

## **Water Supply Availability Committee Meeting – December 5, 2017**

In-House and Phone Conference - Meeting Notes

### **In-House Attendees**

Ken Stahr – OWRD (chair)

Samantha Phillips - OWRD

### **Phone Attendees**

Andy Bryant – NWS

Scott Oviatt - NRCS

Peter Cooper – USBR

Nick Yonker – ODF

Eric Rau - OEM

Marc Stewart – USGS

Kathie Dello – OCCRI

Sonia Pederson – OEM

Margaret Matter – ODA

Jeff Marti – WA State Drought Coordinator

### **Presentations – Update on Monthly Conditions and Water Year Summary**

**Scott Oviatt** – A comparison was made between the stark difference a two week period made in regard Snow water and precipitation around the State. On November 20 the snow water equivalent was 238% of normal, on December 5 the current snow water equivalent is 59% of normal. On November 20 precipitation was 131% of normal. On December 5 it was 119% of normal. Snowpack was lost due to warming temperatures. Rain was measured but we are not building but losing snowpack around the state. From this point forward we typically see snow accumulation. It is still early and time will tell. The following are Scott's early December observations:

- Statewide snow water equivalent value generally at 8.0" of water or less
- Snow concentrated at higher elevations, little low to mid elevation snowpack
- Low and mid elevation snowpack that was measured in mid-November has melted due to warmer temperatures and rain-on-snow.
- Little if any accumulating of snow since mid - November (most mountain precipitation fell as rain).

**Andy Bryant** – Precipitation around the state since the start of the water year is variable with Central Oregon trending toward below average in precipitation. The same trend continued for November. LA Nina is likely now peaking and predicted to slowly trend to ENSO neutral during the spring of 2018. The outlook for December is dry and warm (except for valley inversion) conditions are expected through mid-December, likely resulting in below-average precipitation and above average temperatures for the month, barring a drastic change to wetter and or cooler conditions in late. The prediction for January-March indicates that neutral trend that is currently being seen.

**Ken Stahr/ Marc Stewart** – At the end of the 2017 water year, the annual cumulative streamflow was 145% of average. For the start of the 2018 water year, October streamflows were ahead of normal at 155 percent of average. November streamflow flattened but overall the state is still above average at 129 percent. The reservoir storage outlook is good with many reservoirs being around 50% full. Information for October and November indicates that most reservoirs have adequate reserves going into the winter storage season.

**Peter Cooper** – Reiterated the same information regarding the lack of snowpack and the outlook for the next few weeks as being dry with little hope for additional snowpack. Precipitation wise, we are still on track but with the coming dry spell the models show it will change. The last time a similar dry period occurred in Portland was 2009. The thirty day temperature outlook shows above average temperatures and the precipitation outlook for the same period shows below normal precipitation, which is a dramatic shift from the outlook made two weeks earlier.

Tualatin River Basin Scoggins storage is at 61% which is an above average carryover. This reservoir is right at winter flood control space. In the Deschutes River Basin Ochoco Reservoir is at 43% with no plan to release. Prineville Reservoir is at 56% which is slightly under winter flood control. It is still early both reservoirs have a good carry over. McKay reservoir is well below requirement at 18%, only passing the required minimum for winter storage. Emigrant Reservoir is at 30% and they are only passing minimum flows. Major storage reservoirs in Southwest Oregon all have good carry over, passing minimum and capturing inflows. It is still early in the fill season and there should be time to fill the storage reservoirs in all parts of the state.

**Nick Yonker** – Fire season is officially over but when we get a high pressure ridge and heavy winds that could dry out areas and create a possibility for fires. We are keeping watch of the Eagle Creek burn area for flare ups.

**Jeff Marti** – Our neighboring state to the north has been experiencing similar conditions to Oregon but in Washington the rain and snow has kept coming so they are doing significantly better in precipitation and temperature. Stream flows are normal and the USBR reservoirs have good carryover from last year.

**Kathie Dello** – The current Drought Monitor shows no drought categories listed for Oregon at this time. She mentioned that it should probably be showing Central Oregon's lack of precipitation. The Drought Monitor is not set up to detect or monitor snow drought. Which is defined as an abnormally bare (lack of snow) but not necessarily lack of rain, rather a lack of snowpack. Kathie shared that she has a grad student who will be working on a project to collect data on soil moisture which will include a look at data from counties, historic examples and other pertinent categories this is data that could be especially helpful in preparing for drought situations. The other product that Kathie is working on is looking at snow pack and how to reflect the lack of it along with the soil moisture data that give more tools for decisions to be made from. There has been input on these projects from the Drought Readiness Council which will help with technical assistance and this Committee will be updated on the progress of both projects at monthly meetings.

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. Ken will add Jeff Marti and Peter Cooper to the list serv.

The message that Ken will share with the next Drought Readiness Committee Meeting is that “Concern” is being voiced and this committee is a little nervous by the lack of snow pack and forecast for dry and warm temperatures especially over the next two weeks and the nest three month outlook. It is still early but a dry December historically has been very hard to “make up”.

The next meeting will be held on January 9, 2018 at the Salem OEM office and by Join-Me, on-line meetings. See the email from Sonia Pederson for details.