

Water Supply Availability Committee/Drought Readiness Council Meeting – February 13, 2020

Oregon Office of Emergency Management

In-House and Phone Conference – Meeting Notes

In-House Attendees

Ken Stahr – OWRD (Chair)
Ryan Andrews – OWRD
Scott Oviatt – NRCS
Daniel Stoelb – OEM
Nick Yonker – ODF
Marc Stewart – USGS
Erik Rau – OEM

Phone Attendees

Andy Bryant – NWS
Amy Burke – NWRFC
Karen Whistler – DEQ
Larry O’Neal – OCS
Danette Faucera – ODFW
Jon Rocha – USBR
Tom Elliott – DOE
Jeff Marti – WADOE

Presentations – update on water supply conditions

Scott Oviatt

- Snowpack
 - Differences in low vs high elevation snowpack
 - 95% of normal as of 02/13
 - Greatest contributions in eastern OR basins
 - Above normal trend
 - Snowpack in western basins tailed off
 - Typically around one more month to accumulate snowpack
 - Compared to 45% of normal on 01/01
- SNOTEL SWE above 100% of normal at many individual sites
 - Exceptions at several low elevation sites
 - Primary areas of greatest SWE include northern Cascades, Blue mountains, and Wallowa mountains
 - January SWE was normal to above normal
- SNOTEL precipitation at 84% of normal as of 02/13
 - Values greatest in NE OR
 - January % of average was well above normal at individual sites
 - January inches of water also normal to above normal
- Umatilla basin snapshot
 - Water holding capacity increased due to cooler temperatures, so snow held more water
 - Snow and rain from high elevations contributed significantly to flooding
 - SWE gain was greater than precipitation
 - About 12 inches at Milk Shakes
 - About 9.7 inches at Touchet
 - Storm followed main spine of Blue mountains
- Streamflow forecasts

- Many areas projected near normal for 50% exceedance flows for April – September
- Prineville/Ochoco are areas of concern
- Reflective of snow conditions

Andy Bryant

- WY % of normal precipitation
 - NE OR is lone region above average, due to recent heavy precipitation in the Blue and Willowa Mountains and surrounding areas.
 - Central OR (Deschutes) is notably below average
 - Last 60-days showing some improvements in NW and NE OR
 - Deficit in central and southern OR
- Temperature departures from normal
 - Above average statewide
 - February temperatures below average west of Cascades
 - Near average east of Cascades
- 10-day outlook
 - Above average temperatures in southern OR
- 1-month outlook
 - Below average precipitation
- 3-month outlook (Mar – May)
 - Above average temperatures
 - Below average precipitation in southern OR
 - Just below thresholds for weak El Nino
- Drought Monitor as of 02/13
 - Ongoing D0 (abnormally dry) almost statewide
 - D1 (moderate drought) in central and north central OR
 - Klamath, Douglas, and Jackson counties already seeing impacts

Amy Burke

- Increases in NE and NW coastal rivers
 - Willamette and Umpqua basin rivers holding steady
 - Rogue below normal, along with SE OR
- Natural streamflow % of normal
 - Lack of increase in water supply forecast on west side of Cascades due to rain, not snow
 - East and NE show some increase due to recent events
 - Increase in NE showing displaying unique patterns of precipitation that may represent false signal in increased water supply

Marc Stewart

- January average streamflow
 - Normal conditions along west Cascades (Willamette Valley)
 - NW OR above average conditions
 - Significant increase from December

- 7-day average streamflow not showing much change
 - Conditions near normal
- Eastern OR experiencing higher flows due to snowpack
- Umatilla River experienced 50-100 year event (in terms of recurrence interval)
 - Still in verification mode

Ken Stahr

- January % of normal streamflow
 - Near normal statewide
 - Significant differences between west (144%) and east (73%) of Cascades
 - Significant increase from December
- % of normal on 02/06/2020
 - Over 200% of normal statewide with both sides showing similar
- WY to date at 73% of normal

Jon Rocha

- Teacup diagrams are misleading as of 02/13
 - Many reservoirs showing below full
 - Reservoir cannot legally fill until April/May
 - Following fill schedules
 - Most reservoirs are on track to fill as early as April/May
 - Except for Rogue systems
 - Many reservoirs hedging towards flood control
 - Scoggins in flood control since January
- McKay storage space adequate to capture peak flows
 - Dredging has begun downstream of dam
 - Projections show supply releases may be necessary by March
- Crooked system feeling effects of low flows
 - Some snow helps potential for full fill
- Eastern OR looks good
 - Most reservoirs projected to fill
 - Phillips has low potential to fill
 - Owyhee has good water supply due to snow (likely to fill)
 - Started generating power due to good fill
 - Malheur potentially enacting contingency plan
 - Things look better and reservoir is currently tracking fill schedule

Nick Yonker

- Low fire potential even through extended forecast (through May)

Notes

- Daniel – story map
 - Highlights February flooding (in Umatilla)
 - Incident period expected as 02/05-02/09

- Preliminary damage assessment of public infrastructure with FEMA
- Examine Tillamook as well at end of month
- Some NE flood gages show highest on record from USGS
- Severe transportation impacts to I-84 and county road closures
 - Damage to over 200 major structures
- Helicopter assistance was required for 54 people and several animals
- Military department was heavily involved
- One shelter supported 19 people
 - 250 people supported in total with meals/shelter
 - Serving average of 200 meals/day
- Klamath County considering federal drought declaration
 - Maintain focus on water supply
 - Keep eyes on Baker County as well
- Suggestions for presentations
 - Offer from OHA drinking water as relates to harmful algal blooms
 - Maybe for April?
 - Potential ET work from OWRD or DRI
 - Show recording?
- Irrigation districts considering distributing water earlier due to increased temperatures
- Next meeting proposed for March, 10 from 9 – 12