



Oregon's Drought Readiness Council August 11, 2016 Meeting Notes



Approved by Council Sept. 15, 2016

Attendees:

Brenda Bateman, WRD. Council Co-Chair
Kathie Dello, OCCRI
Tom Elliott, DOE (by phone)
Bruce Gilles, DEQ (by phone)
Jim Johnson, ODA
Angie Lane, OEM

Smita Mehta, DEQ (by phone)
Erik Rau, OEM
Kari Salis, OHA (by phone)
Anna Pakenham Stevenson, ODFW (by phone)
Nick Yonker, ODF

Welcome and Introductions:

Participants around the table and on the phone introduced themselves.

Agenda Review:

Added updates from Oregon Communities, updates from the Drought Task Force, and discussion of NOAA Atlas 14 to the agenda.

Approval of July Notes:

None. Very thorough, thank you!

Update on Water Conditions:

The Council reviewed the August 11, 2016 memo provided by the Water Supply Availability Committee (see meeting materials). WSAC member Nick Yonker led the discussion, with Kathie Dello assisting:

- It was a cooler, wetter July than usual. Expect a return to hot and dry for August across the state.
- Conditions have returned to hot and dry from Baker to Umatilla; the Drought Monitor went to D2 (extreme drought) for that geographic area this morning.
- These conditions are an indicator of increased fire potential, but have little bearing on agricultural crops...folks are winding down their season and generally have the water they need by drawing on storage.
- Fire conditions overall are much improved, compared to the past three years.
- Another change in the Drought Monitor: D1 designation now stretches further north up the coast.

Products of the Council:

1. Process request for drought declaration from Baker County.

Discussion Points.

- No one is pressing hard for a drought declaration at this time.
- Other east-side basins are bringing irrigation season to a close. Those with two-year reservoirs (i.e., Owyhee) are trying to ensure some carry-over water for next year.
- County emergency managers have turned their attention to fire-fighting; drought declarations don't provide any additional tools for firefighting.
- Council members continue to recommend no drought declaration for Baker County.
- Governor's Office will make the final call regarding drought declaration.
- The Council will send a formal "acknowledgement of receipt" for the county's request; that wasn't done last month.

2. Updates on Ten-Mile Lake.

The Governor's Office has received correspondence from homeowners seeking assistance with regard to declining lake levels. Some of the homes are only accessible by boat, and low lake levels have made boat access impossible. Tools of the Drought Council are not a good fit here, as there are a number of challenges related to low water levels and the community is still in the process of charting a path forward. Governor's Office / Regional Solutions is participating in conversations with community leaders. Stand by for more information.

3. Updates on Detroit Lake.

Similarly, low levels at Detroit Lake are impeding boating and other recreation as Labor Day approaches. This system is managed and operated by the US Army Corps of Engineers, which has held meetings with the community already this summer. WRD northwest region staff members are monitoring the discussions.

4. OCCRI Discussion, featuring Kathie Dello.

- a. OCCRI was established in 2007 by the Oregon legislature to coordinate climate change activities across the state. State and federal funding pay for the center director, state climatologist, and one administrative assistant. Other funding and technical partners include NOAA's CIRC program and NOAA/NIDAS' drought program.
- b. In the coming months, an inter-state team from Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, and Colorado will be working on a Drought Early Warning System (DEWS), to improve metrics and monitoring around the concept of drought. Representatives from the five states will meet in Boise in late September for face-to-face work around this.
- c. Kathie will plan to report back on this meeting during our October Council meeting.
- d. Kathie, please put all the Council members on the DEWS listserv, so that we can get monthly newsletters with water conditions and work updates.
- e. Discussion:
 - Q. Where's the forecasting part of this work? A. That's the crux of what we're hoping to develop, but also the most difficult because some of the data points and scientific methods are not really in place yet. It's part of the long-term work plan.

We'll feature DEQ next month. If other agencies have drought-related programs they would like to share, let the co-chairs know.

5. NOAA Atlas 14.

Brenda Bateman briefed the group on the latest status of "NOAA Atlas 14." This is a state-by-state effort that provides high confidence estimates of rainfall intensity and duration, and should be able to tell us if precipitation intensities have increased (if so, likely climate change related).

Civil Engineers and hydrologists use probabilistic estimates of rainfall intensities for particular durations and locations for the design and rehabilitation of a wide range of structures, including bridges and culverts, storm water drainage systems, and also spillways and conduits for dams. In 1953 the National Weather Service (NWS) began publishing rainfall-intensity-frequency-duration values or precipitation frequency estimates (Weather Bureau Technical Paper 24, 1953). These values have become de-facto national standards by inclusion or reference in design and planning standards of a wide variety of agencies at Federal, state, and local levels. The current standards date from the 1960/70s. They are being updated based on a variety of improvements including: use of significantly longer data records, advancements in statistical analysis, and the ability to evaluate great amounts of data.

Atlas 14 has been completed for 45 out of 50 States, with just OR, WA, ID, WY and MT remaining to be completed. A quick poll of Council members shows that folks believe that updating these efforts in Oregon would yield beneficial information and they would be interested in seeing this move forward. Members

promised to give this more thought. Brenda will follow up with an email, requesting how agencies might use this information more specifically. We may put together a one-pager with the results, so that it can be shared with natural resources cabinet and other potential funders / supporters.

6. ORS 401 Templates.

- a. The group continued to look at templates that the Governor could use to declare water-related emergencies under ORS 401. This is the first time the state has developed an emergency declaration template for a single hazard. (Usually, we use a generic template and modify it to fit the emergency.) This new approach provides more guidance for county emergency managers and commissions. OEM will continue to revise and share text. The goal is to have a new set of templates posted and available as a resource during spring 2017.
- b. Discussion:
 - Use “or” not “and” in the list of impacts. Let folks pick and choose, or add their own. Not all conditions have to be in effect in order to qualify as an emergency.
 - OEM and its partners hold regular workshops for emergency managers. Fit the ORS 536 and ORS 401 templates into the curriculum.

7. Updates from the Drought Task Force.

- a. The Drought Task Force has met twice. These are public meetings.
- b. Their key objective is to look at drought tools that currently exist and determine whether they are adequate or whether more or better tools are necessary.
- c. The group is chaired by Sen. Roblan and Rep. Helm, and seems to be focused on both short-term drought tools (e.g., access to data and use of water during drought) and long-term drought tools (e.g., water conservation, water re-use, and water storage projects). They have begun to draft a report to the Legislature, which they’ll fill in as they go. The report is due in November.

Next Meeting is Tuesday Sept. 15, from 10:00 to noon at OEM.

Due to a scheduling conflict, the October meeting will likely be moved to a Wednesday...Oct. 12.