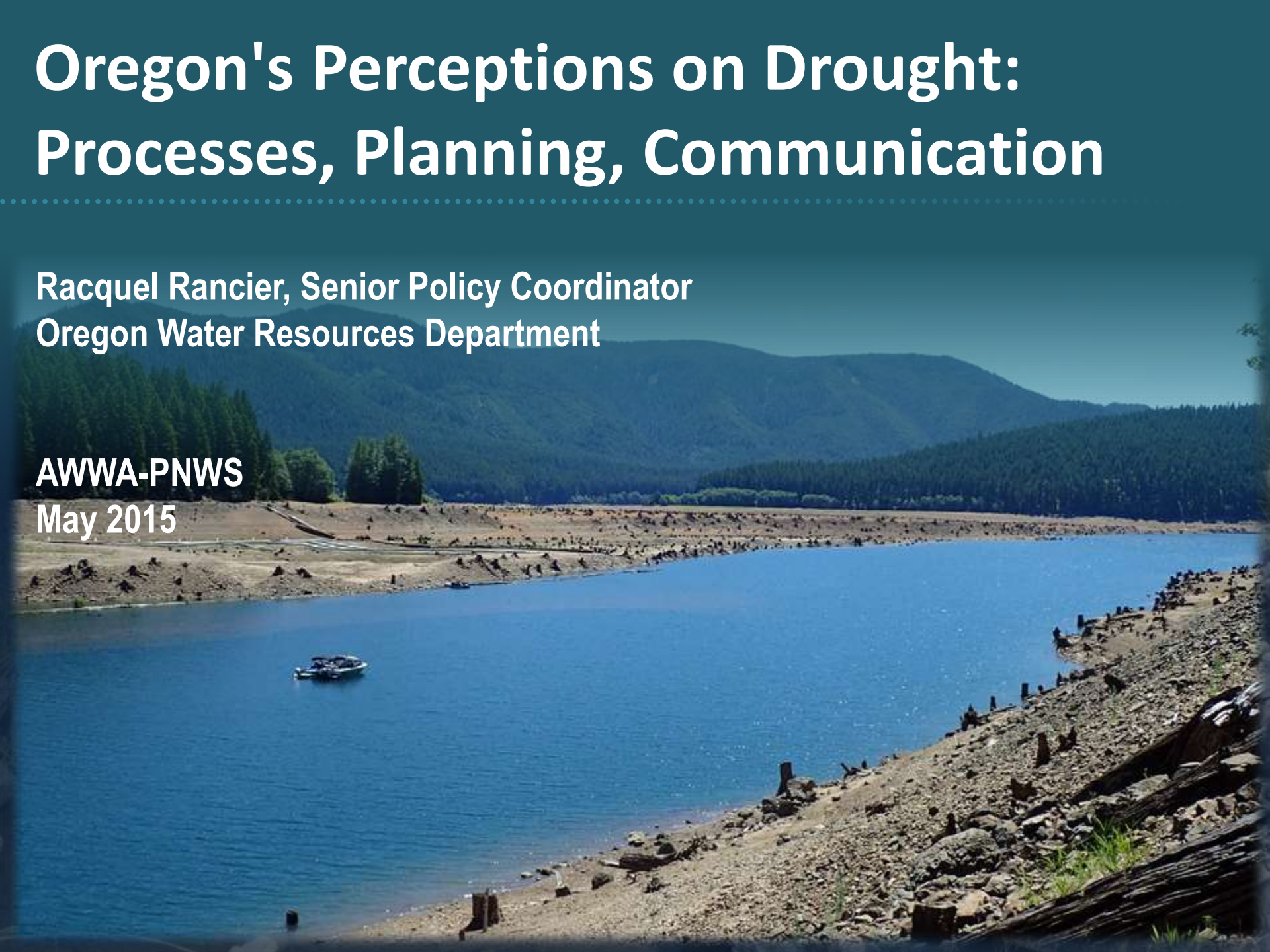


# Oregon's Perceptions on Drought: Processes, Planning, Communication

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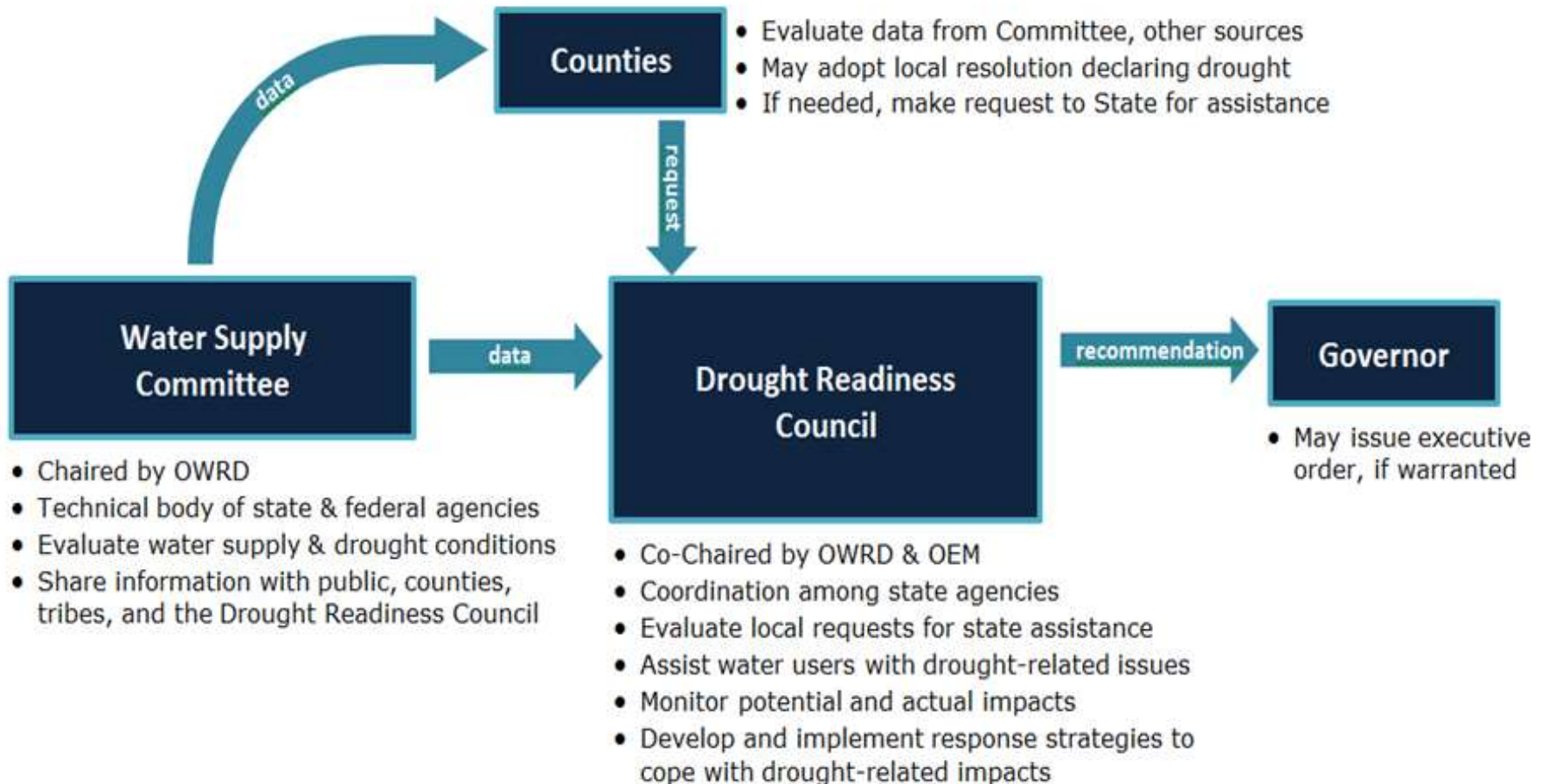
Racquel Rancier, Senior Policy Coordinator  
Oregon Water Resources Department

**AWWA-PNWS**  
May 2015



# Oregon's Drought Declaration Process

**REVAMPED AT END OF 2015  
DUE TO LESSONS LEARNED**



# Water Supply Committee

- **Oregon Department of Agriculture**
- **Oregon Department of Forestry**
- **Oregon Office of Emergency Management**
- **Oregon Water Resources Department (Chair)**
- **NOAA-National Weather Service and Northwest  
River Forecast Center**
- **USDA-NRCS Snow Survey Program**
- **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**
- **U.S. Geological Survey**

# Indicators of Drought

- **Precipitation**
- **Temperature anomalies**
- **Storage in key reservoirs**
- **Long-range temperature outlook**
- **Long-range precipitation outlook**
- **Snowpack**
- **Current streamflows and behavior**
- **Spring and summer streamflow forecasts**
- **Ocean surface temperature anomalies (El Nino, La Nina)**
- **Soil and fuel moisture conditions**
- **NRCS Surface Water Supply Index**



*Malheur Reservoir in 2014*

# Drought Readiness Council

- **Oregon Climate Change Research Institute**
- **Oregon Department of Agriculture**
- **Oregon Department of Energy**
- **Oregon Department of Environmental Quality**
- **Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife**
- **Oregon Department of Forestry**
- **Oregon Health Authority's Drinking Water Program**
- **Oregon Office of Emergency Management (co-chair)**
- **Oregon Water Resources Department (co-chair)**

