS, Crop-CASMA) show some variability in soil moisture conditions, however, there is some agreement indicating drier-than-normal conditions in parts of northeastern, central and southwestern Oregon.
 - SNOTEL soil moisture conditions:
 - Billie Creek Divide (SW OR): well below normal
 - Snow Mountain (Central OR): well below normal
 - High Ridge (NE OR): well below normal
 - Bourne (NE OR): well below normal
- Water Supply Outlook
 - May 1st streamflow volume forecasts indicate below-normal conditions for most of western Oregon and below to well below normal conditions in central and eastern Oregon.

Leah Pope, NWS

- Precipitation
 - Over the last 30 days, precipitation was well below normal for most of the state, excluding parts of north-central and northeastern Oregon, where precipitation was above normal.
 - Over the last 90 days, precipitation was below normal for most of the state, excluding parts of northwestern, and eastern Oregon, where precipitation was above normal.
 - Precipitation totals over the last 30 days were up to 4 inches in parts of western and northeastern Oregon. Most of central and eastern Oregon received below half an inch of precipitation. Parts of northwestern and northeastern Oregon received up to 6 inches of precipitation.
 - WYTD precipitation conditions (as of 5/17) were below normal for most of the state. The most notable precipitation deficits were in western Oregon where precipitation was generally 10 to 15 inches below normal. Parts of Josephine and most of Curry counties experienced precipitation deficits exceeding 20 inches.
- Temperature
 - Temperatures over the last 30 days were above normal statewide. For most of the state temperatures were 4°F to 6°F above normal.
 - WYTD (as of 5/17) temperatures have been above normal statewide. The most significant temperature anomalies were recorded in parts of eastern Oregon where temperatures were 4°F to 6°F above normal.
- Evaporative Demand Drought Index (EDDI)
 - Over the last month (through 5/15), EDDI values for Oregon correspond with moderate to severe drought for most of the state.
- Outlook
 - NWRFC 10-day precipitation outlook (ending 5/29) indicates well below normal precipitation conditions statewide.
 - 8-14 day outlook (5/27-6/2) indicates probabilities leaning towards above normal temperatures in far eastern Oregon and near normal temperatures for the rest of the state. The outlook also indicates above normal precipitation in southeastern Oregon and near normal precipitation for the rest of the state.
 - Seasonal temperature outlooks:
 - Jun-Jul-Aug
 - Probabilities are leaning towards above normal temperatures in western Oregon with above normal temperatures likely for the rest of Oregon.
 - Jul-Aug-Sep
 - Probabilities are leaning towards above normal temperatures for most of the state with above temperatures likely in southeastern parts of the state.
 - Aug-Sep-Oct
 - Probabilities indicate above normal temperatures are likely statewide.
 - Seasonal precipitation outlooks:
 - Jun-Jul-Aug
 - Probabilities leaning towards below normal precipitation in northern parts of the state with equal chances of below-normal, normal, or above-normal precipitation for the rest of the state.
 - Jul-Aug-Sep
 - Probabilities indicate equal chances of below-normal, normal, or above-normal precipitation statewide.
 - Aug-Sep-Oct

- Probabilities leaning towards below normal precipitation in northern parts of the state with equal chances of below-normal, normal, or above-normal precipitation for the rest of the state.
- Wildfire Potential Outlook
 - May 2026: Normal
 - June 2026: Normal in western Oregon, above normal in central and eastern Oregon.
 - July 2026: Above normal in southwestern, central, and eastern Oregon. Normal for the rest of the state.
- ENSO
 - ENSO-neutral conditions are present and favored through April-June 2026 (80% chance). In May-July 2026, El Niño is likely to emerge (80% chance) and persist through at least the end of 2026.

Sonali Chokshi, NWRFC

- Streamflow Forecast
 - Observed runoff for April was generally below normal statewide with some normal to above normal flows in parts of northwestern and northeastern Oregon.
 - Recent observed runoff was also generally below normal with some near normal flows in northwestern and northeastern Oregon.
 - Recent streamflow forecasts through September are below normal statewide. In parts of southwestern, central, and eastern Oregon, streamflow forecasts are well below normal.
 - Donner und Blitzen River (Harney County)
 - Observed runoff from February through April was below normal. Forecast for May through September is below normal.
 - Apr-Sep: 38% normal
 - Water year: 54% normal.
 - Owyhee at Owyhee Dam (Malheur County)
 - Observed runoff from December through April was below normal. Forecast for May through September is below normal.
 - Apr-Sep: 11% normal
 - Water year: 25% normal
 - Willamette at Salem
 - Observed runoff from October through April was below normal. Forecast for May through September is below normal.
 - Apr-Sep: 53% normal
 - Water year: 62% normal
 - Rogue at Raygold
 - Observed runoff from November through April was below normal. Forecast for May through September is below normal.
 - Apr-Sep: 46% normal
 - Water year: 55% normal
 - Columbia River at the Dalles Dam
 - Observed runoff from October through March has been variable ranging from below to above normal. The forecast for May through September is also variable, ranging from below to above normal.
 - Apr-Sep: 87% normal
 - Water year: 96% normal

