

## Memo

**To:** Drought Readiness Council  
**From:** Water Supply Availability Committee  
**Date:** October 12, 2016  
**Subject:** Update on Water Supply Conditions

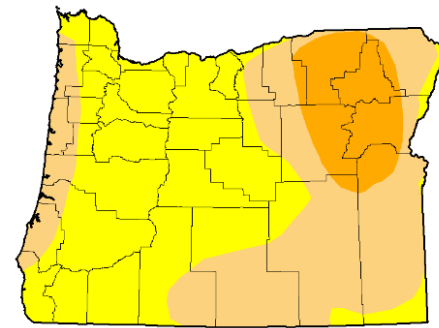
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Oregon's Water Supply Availability Committee (WSAC) held its regular monthly meeting on October 11, 2016. The Committee discussed recent water supply conditions, as well as a summary of water conditions during the 2016 Water Year (Oct. 1, 2015-Sept. 30, 2016). Water supply conditions across the state continued to be lower than average at the end of the water year, due to a return to warm temperatures in August.

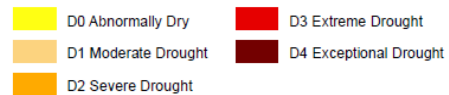
### Key Highlights from 2016:

- **Precipitation varied widely across the state during September.** The northwest corner and north central parts of the state received well above average amounts of precipitation during September, with below average conditions for this time of the year in the rest of the state.
- **For September, statewide average streamflows were at 61 percent of normal.** While low, this was better than the 54 percent of normal seen last year at this time. Streamflow conditions in the Hood, Klamath, and Malheur Lake Basins, all 79 percent of normal or higher, fared the best. The most stressed basins in September were the Umatilla, John Day, North Coast, and South Coast Basins. Refer to Attachment 1 for a map of streamflow conditions for September. See Attachment 2 for a bar graph displaying monthly and cumulative streamflow conditions for 2016.
- **Reservoir storage levels were strong at the start of the 2016 irrigation season.** From December 2015 through March 2016, Oregon received much-needed snow and precipitation. Above-normal temperatures during April 2016 resulted in early and rapid snowmelt, high streamflows, and good storage / reservoir conditions. A subsequent lack of spring rains contributed to the rapid drawdown of many reservoirs supplying water for agriculture. By the end of the summer, many eastern Oregon reservoirs were back to the low levels seen in 2015. Through rigorous management, Owyhee Reservoir (a two-year reservoir) will have some carry-over water for next year.

- **Little change in the U.S. Drought Monitor since last month.** As of October 4, the entire state is in the D0 category (abnormally dry). Coastal areas from the southern portion of the North Coast, to the northern portion of the South Coast, and Eastern Oregon regions, representing approximately 50 percent of the state, are listed in the D1 category (moderate drought). Further, 12 percent of the state, including portions of Umatilla, Baker, Grant, and Union Counties continue to be listed in the D2 category (severe drought). Soil moisture models continue to indicate drier than normal conditions within these areas.



*Intensity:*



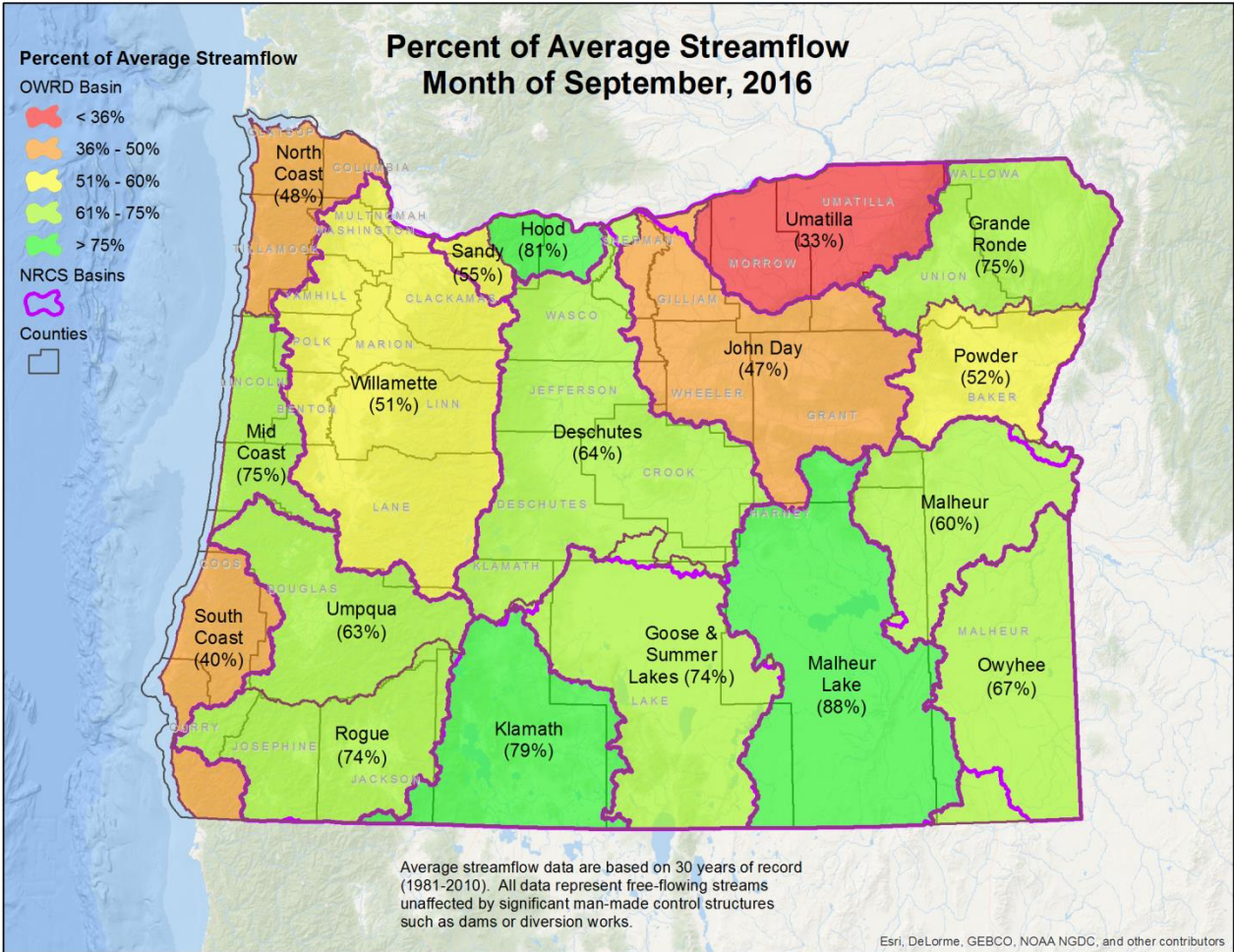
- **Fire potential is low-to-moderate.** Recent rainfall and cooler temperatures have reduced fire potential to low-to-moderate levels for most of Oregon. Compared to last year, there were far fewer acres burned from wildfire in 2016. Conditions were dry this year and at times, even drier than last year. Much of the lack of significant wildfire this year is because of fewer lightning events.

