



Oregon's Drought Readiness Council
July 14, 2016 Meeting Notes



DRAFT – Needs Council Approval

Attendees:

Lauri Aunan, GNRO (by phone)
Brenda Bateman, WRD. Council Co-Chair
Kathie Dello, OCCRI
Tom Elliott, DOE (by phone)
Bruce Gilles, DEQ (by phone)
Bev Hall, OEM
Jim Johnson, ODA
Matt Marheine, OEM. Council Co-Chair

Wade Peerman, DEQ (by phone)
Racquel Rancier, WRD (by phone)
Erik Rau, OEM
Kari Salis, OHA (by phone)
Ken Stahr, WRD
Anna Pakenham Stevenson, ODFW
Nick Yonker, ODF

Guest:

Jason Yencopal, Baker County (by phone)

Welcome and Introductions:

Participants around the table and on the phone introduced themselves.

Agenda Review:

Added consideration of Baker County request for drought declaration.

Approval of June Notes:

One suggested edit (Moller has two L's); approved with edit.

Update on Water Conditions:

The Council reviewed the July 14, 2016 memo provided by the Water Supply Availability Committee (see meeting materials). Ken Stahr, WSAC Chair, along with Nick Yonker and Kathie Dello, provided a summary of water conditions for the group:

- It is a cooler, wetter July than usual. Expect a return to hot and dry for August.
- Soil moisture is low on east side; the Drought Monitor could possibly go to D2 in the coming weeks.
- This morning, NOAA decreased the odds of a La Niña from 70 to 50 percent.
 - This results in neutral conditions (still a big change from El Niño).
- The recent rain also knocked back fire potential / energy release component.
 - Currently normal throughout most of the state.
- Might the “Blob” in the Pacific Ocean be coming back? Not yet confirmed, although subsurface water quality conditions never really cleared up. Kathie offered to check on this and get back to the group.

Products of the Council:

1. Process request for drought declaration from Baker County.

a. First, note process change: In 2015-16, the State developed a revised process for an ORS 536 drought declaration, which goes through Drought Readiness Council. Counties may also request an ORS 401 emergency declaration if necessary (to provide emergency measures such as water hauling, shelter, etc.). This conversation is focused on ORS 536 only. Next Steps? Co-chairs will make recommendation to the Governor's Office.

b. Request for drought declaration by Baker County, presented by the county emergency manager– see attachment. The county is trying to be more proactive this year. Commissioners are hearing from the producers. They've cut the first crop of hay already, so irrigation water will be picking up soon for 2nd

cutting. Rains did help, but dust is still kicking up on the roads. Already declared an emergency at the county level. Actions underway? Irrigation Districts are cutting back, particularly at Phillips Reservoir.

c. Discussion Points.

- Are there calls for water hauling or other state interventions? No, water users are working together, shutting off voluntarily. We don't have producers directly coming to the county with quantified/economic impacts. The Farm Service Agency appears to be getting some calls.
- The Drought Council has made it a practice to defer an affirmative recommendation to future meetings if conditions do not rise to the level of "severe, continuing drought," which is not apparent t at this time.
- Certainly, higher temperatures will be returning in August.
- Note that local water users can still make voluntary arrangements without a state declaration.
- And watermasters can regulate, too.
- Section 5 of the county's declaration includes a request of the Governor and Secretary of Agriculture. Governor's action is no longer a necessary precursor for the federal action (used to be, but not anymore).
- Could Council members have more information about agricultural or other economic impacts? Oregon Dept. of Agriculture has not heard about fallowed land, moving closer to water sources, or any quantification / monetization of impacts.
- Could we also get more information about whether any local actions have taken place to mitigate impacts of drought? Is there any local communication with public about need to conserve, etc.? Messaging is very important (not just local but state level, too).
- Do we know whether the state's drought toolbox (drought permits for groundwater use) would be used if there were a state declaration? There was one permit application that was withdrawn in 2015 and then none until as far back as 2005. Not sure irrigators know this tool is available during a drought declaration. Make sure the state is getting the word out.
- Would like to see a stronger hydrologic case and more documentation of ag/economic impacts before activating the Governor's authority to coordinate resources.
- If the Council holds off, would the county need to re-submit its request? No, we can reconsider at next monthly meeting or intervening time period. Let us know if hydrologic conditions change; or if county provides additional input.
- Updates for hydrologic conditions come out bi-weekly. Ask for community impact reports, too.
- Members are comfortable holding off and revisiting as conditions change.
- Chairs will make the final call regarding recommendations and communicate to Governor's Office.
- Governor's Office will make final call regarding drought declaration.

