

Memo

To: Drought Readiness Council
From: Water Supply Availability Committee
Date: September 15, 2016
Subject: Update on Water Supply Conditions

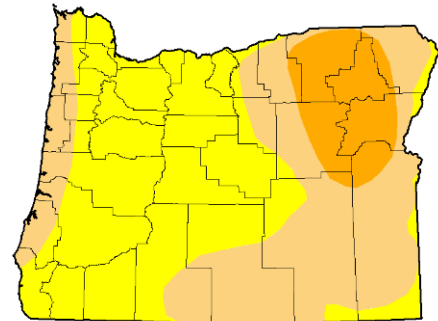
Oregon's Water Supply Availability Committee (WSAC) held its regular monthly meeting on September 13, 2016. Water supply conditions across the state continue to be lower than average since last month's meeting, due to a return to normal temperatures and dry August conditions. Outlook and supply forecasts show continuing warm and dry conditions in the coming months.

Some key highlights:

- **Precipitation was below normal in most areas of the state during the month of August.** The northwest corner and north central parts of the state received average amounts of precipitation, with below average conditions for this time of the year in the rest of the state. Climate models are now indicating the likelihood of ENSO-Neutral conditions for later in 2016. For the Northwest, this means that there's an equal likelihood of above average or below average precipitation in coming months.
- **Above average temperatures are expected to continue through September.** Temperatures in August were average in central Oregon and 1 to 3 degrees above normal in western Oregon and parts of northern Malheur County. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate Prediction Center continues to predict increased odds of warmer than normal conditions for the rest of the summer and early fall.
- **Streamflows continue to fare better overall in 2016 than in 2015.** Statewide average streamflows for August were at 65 percent of normal. This was better than 50 percent of normal seen last year at this time. Flows continued a typical downward trend throughout the month after the brief respite brought about by July's cooler temperatures and precipitation. The Hood, Klamath and Mid Coast Basins, all above 80 percent of normal, are faring the best. The most stressed basins are the Umatilla, John Day, Powder, Malheur River, and Malheur Lake Basins. Refer to Attachment 1 for a statewide summary of streamflow in addition to hydrographs of the Umatilla, John Day 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.
- **Those with reservoir storage continue to do relatively well.** Reservoir storage levels were strong at the start of the irrigation season, as water managers were able to benefit from springtime run-off. Irrigation systems and rivers fed by reservoirs continue to be in better shape than those that are not. 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, most reservoirs will be depleted, as they were in 2015. Federal agencies have begun meeting to design their reservoir operations for the fall. Through rigorous management Owyhee Reservoir, a two-year reservoir, expects to have some carry-over water for next year.

- **The Drought Monitor shows 100 percent of the state abnormally dry.** As of September 6, the entire state is in the D0 category (abnormally dry). The North Coast, Mid Coast and Eastern Oregon regions, representing approximately 50 percent of the state, are also listed in the D1 category (moderate drought). Further, 12 percent of the state, including portions of Umatilla, Baker, Grant, and Union Counties are now listed in the D2 category (severe drought). Soil moisture models continue to indicate drier than normal conditions within these areas.