The Oregon Department of Forestry recently announced that the current Regulated-Use Closure in the Northwest Oregon Forest Protection District has been lifted. This area includes all state, private, and federal Bureau of Land Management forestlands in the Tillamook, Forest Grove and Astoria districts. Check with your local ODF office for restrictions in your area or visit [ODF's fire restrictions web page](#) for more information.

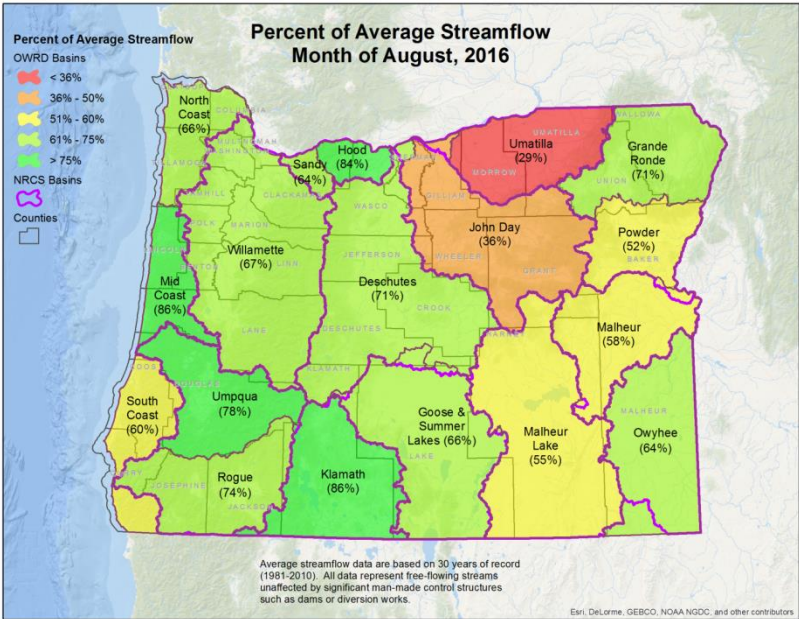
### Looking Ahead:

- **Climate models now indicate the likelihood of ENSO-Neutral conditions for later in 2016.** “ENSO” is the El Niño/Southern Oscillation, and refers to the relationship between ocean temperatures and atmospheric conditions. Neutral conditions occur when the system is transitioning between El Niño and La Niña events. This winter has the potential for a very mild La Niña. For the Pacific Northwest, ENSO-Neutral conditions mean that there is an equal likelihood of above-average or below-average precipitation in coming months.
- **Above average temperatures are forecasted to continue through December.** Temperatures in September were 1 to 3 degrees above normal in the northern to mid-coast regions and 1 to 5 degrees warmer than normal in far eastern Oregon; temperatures were cooler than normal for the rest of the state. NOAA’s Climate Prediction Center continues to predict increased odds of warmer than normal conditions through early winter.

Attachment 1: September Streamflow Conditions



Compared to this time last month...



Attachment 2: Bar Graph — Statewide Percent of Average Streamflow