# State Drought Response

## **Declaration that a severe, continuing drought exists**


- Can direct state agencies and political subdivisions to implement a water conservation or curtailment plan
- Provide existing water right holders with access to temporary water management tools

## **Declaration of State of Emergency**

- Severe water emergency (ex. drinking water shortage)
- Much broader action; deployment of people and equipment

# Temporary Water Management Tools

- **Temporary Emergency Water Use Permit**
- **Temporary Transfer**
- **Temporary Instream Lease**
- **Preference for Human Consumption or Stock Water Use**
- **Special Option Agreements**
- **Temporary Substitution**
- **Exchange of Water**



## OREGON WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT State Drought Declaration Process & Emergency Tools

### State Drought Declaration Process

Drought declarations for an area typically go through a three-part process before securing a state drought declaration from the Governor. First, a county commission submits a request for a state drought declaration to the Office of Emergency Management. Second, the Water Availability Committee, chaired by the Water Resources Department, meets to discuss information on weather and water supply conditions and subsequently make recommendations to Oregon's Drought Council. Chaired by the Office of Emergency Management, the Drought Council assesses the impact of drought conditions and makes recommendations to the Governor's Office on whether to declare drought in an area.

The Governor may then choose to issue an Executive Order declaring a drought emergency. State drought declarations are typically issued at a county scale. The primary benefits of a state drought declaration from the Governor are that it creates greater awareness of drought conditions; facilitates coordination between state agencies; and allows the Water Resources Department to provide existing water right holders with access to emergency water management tools. These tools are outlined below.

The Governor or the Oregon Water Resources Commission can also direct state agencies and political subdivisions to implement a water conservation plan or water curtailment plan.

### Emergency Drought Tools for Water Right Holders

A state drought declaration allows the Water Resources Department to offer certain tools to water right holders in a drought-declared county. These tools have an expedited review process, reduced fee schedule, and are intended to be short-term emergency authorizations, not permanent solutions to deal with water supply challenges. Water right holders seeking long-term solutions should first contact their watermaster to help identify what options may exist.

- **Temporary Emergency Water Use Permit**

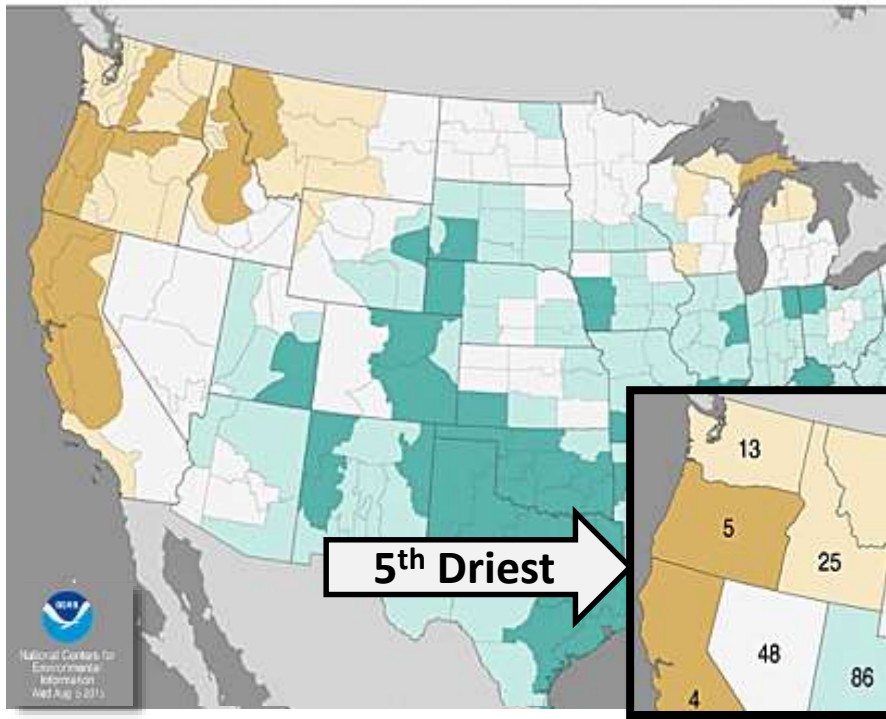
An approved emergency water use drought permit allows a water user to temporarily replace water not available under an existing water right. The most common drought permit allows the use of groundwater as an alternative to an existing surface water right. A well-prepared application generally takes approximately ten business days to process. Emergency water use permits are issued through an expedited process and are valid for one year or the term of the drought declaration, whichever is shorter.

