

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

Phone Conference – Meeting Notes

Attendees

Ken Stahr – OWRD (Chair)	Andy Bryant – NWS
Ryan Andrews – OWRD	Ryan Lucas – NWRFC
Yamen Hoque – USACE	Daniel Stoelb – OEM
Jim Johnson – ODA	Larry O’Neill – OCS
Scott Oviatt – NRCS	Danette Faucera – ODFW
Marc Stewart – USGS	Jon Rocha – USBR
Margaret Matter – ODA	Roxy Nayar – DEQ

Presentations – Update on water supply conditions

Scott Oviatt

- New basin format for showing normals will be put in place for upcoming water year
 - More realistic to represent basins that include boundaries in other states
- Statewide SNOTEL precipitation measured 82% of normal for WY 2020 as of 8/13
 - NE OR measuring near normal
 - Rest of state below normal with Klamath measuring at 69%
- Comparing current conditions to all values within period of record as percentiles provides more value when assessing drought impacts
 - Many SNOTEL sites are measuring in the lower 25th percentile along the Cascades, with conditions worsening moving south
 - NE OR SNOTEL sites measuring in the upper 50th percentile
 - Some sites in central OR and south-central OR are measuring the lowest or second lowest precipitation values on record
- Soil moisture relative response
 - Holland Meadows SNOTEL site shows similar conditions to this time last year
 - Rate of change is steeper in 2020
 - High Ridge SNOTEL site in NE OR has higher relative soil water compared to last year
 - Billie Creek Divide SNOTEL site in SW OR has higher relative soil water compared to last year
 - Surprising given lack of precipitation, but potentially explained by cooler temperature and higher residual moisture content
 - Silvies SNOTEL site in SE OR measuring very similar to last year

Andy Bryant

- WY 2020 precipitation measuring well below normal for much of OR
 - Exception in NE OR and Mt Hood area which is measuring normal to above normal, with some locations above 125% of normal

- Rest of OR measuring between 25-90% of normal
- Anomalies west of Cascades show deficits of more than 20 inches; east of Cascades show deficits of 4-12 inches
- Precipitation over past 60 days (as of 8/12) show varying conditions statewide
 - Far eastern and NE OR show above normal precipitation up to 300% of normal in some locations
 - Much of rest of state measured below to well below normal
 - Central OR measured near 25% of normal
 - SW OR measured between 0-25% of normal
- Temperatures for July 2020 showed varying conditions throughout the state
 - Overall temperatures hovered near normal
 - Scattered portions of below normal temperatures
 - Portion of SW OR measured above normal (1-4 degrees)
- Early August temperatures measured near to below normal west of Cascades, but above normal for nearly all of eastern OR
- US Drought Monitor showed expansion of D3 (extreme drought) in SW OR and north central OR
- Increased likelihood of La Nina conditions for fall and winter
- Climate outlook shows increased probability for above normal temperatures statewide, with probability of precipitation varying across the state for next 8-14 days
 - NW OR increased probability of above normal precipitation
 - Eastern OR shows increased probability of below normal precipitation
- 3-month outlook shows increased probability of above normal temperatures, with increased probability of above normal precipitation for northern half of OR, and near normal precipitation for southern half of OR

Ryan Lucas

- Runoff conditions measured below to well below normal for WY to date for much of OR, with exception of NE OR measuring near to above normal
- Volume forecasts hint at potential improvements throughout rest of WY across the state

Larry O'Neill

- Possible addition of D3 conditions in Harney, Klamath, and western Douglas counties
 - Increase in D2 coverage in Lake county
- 9-month Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI) indicates that areas of D3 expansion have potential for D4 (exceptional drought) designation
- US Drought Monitor not reacting to seasonal summer drought, but is based off of summer climatology so conditions may be underrepresented
- Agricultural and water use impacts include dry wells, dry landscapes, and livestock issues

Ken Stahr

- Streamflows for the month of July were variable throughout the state
 - Counties west of Cascades measured near to above normal overall, with exceptions of Clatsop (67%) and Josephine (62%) counties

- NE OR (Umatilla, Wallowa, Union, and Morrow counties) measured above normal streamflow
- Several counties west of Cascades measured below to well below normal streamflows
 - Harney (42%), Baker (40%) , Wheeler (31%), Lake (29%), and Crook (12%) counties were notably low
- Streamflow conditions likely to reported on a gage-by-gage basis in future conditions reports
 - Maps will attempt to represent streamflow conditions similar to USGS Water Watch showing 7-day percent of average streamflows
- Gages highlighted lack of runoff throughout water year
 - Silvies River (10393500) briefly exceeded normal streamflow only a few times
 - Similar conditions were evident in the Powder River (13275105)
 - Inflows to reservoir approaching lows similar to WY 2015
- Rain events appear to be sustaining baseflows along the coast
 - Salmon River (14134000) and Wilson River (14301500) measuring flows near normal
- Lake County was most recently approved drought declaration request

Ken Stahr (for Marc Stewart)

- July streamflows measured similar to June throughout the state
 - Many streams west of Cascades measured normal to above normal, with exception of several sites along the Cascades which measured below normal
 - Cluster of gages just east of Mt Hood continued measuring below normal from June
 - Sites in eastern OR measured normal to above normal
- 7-day average streamflows measured normal overall with some exceptions
 - Handful of gages in SW OR and in the Mt Hood region measured below to well below normal
 - Smattering of gages throughout state measured well above normal with some measuring in the upper 90th percentile
- Gages in Wasco County measuring below to well below normal
- Jefferson County gages measuring just within normal range for this time of year
- Galesville Reservoir elevation levels measuring third lowest of past 20 years of record
- Streamflows along coast within normal range, likely supported by recent precipitation events
- Streams with 14-day average streamflow measuring below normal located along Cascade Range and Mt Hood region
- 7-day average runoff hydrograph shows streamflows within normal range for entire state

Jon Rocha

- Most basins holding constant in terms of reservoir storage
 - Many drafting at normal rate
- Deschutes, Crooked, and Rogue basins losing ground due to drought
 - Conditions call for increased releases due to increased water usage

- Demand in Umatilla basin arises from maintaining low flows for instream needs
- Wickiup Reservoir likely to empty by end of WY 2020

Yamen Hoque

- Willamette basin reservoirs measuring at 73% capacity
 - Operating reservoirs to maintain minimum flows at control points in Salem and Albany, mostly from Lookout Point and Fall Creek reservoirs
 - Releases are intended to meet Biological Requirements
- Elevations being maintained for Santiam
- Rogue basin reservoirs measuring at 56% of capacity
 - Lost Creek and Applegate reservoirs are operating to meet minimum flow requirements

Ken Stahr (for Nick Yonker)

- Considerable fire potential statewide for month of August
- Flare up overnight on 8/12 near Mosier
 - ODF sending incident fire manager

Round Table

- Next meeting proposed for 9/10
- No drought declaration requests on table
- Solicit input from emergency managers about updates to conditions report format
- Consider webinar to explain information included in conditions report