



Oregon's Drought Readiness Council December 13, 2018 Meeting Notes

Participants in the Room:

Sonya Andron, Co-Chair, Oregon Office of Emergency Management
Brenda Bateman, Co-Chair, Oregon Water Resources Department
Ken Stahr, Chair of the Water Supply Availability Committee, Water Resources Dept.
Nick Yonker, Oregon Department of Forestry
Tom Jenkins, Oregon Department of Forestry
Daniel Stoelb, Oregon Office of Emergency Management
Erik Rau, Oregon Office of Emergency Management

On the Phone:

Roxy Nayar, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
Kathey Brucker, USDA Farm Services Agency
Aaron Borisenko, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
Tom Elliot, Oregon Department of Energy
Jason Miner, Governor's Natural Resources Policy Advisor

1. Welcome and Introductions

Sonya Andron, Drought Readiness Council Co-chair, welcomed everyone and had participants introduce themselves.

2. Agenda Check

No items were added to the agenda, but participants requested a robust discussion in preparation for a likely drought in 2019.

3a. Approval of October 2018 Notes

There were no edits proposed for the October 2018 notes. All approved.

3b. Approval of November 2018 Notes

There were no edits proposed for the November 2018 notes. All approved.

4. Water Conditions

Ken Stahr, Chair of Oregon's Water Supply Availability Committee gave the members updates on Oregon's water conditions. See PowerPoint for the details. Highlights are below:

- The Dec. 10 Snow-Water Equivalent map of Oregon runs the gamut, from 34 percent to 135 percent of normal. Generally, Oregon is off to a really slow start for the water year. One site in The Dalles that normally sees 9 inches is experiencing 2.9 inches today. Definitely cause for concern, but it is still very early in the season.
- SNOTEL – mountain precipitation is 66 percent of normal. The higher deficits are in the northern portion of the state.
- The National Weather Service is showing precipitation as well below normal (5" to 8"). Even as far back as six months ago, Oregon was seeing a deficit.
- Temperature. October was well above normal for temperatures, although South Central Oregon was a little cooler than normal. By November, we were much warmer than normal almost everywhere except the southeast corner. For the two-week outlook, we're looking at above normal precipitation, along with above

normal temperatures throughout the state. These projections hold into February as well. Sub-surface sea temperatures are running higher than normal too. There are indicators of El Niño - like weather coming.

- Storage. Scoggins Reservoir is at 27 percent of capacity, which is low for this time of year. Wickiup is up from single digits, to 32 percent of full. Prineville and Ochoco Reservoirs are filling, slowly. McKay is at 12 percent. Owyhee is 34 percent, which is almost a full year's supply. They continue to hope for more. Other reservoirs in the state are still in single digits, without carry-over. In the Rogue, inflow and outflow are equilibrated; they have been passing water for instream flows.
- Percent of average streamflow. Baker County has one data point and it is showing 49 percent of normal. Streamflows throughout the state are below normal for this time of year. Many streams are well below 2015 and 2018 flows (low water years). We're seeing lows of record for seven-day streamflow average throughout the western half of the state.
- The U.S. Drought Monitor now shows some D3 drought conditions extended up the west slope of the Cascades.

5. Consider Requests for Drought Declaration

As the 2018 governor's drought declarations are due to expire on December 31st, Drought Readiness Council members want to make sure that affected counties are aware of this administrative sunset and prepared for continued drought conditions into 2019.

A number of counties used the tools that were made available to them during the drought. These included water right transfers, groundwater drought permits, human consumption / stock water preferences.

Continued drought conditions into the next growing season are unusual. Plan to set up a phone call with emergency managers on December 17 to prepare them for 2019. We'll want to continue collecting evidence of drought conditions, including early season stories like soil moisture and water conditions for cover crops.

Ask emergency managers whether there is an early group of counties who would like to work with the Drought Readiness Council and Governor's Office to put a drought declaration in place early in the calendar year. This would not preclude other counties from making requests later. This could assist local officials with any local messaging or conservation efforts. If conditions improve, the counties could discontinue use of drought tools and ask the Governor to rescind a declaration; or, they could do nothing and let the season play out. Any emergency managers who are interested in an early-bird approach should email Sonya Andron.

