

Meeting Notes:

6/13/2017 Water Supply Availability Committee

10:00 am to noon - Oregon Office of Emergency Management

Participants

Ken Stahr, WRD - Chair

Brenda Bateman, WRD TSD

Justin Iverson, WRD GW

Scott Oviatt, NRCS

Nick Yonker, ODF

Margaret Matter, ODA

Marc Stewart, USGS by phone

Zach Swick OEM

Agenda

** Dry Horizons Newsletter. - KStahr will send link to this group.

National Drought Monitor, publisher.

Oregon still has a need for better indicators.

BB send this on to the DRC as well.

Next WSAC Meeting? Yes, July 11th.

Washington WSAC announcements come to you? Listen in!

** DRC - send 3 report links to WSAC.

** Shoot for July 13 for the next DRC meeting.

Nick Yonker, ODF. After this weekend's moisture in SC and SE Oregon, the mapped indicators are all 'green'. Noted recent snow on Santiam pass! Low level fire danger on state and federally managed forest lands. Some predictions are trending toward cooler, wetter summer through August. This would support forecast leaning towards below normal fire season. (vs. National Interagency Fire Season is leaning towards normal number of acres burned). Grasslands on east side of Cascades may provide fire fuels at mid-season.

Margaret Matter, ODA. Growing season is delayed, even down to the farmer's markets and organic farms. Early plantings experienced seed wash out due to heavy rains. Not certain about larger growers. About three weeks behind in eastern Oregon (Grande Ronde down through Harney).

Scott Oviatt, NRCS. Star Ridge snow site above Canyon Creek (5,350 elev.) is now snow-free. New snow pillow in place in 2017. May 1 showed delayed melt out, three weeks later than normal. [Emphasis on three weeks later than normal]. Mountain precipitation data collection sites show statewide precipitation 128% of normal. Low 116% in Harney. Precip was below normal throughout the state during the month of May, so that brought overall numbers down (were at 131% of normal back at May 1). June 1 forecast loses the snow signal. This is the last snow report of the 2017 season.

Marc Stewart, USGS. 75 percentile for 14-average streamflow runoff for Oregon. Record streamflows October 2016. Two coastal sites; show bump in Chetco from this weekend's rain. Likelihood of a steep drop-off of flow in late July. Upper Klamath Lake still has strong inflows coming in. Really high outflows coming off the Columbia.

Ken Stahr. Still at 152% of streamflow for the water year. Four consecutive months of above average flows. (Compare this against this time last year when flows were below average and never came back.). More than 100% of average streamflow almost everywhere (except the Umatilla and South Coast) in May 2017. Flows in Coastal basins have been more volatile. Flows dropped during the month of May. See graphic for reservoir storage summary.

Justin Iverson. Collect manual well water level measurements quarterly. Today's data are from March. We're collecting right now. And will go out again in September. Seeing good recharge in shallow aquifers. But, long term we're seeing trend in decline. Not only are spring peaks dropping, but summertime lows are dropping as well. When we get wetter years when folks don't have to irrigate as much and recharge is significant, we see a bump upward in water levels.

In Deschutes, however, GW follows decadal climate cycles.

In Klamath / Malin, BOR paid to pump wells during drought years. Seasonal lows continued downward, as did seasonal recovery. Program ended in 2015. No pumping in 2016. No drop, but no recovery either. While GW can serve as a buffer during drought years, we mine the resource and will need to employ recharge if we want GW levels to rebound.

In Umatilla Basin, Basalts. Little connection to surface water. In Butter Creek Critical Area, GW levels continue to drop at a steady pace. Not renewable resource.

Think about broader scale pictures. Regional graphics.

Margaret Matter. Two Nevada counties are piloting a new water resources administration scheme. New water resources administration in Australia (Michael Young, Univ. of Adelaide) is leading the way. Switch from water rights to water shares. Varies every year. Have mechanisms to move water around. Four counties in California now joining in. Blueprint for unbundling water rights; periodic review.