



Oregon's Drought Readiness Council
March 14, 2018 Meeting Notes
Needs Council Approval

Attendees in the Room:

Sonya Andron, Oregon Office of Emergency Management, Drought Readiness Council (DRC) Co-Chair
Brenda Bateman, Oregon Water Resources Department, Drought Readiness Council (DRC) Co-Chair
Ken Stahr, Oregon Water Resources Department, Water Supply Availability Committee (WSAC) Chair
Kathie Dello, Oregon Climate Change Research Institute (OCCRI)
Alyssa Mucken, Oregon Water Resources Department (WRD)
Kathey Naegeli, USDA Farm Services Agency (FSA)
Scott Oviatt, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Samantha Phillips, Oregon Water Resources Department (WRD)
Eric Rau, Oregon Office of Emergency Management (OEM)
Anna P. Stevenson, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW)

By Phone:

Aaron Borisenko, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
Tom Elliott, Oregon Department of Energy (DOE)
Wade Peerman, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
Kari Salis, Oregon Health Authority, Drinking Water Program (OHA)
Nick Yonker, Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF)

1. Welcome and Introductions

Brenda Bateman chaired the meeting, welcoming everyone. Participants introduced themselves.

2. Agenda Check

No additions proposed.

3. Approval of February 2018 Meeting Notes

No changes proposed.

4. Water Conditions

Ken Stahr presented a summary of current water year conditions from the Water Supply Availability Committee to the Drought Readiness Council. See materials packet for details. Highlights and recap include:

- The past 14 days have been cooler than normal.
- Precipitation has also been below normal and is forecasted to stay below normal.
- Streamflows are hovering near the 2015 line (low flows) in most places.
- Those with access to storage are still in decent shape.
- Eastern Oregon reservoirs are unlikely to fill all the way.

5. NRCS' Snow Survey Program

Scott Oviatt from USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service provided a briefing on NRCS' Snow Survey. See materials packet for details. Highlights and recap include:

- We've been tracking snow-water equivalent (SWE) for the past 100 years.
- Funded program during the dust-bowl era.
- SWE is a tool to forecast spring and summer snow-melt run-off (i.e., water supply).
- Streamflow forecast requires real-time data and long-term data.

- Terminology includes: SWE, Water Year Precipitation, Streamflow Forecast.
- National Water and Climate Center Staff have been adding a box to the SNOTEL maps ("Basin Fill, Snow-Water Equivalent Map") to alert users that this service may go away in 2019. Reason? software upgrades, security firewalls, and staff vacancies.
- Need a template or replacement prior to discontinuation.
- Proposed replacement? Sites used as inputs would be different, losing consistency and continuity between states and time periods. CA operates their own; methods and data not readily available.
- Requested Action from the group: Write letter of concern from the Drought Readiness Council, using same approach as we did with the AgriMet memo. This is an action item with full support from the meeting participants.
- Reach out to Western States Water Council to make sure they're doing the same. American Water Resources Association as well.

Discussion:

- What's the role of satellite imagery? NOAA is looking into that. Finding that accuracy of snow data is unreliable where there's topography! NASA working on it too, calibrating & honing. Need AgriMet to calibrate.
- Do we need more sensors? Drones? Yes, we know of many data gaps. The problem is resource, including staff to operate and maintain equipment and to work/finalize the data. Other states use drones for compliance, wetland reserves, and more.

6. Debrief of Klamath Drought Declaration

- Governor declared drought in the Klamath Basin yesterday.
- Water Supply Availability Committee and Drought Readiness Council were ready with analysis and acted quickly when the request came in.
- Future processing will differ by county, depending on how active staff, commissioners, and watermasters are with communications.
- What follow-up should we do, in terms of archiving? Governor's declaration will go on Water Resources' website. Supporting documents will go onto Drought Readiness Council's webpage.
- Water Resources Department is asking its region managers for help with documentation of drought impacts.
- We should be connecting with the Association of Oregon Counties and the League of Oregon Cities as well, providing briefings on the drought process. Oregon Office of Emergency Management is part of the AOC college, for new commissioners.
- Every emergency is assigned a case number at Office of Emergency Management. We can track some of the formal documents if we need to, although they get archived when the event is over.
- Some language in the final press release (e.g., "record-breaking drought") was over the top. Can't we provide sample language? We did, but only some was used.

7. Roundtable

- Farm Services Agency. No Federal programs have been triggered regarding drought in Oregon. Don't have to have a secretarial declarations for some of the funding programs. Currently Oregon is in D0 and D1 status. D2 for 8 weeks of the grazing season is necessary to declare drought at the federal level. So, we wouldn't be there for quite awhile
- Oregon Climate Change Research Institute. Federal Drought Monitor doesn't quantify snow drought very well, so OCCRI is re-evaluating how to make use of staff's time and skills. Phil Mote released a snow trends paper a few weeks ago, noting we've lost more snowpack than we realized. OCCRI could provide a briefing on that, even a whole brown bag lunch session. ODFW offered to host, with its access to free parking.
- Action: send Mote article out to the group.
- Office of Environmental Management. OEM's Ops Center uses procedural tracking of emergency events, and now has begun a file on the Klamath Drought Declaration. DEQ has lots of experience with OERS (e.g., spills, harmful algal blooms).
- Has there been any fire damage to SNOTEL sites? No? We've been pretty lucky compared to other states.
- Thank you for the educational briefings; they're helpful!

8. Next Meeting

April 12, 2018 at WRD in Salem from 10:00 to noon.

9. Adjourned at 11:55