

Water Supply Availability Committee/Drought Readiness Council Meeting – July 13, 2021

Phone Conference – Meeting Notes

Attendees

Ryan Andrews – OWRD (Chair)	Scott Oviatt – NRCS
Henry Pai – NWRFC	Larry O’Neill – OCS
Spencer Sawaske – ODFW	Mary Karen Scullion – USACE
Jon Rocha – USBR	Marc Stewart – USGS
Andy Bryant – NWS	Kari Salas – OHA
Tom Elliott – ODOE	Salina Hart – USACE
Samantha Kovalenko – USACE	Jim Johnson – ODA
Paige Haxton-Evans – DEQ	

Presentations – update on water supply conditions

Scott Oviatt

- Statewide SNOTEL WY precipitation measured 80% of average as of July 12
 - All basins below average (max = Hood-Sandy-Lower Deschutes = 93%; min = Lake County-Goose Lake = 59%)
 - Stable trend in precipitation % of average due to typical lack of precipitation for time of year
 - 90-day precipitation well below average statewide
 - Convection storms in SE Oregon deposited some precipitation over past 90 days
 - Similar for 120-day (mid-March to mid-July)
- Soil moisture content well below average statewide for sites with available information
 - New product on NRCS website
 - Sites measuring lower 10th percentile (High Ridge near Pendleton; Holland Meadows), with some approaching new lows for period of record (Silver Creek in Klamath Basin)
 - Period of record varies by location

Andy Bryant

- Statewide WY precipitation measuring well below average
 - Western OR hovering around 75-90% of average
 - Much of eastern OR <= 50% of average
- March-June precipitation much below average, with some places experiencing driest period on record
- June temperatures much above average
 - Much of eastern OR experienced temperatures at least 8 degrees above average
 - Western OR experienced temperatures 5-8 degrees above average
- Mid-late July outlook
 - Little to no precipitation forecasted
 - Temperatures likely to be above average
- Aug-Oct outlook
 - Above average temperatures likely

- Below average precipitation likely in eastern third of OR
 - Equal chances above/below normal western/central OR
- Streamflow forecasts
 - Nearly all of state observed below average runoff with exception of some locations in NW OR
 - Observed WY runoff trends downward in North-South direction in western OR
 - Natural streamflow forecasts rank lowest or bottom fifth percentile in western OR
 - Eastern OR faring little better

Larry O'Neill

- Moody Farms Agrimet station tied warmest on record at 119.27 °F
 - Unofficially tied record in Pendleton and Prineville
- Notable meteorological events in June
 - Atmospheric river event in western OR
 - Record heat wave
- Drought impacts and severity arrived earlier than this point last year due to this being second year of multiyear event
- Second driest June on record statewide
 - 2 inches less than 2015
- June 2021 second warmest on record statewide (2015 warmest)
- Fine fuels and hay fuels very dry and drying fast
 - Specifically in Wallowa County
- Streamflows responding more so to 90-day SPEI
- Soil moistures along Cascade Crest are poor
 - Near historic lows in much of western OR and portions of eastern OR
 - Corresponds well with D4 conditions on US Drought Monitor

Marc Stewart

- Many gages measuring below to well below average streamflow in terms of both 7-day and 28-day averages
- Many streams measuring in lower 10th percentile and/or setting new historic lows
 - NW OR
 - Siuslaw R and Thomas Cr
 - SW OR
 - Steamboat Cr
 - NE OR
 - John Day R and Meachem Cr
 - SE OR
 - Donner Und Blitzen R
 - Seasonal measurements for low flows near Steens Mountain
- Regulation on Upper Klamath Lake slowly drop in lake levels
- 7-day hydrograph for statewide in lower 10th percentile

Ryan Andrews

- 19 counties received Executive Orders; 3 additional requests in Coos, Lane, and Lincoln
- Nearly all counties measuring below to well below average streamflow statewide

- Exceptions in Tillamook (101%) and Polk (103%)
- All counties measured well below average streamflow for June
 - Max = Wallowa at 88%
 - Min = Crook at 2%
- 7-day average streamflows below to well below average statewide
- Hydrographs for counties requesting drought declarations measuring well below average streamflow
 - Many approaching or already measuring new lows for period of record

Jon Rocha

- Increased irrigation demand statewide
 - Indicated by reduced percent of average compared to June
 - All USBR river basins delivering irrigation water
- Dead pool expected at several projects by end of July or early August
 - Phillips Lake in Powder Basin
 - Emigrant, Howard Prairie, and Hyatt in Rogue Basin
 - Wickiup in Deschutes Basin
- Low carryover expected to start next WY in Owyhee, Malheur, Powder, Deschutes, Crooked, and Rogue Basins
 - Likely some of lowest carryover on record for Prineville (25,000 AF)
 - Enough to support minimum flows for winter
 - Likely empty Rogue reservoirs by end of July

Mary Karen Scullion

- USACE reservoirs about 52% full
 - Low inflows (~1200 cfs)
 - Outflows (~4660 cfs)
 - Augmentation
 - Meeting most tributary minimum flows
 - Not so much in mainstems
- Pulsing during heat wave to reduce instream temperatures by couple degrees
- Projects planning to be at or above minimum conservation pool by October 1
- Fall Creek at minimum flow for fish facility
 - Not releasing for demand
- Recreation marinas (i.e. Dorena Lake) impacted
 - Detroit Lake marinas impacts as well
- Cougar Reservoir temperatures in line with recommendations
- Blue River released two pulses at beginning and end of June for temperature control
- Fern Ridge static – minimum flows met since February
 - Augment for Monroe gage
 - Uptick in demand – using stored water to meet
 - Similar for Green Peter
 - Maybe approaching minimum conservation pool in early September
- Foster in great shape for recreation
- Detroit past spillway crest – lost ability to release at upper outlets

- Access to water for marinas is likely done
- Willamette at Salem benefitted from reduced minimum flows
 - Compromised with flow pulses
- Rogue
 - Lost Creek will have some carryover
 - Releasing minimum flows
 - Applegate lowered minimum flows

Discussion

- Next meeting proposed for August 11
- Drought requests for Coos, Lane and Lincoln Counties to be forwarded to Governor's Office