

Water Supply Availability Committee/Drought Readiness Council Meeting – June 16, 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
Daniel Stoelb – OEM	Roxy Nayar – DEQ
Tom Elliott – ODOE	Lee Go – FSA
Traci Naile – OEM	Jim Johnson – ODA
Paige Haxton-Evans – DEQ	Racquel Rancier – OWRD
Rachel LovellFord – OWRD	Bryn Hudson – OWRD

Presentations – update on water supply conditions

Scott Oviatt

- Many basins melted out 1-3 weeks early
 - Grande Ronde-Burnt-Powder-Imnaha about 4 weeks early
 - Hood-Sandy-Lower Deschutes has minimal snowpack remaining, but ultimately melted out 2 weeks early
- SNOTEL precip at 83% of average as of June 15
- Recent 30-day precipitation skewed from recent system over past 5-7 days in western OR
 - Harney Basin impacted by upper elevation precipitation
- 60-day precipitation well below long-term average
 - Even worse for 90-day
- Some measurable precipitation over past 7 days along Cascades and western OR
- Dry signal in Wallowa County
- Streamflow forecast volumes at 50% exceedance extremely low central and southcentral OR
 - Moderate in Hood
 - Much below average most everywhere else
- Advising stakeholders to evaluate 70% exceedance forecasts

Henry Pai

NWS

- Precipitation over water year to date below to well below normal statewide
 - Portions of central and south-central OR receiving 50% of normal or less
 - Part of Harney County 25% of normal or less
 - Much of state less than 75% of normal
 - NW and NE OR about 90% of normal
- Past 90-day precipitation 50% of normal or less for much of state
 - Large portion at 25% of normal or less
- Couple weather systems dropped above normal precipitation in coastal areas over past 14 days
 - Some significant precipitation in SW OR

- Eastern OR remained well below normal
- May temperatures were near normal for much of state
 - Exceptions in north central and SW OR where temperatures were above normal
- No measurable precipitation forecasted over next 10 days in Oregon
- 8-14 day outlook indicates probabilities favoring above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation
 - Same story for one-month and three-month outlook

NWRFC

- Observed runoff well below average statewide
 - Few exceptions in NW and NE OR
- Runoff forecast volumes for April through September well below average statewide
 - Only two locations in Umatilla basin expected near average
 - Otherwise nearly all other stations forecasted below 75% of average
 - Many stations in Western OR forecasted below 50% of average
 - Impacted by extremely dry conditions over recent three month period
 - Median forecast percentile around 70% of normal
 - Many forecasts are in the lower 5th percentile for all forecast volumes on record
 - Large portion of forecasts rank as worst on record
- NF John Day in Grant County well below median (fourth to last ranking)
- Grande Ronde in Union County near bottom in ranking
- Willamette R forecast ranks lowest on record

Larry O'Neill

- Warm May and lack of precipitation led to recent changes in US Drought Monitor
 - Extension of D2 conditions west to coast
 - No D0 coverage
 - One of few times in Oregon USDM history
- CMOR reports indicating conditions reflective of August
 - Adverse impacts on dryland agriculture
 - Grasshopper infestations
 - Dust storms
 - Dry creeks, ponds, and wells
- PDSI incorporates measures of total water balance (precipitation and temperature)
 - Conditions deteriorating in NE OR
- Precipitation for March-April-May period second lowest on record statewide (1924 is worst)
 - Klamath County tied driest MAM on record
 - Fourth driest WYTD on record
 - Deschutes County second driest MAM on record
- Klamath County 12-month SPEI third lowest 12-month period on record
 - Consistent with borderline D4 conditions
- Wasco County 12-month SPEI translates to D3 conditions

Marc Stewart

- Streamflow conditions
 - Dailies for June 14 reflect recent precipitation along coastal range
 - Some elevated flows
 - 7-day averages improved somewhat so no longer reflecting near record or record lows
 - However many still well below average in Western OR and statewide
 - Some exceptions along Cascades and NE OR
 - 28-day averages well below average statewide
 - Some exceptions along Cascades and NE OR
- Linn County hydrographs reflect below average conditions over recent long term
 - Received slight boost from recent precipitation
- Lane County streamflows at lower end of normal and just below normal
 - Similar for Josephine County streamflows
- Upper Klamath Lake elevation well below recent 10 year elevation data
 - Williamson R inflows to UKL in lower 10th percentile

