

Okanogan CD Drought Preparedness Plan – June Planning Meeting

June 9th, 2025 | 1:00pm – 3:00 pm

Online

SUMMARY NOTES

Meeting started at 1:00 pm

Introductions: Attendees introduce themselves & Affiliation

Attendees:

Jordana Ellis (Okanogan CD)

Sandra Streiby (Methow Watershed Council)

Sarah Lane (Methow Watershed Council)

Mike Bastian (Methow Watershed Council)

Tessa Reeder (Washington Water Trust)

Greg McLaughlin (Washington Water Trust)

Cindy Fabbri (Washington State University)

Jonathan Yoder (Washington State University)

Stuart Crane (Yakama Nation)

Elianna Rosenthal (Washington Department Fish & Wildlife)

Jord Wilson (City of Pateros)

Hannah Tomlinson (NRCS)

Celeste Acord (NRCS)

Rodney Cawston (Colville Tribe)

Rowena Stpierre (Colville Tribes Climate Action Coordinator)

Michelle Martin, (Okanogan Land Trust)

Nigel Kingsbury (Department of Ecology)

Updates to Google Drive: Review of the additions/changes. For those who are interested and do not already have access to the Drive please contact Jordana for directions on how to access the Google Drive.

- Literature: What has been added, what we lack, what we need to gather from this.
 - Jordana created a review sheet that will aid in ensuring the information gathered will be consistent with the outline for the risk assessment. A review of the template would be helpful to see if the form will assist the reviewer in capturing the information necessary for the Risk assessment.

- The question was asked if there were assignments for review. At this time the review is on a voluntary basis. As the project progresses, if needed the work can be divided and allocated for completion.
- During the discussion on the survey it was discussed that in leu of an individual taking a survey that some key stakeholders could instead be interviewed. This type of interview would be in line with a literature review and noted as a source and documented in a similar manner as the literature review. Please have this in mind if you are offering feedback on the literature review template and offer feedback for how the form can facilitate an interview as well.

Survey Development:

- Update on process:
 - There are two surveys ready for review on the Google drive. One for individuals and organizations. One for Purveyors.
- The group reviewed survey questions: Discussions that arose:
 - The survey will not ask for specific personal information like addresses, however context for where the individual is living, or location of concern, will be valuable for the risk assessment. How to gather that information is still unclear. Zip codes were proposed. Group was more interested in an interactive map that would allow survey taker to place a circle (minimum size? 1 mile? ½ mile? Max size? 5 miles?) around their area of focus.
 - What if a “survey taker” has more than one place of use or location of concern they would like to reference in the survey?
 - It was acknowledged that is a possible issue with any survey. We can narrow in on specific locations/issues and get narrow and specific answers or we can go broader and more general and the information gathered would be diluted to the degree the scope was broadened.
 - The same concern was expressed for the individual declaring their primary area of interest, concern, affiliation. Many individuals in our area span several affiliations and interests. How to capture that?
 - The group discussed the possibility of individuals taking the survey more than once for each area of focus. (Ex: One occurrence for an individual that is a farmer-irrigator, and again for their role as an individual concerned with recreation/ environment – fishing/ habitat.)
 - The practice of allowing one individual to take the survey more than once is discouraged where values are quantitative when it is important to apply statistics to the evaluation of the results.

When results are qualitative there is not as great a concern and the practice will not damage the integrity of the results.

- The next question was if the practice should be encouraged and noted in the directions or left unsaid. Most of those who commented felt it would be more accurate and less confusing for both the survey taker and the quality of the results to allow the practice. The practice will not be overly encouraged, yet a note of acceptance that the practice may be necessary for some individuals to share their concerns/ experiences will be included.
- It was noted that the practice could be limited by some survey platforms limiting the number of times one IP address could access the survey. Creators will take this into account and ensure that restriction is relaxed.
 - Include in “area of interest, knowledge, experience, concern, or affiliation?” = Conservation nonprofit organization
- Survey Question #5: “*Is the water you are referencing associated with one or more legal appropriations (i.e., water rights), recognized by the State of Washington, at the **water place of use**?*”
 - The current format allows a yes or no answer. What is the value of this response? How can we get more out of the responses to this question. Is the way the question posed allowing for “all types of rights” and the layperson’s knowledge of what type of right they have?
 - The group determined that this question would be better expressed as a list of possible types of rights and allow them to select the appropriate answer. (Ex: permit/certificated water right, permit exempt use (domestic/stock water), instream flow, tribal rights, etc.)
- Survey Question #7: “*Is there anything important we should know about the water supply at the **water place of use**, especially as it relates to drought?*”
 - This is currently an open ended question allowing the survey taker to list any information. Question arose as to whether this format would elicit a productive response. Group discussed if a list of possibilities in addition to allowing input of “other”, would be more effective. It was discussed that this method would in effect “anchor” and limit freedom of response while at the same time might increase participation in the question.
 - Side thought was if all question must be answered or if blanks will be allowed?
 - Group discussed the tradeoffs of both methods and decided that a list of possible answers with the addition of “other” where survey taker can enter

