

Water Supply Availability Committee Meeting Notes - 12/11/2018

Oregon Office of Emergency Management

In-House Attendees

Ken Stahr – OWRD (chair)
Lafe Paulson – OWRD
Marc Stewart – USGS
Daniel Stoelb – OEM
Nick Yonker – ODF
Marc Stewart - USGS
Erik Rau – OEM
Justin Marquis – FEMA
Jake Grabowsky - FEMA

Phone Attendees

Andy Bryant – NOAA/NWS
Steve King - NWRFC
Jeffery Walters – NWRFC
Peter Cooper - USBR
Jason Miner - GNRO

Introductions

November meeting notes approval

NRCS, ODF, OWRD, USGS approve
USBR and NWS reviewing

Presentations

1. Ken Stahr for Scott Oviatt – Snowpack and mountain precipitation

- Current Statewide SNOTEL snow water equivalent is 57 percent of normal.
- SNOTEL statewide precipitation is 66 percent of normal.
- Small amounts of snow water equivalent early in the season are subject to change quickly. It is a bad start, but there is still time for it to turn around.

2. Andy Bryant – Precipitation and Temperature outlook

- Water year to date precipitation ranges from 40 to 80 percent of normal across the state. Precipitation amounts are particularly low in western and central portions of the state.
- Limited areas of central and southeastern Oregon have experienced normal levels of precipitation in the last 14 days.
- 30 day precipitation totals for western Oregon are between 3 and 8 inches below the 30 year average, with the Cascades and coast range experiencing the extreme end of that spectrum.
- Temperatures statewide are above average by 3°F in the Cascades and coast range, and 1°F at lower elevations. December temperatures thus far are below average.
- U.S. Drought Monitor for December 4 shows all of the state besides a small area in the north east in D1 to D3 status, with a majority of the state in D2 Severe Drought. A substantial portion of the middle latitudes are listed in D3 Extreme Drought.
- WYTD observed runoff is predominantly well below average throughout the state. A majority of sites in the western portion of the state have seen less than 25 percent of the

normal amounts. Typical October through November river rises have not been observed. Some of the deficit in runoff is likely related to soil conditions, as dry ground is still replenishing.

- 10 day Precipitation Forecast – The majority of the state is expected to experience above average precipitation. Expected temperatures in the average range should result in snow accumulation in the mountains. The system expected early next week could be substantial enough to cause flooding concern.
- Mid-December outlook predicts above average temperatures and precipitation.
- December – February outlook: Currently climate conditions do not reflect an adequate response to sea surface temperatures to be classified as El Niño, though there is high confidence that such conditions will occur over the winter.
- March – April outlook: Temperatures are currently expected to be above normal for this period. Precipitations predictions are inconclusive at this time.

3. Marc Stewart - Streamflow

- November stream flows at USGS sites are below normal to much below normal (<10th percentile). Thus far, 2018 flows roughly reflect those of 2015.
- Galesville reservoir is near record low conditions. Measurements at the inflow site indicate that this is closely related to supply.
- November streamflow: Union County is the only county in the state to approach average flows with 88 percent. Statewide, flows were less than 50 percent of normal. Western Oregon was at 30 percent of normal, while eastern Oregon was at 60 percent.

4. Ken Stahr - Streamflow

- OWRD field staff are reporting low flows and surface water shortages around the state.
- Statewide, streamflow was less than 50 percent of average for the month of November
- For the same period, streamflows for the west side of the state were 30 percent of average. The east side is low, but less severe, averaging closer to 60 percent of average for the month.
- A few individual gaging stations have reported close to average flows, especially in the northeast corner of the state. However, countywide totals have remained low due to deficits at a majority of stations.
- Percent of average as of December 4: Westside 24 percent, Eastside 49 percent, Statewide 39 percent.
- Mean daily flow for 2019 WY are well below the 30 year period of record averages, and approach all-time record lows in some cases. Flows are also visibly below those recorded in 2015 on nearly all days in the basins discussed.

5. Peter Cooper - USBR Reservoirs

- ENSO forecast for October, November, December El Niño probability is 83 percent.
- ONI Index for this period versus the actual January – July runoff projection indicates slightly below to well below average precipitation at BOR reservoirs.

- Soil moisture deficit is evident throughout the west side of the state and in areas of the east.
- WYTD precipitation closely reflects values seen in 2010, and is lower than 2015.
- Soil moisture percentile as of December 10 is 2 - 20 percent throughout the western part of the state, and in many places east of the Cascades.
- Storage in all basins discussed, other than the Owyhee, are at or below levels seen during recent low precipitation years.

6. Nick Yonker – Wildfire conditions

- With cooling temperatures and increasing precipitation fires are laying low, and are expected to remain so though the winter months.

Discussion

Andy Bryant commented that the US Drought Monitor rating of D2 is unrealistic for the northwest corner of the state in the vicinity of Columbia, Washington, and NW Clackamas County. A proposal to downgrade to D1 in this area will be drafted for review.

Next meeting proposed for January 8, 2019

Meeting adjourned at 12:30