- **Temporary Transfer**

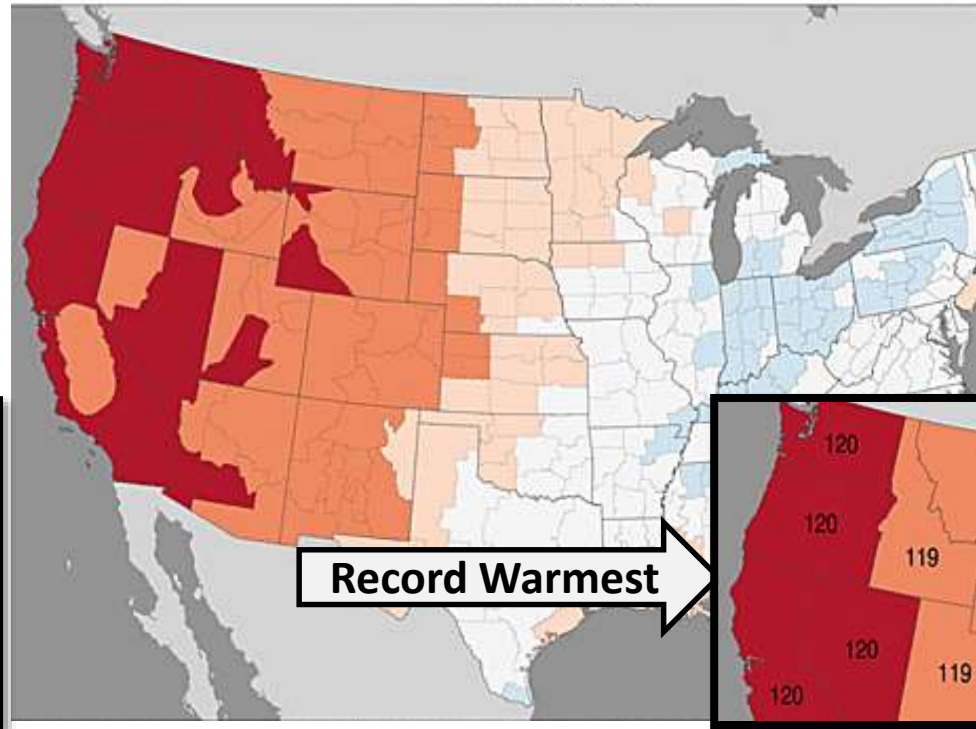
A water user can apply to change the type of use, place of use, or the location of the diversion under an existing water right. A temporary drought transfer takes place under an expedited process, and is in effect for the duration of the drought declaration or up to one year, whichever is shorter.

