



Memo

To: Drought Readiness Council
From: Water Supply Availability Committee
Date: July 14, 2016
Subject: Update on Water Supply Conditions

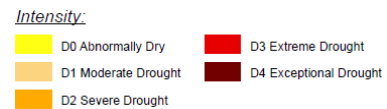
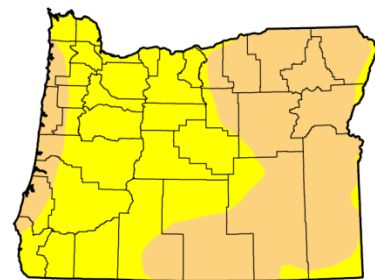
Oregon's Water Supply Availability Committee (WSAC) held its regular monthly meeting on July 12, 2016. Water supply conditions across the state have degraded slightly since last month's meeting. Although unusual for July, precipitation and cooler weather occurred earlier this month, helping streamflows and reducing demand for water. However, outlook and supply forecasts show continuing hot and dry conditions in the coming months.

Some key highlights from the July 12 WSAC Meeting:

- **Total precipitation thus far is at or near normal for much of the state.** All basins have received near average amounts of precipitation for the year so far. Looking at only the period from April 1 to today, precipitation statewide has been between 50 and 75 percent of normal. However, snowpack is gone, and federal agencies are already conducting seasonal maintenance at snow measurement sites. The three-month outlook forecasts below-average precipitation for the Pacific Northwest through September.
- **Above normal temperatures will continue through September.** Temperatures around the state for the past three months have been two to five degrees above average. While temperatures were cooler in early July and are expected to be near or below average for the rest of the month, NOAA's Climate Prediction Center is calling for above normal temperatures through the September outlook period. Climate conditions are favorable for the development of La Niña—albeit a weak La Niña—bringing potentially cooler and wetter conditions this winter to the Pacific Northwest.
- **Several streamflow sites are now approaching record lows for this time of year.** Statewide average streamflows for June were at 44 percent of normal. Although this was better than 32 percent of normal seen last year at this time, flows are still low and have been on a downward trend since April. During the recent cooler wetter days, some of the flashier systems briefly rebounded to 80 to 100 percent of normal; these conditions are not predicted to last. The Grande Ronde Basin, at 67 percent of normal, is faring the best. The most stressed basins, hovering between 22 to 38 percent of normal for June, are the South and North Coast Basins, the John Day, Malheur, Malheur Lake, Umatilla, Umpqua, and Willamette Basins. Refer to Attachment 1 for a statewide summary of streamflow in addition to hydrographs of the Nehalem, Umatilla, and Powder Rivers. See Attachment 2 for a bar graph displaying streamflow conditions in all of Oregon's basins. Attachment 3 is a map illustrating the same information.