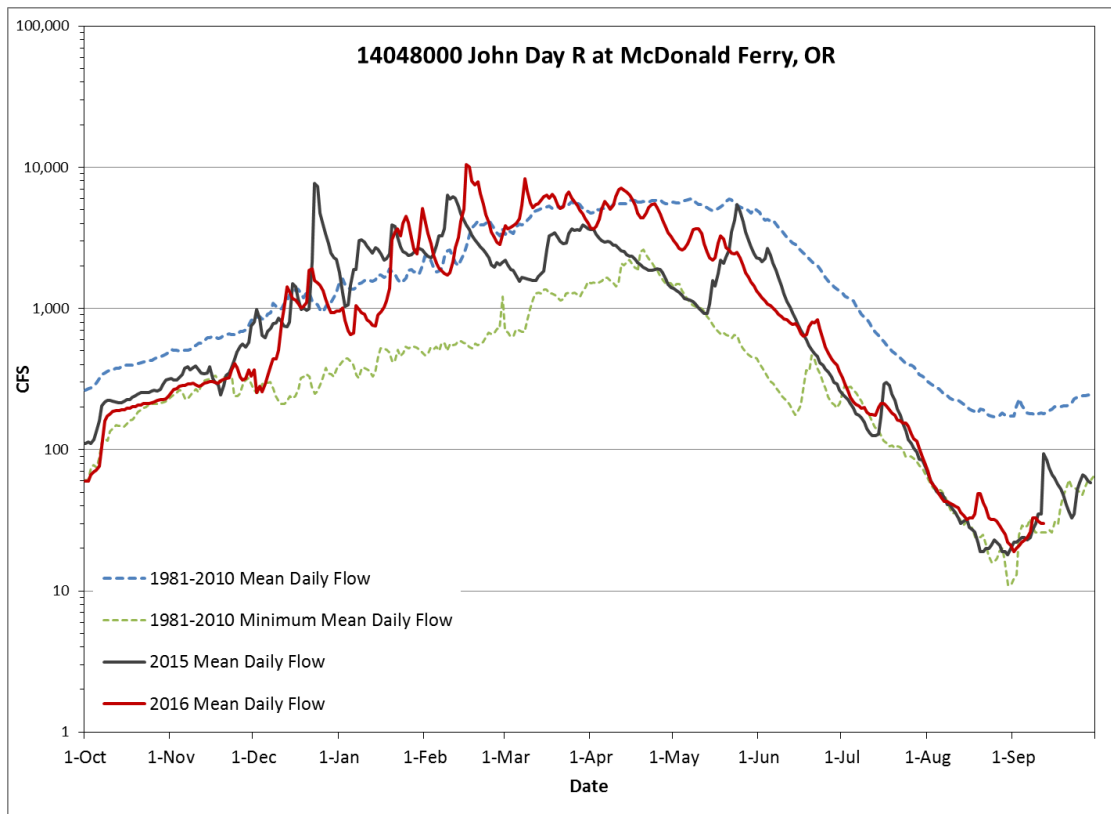
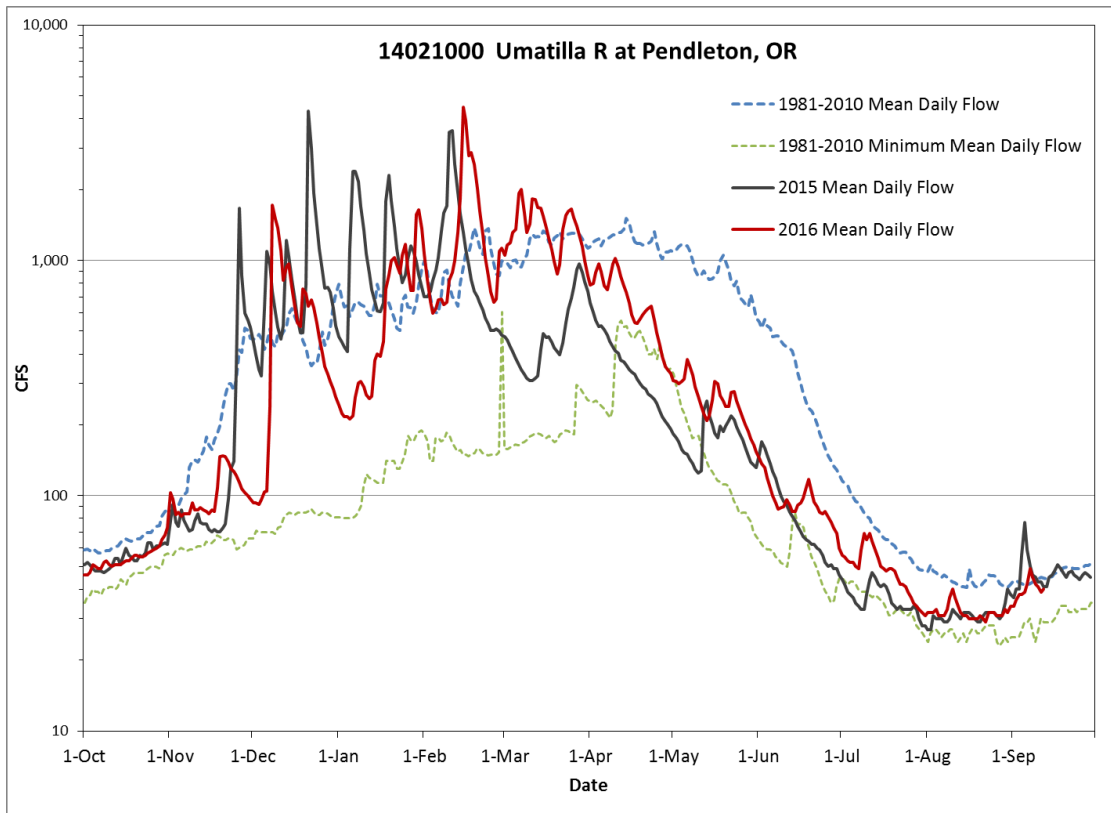