# 2015 Recap: Jan. – Sept. Conditions

Divisional Precipitation Ranks  
January–September 2015  
Period: 1895–2015

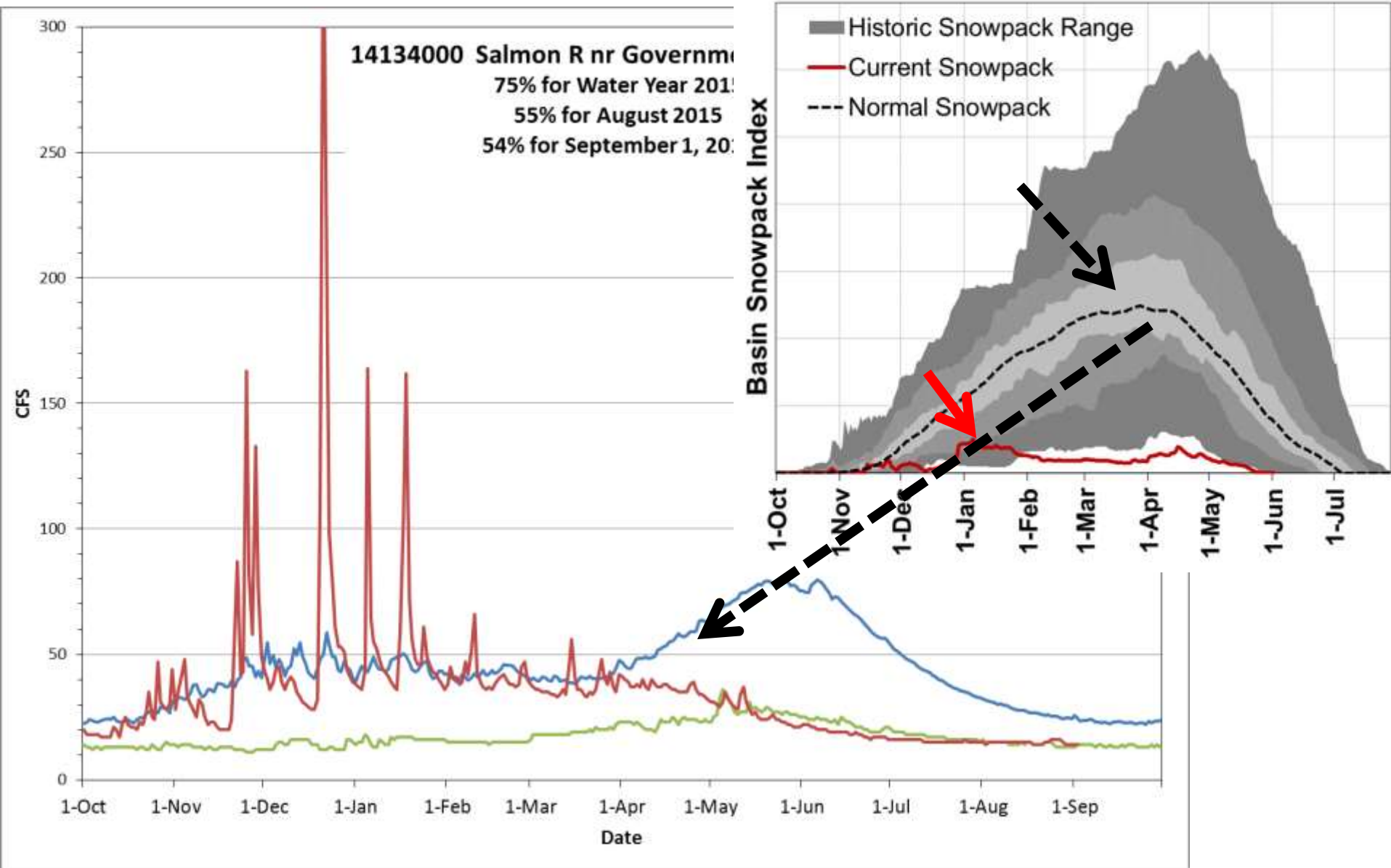


Divisional Average Temperature Ranks  
January–September 2015  
Period: 1895–2015