Larry O'Neill, OCS

- USDM
 - As of 5/12, 72% of the US West is in some form of drought.
 - As of 5/12, 71% of Oregon is in some form of drought. About 31% is in severe (D2) or extreme (D3) drought.
 - Over the last four weeks, there has been USDM degradations across much of Oregon. In northeastern Oregon, there was a single class improvement. This is likely to be short lived.
- Temperature
 - April 2026 was the 20th warmest April since 1895 which was 2.7°F above normal.
 - The calendar year-to-date was the 3rd warmest period (Jan-Apr) since 1895 which was 5.5°F above normal.
 - Water year-to-date (Oct-Apr) temperatures were the 2nd warmest since 1895 which was 5.0°F above normal. Harney County experienced its warmest period and Gilliam County its second warmest period.
 - Temperatures over the last 12 months (May 2025 – April 2026) was the warmest period since 1895 and was 4.6°F above normal.
- Precipitation
 - Oregon experienced its 43rd wettest April since 1895, with precipitation at 120% of normal. Most of this
 - The calendar year-to-date was the 20th driest since 1895 with about 75% of normal precipitation.
 - Water year-to-date precipitation was the 31st driest since 1895 with about 85% of normal precipitation.
 - Precipitation over the last 12 months (May 2025 – April 2026) was the 13th driest period since 1895 with about 75% of normal precipitation. Gilliam County was the 66th driest and Harney County was the 35th driest.
 - weeks.
- Drought Indicators
 - PDSI
 - Oregon experienced its 3rd driest April since 1895. Gilliam County was 37th driest and Harney County was 7th driest.
 - SPEI
 - WYTD and 12-month SPEI values correspond with severe to extreme drought across much of the state, spanning an area from southwestern to northeastern Oregon.

Carrie Boudreau, USGS

- Streamflow conditions over the last 28 days (5/19) were generally below normal for most of the state. Some normal flows were recorded in parts of western and northeastern Oregon.
- Streamflow conditions over the last 7 days (5/19) were also generally below normal for most of the state. Some normal flows were recorded in parts of western and northeastern Oregon.
- Gilliam County
 - John Day River (at McDonald Ferry): well below normal conditions
- Lake, Harney, and Malheur Counties
 - Donner und Blitzen: well below normal conditions
 - Owyhee River: well below normal conditions
- Northeastern Oregon
 - John Day River (at Service Creek): well below normal conditions

- Grande Ronde River: well below normal conditions
- Northwestern Oregon
 - Nehalem River: normal conditions
 - Siletz River: below normal conditions
- Southwestern Oregon
 - Chetco River: below normal conditions
 - South Umpqua River: well below normal conditions
- Upper Klamath Lake – elevation currently ~4141.85 ft
 - Williamson River: below normal conditions
 - Link River: normal conditions

Cameron Greenwood, OWRD

- Streamflow conditions in April were below normal for much of the state. The most notable streamflow deficits were recorded in the South Coast, Rogue, Malheur Lake, and Malheur basins ranging from 36-44% of normal.
- Streamflow conditions over the water year-to-date (WYTD) have been below normal for much of the state, especially in parts of southwestern and northeastern Oregon. WYTD conditions in the Sandy, Hood and Malheur Lake basins have been near normal.
- Recent streamflow conditions over the last seven days (through 5/18) were below normal for much of the state with some near to above normal streamflows recorded in parts of northwestern Oregon.
- Conditions over the last 28 days (through 5/18) has also generally been below normal, with near normal streamflows recorded in parts of northeastern, central and northwestern Oregon.
- Gilliam County
 - WYTD: 57%
 - John Day River: well below normal
- Lake County
 - WYTD: 73%
 - Chewaucan River: well below normal conditions
 - Honey Creek: well below normal conditions
- Harney County
 - WYTD: 96%
 - Silvies River: well below normal conditions
 - Donner und Blitzen River: well below normal conditions
- Malheur County
 - WYTD: 55%
 - North Fork Malheur River: well below normal conditions

Corinne Horner, USBR

- Operations Activities:
 - Did not produce May water supply forecasts.
 - All reservoirs have peaked and most have begun drafting to meet demand.
- Water Supply Notes
 - Refill unlikely in all basins except Tualatin
 - Tualatin was the only basin to fill.
 - Good carryover from WY 2025 will help provide a fairly normal irrigation season in most basins.
 - Expecting very low carryover at the end of the season.

Andy Martin, USACE

- Willamette Projects: 68% above minimum and 31% below the rule curve.
- USACE Flow Management and Water Quality Plan through May 2026
 - Project specific 2024 BiOp operations for fish passage and water quality (temperature and TDG).
 - Maintain minimum 2008 BiOp minimum tributary flows, except coordinated N. Santiam reduction
 - Deficit Year Salem Targets primarily using Prioritize augmentation from Hills Creek, Lookout Point, Fall Creek, and Blue River
- Lookout Point
 - No spillway fish passage but conducting temperature management spill as of April 17 until SWC is lost (~early July)
 - Later Season temperature management, prioritizing regulating outlets.
- Cougar
 - Delayed refill start date
 - Poor snowpack and forecasted precipitation risk refill and use of temperature tower.
 - Started refill April 3.
- Green Peter/Foster
 - Starting May 16, start FOS refill to summer band.
- Detroit
 - Reduced BiOp minimum flow starting April 10.
 - Allows longer temperature management season
 - Reduced flow going to Salem

Drought Readiness Council

Drought Declaration Requests

- Gilliam County – Conditions support a state drought declaration. DRC in support of recommending Gilliam County's drought declaration request to the Governor's Office.
- Lake County - Conditions support a state drought declaration. DRC in support of recommending Lake County's drought declaration request to the Governor's Office.
- Harney County - Conditions support a state drought declaration. DRC in support of recommending Harney County's drought declaration request to the Governor's Office.
- Malheur County - Conditions support a state drought declaration. DRC in support of recommending Malheur County's drought declaration request to the Governor's Office.