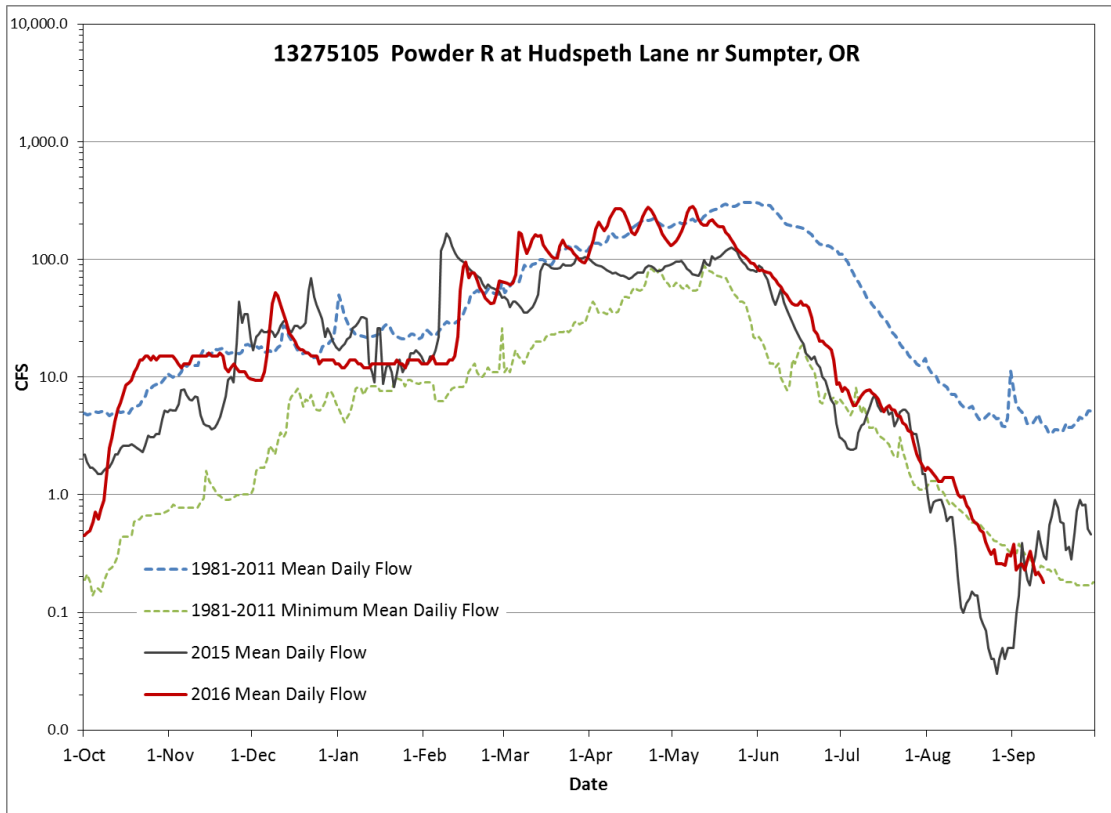
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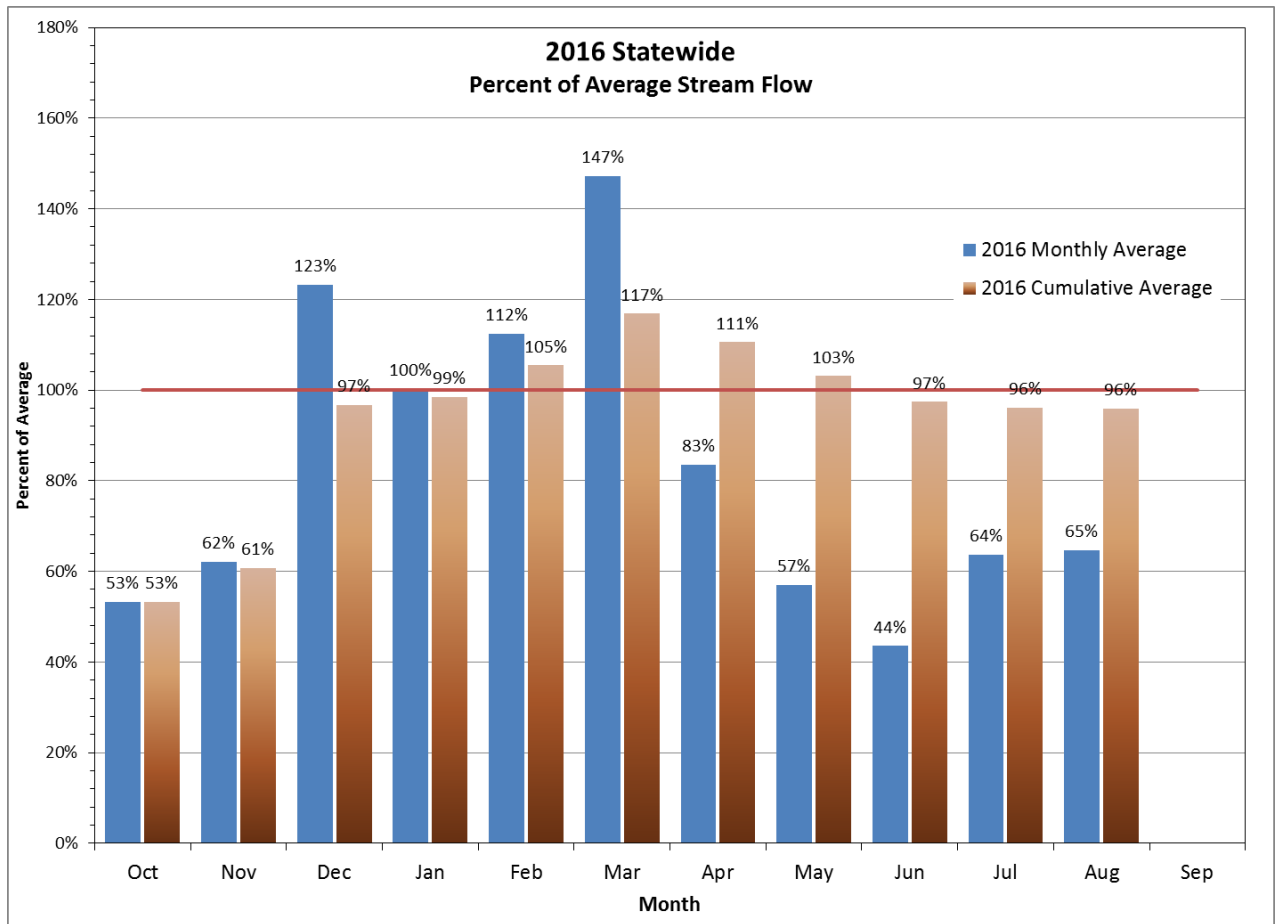
- **Fire potential is currently near normal-to-above normal for most of Oregon.** Compared to last year, there have been far fewer acres burned from wildfire in 2016. Much of this is due to fewer than normal lightning events. Rainfall and cooler temperatures in July also temporarily improved the fire outlook. However, due to lack of precipitation and a return to average temperatures in August, most areas in the state have returned to normal or above normal fire conditions. The National Interagency Fire Center's (NIFC) monthly outlook indicates mostly normal fire potential through August and September. The Oregon Department of Forestry would like to remind everyone that fire season remains in effect with conditions still dry and susceptible to fire starts. Backyard debris burning and dispersed campfires remain prohibited throughout much of the state. Check with your local ODF office for restrictions in your area or visit [ODF's fire restrictions web page](#) for more information.