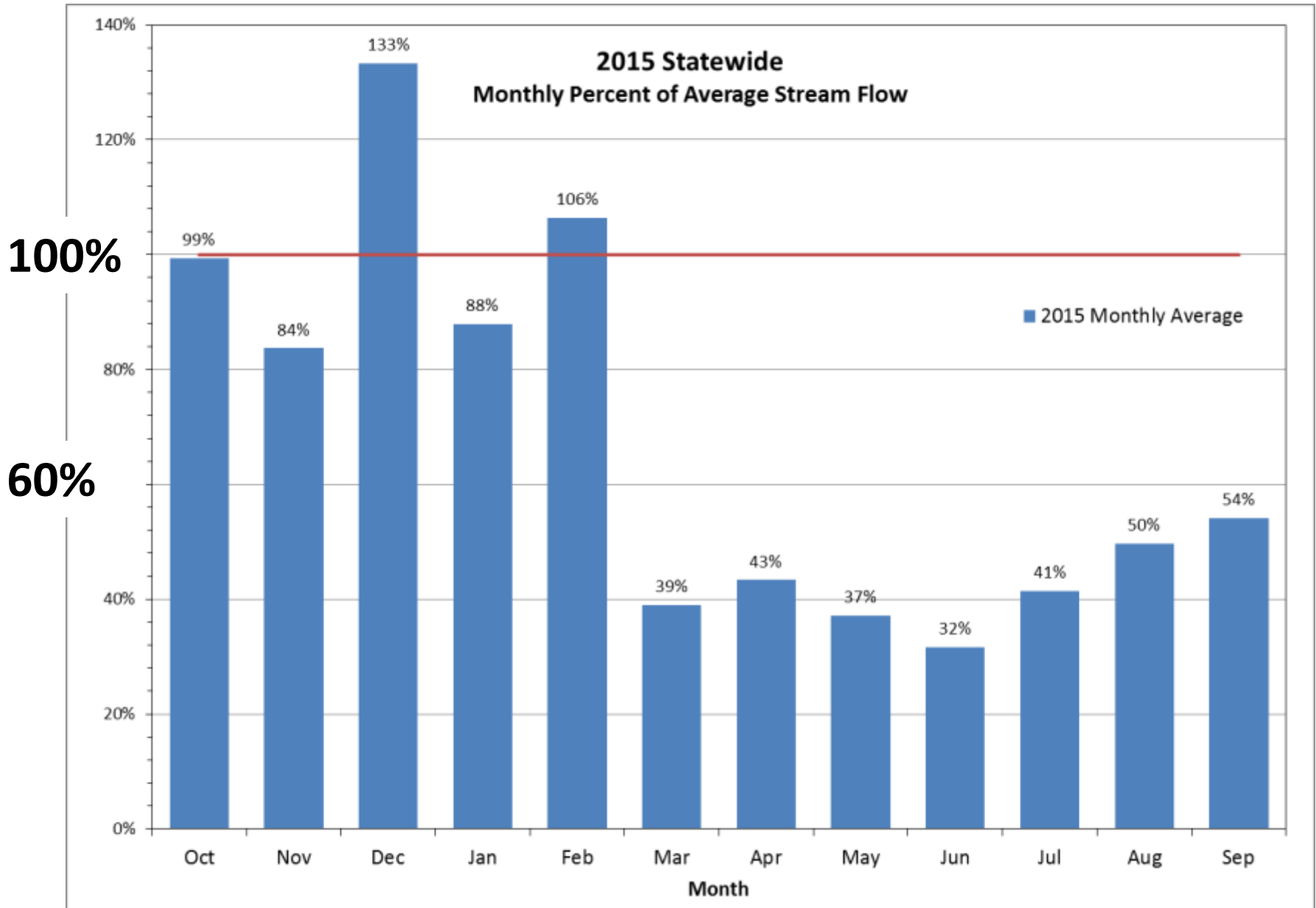




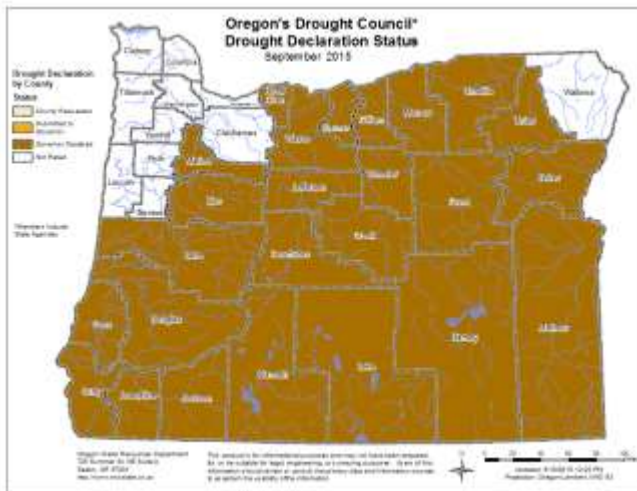
# Snowpack as a Storage Reservoir



# 2015 Monthly % of Average Streamflow

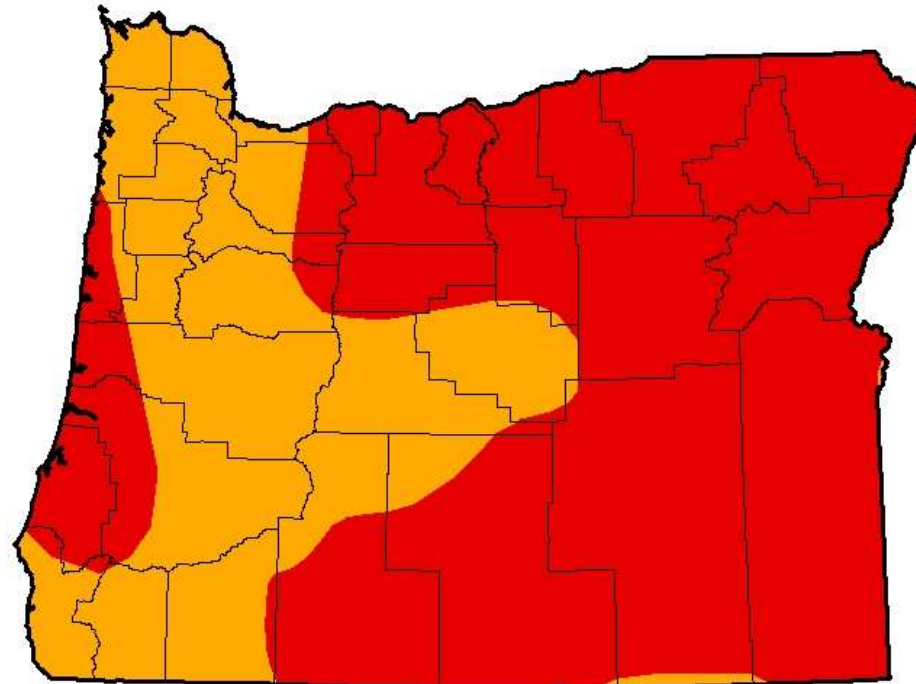


# Extent of Drought 2015



## U.S. Drought Monitor Oregon

**August 25, 2015**  
(Released Thursday, Aug. 27, 2015)  
