

Pacific Northwest Region Water Supply Update August 28, 2013

August has been no exception to the hot and dry summer in the PN Region, with temps typically ranging about 5 to 10 degrees above average. There is nothing in the forecast to suggest any wholesale changes, other than hope that fall will actually arrive some day and transition to a more active pattern. Reservoirs have drafted deeply to provide irrigation water, and many have reached or are nearing their minimum contents, meaning a shutdown of irrigation a month or more earlier than normal for some districts. The Malheur and Owyhee basins in eastern Oregon were hardest hit, along with the Boise and upper Snake basins in Idaho to a lesser degree. However, this was anticipated by the affected irrigators and they planned accordingly, opting for less water intensive and earlier maturing crops. The Payette and Yakima basins will see a full irrigation season. Reservoir carryover going into 2014 will be critically low in many basins however, and all eyes will be on next winter's weather.

	Snowpack % of avg.	Water Year Precipitation % of avg.	January to Date Runoff % of avg.	Reservoir Storage % full	Allocations
Yakima (WA)	n/a	98	92	50	100
Flathead/Hungry Horse (MT)	n/a	105	109	96	n/a
Crooked (OR)	n/a	87	46	57	n/a
Rogue (OR)	n/a	85	n/a	49	n/a
Boise (ID)	n/a	78	53	33	n/a
Payette (ID)	n/a	88	65	55	n/a
Upper Snake (ID)	n/a	84	73	19	n/a
Columbia Basin (Columbia R at the Dalles)	n/a	96	102	n/a	n/a

Pacific Northwest Region Water Supply Update July 17, 2013

Like the rest of the West, the PN Region is in the grips of a very hot summer. Triple digit temps have been common, with many records being broken near the beginning of the month during a particularly hot week. Precip, as typical in summer, has been very limited. Forest and range lands have dried out and are susceptible to lightning strikes as monsoonal moisture is occasionally sent northward, unfortunately minus most of “moisture” part. Reclamation reservoirs are drafting to provide irrigation supplies, although the early and heavy demands mean some projects will empty (eastern Oregon) or be very low by the end of the summer. Irrigation districts are being proactive to conserve water to stretch their supplies for a full growing season. Irrigators without access to Reclamation storage are facing much worse prospects and shortened seasons, with various emergency drought declarations being made at state and local levels. A lot of fingers will be crossed next winter, hoping for a big snowpack.

	Snowpack % of avg.	Water Year Precipitation % of avg.	January to Date Runoff % of avg.	Reservoir Storage % full	Allocations
Yakima (WA)	n/a	98	92	88	100
Flathead/Hungry Horse (MT)	n/a	107	111	99	n/a
Crooked (OR)	n/a	87	47	71	n/a
Rogue (OR)	n/a	85	n/a	68	n/a
Boise (ID)	n/a	79	52	57	n/a
Payette (ID)	n/a	89	65	83	n/a
Upper Snake (ID)	n/a	85	73	45	n/a
Columbia Basin (Columbia R at the Dalles)	n/a	98	102	n/a	n/a

Pacific Northwest Region Water Supply Update

June 12, 2013

Spring runoff is winding down as the PN Region enters the dry summer season. Flows peaked several weeks early and many reservoirs are beginning to draft to meet irrigation demands. The bright exceptions are the Yakima Basin reservoirs which remain full and Hungry Horse Reservoir in Montana, which is projected to fill by early July. Elsewhere runoff was below to well below average this year, and May was the fifth month in a row with below average precipitation for much of the southern half of the PN Region. The earlier drafting of reservoirs means some projects will empty (eastern Oregon) or be very low by the end of the summer. Many irrigation districts are being proactive to conserve water to stretch their supplies for a full growing season. Reservoir storage will be critical for meeting irrigation demands in 2013; those who rely on natural flows will likely face shortages.

	Snowpack % of avg.	Water Year Precipitation % of avg.	January to Date Runoff % of avg.	Reservoir Storage % full	Allocations
Yakima (WA)	n/a	98	94	100	100
Flathead/Hungry Horse (MT)	n/a	108	118	86	n/a
Crooked (OR)	n/a	87	48	82	n/a
Rogue (OR)	n/a	92	n/a	81	n/a
Boise (ID)	n/a	77	56	72	n/a
Payette (ID)	n/a	86	69	99	n/a
Upper Snake (ID)	n/a	84	79	67	n/a
Columbia Basin (Columbia R at the Dalles)	n/a	97	102	n/a	n/a

Pacific Northwest Region Water Supply Update May 15, 2013

The PN Region is currently seeing the peak snowmelt runoff of the season due to record and near record temperatures over the last week. The Yakima and Flathead basins, which had a near average snowpack, have experienced some minor flooding but are now receding; Reclamation reservoirs performed their flood control duties and greatly reduced flows. The rest of the Region had below to well below average snowpacks this year, much of which is melting out now in one big surge, yet well below any flood concerns. This slightly early runoff will result in earlier drafting of reservoirs; some projects will empty (eastern Oregon) or be very low by the end of the summer, making next winter's conditions even more critical for adequate recovery. Reservoir storage will be critical for meeting irrigation demands in 2013; those who rely on natural flows will likely face shortages.