2. ORS 401 Emergency Declaration Template.

a. Created language out of a Harney County example from 2011. These are examples that could certainly change with local circumstances. Make sure "life and property" or "health and safety" phrases are in here. These represent more dire circumstances than the ORS 536 requests. Ask counties to "please describe the severity of the situation here." And, "please describe the top five things you need from us to address the situation." Give them more flexibility to describe the situation. Counties are encouraged to implement their emergency declarations prior to requesting Governor's support.

b. Discussion points:

- Should we provide an addendum of available tools to pick and choose from? No, don't provide form language to cut and paste; we want to hear about conditions on the ground in the counties' own words.
- See guide included as part of the meeting materials.

3. Emergency Contact Info.

Review contact information and send notes to Brenda Bateman. Fix Nick Yonker's name. Send updates as information changes.

4. OHA Discussion, featuring Kari Salis.

- a. See 2008 Hauling guidelines. No list of providers or regulations, just the guidelines. Remember to use potable water sources.
- c. Also OHA-DW Services' website has info about shock chlorination, treatment:
<http://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyEnvironments/DrinkingWater/Pages/index.aspx> and
<http://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyEnvironments/DrinkingWater/Operations/Treatment/Documents/Chlorine.pdf>.
- d. Same site provides guidance re harmful algae blooms, depending on nutrient loading.
- e. Although there aren't conservation/curtailment requirements during a drought, OHA can help review protocols. See OHA's drought webpage:
<http://public.health.oregon.gov/Preparedness/Prepare/Pages/PrepareForDrought.aspx>
- f. Always doing surveillance of diseases and vectors as well.
- g. Recreational advisories went out earlier this year, noting unsafe conditions in the water. One in the Umpqua and one in upper Klamath Lake. You can sign up for alerts!

If other agencies have drought-related programs they would like to share, let the co-chairs know.

5. Updates from the Drought Task Force, featuring Racquel Rancier.

- a. Task Force convenes next week. These will be public meetings.
- b. Key objective is to look at drought tools that currently exist.
- c. Will also make recommendations to the Legislature about what mitigation & resiliency work needs to be done. Oregon doesn't have resources to identify and document drought-related impacts.

Next Meeting is Aug. 11, 10:00 to noon at OEM

COUNTY OF BAKER
BOARD of COMMISSIONERS

DECLARATION OF LOCAL DISASTER

WHEREAS, the County of Baker on this 7th day of July, 2016 has determined that the Baker County agricultural industry, and related economy is suffering widespread and severe economic damage, from extreme cyclical weather conditions and continuing drought within the county.

And

Baker County's precipitation is over 3 inches below normal for the water year beginning October 1, 2015.

And

Phillips Reservoir, the largest water reservoir in the county, is only allowing 1.2 acre/ft per acre which is less than the 1.25 acre/ft per acre last year during which time the county had declared and was in extreme drought as denoted in the United States Drought Monitor. Thief Valley Reservoir contains over 1,300 acre feet less of water than it did at this same time last year. Unity Reservoir contains the same amount of water as it did at this same time last year.

And

The extended weather forecast for Baker County projects "higher than normal temperatures, and below average precipitation".

And

The county has been in drought the last three years that even with a near normal winter is not able to make up the short falls from the past years.

And

These disaster conditions have resulted in loss of economic stability, pasture shortages, shortened growing season, and decreased water supplies for Baker County agricultural producers. In addition, this multi-year cumulative drought has resulted in decreased forest fuel moisture and resulted in early onset fire danger.

WHEREAS, the Baker County Board of Commissioners, have determined that extraordinary measures must be taken to alleviate the suffering of people and livestock and to protect or mitigate economic loss, and to be responsive to the threat of wildfires;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED by the Baker County Board of Commissioners:

- Section 1. That a local disaster is declared within Baker County.
- Section 2. That the Baker County EOP, Drought Annex plan has been implemented.
- Section 3. That a drought declaration under Oregon Revised Statute 536 be used to allow the Water Resources Department to use a number of water-related tools that include temporary drought permits to use groundwater.
- Section 4. That this proclamation shall take effect immediately from and after its issuance.
- Section 5. The Board of Commissioners, request that the Honorable Kate Brown, Governor, of the State of Oregon declare: "that a severe, continuing drought" exists in Baker County.

-And-

request the Honorable, Tom Vilsack, Secretary, of the United States Department of Agriculture, to expedite assistance to local agricultural industries/producers who have suffered extensive and ongoing loss from the drought and associated wildfires

ORDERED this 7th day of July, 2016

William "Bill" Harvey, Chair
Board of Commissioners

Tim Kerns
Commissioner

Mark Bennett
Commissioner