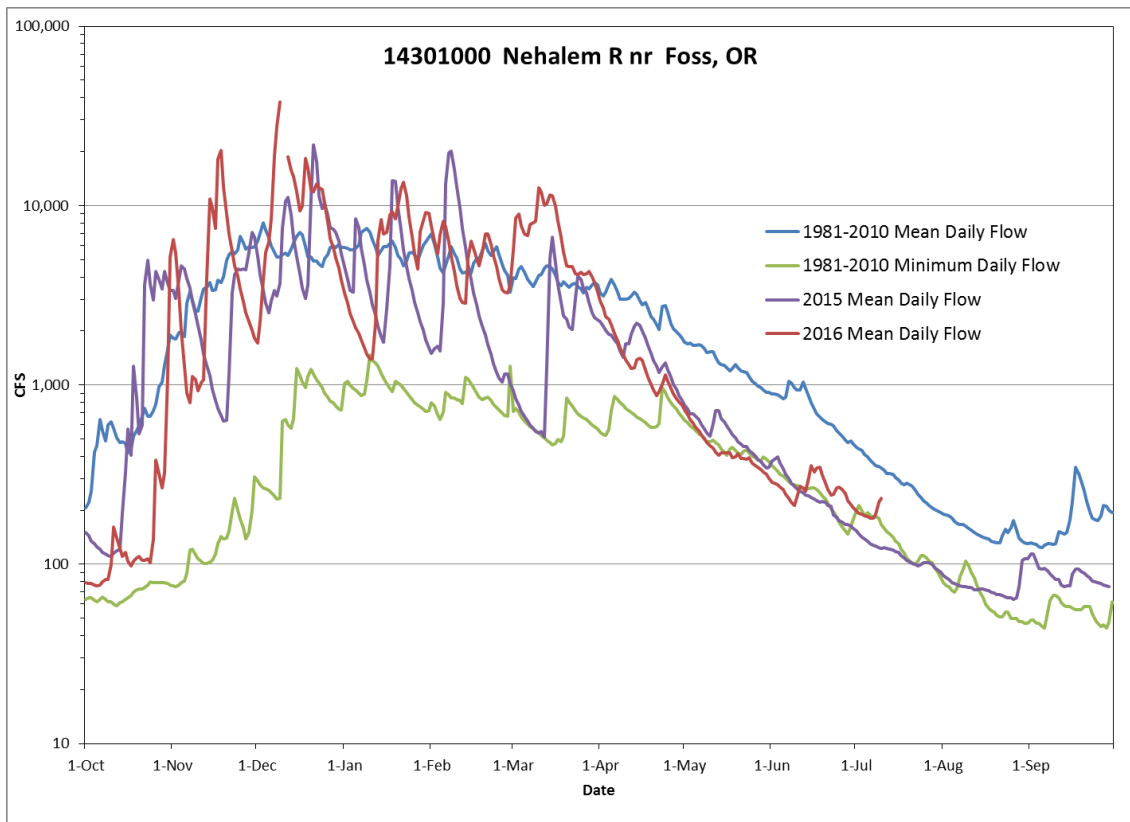
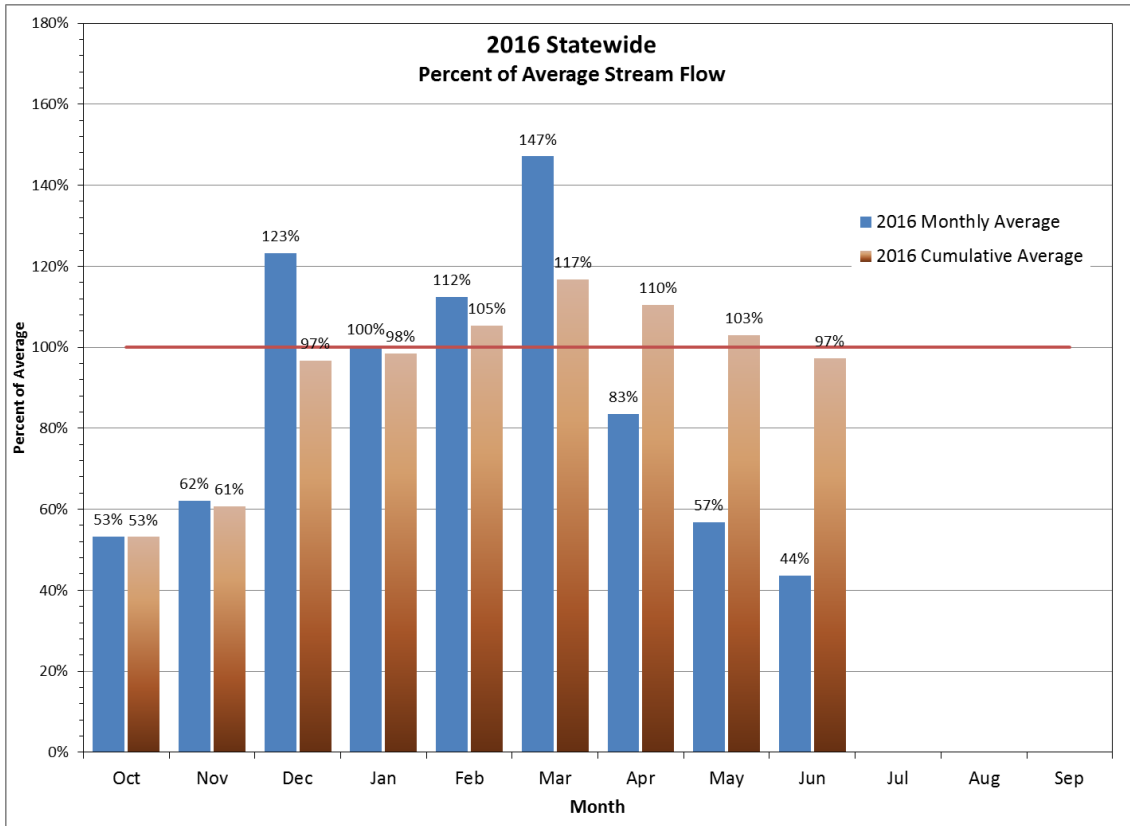
- **Streamflow forecasts through September have continued to decline.** In the past two months, streamflows have dropped far below average, resulting in streamflow forecasts that are also normal to well below normal for the July through September period. The southeast corner of Oregon (the Powder, Malheur, Malheur Lake, and Owyhee Basins) are among the lowest streamflows in the July through September forecast, well below 60 percent of normal.
- **Reservoir levels are better than last year at this time, but dropping quickly.** Reservoir storage levels across the state are higher compared to this time last year, as water managers were able to benefit from springtime run-off. Rivers that are fed by reservoirs are in better shape than those that are not; water shortages will emerge soon in locations without access to storage. However, all reservoirs are now being drawn down, supplying irrigation and municipal water, as well as instream flows for fisheries. By the end of the summer, reservoir levels will likely mirror 2015 levels.

