

Water Supply Availability Committee/Drought Readiness Council Meeting – August 11, 2021

Phone Conference – Meeting Notes

Attendees

Ryan Andrews – OWRD (Chair)

Henry Pai – NWRFC

Spencer Sawaske – ODFW

Jon Rocha – USBR

Andy Bryant – NWS

Jim Johnson – ODA

Scott Oviatt – NRCS

Aaron Borisenko – DEQ

Salina Hart – USACE

Carrie Boudreau – USGS

Tom Elliott – ODOE

Presentations – update on water supply conditions

Scott Oviatt

- New Crescent Lake SNOTEL site
- Statewide SNOTEL precipitation at 79% of average on August 10
- Spring drought began around March 1
 - All basins at or below 53% of average since March 1
 - Max = Owyhee @ 53%; Min = Klamath @ 33%
- All SNOTEL stations statewide rank as lowest or 2nd lowest cumulative precipitation record from March 1 to August 10
- Soil water content below average at sites statewide
 - Holland Meadows at lower end of average (2011 – 2021)
 - Similar at Silvies
 - High Ridge well below average (2004 – 2021)
 - Silver Creek well below average (2004 – 2021)

Andy Bryant

- Statewide precipitation over water year to date has been well below average
 - Much of east side around at 50% or less
 - Portions of Harney County less than 25% of average
 - Much of west side ranges from 50 – 75%
 - NW portion of state ranges from 75 – 90%
- Record dryness from March through July for much of north central and northeast OR
 - Also portions of SW OR
- June and July temperatures were much higher than average for OR and all of PNW
- Almost 25% of state classified as D4 according to USDM
- Near-term outlook forecasts little to no precipitation statewide
 - Probabilities favor above average temperatures over same period
- Seasonal (3-month) outlook indicates probabilities favoring above average temperatures
 - Equal chances above/below average precipitation statewide

Henry Pai

- Baseflow forecasts for August slightly below average for most sites
 - Exception for Umatilla

Carrie Boudreau

- 7-day and 28-day average streamflows below to well below average at many sites statewide
 - Northwest
 - Nehalem R and Thomas Cr near record lows
 - Siletz well below average
 - Southwest
 - Steamboat Creek well below minimum observed for period of record (record low)
 - Rogue and Chetco well below average
 - Northeast
 - John Day R well below average
 - Meachem Cr near record low
 - Southeast
 - Donner Und Blitzen and Owyhee well below average
- Upper Klamath Lake somewhat leveling off likely due to curtailments
 - Inflows in Williamson R below average
- 7-day statewide hydrograph well below average

Ryan Andrews

- 22 counties have received Executive Orders for drought declarations
- Streamflows well below average statewide over water year to date
 - Some exceptions in counties in NW OR
- July streamflows well below average statewide
 - Max = Wasco @ 78%
 - Min = Crook @ 1%
- 7-day average streamflows well below average
 - Exception on Powder River; received influx of precipitation
- Nearly all basins measuring below to well below average streamflows over water year to date
 - Exceptions in North Coast and Mid Coast which are near normal
- Powder River at new high flow for period of record (1981 – 2010) on August 10

Jon Rocha

- Reservoir systems below to well below average statewide
 - Irrigation demand remains high (lower percent of average compared to previous month)
- Most basin still delivering water
- Some systems shut down – most typically try to irrigate into mid-October
 - Rogue (July 19)
 - Powder (soon)
 - Malheur (mid-August)
 - Bully Creek res only system trying to make it to mid-September
 - Deschutes (late-August)
 - Crooked (early September)
 - Ochoco instrumentation above water level

- Pumping water into pen stocks to get water out of reservoir
- Owyhee (mid-September)
- Umatilla operating as usual

Salina Hart

- Willamette system at 41% full (usually around 80%)
 - Reservoirs doing better than 2015 because they didn't release as much water for BiOps flows this year
 - Releasing minimum flows for tributaries
 - Targeting 5000 cfs for Willamette @ Salem
- Dipping into power pools (below minimum conservation pool)
 - Impacting storage for hydropower
 - Managing to stay within power pool
- Rogue trying to meet ESA fisheries needs
 - Currently @ 35% full
- Willow Creek only USACE project to fill
 - But only @ 19% due to high irrigation demand
- Public meeting to discuss Willamette

Discussion

- DEQ
 - 58 public water facilities being monitored for harmful algal blooms
 - Starting to pick up – above health advisory thresholds
- ODA
 - US Secretary of Agriculture visited to assess berry crop damage
 - North Unit Irrigation District (Jefferson County) high value crops not likely to be irrigated
- Next meeting proposed for September 15