

## **Water Supply Availability Committee Meeting – September 12, 2017**

In-House and Phone Conference - Meeting Notes

### **In House Attendees**

Ken Stahr – OWRD (chair)

Scott Oviatt – NRCS Snow Survey

Marc Stewart – USGS

Kathy Dello - OCCRI

Justin Iverson – OWRD

### **Phone Attendees**

Andy Bryant – NWS

Nick Yonker – ODF

Mary Karen Scullion – USACE

### **Presentations**

Scott Oviatt - Mountain precipitation since October 1, 2016 is at 122 percent of normal. Presented soil moisture data at three SNOTEL sites in North Central and Northeast Oregon: Mt Howard - as of 9/1/17 the soil moisture is 49 percent effectively saturated, normal is 59 percent. Snow pack melted out on 6/15/17, a week later than normal; Moss Springs - as of 9/1/17 soil moisture is 8.8 percent effectively saturated, normal is 18 percent, snowpack melted out on 6/5/17, normal for this site; High Ridge – as of 9/1/17 the soil moisture is 11 percent effectively saturated, normal is 31 percent. Snowpack melted out on 5/30/17, two weeks later than normal. While 2017 was a good precipitation year, the hot dry summer is showing an impact.

Andy Bryant – Over the past 90 days there have been above normal hot-dry conditions with little or no precipitation. The US Drought Monitor is reporting 77.67 percent of the state is ‘Abnormally Dry’ with 13.5 percent (the Northwest portion) being considered in ‘Moderate Drought’. The climate prediction outlook for mid-September shows a generally wetter and cooler pattern starting September 17 and continuing into late September. The outlook for September –November precipitation probability is neutral. ENSO Neutral conditions historically result in below-average precipitation and near average temperatures in Western Oregon and the Cascades

Ken Stahr – Stream flow conditions: In August of 2016, statewide streamflow was at 65 percent of average for the month, with the cumulative average from the beginning of the water year at 96 percent. For August of 2017, the statewide streamflow was at 85 percent of average for the month, down from 86 percent in July. The cumulative average from the beginning of the water year is 143 percent. Percent of average stream flow in basins compared with Umatilla the lowest at 47 percent. Five stream gages were discussed with each showing a pattern of downward slope after July 1, 2017. This downward trend is expected to continue. A summary of reservoirs still indicates that most are showing good storage capacity for this time of year.

Marc Stewart – noted that unregulated streams in the Willamette Basin are flowing at lower than normal rates.

Mary Karen Scullion – Willamette basin total reservoirs are at 55 percent of capacity. USACE is continuing to monitor conditions and releasing water to support fish. The Rogue is 42 percent full, also releasing for fish. All areas will continue release through the fall until rains begin.

Justin Iverson - Groundwater staff members will be out to measure groundwater levels in October once irrigation is over to see how recharge is progressing.

Kathy Dello – Ken Stahr and Scott Oviatt are now a part of the bi-weekly meeting calls to lend their expertise to the US Drought Monitor team. The group participated in a phone meeting on Monday, September 11 and recommended that the northern portion of the state be included in the D1 (Moderate Drought) category. Ken will contact OWRD field staff for input on regulatory activities and Scott will reach out to his field staff. The collaboration will help the authors of the US Drought Monitor to add more local information and resources to their decision making process.

Nick Yonker – Fire Conditions today are slightly better than in the past few weeks. Cooling conditions and rain are in the forecast which will drop the elevated fire conditions. The fire season started out slow but with dry conditions and high temperatures these conditions went to above normal. The active fires around the state will benefit from the cooling conditions.

August meeting notes were reviewed and will be posted online once approved by everyone.

### **Summary**

The group consensus was that at this time, conditions indicate that there are no areas in the state where a drought declaration would be necessary. However, due to abnormally dry conditions there are areas in and around the state that merit continued monitoring.

Next meeting October 10, 2017 at the Salem office and by phone.