

## Water Supply Availability Committee/Drought Readiness Council Meeting – May 12, 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	Carrie Boudreau – USGS
Daniel Stoelb – OEM	Roxy Nayar – DEQ
Tom Elliott – ODOE	Peter Parsons – ODF
Traci Naile – OEM	Jeff Marti – WDOE
Paige Haxton-Evans – OEM	William Martin – OEM
Rachel LovellFord – OWRD	Andy Bryant – NWS

#### **Presentations – update on water supply conditions**

##### **Scott Oviatt**

- Snowpack map product no longer to be presented for rest of water year
- Statewide snowpack measuring 59% of median
  - Only Hood-Sandy-Lower Deschutes measuring above median
  - Other basins well below median or have already completely melted out
  - No longer significant factor in water supply calculations
- Above normal temperatures in April led to rapid rate of snowmelt greater than normal
  - Meltout occurred nearly four weeks early for some basins
- SNOTEL water year precipitation measuring 84% of average statewide
  - Only Hood-Sandy-Lower Deschutes, Umatilla-Walla Walla-Willow and Grande Ronde-Burnt-Powder-Imnaha basins measuring above 90% of average
  - Other basins below to well-below average (min = Lake County-Goose Lake at 60%)
  - Many sites in southern and central Oregon have 365-day precipitation rankings in lower 10<sup>th</sup> percentile, with some measuring lowest rank on record
  - 30-day precipitation averages measuring below 50% statewide
    - Similar pattern for 60-day averages
- Streamflow forecast volumes projected to be well below average, with water users being advised to monitor flows closer to those typical of 70% exceedance forecast

##### **Andy Bryant**

- NWS offering special presentation to highlight conditions and potential impacts to NW OR and SW WA
- Precipitation deficits over past two months have had significant impact on water supply forecasts
  - Major impacts for western Oregon – particularly coast region which averaged deficits of 8 – 12 inches over past 60 days
- Temperatures were much above average for April, including elevated temperatures throughout the Cascade Range

- Near-term forecast over next 8 – 14 days indicates likelihood of below normal precipitation and equal chances above/below normal temperatures
  - Conditions could contribute to reduced soil moisture and increased rate of snowmelt
- 3-month outlook indicates high likelihood of above average temperatures and below normal precipitation for May through July
  - Long-term outlook of July through September indicates above average temperatures with equal chances above/below normal precipitation
- Observed water year runoff volumes are below to well-below normal throughout much of the state
  - Exceptions in NW and NE OR with some locations near normal observed runoff
- Streamflow forecast volumes for April through September are well below normal statewide
  - Many sites rank as lowest or near lowest projected runoff volumes on record
    - Some even worse than 2015 drought

### **Henry Pai**

- Much of state, with exception of NW and Umatilla, is well below normal observed runoff
- Many projections at forecast points have suffered significantly due to extremely dry March and April
  - Coupled with rapid rates of snowmelt
- Siletz R April through September projection at just 41% of normal
  - Worse than 52% of normal projection for 2015 drought
- Willamette R at Salem ranks worst projection on record
- Crooked R and Owyhee R also rank as some of worst projections on record

### **Larry O'Neill**

- D4 coverage expanded to southern Deschutes County
- Low soil moisture and record low streamflows contributed to expansion of D3 into western OR
- Soil moisture profiles at record lows throughout state
- Long-term dryness driving drought conditions in central OR
- 0-200 cm soil moisture profiles can take 1 to 2 years to rebuild

### **Carrie Boudreau**

- Streamflows have trended downwards over past month as highlighted by streamflow percentile comparison between April 12 and May 10
  - Many western Oregon streams measuring lowest 28-day streamflow average on record for May 10
- Linn County hydrographs on downward trend due to dry March and April
  - Currently measuring well below average
- Lane County hydrographs also reflecting downward trend into well below average percentiles
- Crooked River flows measuring some of lowest on record
- Many coastal streams also measuring streamflow well below average

- Upper Klamath Lake measuring about two feet below typical elevation levels

### **Jon Rocha**

- Most USBR reservoir storage peaked in mid-April
- Drafting in most basins except Burnt, Rogue, and Umatilla
  - Owyhee drafting since early April
- Warm Springs reservoir in Malheur Basin projected to empty August
- Rogue, Umatilla, Burnt systems still in refill operations
- Anecdotal reports of irrigation demands typical of summer
- Carry-over problem likely to start next water year for Owyhee, Malheur, Powder, Deschutes, Rogue, Crooked
- Owyhee district operating with 25% reduction in allotments
- Late start (June) and early (August) end to irrigation season in Rogue
  - Moving water through system to Emigrant Lake
- Enacting conservation measure on newly established Habitat Conservation Plan to budget available water for minimum flow targets in Crooked
- Prineville at 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest refill storage contents on record
- Tualatin system starting to draft which is about a month early

### **Mary Karen Scullion**

- No main stem flow targets in Willamette to conserve water
  - Minimum flow targets are being maintained in tributaries
- Most reservoirs will empty by end of October
- Fall Creek outflow only for maintaining habitat at fish facilities
- Meeting irrigation demands in Long Tom River basin
- Fern Ridge recreation will be impacted
- Mckenzie River and Blue River reservoirs will augment summer streamflows just above minimum flow targets
- Detroit may cutoff recreation pool in mid-August

### **Peter Parsons**

- Minimize smoke impacts from prescribed burns
- Prescribed burns will end in early June, about a month earlier than usual
- High significant fire potential in SW OR
- Fuels burning hotter and more than expected statewide
- Prescribed burn escaped and turned to wildfire in southcentral OR

### **Discussion**

- June 16<sup>th</sup> proposed for next meeting
- DRC concurs with Crook County drought request