

Drought Readiness Council
March 14, 2019

On the phone:
Kathie Brucker, FSA
Kathie Dello, OCCRI
Tom Elliott, DOE
Smita M. DEQ

In the room,
Brenda Bateman, WRD
Ken Stahr, WRD
Lisa Jaramillo, WRD
Jim Johnson, ODA

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Agenda Review
No changes.

3. February 2019 Meeting Notes
No changes.

4. Update on Water Conditions

Salmon River, Government Camp from cover slide.

Snow: compare Feb to March. 121% of normal.

In less than a month, a series of storm events took the state to above normal conditions.

Lowest SWE is in Hood, which is at normal. John Day is almost record-breaking.

4 sites are recording record accumulation rates. 4 sites showing 2nd highest.

Precipitation. SNOTEL 8% in Feb. Now 93% of normal in March.

Not as dramatic an increase as snow.

Streamflow forecasts for April through September.

Almost everything is above 100%.

However, Deschutes gages are slightly below 100%.

NWS precip. % of average lower than normal for the year.

In the past 14 & 30 days, there has been a dramatic change; central ore shows 400% of normal.

Keep in mind that these areas typically get 10 in of rain per year.

Also, lots of precip in the SW corner of the state; reflected in the hydrograph.

Temperature. Jan. was warmer than normal. February was colder.

In March, ranged from 2 to 20 degrees below normal throughout the state!

US Drought Monitor. As of Feb. 5th had extreme droughts (D3).

That designation was removed last week. Other areas shrunk as well.

Drought Monitor is responding well to us. Predict a further chipping away of D2.

Mid March outlook has remained warmer than normal; precip is wetter than normal (10-day)

Long-term? (March thru May). HI confiding warmer; equal confid in precip.
June-Aug. is predicted to be dry and warm.

Surfacewater run-off so far this year (50% and lower in many places).
Seasonal Water Supply Forecast is for close to normal run-off because of snowpack.
Since the beginning of the water year, we've been below 61% of streamflow everywhere.
Cumulatively since the beginning of the water year...58%.

USGS graphic, 7 day avg run off shows low flows throughout as well.
In Feb. Wasco Co was 19% of normal vs. Curry County >100% of normal. (Wheeler 39%).

Most concerned about rainflow dominant watersheds.

Storage? Tualatin Basin looking much better than one month ago.
Same with McKay.
In Eastern Oregon, the story is all about carry-over. Spent everything in 2018.
Today, reservoirs are way behind, and trying to fill as we speak. Likely to fill at this point.
Dependent on the rate of run-off. If they have to go into flood control mode,
it will be harder to guarantee fill for water supply.

5. Requests for Drought Declaration

WSAC unanimous in that conditions are low, but improved. Still premature in declaring drought in Wheeler. More than 150% of normal snowpack in that area. Will depend on temps in the coming month, and the run-off pattern that occurs.

6. WMCPs – Lisa Jaramillo, Transfer and Conservation Section Manager.

Work with munis and IDs to plan their water term water demands and prepare for short-term water supply emergencies. Found that small munis were having difficulty complying with rules because they didn't have funding or capacity to do the work. The IWRS called for ways to help the small munis in this effort. In November 2018, we updated WMCP rules and added a new section for small munis to plan for the long-term, but in a scaled back version, tailored to fit their needs. These are for communities with less than 1000 people or less than 300 water Service Connections.

Kerri Cope is our lead person in that area. See draft handouts: conservation measures and curtailment measures. Helps with questions that munis should be asking themselves. How to meet 20-year water demand projects. How to track and account for water use. How to use water as efficiently as possible. Also have a handout for water curtailment plans. These are universal for munis, with the difference for smaller suppliers only required to have two stages of alert. Maybe their systems aren't complex, or have fewer drinking water sources.

Would welcome your input and suggestions.

Q1 Ken Stahr. Connection to drought? With muni plans, there's a direct connection. If drought is declared, it triggers some of these activities. Could we use these as a tool for a declaration? Could they help start the declaration process? BB: or could an executive order point to these as resources? It would enhance the state's toolbox. Lisa. See the 2015 fliers as well. They contain good conservation strategy. We don't prescribe what the trigger are; it's up to individual communities.

Ken: could we do outreach? Would have to go through LOC, SDAO, OWUC, OAWU.

Lisa. Conservation corner, OAWU presentations.

Smita: In Hood River today. DEQ interacts with cities annually on implementation plans; could bring this up as well. Lisa, OHA would another good avenue.

7. Roundtable and Discussion

Smita Mehta

Tom Elliott

Kathey Brucker

Kathie Dello, OCCRI. Still working on setting up conversation between NDMC, Congressional offices, and state agencies, re inputs to Drought Monitor. Pleased with the direction of and support for this effort.

After defense, will extend Danielle M.'s OSU work further (looking at prob of recovery looking at modeled total moisture across all counties in the PNW. If we're in bad shape Feb. 1, it will be more difficult to recover. Will look at different time periods under climate change. Will make more user friendly and public facing.

Jim Johnson, ODA. Land-use bills in the legislature. Dairy bills next week, including water.

LCDC adopted new (temp) rules to limit solar generation on high value farmland.

Looking to make these permanent in May. ODA thinks it doesn't go far enough.

Worried about losing land base as well as water base for ag.

Exempt water users aren't getting required water rights (e.g., wineries' restaurants).

Brenda Bateman, WRD. Beginning job rotation next Monday, through the end of the biennium.

Ken. DLCD project on climate change. Updating 2010 Framework. Part of the natural resources cluster.

Kathie: have asked to link science with county hazards plan that's due shortly.

BB: we've asked Chris to check in with climate cabinet, climate authority.

8. Announcements and Next Meeting Dates

April 11

May 16

June 13

Adjourned 10:55