Attachment 1: Streamflow Conditions

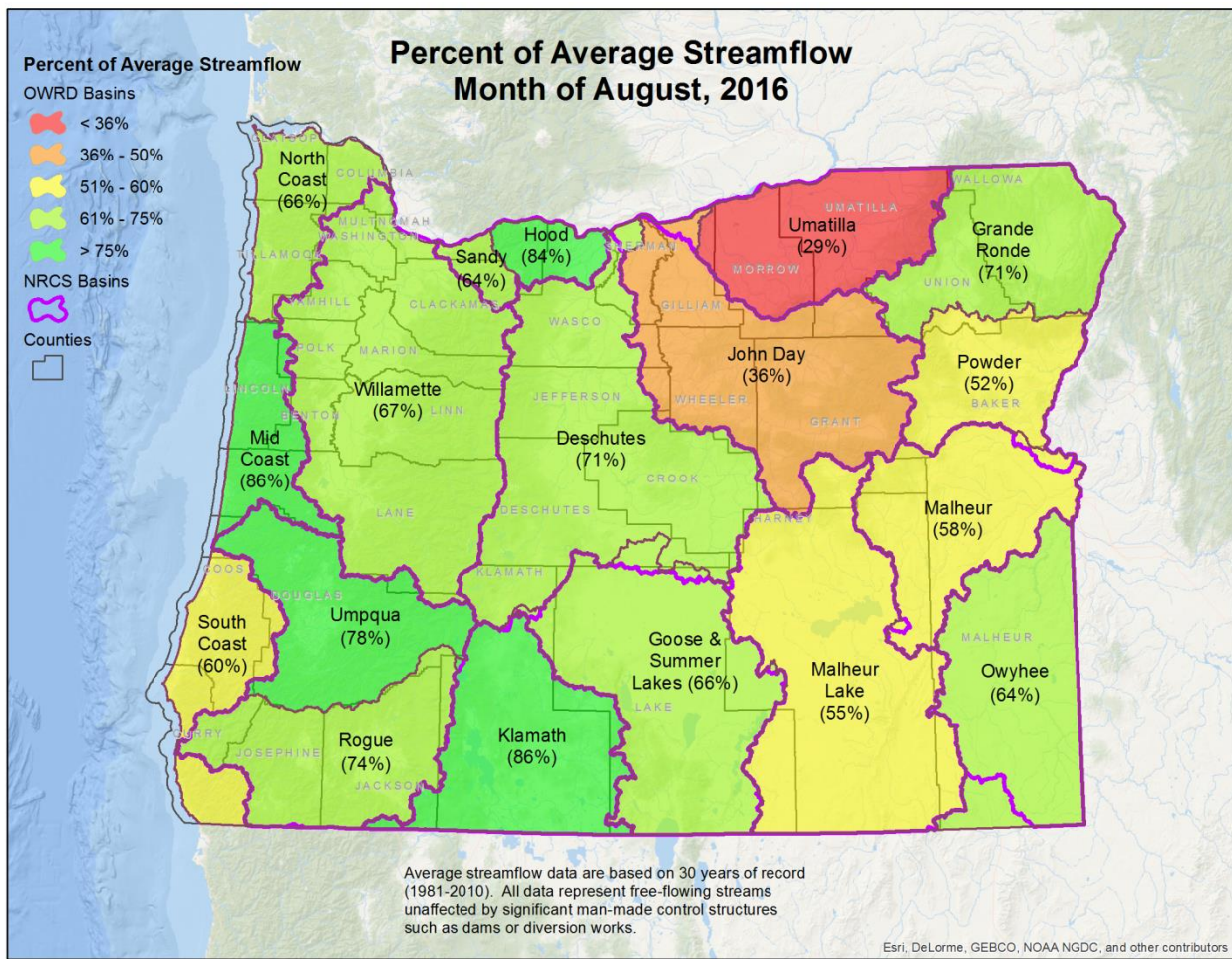




Attachment 2: Bar Graph — Percent of Average Streamflow



Attachment 3: Map — Percent of Average Streamflow



Compared to this time last month...

