

Water Supply Availability Committee Meeting

2/14/2017

Meeting Notes

Oregon's Water Supply Availability Committee (WSAC) held its regular monthly meeting on February 14, 2017. The Committee discussed recent water supply conditions.

Scott Oviatt, NRCS Snow Survey – As of February 14, 2017, Statewide snow water equivalent (SWE) is 127 percent and mountain precipitation is 118 percent. Conditions are similar to those seen this time last year. Looking forward, by early April we will have a much better idea of what the water supply season will be like. Prognosis is still “cautiously optimistic”. Spring temperatures will be paramount.

SWE in the Willamette Mountains is the lowest in the state at 106 percent due to low density (moisture) snowpack. Willamette is the highest at 141 percent.

Considerable accumulations of low elevation snow in central and eastern Oregon caused widespread damage to structures. A survey was conducted to determine effect of low elevation snow on streamflow and potential flooding. 3-5 inches of SWE were measured in Union County. Areas in Malheur and Baker Counties were also surveyed with similar amounts.

Andy Bryant, National Weather Service – Statewide colder than normal temperatures. Coldest January in PDX in the last 30 years.

Above average precipitation statewide (not just mountain) in January. Last ½ of February forecast is for continued seasonably cold, wet weather. Snowpack should continue to build at a moderate rate.

The March-May outlook is for equal chances of above or below normal temperature, and above normal precipitation.

Recent climate observations indicate that ENSO Neutral conditions have returned. These conditions will likely persist through spring. The Climate Prediction Center forecasts the onset of a weak [el nino](#) in March-May 2017, which strengthens to moderate intensity by the upcoming summer.

The summer outlook is for warmer than normal conditions for most of the Continental US. Drier than normal conditions are forecast for Oregon and Washington.

Ken Stahr, Oregon Water Resources Department – Streamflow for most the state was normal for January. Cold temperatures created challenges for real-time stream flow data dissemination. Western and Central Oregon reservoirs are in good shape. With the exception of Owyhee Reservoir, Eastern Oregon reservoirs are still at low levels. There is still optimism due to the good snowpack.

Mary Karen Scullion, US Army Corps of Engineers – Willamette and Rogue project reservoirs are on track for a good summer season. Two Willamette reservoirs are undergoing maintenance and are being held to lower than normal elevations.

Fall Creek is being held low until the end of Feb for bulkhead placement prior to repairing a regulating outlet. Refill will resume March 1 and it is not likely that the delay will affect the ability to refill to full pool.

Dorena is being held low to inspect one of the regulating outlets. The current plan is to only delay refill thru February. Refill will resume March 1 and it is also not likely to affect the ability to refill to full pool.

Nick Yonker, Oregon Department of Forestry – Fuel moisture is obviously high (wet). Hope continues for a lower than normal fire season.