



**Oregon’s Drought Readiness Council and
Water Supply Availability Committee
November 16, 2017 Workshop Notes
1:00 pm workshop at OEM Headquarters**



Attendees

Brenda Bateman, Oregon Water Resources Department, Drought Readiness Council (DRC) Co-Chair
 Sonya Pedersen, Oregon Office of Emergency Management, Drought Readiness Council (DRC) Co-Chair
 Ken Stahr, Oregon Water Resources Department, Water Supply Availability Committee (WSAC) Chair
 Aaron Borisenko, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
 Andy Bryant, NOAA, National Weather Service
 Tom Elliott, Oregon Department of Energy
 Jim Johnson, Oregon Department of Agriculture
 Kathy Naegeli, USDA, Farm Services Agency
 Scott Oviatt, Natural Resources Conservation Service
 Anna Pakenham-Stevenson, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
 Wade Peerman, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
 Racquel Rancier, Oregon Water Resources Department
 Nick Yonker, Oregon Department of Forestry

On the phone:

Alyssa Mucken, Oregon Water Resources Department
 Kari Salis, Oregon Health Authority, Drinking Water Program

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1. Welcome and Introductions

Brenda Bateman and Sonya Pedersen led the workshop, welcoming everyone; participants introduced themselves.

2. Technical Presentations and Q&A

- a. Kathy Naegeli, Farm Services Agency
 - Summary of drought-related payments from USDA--
 - \$103 M in 2015
 - \$104 M in 2016

Drought declarations are based on the Federal Drought Monitor with no state declarations necessary. Drought conditions D2-D4 make areas eligible. Longevity under these conditions increases potential payments. See packet of materials for more statistics.

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- b. Anna P. Stevenson, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
 - We’re focused on species that cannot handle warm streamflow temperatures
 - Minimum Flows do not equal optimal flow targets.
 - Cold water refugia areas are needed.
 - Ideas for getting water back instream during drought include:

- Short-term leasing: need flexibility, responsiveness, and pre-approval in high priority areas.
- Long-Term reduction of rate/duty of diversions
- FAST Program on 15-mile Creek with ODFW.

- On the Lostine there are forbearance agreement among irrigators to cut back during times of drought.

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c. Kathy Dello, Climate Impacts Research Consortium (CIRC); presented by Ken Stahr

What should go into a drought indicator?

Look to Colorado, which uses something called a surface water supply index.

There are statistical shortcomings with that.

Funding is available this year for a grad student to help.

What needs to go into such an indicator?

Soil moisture (it isn't part of the federal drought monitor)

Forecasting needs to be seasonal to sub-seasonal (S2S), at a county scale.

14-day, monthly, three-month outlooks currently come from the climate prediction center.

The National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) has just hired new regional coordinator —

Brit Parker. Came from coastal and reef conservation programs.

Discussion:

The drought monitor is currently our only source.

We need a data set that allows us to communicate consistently across the state.

An index is a great idea, although it could get politicized. Protect its integrity as a scientific tool.

It would be helpful to hear about local conditions as well (e.g., seeding, range conditions).

Add to that local “regulatory” activities (e.g., shut offs, distribution of water).

The resiliency discussion is going to take on a whole lot more weight, if we can't forecast!

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d. Scott Oviatt, Natural Resources Conservation Service

Here's an example of an “Drought Impacts Map” from Montana.

It's ARC-GIS online, menu-driven.

Could we put something similar together?

These are story maps that summarize data and take external input.

Start small with a few tabs in Oregon.

Create a map that can retrieve stream gage data, drought monitor layers.

Could you pull in partners?

There are access restrictions for security reasons, but yes, partners could help provide data.

The trick is maintaining the data sets, and keeping everything up-to-date.

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e. Alyssa Mucken, Integrated Water Resources Strategy Coordinator

There are several drought-related topics where we could make some improvements.

The first five are bulleted items that both the 2016 Drought Task Force and the 2016 Policy Advisory Group agreed upon. As a result, you'll see these five in the 2017 Integrated Water Resources Strategy's recommended actions as well.

- drought indicators
- assess impacts, risks, vulnerabilities
- outreach and communication
- funding for watermaster staff
- restoration of streamflows through voluntary means
- emergency funds for resiliency
- developing drought contingency plans.
- creating mandatory and voluntary measures.

Discussion:

- One already-existing unused tool is the "special option," where you pay a senior water right holder to leave water instream or to have access to back-up supplies. (Like paying someone on retainer). Constant payment of money is expensive, but access to water is triggered under certain conditions.
- ODFW, how will you identify priority streams?
 - By location, look at water quality, temperature, flow, fish distribution maps.
 - We could rely on our partners, but they already have their own and different priorities.
 - What about anecdotally, with basin conversations.
 - Often, in priority streams, there aren't folks up stream to pay.
 - A small community without adequate water supplies, may not have many options.
- Re-visit grey infrastructure and storage.
- Need stronger nexus with county emergency managers.
- Do a better job lobbying the farm bill to recognize specialty crops as eligible for payments at federal level.
- If we have future plans in place for agriculture, we need to be building water storage.
- DLCD is in charge of the natural hazards mitigation plan; pull them in to this conversation.
- Business Oregon too.
- Also the Stream Team and its monitoring efforts.
- There are 350 individual wastewater permits that operate, January through April. They are not authorized to operate during summer months. Only largest plants have the ability to cool / treat water and release it. If we could help them meet water quality standards, they could be releasing water in the summer when it's needed downstream.
- Could we do more around grants and loans in conservation infrastructure?

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3. Discussion and Conclusion:

We do not suggest adding new tools that would be triggered only in times of drought. However, there is a lot the state can do to prepare before drought returns. Long-term tools designed for resiliency include:

(1) Data

- Indicators for drought stage,
- Story maps for impacts and vulnerabilities,
- Identification of priority streams for flow restoration.

(2) Outreach & Education

- Focus on water conditions, conservation, preparedness.

(3) Planning

- This includes natural hazard mitigation plans with local land-use planners, water supply system planning, drought contingency planning with partners such as the Bureau of Reclamation.

(4) Investment in Water Resources Management

- Non-traditional storage (where are the good locations?); water re-use / gray water; release wastewater year round, treated to higher standards. Use place-based conversations to determine what management technique would work the best in each basin.