

TASK FORCE ON DROUGHT EMERGENCY RESPONSE



HB 4113(2016)

September 27, 2016 – MEETING NOTES

Location: North Mall Office Building | Room 124

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Ken Helm, Co-chair	Jason Green (phone)	Kimberley Priestley
JR Cook	Richard Kosesan	Eric Quaempts
Suzanne DeLorenzo	Mary Anne Nash	Julie Smitherman
Brett Golden	Rod Park	April Snell

AGENCY STAFF:

Racquel Rancier, OWRD	Ivan Gall, OWRD	Laura Wilke, OWRD
Lanaya Blakely, OWRD	Lisa Jaramillo, OWRD	Chris Kowitz, OWRD

AUDIENCE:

Mike Faight, Jeff Stone, Mark Landauer, Lauren Smith, Tracy Rutten, Jerome Rosa, Peggy Lynch, Greg Mintz

I. Welcome and Introductions

Co-chair Helm welcomed everyone. Task Force members and the audience introduced themselves.

II. Agenda Review and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Co-chair Helm reviewed the agenda; no changes were made.

Meeting Four Minutes, September 15, 2016: Co-chair Helm asked if there were any requested revisions to the minutes. Snell requested the notes more clearly specify which spreadsheet is being referenced. Kosesan requested the documents clearly state that they are a tool to prioritize ongoing discussion and not a formal vote to endorse the recommendations. Golden moved to accept the minutes with the requested amendments discussed. There were no objections to the motion.

III. Discussion of Process and Timeline

Rancier described the meeting materials and how they were a tool to assist the task force's discussions.

Rancier reminded the Task Force of the scope laid out in House Bill 4113, intended to address emergency drought response actions, and suggested members consider referring long-term ideas to the Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRS) Policy Advisory Group (PAG) for consideration during their upcoming drought conversation. The task force discussed how to address long-term proposals and incorporate ideas that lack majority support. No decisions were made. The Task Force was encouraged to work on ideas where majority agreement is likely. Since the Co-Chairs have chosen to be non-voting members, seven votes constitute a majority. Report is due November 1. Next meeting is October 12, at which time the Task Force should have a partial draft report to review.

It was suggested that in the process of narrowing down proposal ideas, recommendations should be stated as an action statement with an objective. Information from the meeting discussion and Draft Ideas for Discussion document would be used to support the high-level recommendations.

IV. Discussion on Proposals Under Consideration

No formal votes of the task force were taken. The task force members discussed each topic area, and identified potential recommendations for further drafting:

Topic L. Scientific Data:

The Task Force discussed the need for more scientific data to anticipate drought and manage water.

Potential Proposed Recommendation: The state should continue to increase and enrich water-related data collection to inform water use decisions, conservation, and management, as well as better anticipate and respond to drought.

Notes on proposal to consider for report: Need to identify areas to prioritize data funding. Data needs are unique by source type (SW, GW), region, and intended use. Different types of data and baseline information are needed to answer different questions; short term conditions versus forecasting future conditions.

Topic J. Technical Assistance and Preparedness Plans for Small Water Systems

Task Force members discussed small water system needs for technical assistance. Discussions focused on identifying opportunities to build on existing programs and the creation of a voluntary WMCP lite template, while avoiding being overly prescriptive or increasing the burden on small water providers.

Potential Proposed Recommendation:

- Need to address lack of planning, support, resources, and technical assistance for small water systems to be better prepared for drought.
- Water Resources Department should develop a voluntary WMCP lite template as a tool for small communities to understand their water rights, drought risk, and approaches for conservation, and curtailment

Notes on proposal to consider for report:

- Indicate the number and distribution of small water systems across the state.
- Regular WMCPs are cost prohibitive for small water systems.
- WMCP lite could be used in lieu of regular WMCPs for small water systems.
- Completing a WMCP lite would be voluntary for small water systems that are not required by their water right to complete a WMCP.
- Incorporate outreach into Topic F, Communication and Outreach

Topic K. Assessment of Risks and Vulnerabilities

Task Force members discussed the need for drought impact data to identify vulnerabilities, and to evaluate assistance programs for all sectors (ag, muni, instream). Impact data can be an important tool to leveraging federal funding sources. There was some discussion on how much drought impact data already exist that could be used in an assessment, the need for a targeted drought impact study for all sectors, and the geographic scale that an impact study would encompass. Some members noted that scientific baseline data is essential for comparisons.