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



### Intensity:

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

**67 percent in extreme drought**

*The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.*

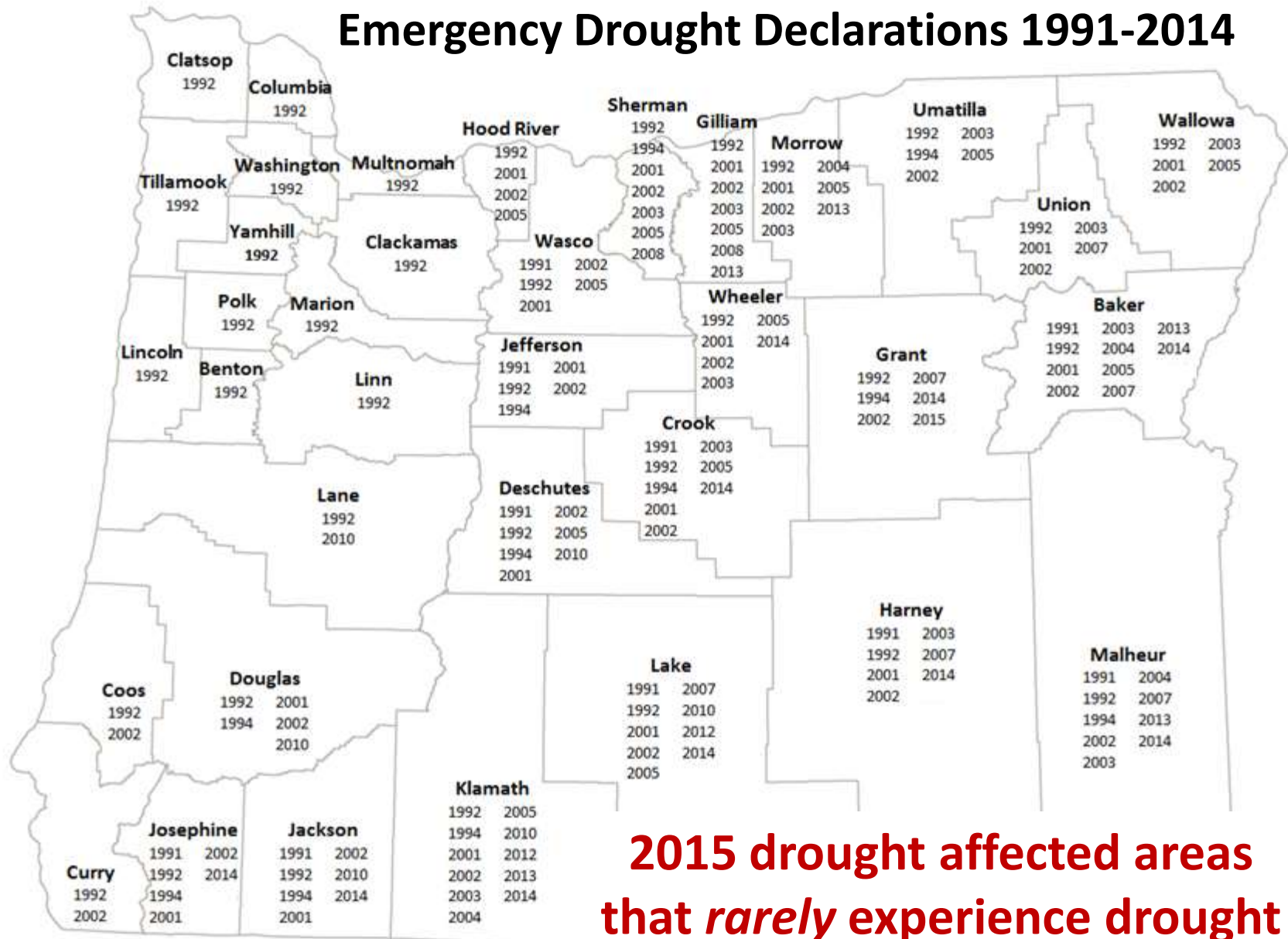
Author:  
Anthony Artusa  
NOAA/NWS/NCEP/CPC



