

Water Supply Availability Committee Meeting – September 10, 2019

Oregon Office of Emergency Management

In-House and Phone Conference – Meeting Notes

In-House Attendees

Ken Stahr – OWRD (Chair)
Mellony Hoskinson – OWRD
Scott Oviatt - NRCS
Nick Yonker – ODF

Phone Attendees

Mark Stewart - USGS
Carrie Boudreau – USGS
Jonathan Rocha – USBR
Andy Bryant - NOAA
Margaret Matter – ODA

August meeting notes: Ken requested that the rest of the group review and notify him this week.

Presentations:

Snow Mountain Precipitation

Scott Oviatt, NRCS

- Precipitation over the last 30 days
 - Central and Northern Cascades have received the most precipitation
 - some cell activities in the Ochocos
 - South Oregon not receiving much precipitation
- Precipitation over the last 7 days
 - Majority of precipitation occurred in the Cascades mostly over the weekend
 - Southwest part of state stayed fairly dry
- Soil moisture predictions (provisional data) – These are snapshots at various locations around the state and are not representative of statewide conditions
 - Annie Springs – trace goes up to near normal, peaks around July 15, maintained near normal throughout water year, promising considering early in the water year was well below
 - Silvies – on Steens mountains – maintains above 75% as the water year progresses
 - Rock Springs – SWE is significantly above normal, normal is typically 5” of SWE, Rock Springs got to 11” of SWE
 - High Ridge – Umatilla Blue Mountains – lower elevation, slightly below normal through the year
 - Different impacts are suspected on the coastal range, but no measurement sites are located there

Precipitation, Temperature, Streamflow

Andy Bryant, NOAA/NWS

- Precipitation % of Average for the past 30 days has shown drastic contrast between areas that are much above average and the areas that have been dry
- Not much precipitation in Oregon last couple of days as compared to Vancouver, WA
- August temperatures were generally above average across the state
- There has been very little change in the Drought Monitor as compared to a month ago
- The next 10 days across the state doesn't look very wet with the exception being SE Oregon
- Climate prediction center September outlook – above average temps in the western US
- Observed wy2019 runoff so far – Willamette Valley and northern Oregon coastal rivers – well below average, above average on the Eastern half of state

Streamflow

Marc Stewart, USGS and Ken Stahr, OWRD

- 28-day streamflow average, 7 day streamflow average – NW area low all year
- 14-day average – sites below the average are scattered throughout the West and more intense in NW
- Today streamflow average for period of record for each gage – seeing some impacts of moisture from last few days
- Plots showing 2015 in blue and 2018 in red - different water years have converged at base flow, although years have started different, all have converged at base flow, this year about average year
- Upper Klamath lake level – lowest water year 2014
- Grande Ronde – most of east side doing well, more water past gages, trend in normal range
- 8 stream gages in WA and ID BPA and Army Corps figure out funding – Grande Ronde gage uncertainty – Marc will call Ken in a couple days to discuss
- 2019 statewide percent of average streamflow
 - About normal runoff for water year
 - Below average flows since April
 - August at 85% of average
- Lower flows on the west side than east, flows trending better on west side
- Percent of average streamflow for July 2019
 - A little bit of improvement since June
 - August – not a ton of difference
- W Fk Hood R – worse than in 2015, near record low in May
- Elk Cr nr Trail – doing ok for this time of year, low in spring and summer
- Silvies R nr Burns – can see hydrologic response of normal soil moisture, good year in Harney and Malheur counties
- Minam R nr Minam – Eastern Oregon flows hovering at normal, much better than 2015

USBR Reservoirs

Jonathan Rocha, USBR

- Many reservoirs are looking good
- Most reservoirs above average for storage and carry over storage
- Most irrigation operations ending in mid-October, reservoir operations will transition flows from irrigation demands to releases for fish and other environmental conditions, with exception in Malheur
- Eastern Oregon carryover really good, could be a concern for runoff season, have to watch out for natural rain and snow events
- Crooked Reservoir Operations – will maintain low flow for Prineville and Ochoco reservoirs, Prineville gage around 100 cfs, have enough water in flow contract to maintain flow for remaining of winter
- Wickiup – below 10% of capacity – similar to last year, last year was pretty much empty, lowest since keeping record, no real insights as to where it is going to end up, managing things a bit differently, hopeful management routine will settle in, trying to figure out how to meet minimum flow requirements, they are in a learning mode on how to operate system with additional requirements.
- Scoggins Reservoir – no update to report, doesn't go to minimum flows until November, at that point may be getting active precipitation events

USACE Reservoirs

Ken Stahr, OWRD presenting for Mary Karen Scullion/Yamen Hoque, USACE

- Ken's take is they are way behind, low as far as capacity, far behind as far as rule curve goes. It would be interesting to hear from USACE on whether they consider this ok or what their opinions are.
- West side flow targets have been met, plan is to continue to attempt to be met. These are observations from teacup diagrams and info received from a couple of weeks ago.

Wildfire Updates

Nick Yonker, ODF

- ODF Significant Fire Potential map – SW still in moderate, moderate on east side except for Klamath lake area, west side low potential
- 7 day Significant Fire Potential map – minimal fire danger next 7 days
- Outlook for rest of season map – showing all normal September through November, considering we have been below normal this year we don't see changing too much from normal to below normal, when you think about past seasons with 50,000 acre fires we are below normal this year, lightning this year was often wet, no significant hot dry season
- ENSO neutral – usually mixed bag of seasonal winter weather

Late Summer Outlook

- Focus on conditions in Western Oregon
 - No shortages in coastal communities
 - North coast communities have been short past few years
- Messaging for Drought Readiness Council
 - Last month's meeting so no update
 - We probably don't need to warn them of any situation based on the presentations from today
 - We will report that conditions are status quo, maybe do winter update for them
- US Drought Monitor Coordination
 - Scott – with impacts we have seen in Clatsop county, let's wait a week before we report, we could continue to get current precipitation impacts into next week
 - Andy received input from WA drought monitor – some improvement in western Washington, include eliminating D0 on east slope of cascade, and shaving from D1 area from cascade west up towards Puget sound, Skamania County got D0
 - Andy would propose to extend that to Clark County
 - Improvements in Pacific and Wahkiakum Counties - see sig improvement on border, leaning towards extending that to Columbia and Clatsop Counties, but ok waiting a week to see
 - Looking at the last 30 days there are some parts of Tillamook, Clatsop, and Columbia Counties that are somewhat above average for precipitation but the main thought would be to extend improvements from Skamania County westward. We could probably do that down to Multnomah, but ok waiting next couple weeks
 - Ken – lets coordinate with WA on suggested changes

Review Bi-Weekly Conditions Report

- Ken – appreciate feedback on that report
- Looking for suggested changes

Next Meeting

- October 8 (proposed)

Roundtable

- Nick – OCCRI participation potential
 - Any new staff from them?
 - It would be good to have them participate in these meetings
 - They are looking for a new director and other staff
 - OWRD will contact