



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

Attendees in the Room:

Brenda Bateman, WRD, Oregon Drought Readiness Council Co-Chair
Ken Stahr, WRD, Oregon Water Supply Availability Committee, Chair
Kathie Dello, Oregon Climate Change Research Institute (OCCRI)
Becca Krasky, Oregon State University intern
Samantha Phillips, Oregon Water Resources Department

By Phone:

Sonya Andron, Oregon Office of Emergency Management (OEM)
Tom Elliott, Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE)
Bruce Gilles, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
Jason Miner, Governor's Natural Resources Office (GNRO)
Roxy Nayer, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
Amira Streeter, Governor's Natural Resources Office (GNRO)
Emily York, Oregon Health Authority, Climate Program (OHA)

1. Welcome and Introductions

Brenda Bateman welcomed everyone. Participants introduced themselves.

2. Agenda Check

No additions proposed.

3. Approval of June 2018 Meeting Notes

No changes proposed.

4. Water Conditions

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

- Oregon's 2018 snowpack peaked at 70 percent of normal.
- Most sites melted out ahead of schedule one to two weeks early.
- The rate of snowmelt was much faster than normal.
- Oregon is experiencing lower than normal precipitation for this time of year.
- Will see hot dry conditions during the next few weeks.
- The U.S. Drought Monitor came out this morning, showing a spread of drought conditions into Washington.
In addition:
 - At least 95 percent of Oregon is in at least D0 status (abnormally dry)
 - At least 68 percent is in D1 (moderate drought conditions)
 - At least 18 percent is in D2 (severe drought conditions)
- Statewide, streamflows were close to 40 percent of normal for the month of June.
 - Goose and Summer Lake at 23 percent was the lowest.
 - For July 10, streamflows are between 40 and 50 percent of normal.
 - The June through September streamflow forecast shows that only the northeast corner of the state expects near normal streamflow conditions.

- Storage
 - As an example of the storage and supply season this year, the Bureau of Reclamation's Ochoco Reservoir started with carryover from last year, as did many other sites. Where the fill line is today is well below where we started. Managers have used this year's accumulation, and dipped into last year's carryover as well. They are now spending down supplies and will have nothing to carry forward into the next water year. Draw-down began about one month earlier than normal this year.
- Fire
 - Twice as many acres as normal have burned this year, but since it is early in the season acreage burned has been minimal. The south central part of the state is expecting dry lightning conditions coming in the following days.

5. Discussion of Request from Wheeler County for Drought Declaration

Kathie Dello just returned from a Lower John Day field tour led by WRD's watermaster. In one of her pictures, the group visited a site that where the river usually still has streamflow at this time of the year; it was dry during the field tour. And it was hot.

The recommendation from the Water Supply Availability Committee is that conditions support the drought request. All members of the Drought Readiness Council support a drought declaration recommendation.

The Governor's office asked for some talking points regarding local conditions. Council members promised to reach out to the local watermaster, emergency manager, OSU extension and others to gather more documentation.

6. Roundtable and Discussion

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

Field staff are asking for suggestions about how to avoid starting fires with the undercarriage of vehicles in rural areas.

- Some agencies require staff to carry 5 gallon buckets of water and a hoe.
- ODF suggests work in the early morning. Wrap up by noon.
- Getting out of hot dry conditions has health benefits as well.
- Feel free to share any more tips your agency may have!

WRD's intern has been in touch with many of you, regarding the documentation of drought impacts. Thank you for your help.

Any feedback from you or your PIOs on the joint drought meeting we just held?

- Good overview of our work.
- It's good to know who to send reporters to.
- Conditions are going to decline pretty quickly over the next few weeks.
- We'll start to see USDA secretarial declarations in Oregon.
- Oregon asked the U.S. Drought Monitor to expand D2 into Crook County and D0 west onto the coast.
- Joint meetings with PIOs will be demand based. Now that they have resources and ways to get updates, we won't necessarily need to meet again.

The River Management Joint Operating Committee (USACE, BPA) has a new report out. The Drought Readiness Council should invite David Rupp to come present it.

OEM is closely monitoring fires. The Klamathon Fire is 75 percent contained, and has issued evacuation notices.

Congress is working on a draft bill to provide drought-related relief; it has been amended to include funding/relief for the Klamath Basin. Oregon and California Governors wrote letters of support. Implementation would be under the purview of Reclamation's Jeff Nettleton.

OHA has published temporary rules for harmful algal blooms.

The Governor's Water Core Team has been meeting since February. The focus is how to address a 100-year backlog of water infrastructure needs. The Governor's office will host a stakeholder meeting of 40-50 people on this topic in July.

OCCRI received grant funding from NASA to work on developing drought indicators. Partners are the water resources departments in the states of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. Next steps include data mining.

The U.S. Drought Monitor is very important to Congress, which is working on a bill to help improve the product. The Oregon team will need to be better about documenting our needs and philosophy around the Drought Monitor so that we can fully participate. Let's request a presentation on the "Making of the Drought Monitor."

7. Next Meetings

- August 9 from 10 to noon at Oregon Office of Emergency Management (OEM), featuring Emily York and work of the Climate Program at Oregon Health Authority.
- September 13 (Thursday) from 10 to noon at OEM
- October 11 (Thursday) from 10 to noon at OEM
- November 14 (Wednesday) from 10 to noon at OEM
- December 13 (Thursday) from 10 to noon at OEM

8. Adjourned at 11:00