

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

Phone Conference – Meeting Notes

Attendees

Ken Stahr – OWRD

Ryan Andrews – OWRD

Scott Oviatt – NRCS

Andy Bryant – NWS

Nick Yonker – ODF

Carrie Boudreau – USGS

Jon Rocha – USBR

Mary Karen Scullion – USACE

Yamen Hoque – USACE

Larry O’Neill – OSU

Margaret Matter – ODA

Roxy Nayar – DEQ

Presentations – update on water supply conditions

Scott Oviatt

- Statewide SNOTEL snowpack measuring at 86% of normal
 - Little amounts of low to mid-elevation snowpack
 - Low amounts of snowpack where little or snow is the norm at low elevation inflates % of normal
 - Down from 95% of normal on 2/13
- Statewide values are likely inflated due to events in NE Oregon
 - NE OR has greatest amount in Umatilla, Walla Walla, and Wallowa at 118%
 - Southwestern OR measuring lowest at 63% in Klamath
- Snowpack trends showing differences between west and east of Cascades
 - West side will most likely peak well below normal
 - East side peaks within normal range, but appear to have occurred earlier than usual
- Statewide SNOTEL water year precipitation measuring at 79% of normal
 - Down from 84% of normal on 2/13
 - NE OR basins measuring just above normal
 - Umatilla, Walla Walla, Wallowa greatest at 105%
 - Rest of state measuring below to well below normal
 - Southern OR basins measuring below 70%
 - Klamath and Lake County, Goose Lake basins measuring lowest at 65%
 - Past 8 days measuring well below normal at majority of individual sites statewide with little difference between regions
- Streamflow forecasts at 50% exceedance probability variable by region
 - Many sites within the Willamette Valley projected near normal (> 90%)
 - Central OR sites around the Deschutes Basin projected well below normal around 50%
 - NE OR sites projecting above normal
 - Southern OR sites projecting below to well below normal (36 – 93%)
- NRCS seeking feedback on scheme to calculate metrics based on HUC-6 watersheds as opposed to historical basin boundaries

Andy Bryant

- Precipitation measuring below normal for much of the state for WY 2020
 - NE OR only region measuring above normal in some locations
 - A few regions in central OR measuring below 25% of normal
 - Majority of state measuring between 25 – 75% of normal
- Precipitation of past 30 days measuring well below normal statewide
 - Nearly all of southern OR measuring below 50% with significant portion measuring below 25%
- February temperatures were normal or above normal for much of the state
 - Some coastal areas experienced below normal temperatures
 - East of the Cascade crest and in most of eastern OR in general, temperatures were above to well above normal with some areas showing + 4° F departure from normal
- Drought monitor reporting expanded areas of D1 (moderate drought) throughout much of central and SW OR
 - Majority of the state showing D0 or D1, with small pockets of no drought in NW, NE and SE OR
- Long-term outlooks
 - Mid-late March
 - Likely below average temperatures and precipitation throughout the state
 - April-June
 - Likely above average temperatures and below average precipitation statewide
- Observed WY runoff measuring well below normal statewide, with exceptions in NW and NE OR
 - SW OR measuring lowest as a whole, with several other locations in central and eastern OR reporting below 50% of normal
- Seasonal water supply forecasts showing below normal forecast runoff volumes for April through September

Carrie Boudreau

- February streamflows measured near normal for much of Willamette Valley
 - Sites in SW OR were well below normal
 - Some sites in NE OR experienced flows much above normal and high flows due to significant precipitation events in the Blue and Wallowa mountains
- Current 7-day average streamflows are measuring well below normal throughout much of the state
 - Sites west of Cascades are experiencing low to extremely low flows compared to historical streamflows
 - Chetco River potentially experiencing record low flow
 - Some sites east of Cascades measuring near normal
 - Some sites in NE OR still measuring flows well above normal
 - Statewide 7-day average runoff for all sites combined measuring much below normal in the lowest 10%

Ken Stahr

- February streamflows measured at 76% of average compared to historical monthly values
 - Finished February at 73% of average for WY 2020
- Streamflows measuring similarly both east and west of Cascades (west = 74%; east = 73%) for WY 2020
 - Both regions measured similarly for February (west = 76%; east = 79%)
- February streamflows showed wide range in % of average for the month
 - Max = Umatilla at 239%, due to significant precipitation events
 - Min = Curry county at 27%
 - Many counties measured below to well below normal
 - NW and NE experienced near normal to above normal streamflows
- Some individual sites are currently measuring the lowest flows for the period of record

Jon Rocha

- McKay Reservoir has good snowpack and baseflows
 - Likely to fill
- Flow forecasts are trending downwards
- Low rain, low baseflows, but some good snowpack
- Releases for irrigation officially begin April 1st
- Bully Creek Reservoir likely not to fill due to little low elevation snowpack
 - Relaxed flood control space requirements until snowmelt patterns become clearer

Yamen Hoque

- Willamette currently at 32% full and 21% below rule curve
 - Slow refill
- All projects are significantly below refill schedule
 - Low inflows, while also operating at minimum outflow requirements
 - Rogue at 60% full and 16% below rule curve

Nick Yonker

- Fire potential remains low throughout the state
 - 7-day significant fire potential is minimal statewide
- Significant wildland fire potential remains normal through June

Notes

- Potential presentations
 - OHA Harmful Algal Blooms and drinking water for April?
 - OWRD Open ET for May?
- Next meeting proposed for April 14th