any information would be most effective in eliciting answers and assisting in the project development stage.

- Survey Questions 9&10: These questions connect water use to timing of year. Discussion on question of if the time frames listed were applicable to periods of use. There are two types of water rights (year round or seasonal irrigation) so why break the information into seasons. The group discussed that some uses in the county are recreational or second homes that fall within different time frames. Decision was to list timeframes in a way that allowed for the accounting by season.
- Survey Question #12 (follow-up to #11): *“If you answered yes to the question above, can you comment on the circumstances? For instance, what happened, where, and what was the severity of the drought at the time?”* The discussion around this question was how to format it to get the most detailed response as well as how to give the survey taker a scale of severity. The group discussed severity first and the group consensus was to use the U.S. Drought monitor scale, unless a different standard that is more familiar to Okanogan County residents can be identified. As for the formatting to get the most detail the idea was supplied to break the question into several fill in answer spots with fill in the blanks for each variable: what happened, where, when, how long event lasted, severity of drought.
- Survey Question #21: *“Are there specific projects that would help you or the community prepare for, mitigate, or respond to drought? Please provide details about the location, type of project, how it would help, and a suggested contact, as relevant.”* The group discussed if there should be lists here keeping in mind the previous discussion on how lists can limit ideas and variability of responses. The group thought there should not be lists, but to suggest to the survey taker that there are “categories” of projects and ask for suggestions. (Ex: infrastructure improvement, storage, recharge, retime, education or changed behavior, policy/law, Other).

Map of sub-regions:

- Boundary delineation:
 - Washington Water Trust & Methow Watershed Council worked with OCD to define these areas better and draft a map for the group to review. Areas are based on sub-watershed lines except where communities would be split in two, then census tracts were used. Group agreed on current boundary delineations. Asked that the maps have the names of towns larger for ease of recognition, as well as offset to better understand what sub-region they are considered part of. Suggestion to also include major roads to allow

individuals to better identify where their communities or areas of focus are located on the map.

- Names of sub-regions:
 - Methow Upper and Lower
 - Okanogan Upper and Middle
 - Columbia Basin
 - Colville Reservation

Outreach:

- The Okanogan CD will create contact list for receiving updates and survey.
- Outreach team created Draft of a Flyer. Still need to add QR code for contact list and or Survey. Need to determine dates and locations.
- Community meetings will be held:
 - Tuesdays or Wednesdays from 5-7, during the weeks from July 28th and August 29th.
 - Okanogan CD outreach created a draft of flyer. Unfortunately, Jordana's computer died and she was unable to share the image for input.
 - Determine locations based on availability. Okanogan CD suggestions for possible locations...
 - Colville Reservation
 - Nespelam Government Center
 - Methow – combine to one meeting for whole valley if possible?
 - Need for second meeting later – reassess after determining if the first meeting offered input from all over valley or if there were specific locations that could be targeted for a second meeting. Discussion will be revisited when OCD outreach team is available.
 - Twisp Grange or Twisp Community Center
 - Upper Okanogan (Oroville – Tonasket)
 - CCC Community Cultural Center in Tonasket
 - Middle Okanogan
 - PUD Auditorium Okanogan
 - Columbia Basin
 - Pateros Fire Hall

Next Steps

- Organize community meetings. Make bookings at desired locations for desired times. Okanogan CD
- Continue discussion on number of meeting to hold in Methow when Okanogan CD outreach team available to meet with Methow Watershed Council.
- Finalize survey. ***If you have feedback the due date is Monday June 16th.***
- Provide feedback on literature review/interview sheet. ***Due date is by July meeting.***
- Incorporate suggestions in map of sub-regions to have ready for printing for community meetings.

Meeting adjourned at 2:54 p.m.