

## **Water Supply Availability Committee/Drought Readiness Council Meeting – January 12, 2021**

Phone Conference – Meeting Notes

### **Attendees**

Ryan Andrews – OWRD (Chair)

Bill Martin – OEM

Spencer Sawaske – ODFW

Peter Cooper – USBR

Tim Holschbach – ODF

Salina Hart – USACE

Alyssa Rash – OWRD

Curtis Peetz – OMD

Jeff Marti – WDOE

Naseem Rakha – Capital Chronicle

Scott Oviatt – NRCS

Peter Markos – DEQ

Andy Bryant – NWS

Carrie Boudreau – USGS

Tom Elliott – ODOE

Daniel Stoelb – OEM

Larry O’Neill – OCCRI/OCS

Jon Rocha – USBR

Kari Salis – OHA

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

#### **Scott Oviatt**

- Snowpack
  - 13% SWE on 12/5 - extreme high elevation SWE
  - 139% of median SWE value statewide as of 1/12 - series of storms late December/early January
  - Less of an impact east of Cascades but all still above median
  - Northern Cascades prime recipient of snowpack
  - Mid and lower elevation sites doing well but takes less amount of snow to show high % of median
  - Somewhat significant drop-off in Willamette due to temperatures and rain-on-snow
  - Basins with flatline indicates that snowpack not accumulating, not that it is melting out
- SNOTEL statewide precipitation 111% as of 1/12
  - Nearly all basins above average (Malheur @ 95%; Rogue-Umpqua @ 99%)
- Sites in Nevada driving Owyhee/Harney basins up
- Streamflow forecasts less reliable at this time due to variability and less precision of snowpack in basins that it is big driver of water supply
  - Willamette and Rogue more reliable due to rain-driven systems as opposed to east side dependence on snowpack

#### **Andy Bryant**

- Precipitation
  - Close to matching record number of days with measurable precipitation in Portland since beginning of water year
    - Above average precipitation in area
  - Areas with above average precipitation are limited to NW and spotty in NE/SE OR

- Most of state below to well below average
- December precipitation % of historic average variable throughout state
  - Only few places in central and SW OR with below average
- December temperatures above average throughout much of eastern OR
  - Western OR closer to average, but somewhat above
- Increase in SWE coverage over high terrain
- Loss in SWE coverage in Coast range and western OR
- Climate outlook
  - Very little precipitation predicted over next 10 days
  - Temperatures trending above average over next couple weeks
  - Not much confidence in how conditions will play out through spring
  - ENSO outlooks trending back towards neutral conditions
- Streamflow forecasts (on behalf of NWRFC)
- Water supply forecasts vary throughout state
- Near to below average streamflow forecast for western OR
- Forecasts in Klamath below to well below average

### **Larry O'Neill**

- Working on 2021 water year summary and impact report - come out in couple weeks
- Drought monitor
  - Main feature of drought monitor is improvement on west side of Cascades
  - Little to no improvement on east side other than Union, Umatilla, and Wallowa Counties - good snowpack in Blues and Wallowas - decent rain in lowlands
  - Worrying signal is below to well below normal precipitation in central OR
  - Potential improvements to D4 areas in Klamath due to precipitation (improve to D3), but skeptical since precip is still below average
  - More than 50% of state is in D3-D4
- County level rankings of accumulated precipitation over last two water years (10/19-09/21) show lowest or second lowest amount throughout central OR; many counties in top 10 driest on record; state as a whole ranked as 3rd driest on record (13 inches below normal over period)
- Calendar year 2021 ranked 30th driest since 1895 (88.8% of average of 1895-2020)
- Below average precip 16 of last 22 calendar years and last four years straight
- 3rd warmest two-year period on record over past two water years (10/19-9/21)
- SPEI considers precipitation as source and evaporation as sink of water
  - Looking at two-year index due to length of drought
  - Some improvement in NW OR
  - Current 24-month SPEI among worst on record since 1930s

### **Carrie Boudreau**

- 7-day average streamflow well above average in western OR
  - Increase from 28-day average
  - Most of east side lagging behind, but some NE streams normal to above normal
- Nehalem River reached flood stage recently due to precipitation events
- Owyhee River experienced recent spike in streamflow to above normal

- Donne Und Blitzen River holding steady at lower end of average
- Upper Klamath Lake elevation trending upwards, but still in bottom half of past 10 or so years at this point of the year

### **Ryan Andrews**

- December streamflows well below average throughout much of state
- Exception in NW OR – near to above average
- Streamflow over water year to date variable throughout state
  - Above to well above average in NW OR and along coast
  - Below to well below average throughout most of eastern OR
- Some increase in streamflows recently, but trending downwards following start of recent dry spell

### **Peter Cooper**

- Storage reservoirs continue to fill with winter fill operations
- Flood risk management at Scoggins
- Will release water as streams start to recede in conditions - drafting back down to space requirements
- Gained a bit in terms of percent full in Owyhee since December
  - Filling very slowly
- % of average between base periods - % of average storage looks better for current base period compared to 1981-2010
- Most reservoirs are lower than 25th percentile for this time of year - some have record lows
- Runoff forecast in Owyhee projects not likely to fill - 115% of average forecast but need somewhere around 150% of average
- Warm Springs in lower 10th percentile of storage contents - needs around 150% of average runoff to fill
- Beulah similar but takes less to fill - although runoff forecast is below normal
- Wickiup at record low storage contents - water will be moved from Crane Prairie down to Wickiup
- Prineville has very low storage content but is able to recover somewhat quickly
- Record low content in Rogue systems - likely multi-year event needed to fill
- McKay driven by rain events
- Scoggins uptick driven by rain-on-snow events

### **Salina Hart**

- Reduce outflows and store water during flood events - wait for downstream to recede before releasing
- Used carryover storage last year - started water year very low
- Lost Creek 22% below ideal - start filling Feb 1
- Flood risk management operations throughout Willamette
- Managing a lot for mainstem control points (Salem at bankfull)
- Some localized flood risk management - such as Jefferson - evacuating water
- Start refill Feb 1 in Willamette

- Willamette at 16% full and 16% above rule curve because no carryover in Willamette
- No refill allowed until after main spring flows recede due to litigation
- Fall Creek and Cougar being told to hold reservoirs at minimum pool until March/April
- Willow Creek snow driven - used for irrigation demand - used most carryover last irrigation season - 21% below normal

### **Discussion**

- February 9<sup>th</sup> proposed for next meeting