



Oregon's Drought Readiness Council April 12, 2018 Meeting Notes

Attendees in the Room:

Brenda Bateman, Oregon Drought Readiness Council Co-Chair
Ken Stahr, Oregon Water Supply Availability Committee, Chair
Bob Harmon, Oregon Water Resources Department
Jim Johnson, Oregon Department of Agriculture
Alyssa Mucken, Oregon Water Resources Department
Erik Rau, Oregon Office of Emergency Management

By Phone:

Smita Mehta, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
Scott Oviatt, USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Wade Peerman, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
Nick Yonker, Oregon Department of Forestry

1. Welcome and Introductions

Brenda Bateman finally got everyone on the right conference call number and then welcomed everyone. Participants introduced themselves.

2. Agenda Check

No additions proposed.

3. Approval of March 2018 Meeting Notes

No changes proposed.

4. Water Conditions

Ken Stahr, Chair of Oregon's Water Supply Availability Committee, briefed participants on recent and current water conditions. See handouts for details. Highlights are summarized below.

- Snow water equivalent (SWE) was 63 percent of normal in March. A month later, we saw an almost 10 percent jump, most dramatically across the northern swath of the state.
- Precipitation also improved during the past month, in the same locations.
- For the water year so far, we have had lower than normal precipitation. For the past month, precipitation and temperatures were both below average.
- For the future outlook, short term precipitation looks like it will be 0.25-0.5 inches in eastern Oregon, and 1 to 2 inches on the west side. Wetter and cooler weather coming.
- May-July will be drier and warmer. Forecasts tend to bias towards historic data.
- Water Supply Forecasts predict improved streamflows in the northern swath of the state in the short term.

Participant Discussion:

- With regard to the U.S. Drought Monitor – Oregon advisors to the Drought Monitor would have liked to have seen D1 expanded across the southern portion of the state (Klamath, Lake County, along the California border), where storage is poor and conditions have worsened. That is not currently reflected in the U.S. map.
- Streamflow: March streamflow increased from February, but we're still below average for streamflow this water year. Some increases have triggered alerts at the Water Resources Department, reminding staff to get

out in the field and measure high flows for the year. Donner und Blitzen is one example of a stream that has been below average all year.

- Storage? Owyhee will be spending down the "bank account." Started in good condition, and will spend that down this season.
- Reservoir Storage Summary. In all basins but Rogue, reservoirs are spot on, on the rule curve. In Deschutes, western reservoirs will fill; not so in the Crook County portion of the basin.

V. Review of Council's Memo Regarding SNOTEL

The group reviewed a draft of the memo prepared for the Governor's policy advisors and agency directors, requesting help with the continuation of SNOTEL products. The memo (see attached in meeting materials) describes the SNOTEL map, its purpose, the concern about its discontinuation, and a request for a letter to Oregon's Congressional delegation and USDA officials.

A few copy edits were suggested. Group Discussion:

- We need help on this from natural resources cabinet.
- The Office of Emergency Management can help move this through emergency management channels as well.
- The final memo will go out with a copy to the Drought Readiness Council members this week.

Although not present, Tom Elliott of DOE sent an email supporting the contents of the SNOTEL memo.

VI. Drought Impacts Story Map

The group hosted Bob Harmon, GIS Coordinator at the Oregon Water Resources Department.

Bob briefed members on the work accomplished thus far on the drought impacts story map. First presented by Scott Oviatt at OEM's situation room, the map is designed to help collect statistics and stories during drought in Oregon. See materials packet for tabs designed so far.

The team started by looking at the Montana example. The platform uses ArcGIS on-line, hosted by ESRI.

The themes/tabs sketched out so far including: gaging stations, U.S. Drought Monitor conditions, and unofficial SNOTEL data.

On such maps, the points, clicked on will pop up additional data, links, and text.

It's important to have authentic data from the expert/source.

What other info/themes should we include? Suggestions included:

- streamflow conditions by basin. See USGS' WaterWatch maps.
- temperature (departure from average?)
- precipitation (departure from average?)
- short-term outlook for both
- regulatory actions at the Water Resources Department
- stories on-the-ground
- groundwater areas of concern
- soil moisture percentiles
- add regional contacts for state agencies?
- add trends? The map always refreshes, so how do you capture trends? Consider monthly snapshots, with archives still available.
- fire maps!
- storage? Teacups and snowpack. NRCS has month-end reports for all reservoirs.
- maps of harmful algal blooms (HABs)

Discussion:

- OEM has experimented w/ these types of maps too.
- Remember there's a Drought Impact Reporter of NIDIS. Don't make folks enter data twice. Or, we should harvest from their site.
- WRD posted an unpaid internship this morning to recruit students to help us collect drought impact stories (from our own watermasters, ag, muni, environmental, recreational).
- Is there an over-arching extension office that can help collect data and stories? The structure has changed and is changing again, to focus on regions. There are a few experts to call and talk to. Mike Bondi in Clackamas County is a good contact. The head of livestock and animal health section at the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture will know what's going on.
- There are other map formats that allow narrative-centric data collection!
- Use media stories as well. Really? Yes, really.
- Not too many tabs, please.
- How do we tell the story in October, and a different one in March.
- This looks great!
- Will we get to play with a beta version. Can we look again? Yes.
- Appreciate the work! One thing that resonates is photos. Could we encourage photo submissions? Yes.
- We could use social media to get help!

VII. Debrief Grant County Drought Declaration

We've sent a recommendation to the Governor to declare drought in Grant County. The final decision is up to the Governor, so we remain silent until she decides what to do. We do know that policy advisors took the conservation language out of the executive order (EOs). EOs are directed to the state agencies, not the local communities who would have to implement the conservation measures.

Agencies would like to see press releases before they're released. Probably not possible.

Klamath request for domestic and stock water preference will go before the Water Resources Commission meeting this Friday, April 13.

Are there any other requests in the pipeline? No. Baker continues to have discussions, but hasn't made any requests yet. Douglas County has had discussions as well, but not identified any urgency.

VIII. Roundtable and Discussion

Any agencies with announcements or updates are welcome to note them here.

Alyssa – with regard to the Governor's 2015 Executive Order requiring water conservation at state agencies, Diana Enright has retired and so the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) will be taking the lead putting together the 2017 data and report from agencies. Dave Wartman is the Sustainability Coordinator for DAS. He has already received responses from many of the agencies. The goal is to finalize the report by June.

Ken Stahr - There is a meeting coming up in May on the potential Scenic Waterway designation on the north coast.

Erik Rau - Monday afternoon the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) will hold a Local & Tribal Emergency Manager Call, which usually gets participation from 25-40 percent of the emergency management folks across the state. Ken and Brenda will brief them on water conditions and the drought declaration process. This group also gets a weekly water newsletter; WRD will send you a URL to include in the text (done). OEM, please send WRD a current list of emergency managers so that we can update our water conditions listserve.

IX. Adjourned at 11:47