Potential Proposed Recommendation: Provide resources for assessments of drought impacts, risks, and vulnerabilities in order to better prepare for, respond to, and recover from drought for all sectors (ag, muni, instream, etc).

Notes on proposal to consider for report:

- Need for all sectors, including instream, agriculture, municipal.
- Difference between the scientific data and the political declaration of drought
- Better inform Oregon's Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning
- Leveraging funding
- Identify which small stream systems are the most vulnerable (threatened/endangered/sensitive species, over allocated, etc.).
- Identify which small water systems are the most vulnerable, including municipal and agriculture.

Topic F. Outreach and Communication Tools

One member suggested that one reason the drought tools are not being utilized may be because water users don't know they exist. Some members noted that Water Resource Department (WRD) needs additional staff to effectively communicate information about drought and water conservation. Communication efforts should focus on educating all sectors, as well as, elected officials and leveraging existing resources of third parties.

Potential Proposed Recommendation:

- Develop communication tool box for all sectors (instream, ag, muni, etc) to educate stakeholders, the public, and elected officials about existing tools, water conservation, water conditions, and drought preparedness, as well as help small communities with communication needs.
- Provide staff resources for a dedicated position to do outreach and communication; this may also require IT and GIS support.
- Explore potential partnerships with third parties, utilities, and other agencies.

Notes on proposal to consider for report:

- Need more modern and active approach to communication.
- Messaging should be streamlined, easy for water users/providers to access and implement.
- Currently, WRD lacks dedicated staff to communicate to the public about drought conditions or tools, regular water right tools, or conservation programs.
- Large utilities and other third party groups may be willing to coordinate the development of educational materials or share existing materials.
- Could coordinate with third party to provide free on-farm assessment to evaluate opportunities for improvement

Topic G. Infrastructure

Task Force members discussed the need to address aging infrastructure. Most of the discussion focused on funding and some noted that access to infrastructure funding sources is an issue and barriers exist. Although funding has been authorized (i.e. SB 839, Drinking Water Revolving Fund, etc), the backlog of infrastructure needs is still enormous. Some small communities may lack the capacity to complete funding applications.

Potential Proposed Recommendation:

- Provide technical assistance or capacity-building grants to help communities and individuals identify funding programs, and then apply for and access infrastructure funding to improve drought resiliency.
- Assemble a group of experts to identify existing infrastructure programs and evaluate barriers to accessing infrastructure funding.

Notes on proposal to consider for report:

- Limited resources available to assist small water systems that lack resources and expertise to

complete funding applications for infrastructure improvements that would increase resiliency to drought.

- Some water providers have difficulty obtaining infrastructure funding for resiliency projects.
- Underutilized funding pools exist.
- Encourage interagency coordination between various agency funding programs. Reference guide for all programs.
- Assessment should be completed by a third party, knowledgeable of community capacity limitations as it relates to multiple stage projects that include complex planning, development, operation and maintenance.

Topic M. Storage to Increase Resiliency to Drought

Members discussed the role of storage as a long-term strategy to increase resiliency to drought and its applicability to the Task Force's charge. The group focused discussion on the management of water releases in existing storage facilities and the need to evaluate statutes for flexibility. Some members indicated that modifying spill procedures could help all sectors during drought. More information is needed to determine if changing Federal rule curves would help mitigate drought impacts, and what the barriers are to changing them. The remaining proposals under this topic may be more appropriate for the IWRS PAG to evaluate.

Potential Proposed Recommendation: Evaluate options for changes in management of stored water during drought.

Notes on proposal to consider for report:

- The management of existing stored water in reservoirs may not be responsive to drought.
- State should look at existing rules and authorities related to federal projects.
- Need to evaluate flood control procedures, including during drought.
- Need to determine modified spill/fill regime

Next Steps

Task Force members have agreed to read the information in the Draft Ideas for Discussion document for the next meeting. Members will send any questions about proposals to staff. Members are encouraged to consolidate proposal ideas and develop action statements and corresponding rationale for the recommendations they would like to move forward.

Staff will develop material for the recommendations so far identified to be included into the report. Language for the report will be refined using feedback from Task Force members via email correspondence.

V. Public Comment

None received.

VI. The Task Force adjourned at 3:00 pm.

Next Meeting

Date: October 12, 2016

Location: Department of State Lands, Land Board Room
775 Summer St., NE, Salem, OR 97304