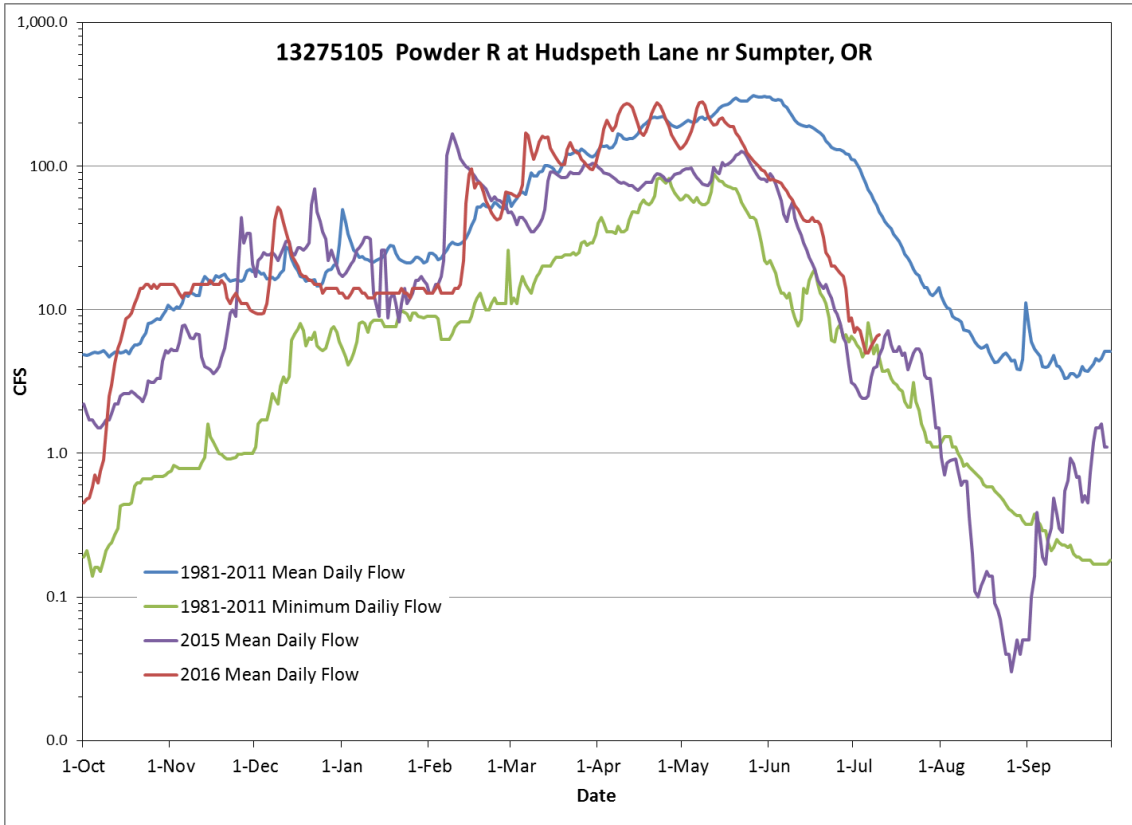
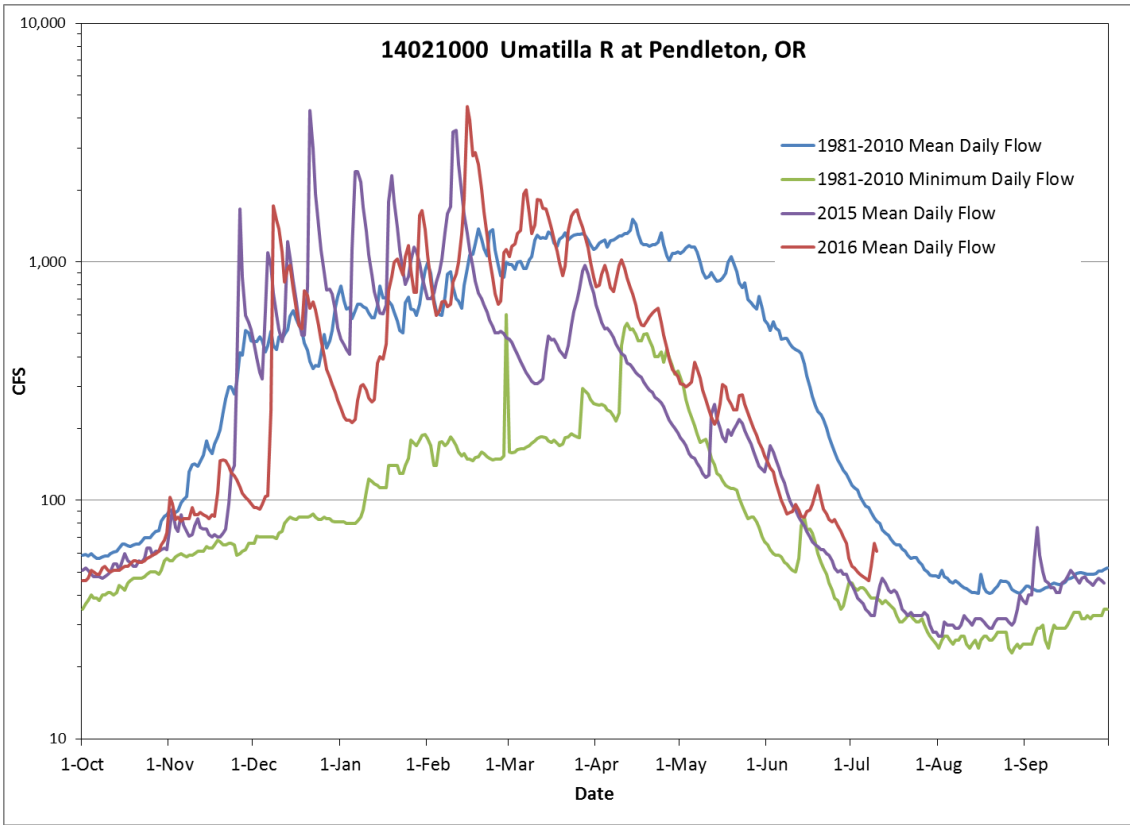
- **The Drought Monitor shows 100 percent of the state abnormally dry.** As of June 14, the entire state is in the D0 category (abnormally dry). The Mid Coast and Eastern Oregon regions, representing approximately 50 percent of the state, are also listed in the D1 category (moderate drought). This is up from 40 percent reported last month. See accompanying graphic. Soil moisture sensors are showing dry conditions within these areas.



