

Water Supply Availability Committee Meeting – October 10, 2017

In-House and Phone Conference - Meeting Notes

In-House Attendees

Ken Stahr – OWRD (chair)
Scott Oviatt – NRCS Snow Survey
Amy Burke – NRCS Snow Survey
Samantha Phillips - OWRD

Phone Attendees

Andy Bryant – NWS
Nick Yonker – ODF
Mary Karen Scullion – USACE
Marc Stewart – USGS
Yamen Hogue – USACE
Salina Hart - USACE

Presentations - September and Water Year Summary

Scott Oviatt and Amy Burke Presented 2017 SNOTEL water year summary:

1. Record setting October precipitation set the tone for wet weather that continued through early June.
2. Cold & snowy December – January brought unusual low elevation snow and above normal snow amounts to the mountains.
3. Mid-Winter (February and March) heavy rain events brought rounds of flooding throughout the state and significant snowmelt. Due to the snowpack surplus, the snowpack was sustained at normal levels even after these losses.
4. December through April brought 5 consecutive months of above average precipitation.
5. Normal to above normal snowpack was maintained through the peak of the season (mid-March to early April)
6. Most major irrigation reservoirs began the water supply season with average and above average amounts of water.
7. As forecast, most rivers experienced above average streamflow volumes from April-July (largely due to the above normal streamflow contribution during April and May.
8. July and August were hot and dry, placing high demands for water usage with decreased streamflows statewide.

Andy Bryant – During the 2017 water year, most of the state experienced above average precipitation with a few areas coming in at average. September was dominated by only one big precipitation event that helped with fires. Precipitation in the northern part of the state was above average and the central part of the state below average. Over the past 14 days only the northern part of the state benefited from the September precipitation event and the southern Oregon areas are still dry. The past 90 day temperatures have been mostly above average. The water year saw slightly above average temperatures which turned out to be a byproduct of extremes. The October outlook is for above average precipitation and below average temperatures. The three month outlook trends toward temperatures closer to average and precipitation above average. La Niña conditions are strengthening and are likely to continue through this winter.

Marc Stewart – Both the 7 and 28 day average streamflow compared to historical streamflow was within the normal range. Graphs were presented that allowed members to see all of the northwest states and how there stream flows were affected this year.

Ken Stahr – Streamflow conditions during the water year throughout Oregon reflected the same overall pattern - above average until around the middle of June when flows dropped due to hot, dry weather and increased water demand. A slight upturn in streamflow was noticed in late September due to the first precipitation event in almost three months.

Mary Karen Scullion – related that the Willamette Basin is at approximately 37 percent of capacity. This is a little lower, but close to normal for this time of year. Maintenance on Blue River Cougar and Hill Creek re are all scheduled to be completed by November.

Ken Stahr resumed sharing information about the rest of the reservoirs. The reservoirs in Central Oregon, North Central, Southern and Eastern areas of the state all seem to be in good shape for the time of year many still being over 50 percent% full.

Nick Yonker – There are four fires around Oregon that are still active they include: The Chetco, Eagle Creek, High Creek, and Jones fires. It is anticipated that the next wet and cooler weather system predicted to move through this week will put them all out. Flooding could be a potential challenge in some burn areas as the ground is not able to absorb the water and it runs off, creating potential flooding. USFS and USGS will be monitoring the burn sites.

Ken asked for input regarding the bi-weekly conditions report. Reminded the group that he and Scott Oviatt are sitting in on US Drought Monitor discussions, taking advantage of an opportunity to become more involved in the process.

The next meeting would normally be held on November 7, 2017 at the Salem office and by phone. The meter may be postponed until December if all are in agreement.