6. Thunderstruck

Tom Jenkins from Oregon Department of Forestry's Smoke Management Office briefed members on the "Thunderstruck" Project. See PowerPoint for more details. Highlights are below:

- The introductions included definitions, data sets, and objectives of "Thunderstruck."
- Data elements include lightning, geography, wind direction, wind conditions, 24-hours a day over a ten year period. Raw data originated with Department of Defense / US Air Force.
- The program only measures strikes that hit the ground.
- The results are 1,296 separate maps for three regions in Oregon (NW, SW, E), for a total of 3,000 maps. They show where we've had thunderstorms with lightning in Oregon, and where lightning conditions were similar during the same time of day.
- It's a risk analysis model that answers: "What is my risk for lightning and where will I see it?"
- The quality of the data is most reliable around Salem, Medford, & Boise where the weather balloons are launched twice a day. The program looks for winds at the 10,000 foot level (most stable elevation). These are the storm track winds.
- Note: cool and moist air is conducive to thunderstorm activity. Dry and wam air limits it.

Discussion:

Q: could this help predict high flow events?

A: Maybe. The confidence level is tied to the base forecast you bring into the tool.

Q: This is the first I've seen PREZI used as anything other than presentation tool. We could use it to explain or plug into water availability.

A: We chose it to see if PREZI would be a good proof of concept, for public-facing data distribution.
Happy to partner with other agencies.

7. Roundtable and Discussion

Roxy Nayar, DEQ. The groundwater sampling group has wrapped up its work in Harney County. They plan to release results in January. It looks as though Klamath Basin will be the next study area in 2019. DEQ plans to take water samples during late summer and fall 2019.

Aaron Borisenko, DEQ. Yes, in January the first part of the Harney County data will be released to the landowners themselves. If there are values above maximum contaminant levels (MCLs), landowners will hear right away. Final reports will come later in the year.

And, the Oregon Health Authority is finalizing rules around public water facilities and Harmful Algal Blooms. These rules are out for public comment. We're looking for genes within different species of algae that code for toxin production. That method promises to be more reliable and less expensive to get public health information. The state will probably conduct a study with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). EPA Region 5 is at the forefront of this.

Jason Miner, GNRO. We're getting lots of calls about the smoke advisory committee's work on the one-hour window to notify communities. The Governor's Recommended Budget indicates launching a blue ribbon council on fire. It's asking is the state's funding approach sustainable? Is the militia model the best way to fight fires?

Tom Elliott, DOE. I listened into energy and environment committee hearings yesterday. The Place-Based Planning groups that directly are affected by drought are very interested in water. Could the Drought Readiness Council plug into this?

DOE's biennial report has been made available to this Council. There's talk of creating a new climate authority. When the Governor visited the agency not long ago she mentioned inter-agency relationships, including water.

Sonya Andron, OEM. FEMA's Integration Team is here now in Salem. The team includes a lead, PIO, emergency planner, and mitigation and recovery specialist. They will serve as direct liaison to federal government. Oregon is one of the first 10 states to have such teams in place. OEM invited two of the planners to attend the Water Supply Availability Committee last Tuesday.

Nick Yonker, ODF. With regard to forestry and fire, Oregon is now in low fire danger with no fires on the landscape. Oregon is pretty wet and greening up. Slash burns are staying within their boundaries.

Tom Jenkins, ODF. This morning the CPC (raw data) and DOD (crunches numbers and maps) produced projections for the next year, showing 1 to 2 degrees warmer than average. East of the cascades, projections are 3 to 5 degrees warmer! These same projections show the western side of cascades moving into a precipitation deficit.

Ken Stahr, WRD. NRCS maps of snow-water equivalent and mountain precipitation no longer have the budgetary "caution sign." It was removed. However, resources are only in place until May. We'll be right back in the budget crunch again very soon.

Brenda Bateman, WRD. Our OSU intern made her drought story map presentation to the Water Resources Commission during its November meeting. The presentation was well received and there was definitely interest in doing something like this again in the future if we could secure the resources.

8. Announcements & Next Meeting Date

The January meeting is cancelled. The next scheduled meeting of the Drought Readiness Council will be February 14.

The next scheduled meeting of the Water Supply Availability Committee will be Tuesday, January 8 and then February 12.