

Water Supply Availability Committee Meeting – May 15, 2018
Oregon Office of Emergency Management

In-House and Phone Conference – Meeting Notes

In-House Attendees

Ken Stahr – OWRD (chair)
Daniel Stoelb – OEM
Carrie Boudreau - USGS
Ryan Andrews - OWRD
Eric Rau – OEM

Phone Attendees

Andy Bryant – NWS
Peter Cooper - USBR
Nick Yonker – ODF
Jason Miner – Governor’s Office
Kathie Dello - OCCRI

Presentations – Update on water year summary

Scott Oviatt (Ken Stahr presenting)

- Snow water equivalent (SWE) is at 41percent of normal statewide with a 30 percent loss from April. The Hood/Sandy, Grand Ronde, and Goose and Summer Lakes Basins are the only basins above 60 percent while the rest are below 50percent. The Owyhee Basin is notably low with only 2percent SWE. John Day and Malheur basins are measuring 0 percent or have no data. Additionally, the John Day Basin measured 0 percent SWE before 05/01. SWE at most SNOTEL sites is at 0 below elevations of 4900’. SWE peaked later in season when compared to 2015 conditions.
- SNOTEL precipitation is measuring 91 percent of normal, with near normal conditions in the northwestern and northeastern basins.
- Forecasted streamflows are closer to normal for northern Oregon and along the Cascades. However, forecasted streamflows for central and southeastern regions are well below normal.

Andy Bryant

- Precipitation is measuring near normal for northwestern and northeastern Oregon. Conditions are below normal, and notably so in southcentral and southeastern Oregon. April precipitation is well above average in northwest Oregon, most of Washington and northern regions of Idaho and northwest Montana, but below average in central and southeastern Oregon. May precipitation is trending down, with a majority of the northwestern states below 50percent of normal.
 - A state of emergency has been declared in some regions of northeastern Washington and northern Idaho due to flooding.
 - Portions of the lower Columbia River are forecast to be at or near flood stage.
- Temperatures were below normal in northern and northwestern Oregon for April, but above normal in the central and southeastern regions. Temperatures are trending warmer than normal statewide for late April and early May. Oregon temperatures have been 3 to 6 °F above average for the past two weeks throughout much of the state, as well as other regions in the northwest. Near record high temperatures were recorded in areas of northwestern Oregon.
- Expansion of D1 (moderate drought) area in southeastern Oregon.

- Mid-May outlook predicts beneficial precipitation of approximately 1” or more in central and southeastern Oregon with temperatures being predicted above average statewide. Late-May outlook predicts above average temperatures.
- The three-month outlook (June/July/August) is predicting inconsequential precipitation relative to the current water year total, as well as above average temperatures.
- Water supply conditions for early April are showing decreases in streamflow forecasts for areas that already have concerns. Warmer and drier conditions are predicted for May, with notably low streamflows forecasted for southeastern Oregon.

Marc Stewart (Carrie Boudreau presenting)

- 30-day average showing below normal streamflow conditions in southern Oregon. 7-day average streamflow conditions are trending below normal.
- Klamath Basin is showing well below normal conditions measured at Williamson River
 - 55 percent of normal in March, and 61 percent of normal in April
- Harney Basin – 42 percent of normal in March, and 52percent of normal in April
- Upper John Day – 57 percent of normal in March, and 69 percent of normal in April
- Owyhee Basin showing a steep downward trend continuing from April
- Rogue/Umpqua Basins – 86 percent of normal in March, and 88 percent of normal in April
- South Coast Basin – 147 percent of normal in March, and 130 percent of normal in April
- North Coast Basin – 208 percent of normal in April, but trending downward in May

Ken Stahr

- Statewide streamflows in April measured 95 percent of normal. Distribution is scattered throughout the state with northern basins and basins east of the Cascades measuring near or well above normal, and trending below normal in the south and southeast. Owyhee, Malheur, and Malheur Lakes Basins are all measuring below 50 percent of normal. Streamflow patterns suggest that basins are responding to precipitation rather than snowmelt.
- Significant precipitation/streamflow events in the Nestucca River for April are being negated by significant May drop-off. Conditions reflect those of 2015 water year.
- Crooked River measuring below normal streamflows, with the peak in April associated with significant weather events.
- Owyhee River is also measuring well below normal streamflows with no significant April storm event.

Peter Cooper

- Flood control is occurring in many northwestern states but Oregon.
- Scoggins Dam measuring at full capacity with some manipulation in storage occurring as a flood space requirement. Drafting typically begins in late May/early June
- Storage reservoirs in the Deschutes River Basin have begun drafting for demand. Peak storage occurred in April for Prineville Reservoir. Neither Ochoco nor Prineville Reservoirs were filled even though carryover from 2017 was good.

- Reservoirs in the Rogue River basin have also begun drafting. The filling season began with low carryover from 2017.
- Reservoirs in the Umatilla River Basin were full for a few weeks and are beginning to draft.
- Eastern Oregon reservoirs have already peaked and are drafting for demand season. Anticipating using carryover this year.

Kathie Dello

- Four of the past seven summers were the hottest on record for Oregon.
- La Niña conditions have expired.
- ENSO-neutral conditions are happening now.
- Too early to predict shift to El Niño with much certainty (< 50%).

Nick Yonker

- Low to moderate potential for fire exists on average statewide.
- The northwestern corner of Oregon has high fire risk due to hot, dry conditions with easterly winds.
- With moisture coming in from the south, Cascades see more moisture and keep fire danger low. Overall conditions indicate near normal for northeast and northwest Oregon. Potential exists for above normal fire risk in southern Oregon due to potential lightning.

Drought Declarations Update

- Need better communication with Drought Monitor to get a better depiction of drought conditions in Oregon.
- Parts of central and eastern Oregon should potentially be classified as D2 (severe drought).
- Graduate student at Oregon State University is working on indicators of drought.
 - How often does state recover when reaching threshold for any given year?

Other

- Include Carrie Boudreau on drought distribution list.
- Next meeting proposed for June 12, 2018.