<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

# History of Drought

## Emergency Drought Declarations 1991-2014



2015 drought affected areas that rarely experience drought

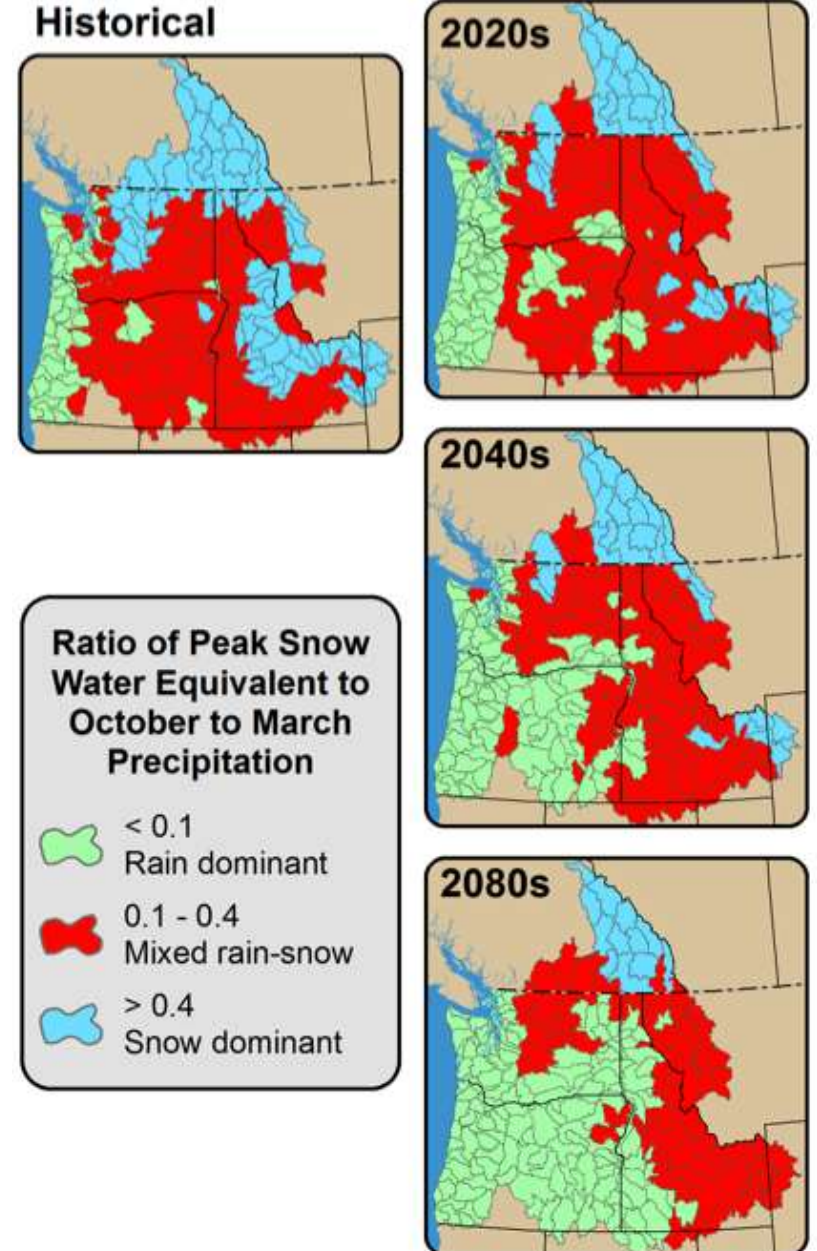
# Result: Significant Response Effort

- **Drought Tools Limited Applicability**
- **Increased Press and Public Interest**
- **Impacts to Other State Agency Programs**
- **Increased Regulation for Senior Water Rights**
- **Result: Needed to respond to broader audience**
  - **Information and Outreach**
  - **Interagency Coordination**



# Drought Messaging

- **2015 Drought is a Warning Shot**
- **Conditions similar to climate change projections**
- **Limited opportunity to get ahead of more serious problems**
- **Everyone do their part to use water more carefully**
- **Address water resources needs now and into the future**



# Department Outreach Efforts

- Weekly Drought Reports
- Interagency PIO Team and Coordination
- Weekly WRD Drought Meetings
- Fact Sheets
  - Water Conservation
  - Temporary Water Management Tools
  - Financial Assistance
  - Well Emergencies and Burned Wells



# Governor's Involvement

Learn more about drought in Oregon

#ordrought



At Home



At Play



At Work

[Save Water Inside the Home](#)

[Save Water Outside the Home](#)

[Boating](#)

[Current Campfire Rules](#)

[Fishing and Hunting](#)

[Travel Oregon](#)

[Drought Assistance Programs](#)

[Drought Status and Current Conditions](#)

[Resources for Municipal Systems](#)

[Save Water on the Farm or Ranch](#)

## Watch Governor Brown's PSA on Drought



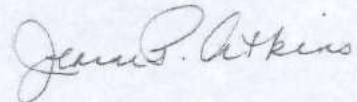
NOW,  
THEREFORE: I, Kate Brown, Governor of the State of Oregon, hereby proclaim July 2015 to be

WATER AWARENESS MONTH



hand and cause the  
Great Seal of the State of Oregon to be affixed. Done at the Capitol  
in the City of Salem in the State of Oregon on this day, July 7,  
2015.

  
Kate Brown, Governor

  
Jeanne P. Atkins, Secretary of State



- **Emergency Drought Declarations**
- **2015 Drought Team**
- **Executive Order 15-09**
  - **Agencies reduce water use by 15 percent by 2020**
  - **Water conservation messaging**
  - **Update the state's emergency plan for drought**
  - **Incorporate drought into the 2017 Integrated Water Resources Strategy**



# Looking Ahead and Concluding Thoughts



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**Senior Policy Coordinator**  
**Oregon Water Resources**  
**Department**  
**[Racquel.R.Rancier@state.or.us](mailto:Racquel.R.Rancier@state.or.us)**  
**503-986-0828**