



Oregon's Drought Readiness Council June 16, 2016 Meeting Notes



(Approved July 14, 2016)

Attendees:

Brenda Bateman, WRD
Lanaya Blakely, WRD
Bev Hall, OEM
Jim Johnson, ODA
Matt Marheine, OEM

Smita Mehta, DEQ
Debbie Moller, OEM
Erik Rau, OEM
Karyl Salis, OHA
Blake Shelide, ODOE

Ken Stahr, WRD
Basil Williams, Gov. Ofc.
Nick Yonker, ODF

Welcome and Introductions:

Brenda Bateman & Matt Marheine, council co-chairs, welcomed everyone. Participants in the room and on the phone introduced themselves. Co-chairs committed to adding Basil, Blake, Debbie, and Lanaya to the distribution list for future meetings.

Agenda Check:

Quick review of the day's schedule; no suggested changes.

Approval of May Meeting Notes:

Suggestions included: in the "Attendees" section, note the two observers who called in by phone during the May meeting. Attach the May 16 memo provided by the Water Supply Availability Committee, so that it travels with the meeting notes. With these changes, notes were approved.

Update on Water Conditions

Ken Stahr, Chair, Water Supply Availability Committee, transmitted a June 14, 2016 memo (see attached) from the WSAC to the Drought Readiness Council, describing significant changes in water conditions compared to last month. Highlights included rapid snowmelt and run off—about one month early—as the result of abnormally high temperatures. While some of the run-off was captured in storage reservoirs throughout the state, drawn-down has begun in these reservoirs and it is likely that end of season reservoir levels will closely mirror those of 2015. Ken also updated members on the process the WSAC is using to develop decision-support tools.

Ensuing discussions included a request to provide a map of those areas of the state that are dependent on mid-level snowpack, as opposed to rain-fed. Participants asked what the period of record was, underlying most of the maps and graphs in this discussion; it's 1981 to 2010.

Products of the Council

- The group reviewed the template designed to help counties request a Governor-declared drought. These requests for drought assistance would be made under Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 536. No edits were suggested, but discussions included the following:
 - OEM can make links to the template available as part of its *Weekly Watch* newsletter to emergency managers.
 - Counties will have to customize the text to their own circumstances. 25 counties wrote such letters last year and have experience around this.
 - OEM and WRD should write a joint memo to county emergency managers, introducing the template and its use.
 - OEM and WRD can provide further guidance on how to make requests and what the available drought permitting tools are, by hosting a series of webinars; one county already has requested a face-to-face meeting to learn more.

- A Drought Task Force will convene this summer to determine whether the drought tools that are “unlocked” by a Governor’s declaration are adequate and useful. Committee members urged the Task Force to check in with water users to hear directly from them what types of needs typically arise during a drought. They also urged the Task Force to be up front about whether the drought toolbox will make additional funds available to water users. Contact WRD if you have specific suggestions about new or improved drought tools. Members asked for continued updates at their next meeting.
- If circumstances become more dire, requiring active intervention on the part of OEM, counties can make a separate request, invoking ORS 401. OEM is creating a template for these requests as well.
- Creating a drought playbook. During its previous meeting, the Council discussed developing a more detailed “playbook” for response to drought, beyond what is currently found in Oregon’s Drought Annex. Such details could include state and federal emergency contact lists, lists of water haulers, resources for federal funding and more. A draft list of state and federal contacts was provided to members for review and comment. Suggestions included:
 - Organizing lists by agency and job title, in case individuals themselves retire or move on,
 - Looking at ODF’s list of contractors and contracting services to see whether it might be useful for these purposes as well,
 - Referring the public and partners to the Drought Annex whenever possible, for basic information.
 - Linking the drought information page (<http://www.oregon.gov/owrd/Pages/wr/drought.aspx>) to USDA’s Farm Services Agency’s state webpages (<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/index>), for funding options.

Next Meeting

- July 14 from 10:00 to noon at OEM.