



## Oregon's Drought Readiness Council Oct. 11, 2018 Meeting Notes

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### Participants in the Room:

Sonya Andron, Co-Chair, Drought Readiness Council & Oregon Office of Emergency Management  
Brenda Bateman, Co-Chair, Oregon Drought Readiness Council & Water Resources Department  
Ken Stahr, Chair, Water Supply Availability Committee & Water Resources Department  
Kathie Dello, Oregon Change Climate Research Institute, Oregon State University  
Roxy Nayar, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality  
David Rupp, Oregon Change Climate Research Institute, Oregon State University  
Daniel Stoelb, Oregon Office of Emergency Management  
Nick Yonker, Oregon Department of Forestry

### On the Phone:

Scott Oviatt, Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Anna Pakenham-Stevenson, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

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### 1. Welcome and Introductions

Brenda Bateman and Sonya Andron welcomed participants and everyone introduced themselves.

### 2. Agenda Check

No additions proposed.

### 3. Approval of September 2018 Meeting Notes

Group approved with the following edits:

See Tom Elliott's Email: "Tom Elliott: DOE has its biennial energy report due November. There **were** some water/**energy** nexus **materials in the draft**. Hopefully, we can build in more cross reference to water in the next report."

### 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.

- Wickiup Reservoir in Central Oregon is registering 1 percent of capacity (100% is 200,000 ac-ft).
- Malheur County rangeland is dry; ranchers moved cattle off in August.
- Statewide SNOTEL precipitation is 195% of normal, but we're only eight days into the water year so don't get too excited just yet.
- Oregon experienced record-setting low precipitation between June 21 and Oct. 3 2018.
- Soil moisture showed rapid declines during July and August. Snowpack melt out was much earlier than normal.
- Precipitation for the 2018 water year has been far below normal in past 30, 90, and 180 days.
- Temperature: Aug was warmer than normal. Sept. more temperate, except in southern Malheur County where heat persisted.
- 10-day outlook: while precipitation is expected, it will still be lower than normal.
- 90-day outlook, same story. Expect warmer and drier conditions than normal.
- Expect an El Niño by winter.
- Streamflow in September was very low in Crook, Linn, Morrow, and Sherman Counties.

- Streamflow in 2018 water year - Crook County had less than 40 percent of normal and was the lowest in the state. The highest was Washington County at 113 percent.
- Total run-off for the state was less than 75 percent. State was run-off dominant without much snow.
- Reservoir status.
  - Tualatin Basin had an average year.
  - Deschutes Basin had a low year because of management demands and water supply
  - Very little to no carryover expected for next year
- U.S. Drought Monitor – D3 expanded into Harney and Malheur, Deschutes, and Crook.
- 10 counties are now under state declaration.
- 31 counties are now under primary federal declaration.
- Only 4 percent of pasture and rangeland in Oregon is in good or very good condition.
- 78 percent of pasture and rangeland is in poor or very poor condition.

## 5. Wildfire Conditions

Nick Yonker of ODF reported that wildfire potential is low throughout the state.

- There was some rain in NE Oregon earlier this week. Not much in South Central Oregon.
- Humidity is high, which helps as well.
- Dry conditions and east winds are forecast for next week.
- Fuel moisture has picked up. In mid teens on east side and 20-30s on the west side.
- This is compared to 6-7 percent during August.
- It will be dry in October.
- Only the Klondike fire is still burning in SW Oregon.
- Cold night time temperatures help as well. Fog too, “the Moisture of Extinction.”

## 6. Consideration of County Requests for Drought Declarations

Malheur County has submitted a request for Governor’s drought declaration. The Water Supply Availability Committee unanimously agreed that hydrologic conditions in Malheur County warranted drought declaration.

What are producers seeing on the ground? The central and southern part of rangelands were depleted by June. Water Supply is non-existent, with ranchers hauling water or moving cattle to other locations. There’s no replenishment of rangeland. More than 50 ranchers wrote or called with stories, using nomenclature like “dust pneumonia” and “empty stock ponds.”

Drought-like conditions accelerated throughout the season.

We need to do a better job of closing the loop and letting counties know when the executive orders have been signed.

All council members supported a governor’s declaration in Malheur County.

## 7. Predicting the Hydrologic Response of the Columbia Basin to Climate Change

David Rupp from Oregon State University provided this presentation. See meeting slides for details.

Potential changes in reservoir management may come in the future.

This study was written by the climate team out of OSU and hydrology team out of UW.

This is not the first time this study has been conducted. There is a new generation of downscaled data and models now available, with new emissions scenarios. This round looked more closely at carbon cycle.

Result? 172 scenarios (featuring emission, climate, downscaling methods, and hydrologic variables)

Different models can show changes in streamflow timing by up to two months.

Some handle groundwater contribution better than others.

BPA and USACE will take results further, in order to get to operational decisions.

## **8. Roundtable and Discussion**

Brenda Bateman: The 2018 Drought Impacts story map will be presented to the Water Resources Commission during its Nov. 16 meeting.

Sonya Andron: There's been a natural gas pipeline rupture in Canada. 11:00 Briefing today.  
Oregon hospitals were worried about power outages and prepared to go on reserves.  
At the Nov. 15 OERS council meeting there will be a panel discussion on 2018 fire season.  
State fire marshal currently has a team deployed to Florida to help.  
OEM held its own table top exercise with Public Safety focused on continuity of operations.  
Access to VPN network proved to be a problem.  
Gov. Disaster Cabinet will host agency directors next week in a public health emergency exercise.  
Continuity of government exercise. GEODE1. Part of a series.  
The IPAWS after-action report now available.

Kathie Dello: OSU plans to host the authors of the U.S. Drought Monitor on Jan. 17, 2019.  
There's a lot of energy and frustration around the U.S. Drought Monitor.  
Worked with Oregon Senators to send letters to USDA and US Commerce.  
USDA, NOAA, City of Portland, stakeholders, US Drought Monitor authors are invited.  
Western Regional Climate Center, Washington counterparts, county emergency managers and county commissioners too.  
Problem? Authors are volunteer positions. Talk to GNRO about getting budget support for FTE.

Haven't heard from NASA on drought indicators grant.

OR-WA annual meeting. Kathie will do an Oregon impacts talk. Nov. 2.

Greenlight to submit proposal to NOAA re economic impacts of climate change on the coast.

Roxy Nayar – DEQ is working on a Clackamas S&W Conservation District presentation. Working on local community loans. Eligible to work with private landowners on water quality projects. Webinar with Oregon Watershed Councils on Nov. 1.

## **9. Next Meeting Date**

Wednesday, Nov. 14 from 10:00 to noon at OEM.

## **10. Adjourned at 11:35**