Ryan Andrews

- Four new county drought declaration requests
 - Grant, Umatilla, Union, and Wasco Counties
 - 15 current state drought declarations in effect
- WYTD percent of average below to well below normal for much of the state
 - Only Polk, Tillamook, and Yamhill Counties at 100% or above
- Streamflows for month of May were well below average statewide
 - Many counties were below 50% of average
 - Only Jefferson and Umatilla were near normal, but none above normal
- 28-day average streamflows were well below normal statewide
 - Few exceptions in Deschutes, Hood regions and NE OR
- 7-day average streamflows still well below normal even with influx of precipitation on the coast over the weekend
 - Some single day averages were normal to above normal for coastal region
- Cumulative streamflow continues to trend downward since February statewide
 - Western OR hovering near 85% of average
 - Eastern OR below 60% of average
- Couple OWRD basins measuring near normal streamflows (North Coast, Mid Coast)
 - All others below to well below average
 - Owyhee basin below 25% of average
- S Fk John Day R nr Dayville, OR trending towards minimum flows for period of record
 - Grant County
- McKay Cr nr Pilot Rock, OR trending below normal streamflow
 - Umatilla County
- Catherine Cr nr Union, OR fluctuating within normal range of streamflow
 - Union County
- Beaver Cr bl Quartz Cr nr Simnasho, OR trending towards minimum flows for period of record
 - Wasco County

Jon Rocha

- All reservoirs drafting statewide
 - If reservoirs were drafting at normal rate, change in % of average would be negligible
- Rogue deliveries started late May/early June
 - Projected to empty by late July/early August
- Extremely dry conditions and high irrigation demands persist
- Crooked system enacting conservation measure on newly established Habitat Conservation Plan to save water for minimum winter flow targets
- Highly likely for carryover problems to start next WY for Owyhee, Malheur, Powder, Deschutes, Crooked, and Rogue systems
- Owyhee demands fairly static
- Malheur projected nearly empty at end of WY
- Unity Reservoir one of only to nearly fill
 - Expect good carryover
- Phillips potentially empty in August
 - Same with Prineville
 - Hope to save 13,000 acft for ecological purposes
 - Trying to store water in Wickiup
- Ochoco projected to empty by July

Mary Karen Scullion

- Good spring benefitted Willamette system by storing water
 - However, likely not to meet BiOps flows in mainstem Willamette
 - Did meet some tributary flows
 - Negotiating with Bonneville Power Association to draft beyond minimum pools
- Experimenting with pulse flow releases for temperature operations
- Lookout Point above spillway crest
 - For downstream fish passage
- Fall Creek operating for fish facility
 - Use warmer water to attract fish
 - Cold water deters adult fish
- Cottage Grove currently at 75 cfs outflow
- Dorena Lake at minimum BiOps flows
- Fern Ridge augments for Long Tom R at Monroe
 - Drafting to detriment of sailboat community
- Cougar pulsing for temperature
 - Extra 1000 cfs for 1 degree (F) temp change in June
 - Maintain minimum flows after
 - Same situation for Blue R
 - Working w/ODFW and NMFS for experimental temperatures
- Green Peter using power pool to maintain BiOps
 - May negotiate to lower minimum flows
 - 1,100 cfs June 16-July 31
 - Fish weir in operation for warm surface water spill, 300 cfs BiOp

- 800 cfs Aug 1 – Aug 31 BiOp
- 1, 100 cfs Sep 1 – Oct 15
- Detroit spilling at night
 - Marinas likely to be impacted

Ryan Andrews (for Pete Parsons)

- Recent atmospheric river events reduced significant fire potential in western OR
 - Moderate potential still exists for portions of eastern OR
- 7-day significant fire potential increases from minimal to normal and elevated over weekend for much of PNW
 - High risk for SE OR starting Monday, June 21
- Significant wildfire potential above normal beginning in July for much of central and western OR, elsewhere in PNW
 - Coverage expands throughout PNW in August
 - Reduces in September

Interagency PIO Drought Coordination with Racquel Rancier, Bryn Hudson, and Rachel LovellFord

- During drought years, ramp up drought coordination due to media requests
 - Held interagency meeting in 2015
- Interested in best way to approach coordination
 - 1-2 meetings with technical and PIOS
- Example actions
 - OPRD in 2015 took action by watering properties
 - Marine Board advised about water conditions
- Keep on same page; increase awareness of meetings
- Drought briefings
 - Solicited feedback regarding what that means for groups like Farm Bureau and League of Oregon Cities
 - Late June/early July
 - Report out on conditions, funding programs, declarations, and impacts
- Another kickoff meeting to report what each agency is doing and opportunities for coordination
- OEM Bobbi Doan should be added to contact list
- Data products and visualization discussion
 - Make sure all data is coordinated across sources
 - What informational products are agencies using
- Contact Bryn Hudson (bryn.hudson@oregon.gov) w/PIO points of contact
- OCCRI
 - Erica Fleishman Erica.fleishman@oregonstate.edu

Discussion

- Ryan send doodle poll to gage availability
- Grant, Umatilla, Union, and Wasco County drought requests to be forwarded to Governor's Office for declaration