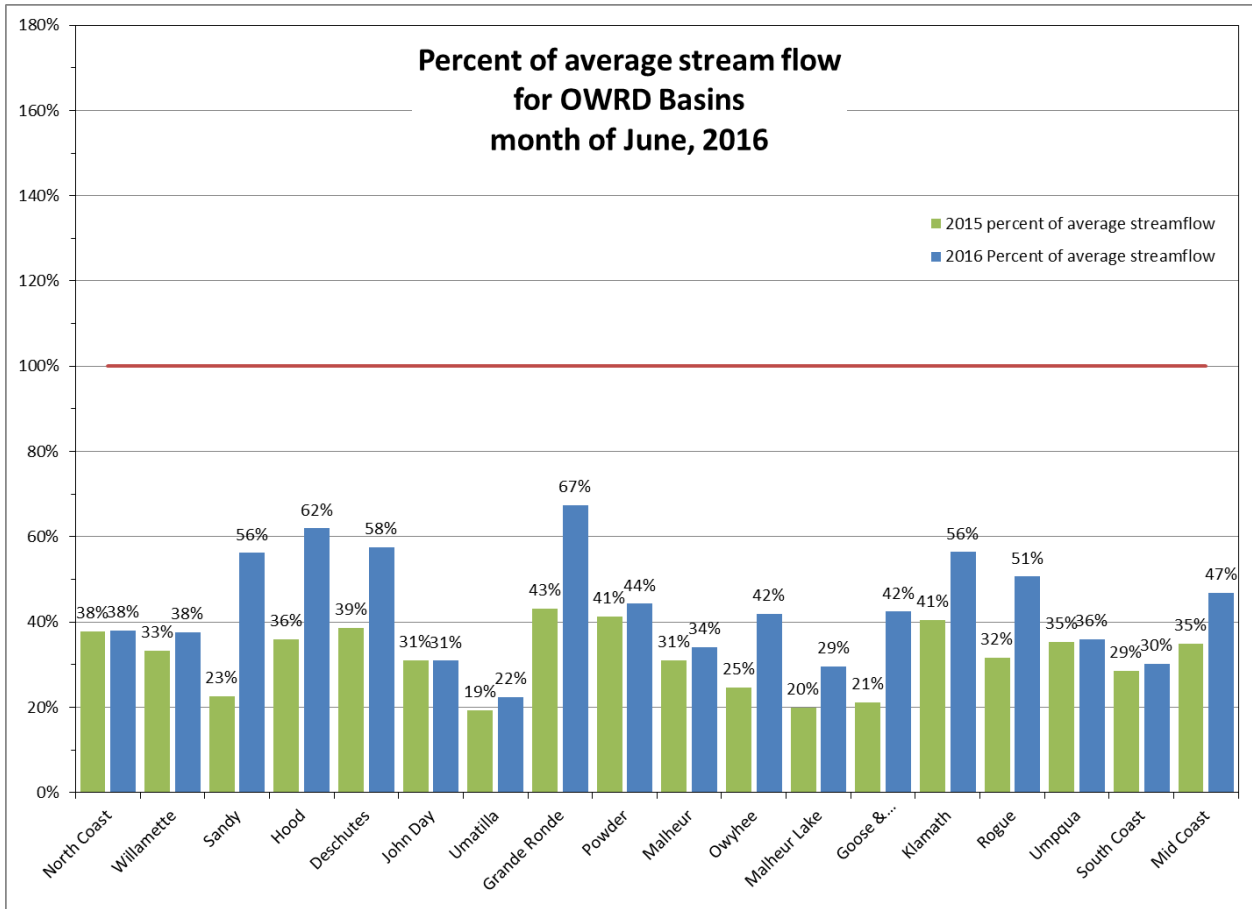
- **The fire potential outlook is normal for most of Oregon.** The National Interagency Fire Center’s (NIFC) monthly outlook is currently indicating above normal significant fire potential in southeastern Oregon for July and August, with normal significant wildland fire potential expected for the remainder of the state throughout the July through October outlook period. Recent rainfall and cooler temperatures in July improved the fire outlook, compared to this time last month. Another monthly outlook will be released on August 1, 2016.

Attachment 1: Streamflow Conditions





Attachment 2: Bar Graph — Percent of Average Streamflow



Attachment 3: Map — Percent of Average Streamflow

