Ecology Convenes WSAC

WSAC makes recommendation re: water supply

EWEC makes determination re: hardship

Governor’s Office Issues Written Approval

Tribal Notification

Ecology Issues Drought Declaration Order

WSAC = Water Supply Availability Committee (Technical)
EWEC = Executive Water Emergency Committee (Policy)
Drought Declaration

- March 9 -- Bureau Forecast
- March 10 – Water Supply Availability Committee Meeting
- March 11 – Emergency Water Executive Committee
- March 13 -- Governor Inslee Announces Drought Emergency
Administrative Drought Trigger

- Water supply conditions where a geographical area or a significant part of a geographical area is receiving, or is projected to receive, less than seventy-five percent of normal water supply as the result of natural conditions and the deficiency causes, or is expected to cause, undue hardship to water users within that area.[WAC 173-166-030(2)]
Modification and Addition of Drought Areas

- Drought Orders may be phased over time
- New areas can be added
- Parties can petition to have areas added
- Orders may be appealed
- Drought Order limited to 1 year from time of issuance
Describing geographic areas for the purpose of declaring droughts

"Geographical area" can be natural or political. Examples:

(a) The state of Washington.
(b) Counties.
(c) Water resource inventory areas (WRIAs) as defined in chapter 173-500 WAC.
(d) Individual watersheds which constitute only a portion of a WRIA but whose boundaries can be topographically described.
(e) Groundwater management areas and subareas as defined in chapter 173-100 WAC.
(f) Designated sole source aquifers.
(g) Combinations of the above areas.
Washington SNOTEL Current Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) % of Normal

Mar 16, 2015
Current Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) Basin-wide Percent of 1981-2010 Median

- unavailable *
- <50%
- 50 - 69%
- 70 - 89%
- 90 - 109%
- 110 - 129%
- 130 - 149%
- >=150%

* Data unavailable at time of posting or measurement is not representative at this time of year.

Provisional Data Subject to Revision

The snow water equivalent percent of normal represents the current snow water equivalent found at selected SNOTEL sites in or near the basin compared to the average value for those sites on this day. Data based on the first reading of the day (typically 08:00).

Prepared by:
USDA/NRCS National Water and Climate Center
Portland, Oregon
http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
State of Washington
Washington - Mean Temperature
October-February 2015 Percentile

Washington - Precipitation
October-February 2015 Percentile

Department of Ecology
State of Washington
Snow Analysis: This Year vs. Last Year
Hardship Evaluation

- Groundwater users should be buffered from impacts
- Agriculture
  - Costs of water supply can increase (well drilling, leasing and purchasing of other water rights)
  - Reduced water delivery, due to pro-ratable or junior water right status
  - Some plants can’t forego season of no irrigation (e.g., fruit trees)
- Water purveyors
  - Municipalities concerned about drought message, reduced revenues
  - Effects on smaller purveyors harder to predict
- Landscaping
  - Landscape industry saw reduced sales in past due to drought perception
- Fisheries: Habitat and hatcheries
- Recreation
- Hydropower
Timing is Critical

• Farmers and irrigators are preparing for this summer, making investments
• Funding and available alternatives need to be put in place quickly in order to be effective
• Yakima forecast likely to go downward in April (next official forecast date is April 6th)
Recommendations from WSAC where watersheds are likely to be below 75 percent of normal supply by WRIA
Emergency Water Executive Committee
Drought Briefing
March 11 2015
March – April – May
Seasonal Outlook
June - July – August Season Outlook
Thank you!

For more information, please contact

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http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/ws/wtrsupply.html
Effect of Drought Order

• Expedited processing for Emergency Drought Permits
• Temporary transfers of water rights
• Funding assistance for public entities (municipalities, irrigation districts, PUDs, etc.)
• Workshops, public education
• Regulation to protect senior water rights
Past Drought Declarations

- 1994 (Yakima Basin)
- 2001 (Statewide)
- 2005 (Statewide)
- 2006 (Lyre – Hoko, Sol Duc – Hoh)
- 2010 (Drought was funded, but no ultimate declaration)
Location of Drought Permit Actions
2001, 2005

http://goo.gl/bXc5G6