

Water Supply Availability Committee Meeting – September 11, 2018
Oregon Water Resources Department

In-House and Phone Conference – Meeting Notes

In-House Attendees

Ken Stahr – OWRD (chair)
Daniel Stoelb – OEM
Scott Oviatt – NRCS
Ryan Andrews – OWRD
Carlos Ortiz-Turner – OWRD

Phone Attendees

Andy Bryant – NWS
Peter Cooper - USBR
Nick Yonker – ODF
Carrie Boudreau – USGS
Mary Karen Scullion – USACE
Jeff Marti – WA Ecology
Kathie Dello – OCCRI
Margaret Matter – ODA
Jon Roche – USBR
Steve King – NWRFC
Amy Burke – NWRFC
Ryan Lucas – NWRFC

Presentations – Update on water supply conditions

Scott Oviatt

- Water year precipitation measuring at 85% of normal statewide
 - Misleading due to timing and variability of streamflow
 - Little precipitation recently leading to very dry conditions
- Since June 1st, precipitation varies from 50-75% of normal statewide
- SNOTEL
 - Annie Springs (Klamath)
 - Peaked around 60% of normal effective saturation
 - Currently sitting significantly below normal effective saturation
 - Set new period of record minimum
 - Silvies (Harney County)
 - Peaked at less than 50% of normal effective saturation
 - Trending towards record low for current period of record
 - Rock Springs (Grant/Harney Counties)
 - Conditions well below normal
 - High Ridge (Umatilla)
 - Peaked in mid-May
 - Melt out began near normal timing, but decreasing at greater than normal rate

Andy Bryant

- Next to no precipitation statewide for past three months
 - Salem, Eugene, and Corvallis broke records for number of consecutive days with no measureable precipitation

- Although cooler than July, August temperatures continued to remain above average throughout much of the state
 - Some portions along the mid to southern coast were below normal
- Large portions of the state have since been designated as D3 drought conditions (extreme drought)
- Mid-late September outlook
 - Some precipitation predicted for northwest Oregon and western Washington
 - However, less than 50% of normal precipitation predicted for much of Oregon
 - Above average temperatures expected statewide
- October/November/December outlook
 - Below normal precipitation
 - Above average temperatures
 - Fairly high confidence in predicting transition to El Nino conditions in late fall/early winter
- Water year runoff
 - Well below normal conditions for much of eastern Oregon
 - Spring snowmelt driven runoff much below average
 - June/July/August significantly below average for region
 - Wet April was only anomaly for western Oregon
 - Most other months were much below average runoff

Kathie Dello

- Rangeland and pasture conditions in southern Oregon are the worst since 1995
 - Just 3% of conditions rated as good or very good
 - Other 97% in lesser condition
- Very little soil moisture in western Oregon
 - Coast has little to no soil moisture

Carrie Boudreau

- Much of state well below normal streamflow
- August streamflow conditions are between 25-75% of normal throughout the state
 - Some areas are less than 10% of normal
 - Northwest and southeast regions
- Northwestern Oregon streamflow about 25% of normal
 - Some areas near record low
 - Typically smaller streams with no regulation
- USGS conducting low flow measurement collaboration with OWRD
 - Approximately 90 sites to be measured to capture baseflow conditions throughout the state
 - Revisit sites from previous years

Ken Stahr

- June recorded lowest monthly average for streamflows throughout Oregon at 40% of normal

- Statewide streamflows are approximately 60% of normal for the entire water year
- John Day basin August streamflow at 29% of normal
- Crook, Morrow, and Sherman counties are all at or below 10% of normal
- Klamath flows are at 81% of average possibly due to curtailment of diversions
- Coastal gages are showing well below normal conditions
- Eastern Oregon gages are recording well below long term normal
 - Donner und Blitzen near record low
- Gilliam County has asked for drought declaration
 - 9 counties have already been declared
 - 12 counties are under federal declaration

Peter Cooper

- Tualatin River reservoirs
 - In period of drawdown
 - Below average carryover is predicted by October 1st
- Deschutes River reservoirs
 - Drawdown appears to be accelerated compared to previous years
 - Well below average carryover predicted for October 1st
 - Wickiup Reservoir currently at 5% of storage capacity
 - Ochoco Reservoir headed for worse carryover than 2015
- Umatilla River reservoirs
 - Draft rate is slightly less than average
 - Headed for average carryover in McKay
- Eastern Oregon reservoirs
 - Many reservoirs are near empty or headed for little carryover by October 1st
 - Drawdown rates are more significant than previous years
- Rogue River reservoirs
 - Well below average carryover expected by October 1st

Mary Karen Scullion

- USACE reservoirs are below average storage capacity
- Willamette Valley reservoirs have inflow of 1200 cfs and are releasing 6000 cfs

Nick Yonker

- Fire potential
 - Northwestern Oregon has low potential due to cool marine air and moisture from recent rains
 - Southwestern Oregon remains as high potential
 - Central and northeastern Oregon have extreme potential
 - Very low fuel moisture in eastern Oregon
 - Mid/late September expected to be normal or lower fire potential
- Peak of fire intensity occurred around August 15th-20th
 - Cool air and longer nights lower intensity potential

Additional notes

- Streamflow, water availability conditions are deteriorating
- Support from group for Gilliam County drought declaration
- Next proposed meeting October 9th
- Forward WA Ecology invite to group