	Snowpack % of avg.	Water Year Precipitation % of avg.	Forecasted Runoff % of avg.	Reservoir Storage % full	Allocations
Yakima (WA)	53	97	87	98	n/a
Flathead/Hungry Horse (MT)	94	112	103	86	n/a
Crooked (OR)	melted	90	58	90	n/a
Rogue (OR)	melted	92	n/a	87	n/a
Boise (ID)	41	81	63	71	n/a
Payette (ID)	31	89	71	92	n/a
Upper Snake (ID)	57	85	82	72	n/a
Columbia Basin (Columbia R at the Dalles)	73	97	94	n/a	n/a

Pacific Northwest Region Water Supply Update

April 10, 2013

The PN Region experienced a real dichotomy of winter conditions this year. Northern tier basins such as the Yakima and Flathead saw a fairly typical winter, with consistent precipitation and an ever growing snowpack which will provide a normal water supply for 2013. Unfortunately, conditions deteriorate rapidly as you move south in the region, especially in eastern Oregon and southern Idaho, where snowpacks struggled to reach 70% of average or worse. The upper Snake basin in eastern Idaho/western Wyoming fared slightly better. Despite the below average runoff forecasts and the fact that some reservoirs will not refill completely, adequate water supplies will be available in 2013. Carryover at the end of the season will be very low however, making next winter's conditions even more critical. A wet spring could still help improve conditions.

	Snowpack % of avg.	Water Year Precipitation % of avg.	Forecasted Runoff % of avg.	Reservoir Storage % full	Allocations
Yakima (WA)	88	98	87	82	n/a
Flathead/Hungry Horse (MT)	95	114	103	85	n/a
Crooked (OR)	71	96	58	94	n/a
Rogue (OR)	74	98	n/a	81	n/a
Boise (ID)	66	85	63	69	n/a
Payette (ID)	71	95	71	80	n/a
Upper Snake (ID)	89	87	82	75	n/a
Columbia Basin (Columbia R at the Dalles)	92	100	94	n/a	n/a

Pacific Northwest Region Water Supply Update

February 13, 2013

January was a fairly stingy month for precipitation in the PN Region. Fortunately most of the region got off to a good start with decent precipitation through December. But with the dry month, snowpack percentages and runoff projections have begun to slip. One dry month is not atypical, but concerns will mount if one month turns into two, or more. February has also been fairly dry for the first half, but there are hints of a pattern change next week. The region needs a return to wetter winter conditions to anchor the water supply, and with roughly 25% of the snow accumulation season left any number of outcomes could occur. Beyond winter, spring precipitation will also play a big part in determining the final water supply. The wait and see game continues.

	Snowpack % of avg.	Water Year Precipitation % of avg.	Forecasted Runoff % of avg.	Reservoir Storage % full	Allocations
Yakima (WA)	93	95	96	66	n/a
Flathead/Hungry Horse (MT)	91	116	111	86	n/a
Crooked (OR)	101	104	92	58	n/a
Rogue (OR)	71	102	n/a	64	n/a
Boise (ID)	74	92	85	55	n/a
Payette (ID)	83	107	100	72	n/a
Upper Snake (ID)	90	89	93	59	n/a
Columbia Basin (Columbia R at the Dalles)	98	104	91	n/a	n/a

Pacific Northwest Region Water Supply Update

January 9, 2013

Water Year 2013 is off to a positive so far in the Pacific Northwest. October through December precipitation was above average, especially in the north, leading to near average snowpacks as we approach the midway point in the accumulation season. High freezing levels during November resulted in rain at the middle and lower elevations, but greatly boosted the high elevation snowpacks. However, with more than half the winter left to go there is a wide range of potential outcomes for the water supply. While the next 2 weeks look dry, the longer range forecasts are providing no signal over much of the basin...in other words anything can happen. Of note, averages are now based on the 1981-2010 period, and generally run about 5 to 10% lower than the previous official 30-year averages of the 1971-2000 period; the percentages listed below would be lower if using the former dataset.

	Snowpack % of avg.	Water Year Precipitation % of avg.	Forecasted Runoff % of avg.	Reservoir Storage % full	Allocations
Yakima (WA)	137	123	107	64	n/a
Flathead/Hungry Horse (MT)	93	126	116	92	n/a
Crooked (OR)	97	117	84	54	n/a
Boise (ID)	86	108	109	51	n/a
Payette (ID)	90	125	116	69	n/a
Upper Snake (ID)	102	98	104	51	n/a
Columbia Basin (Columbia R at the Dalles)	110	118	96	n/a	n/a

Pacific Northwest Region Water Supply Update October 23, 2012

Mid October saw an abrupt change in the PN Region from the warm and sunny fall weather to a very cool and wet pattern. As pleasant as the fall weather had been, a pattern change was sorely needed from the entrenched high pressure ridge that has dominated since early June and left the region moisture starved. Moderate to heavy rain has improved soil moisture conditions in the mountains prior to the snow accumulation season, which should lead to more efficient runoff next spring. The first snows of winter are just now occurring, and the cool unsettled pattern is forecast to continue at least in the short term. Long term forecasts are less certain with a weakening of the El Nino signal, although a higher likelihood for below average precipitation this coming winter is still forecast. Essentially anything can happen, however, and it will be likely be a couple months before a discernible trend in the snowpack is established. (note: water year precip is only since Oct. 1)

	Snowpack % of avg.	Water Year Precipitation % of avg.	Forecasted Runoff % of avg.	Reservoir Storage % full	Allocations
Yakima (WA)	n/a	173	avg or blw	43	n/a
Flathead/Hungry Horse (MT)	n/a	145	avg or blw	91	n/a
Crooked (OR)	n/a	193	avg or blw	54	n/a
Boise (ID)	n/a	134	avg or blw	38	n/a
Payette (ID)	n/a	129	avg or blw	54	n/a
Upper Snake (ID)	n/a	97	avg or blw	26	n/a
Columbia Basin (Columbia R at the Dalles)	n/a	107	avg or blw	n/a	n/a