

Okanogan CD Drought Preparedness Plan – May Planning Meeting

May 12th, 2025 | 1:00pm – 3:00 pm

Online and Okanogan Conservation District Office – Okanogan, WA

SUMMARY NOTES

Meeting started at 1:00 pm

Introductions: Attendees introduce themselves & Affiliation

Attendees:

Jordana Ellis (Okanogan CD)

Jack Owen (Okanogan CD)

Emmy Engle (Okanogan CD)

Jon Culp (State Conservation Commission)

Sandra Streiby (Methow Watershed Council)

Sarah Lane (Methow Watershed Council)

Tessa Reeder (Washington Water Trust)

Greg McLaughlin (Washington Water Trust)

Cindy Fabbri (Washington State University)

Julie Padowski (Washington State University)

Michael Brady (Washington State University)

Jonathan Yoder (Washington State University)

Brent Paul (Trout Unlimited)

Lee Webster (City of Brewster)

Stuart Crane (Yakama Nation)

Kraig Mott (Yakama Nation)

Elianna Rosenthal (Washington Department Fish & Wildlife)

Lorah Super (Okanogan CD/Methow Valley Citizens Council/Methow Watershed Council)

Shawn Davisson (Public Works Director for the City of Okanogan)

Todda McDanial (Omak City Administrator)

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.
 - Cindy has been working on literature review. This section has relevant information on frameworks and methodologies for conducting risk assessments and drought planning as well as County/Watershed/Town &

City specific plans. More core members will be involved in this, **especially specific to Okanogan County. Volunteers welcome!** Jordana will be creating a review sheet for this review that will aid in ensuring the information gathered will be consistent with the outline for the risk assessment.

- Lorah S. stated the District and Watershed Council both have a lot of files related to watershed planning. There may be useful information in the respective archives.
- Risk Assessment Outline: Review of the current draft. This was developed using the grant contract deliverables and breaks down the assessment into key points.
 - Cindy has created several folders in the drive to organize work products. One area is the [Risk Assessment](#).
 - The group is asked to look at, and comment, on the [risk assessment table of contents](#).
 - Headings in the table of contents will be mirrored on the survey as categories of questions. This structure will aid in gathering from the survey, the desired information to inform the risk assessment.
 - The group reviewed the [data source matrix](#) that is a framework on how information will be gathered.
- Glossary: draft vs final
 - The group needs to standardize definitions. Please provide input on how we will define specific, important terms. Please review the draft and comment on/ vote on most appropriate terms for use by the plan/planning team.
 - The language and the plan need to be framed in a way that is usable by governmental entities for possible implementation. Plan will benefit from input from County and Tribes.

Focus areas:

- Name: Continuing the conversation of needing to have standard verbiage that is usable and not confusing can we please agree on what to call the six areas we are focusing on for the plan(s). At first they were called “planning units”, which is confusing as that is the wording used in watershed planning. It was also mentioned that “sub-area” is used in County planning. The final recommendation is “sub-region”. This had no objections from the group.
- Boundary delineation:
 - Before the process goes much further there needs to be agreement on the delineation of boundaries of the six sub-regions. The original idea was that the areas needed to be geographically and demographically combined.

- The group discussed that the plan should still be community focused while incorporating the geographical and legal boundaries of hydrologic influence in the county. Ways of doing that are to incorporate census data with instream flow rule reach delineations. It was also mentioned that there is an area of influence from the Columbia river that is hydrologically defined. Environmental justice mapping data was used along with census data for the grant application and that data is available for communities.
- Methow Watershed Council and Washington Water Trust will work to define these areas better and draft a map for the June meeting.

Survey Development:

- Update on process:
 - Survey development group has met twice since the last meeting. Cindy has been creating questions based on the outline of the risk assessment discussed previously.
- The group review 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 is concerned will be valuable for the risk assessment. How to gather that information is still unclear. Option being explored is an interactive map that will allow the survey taker to pick their approximate location.
 - Discussion on the difference between hazards and impacts. The survey is asking what hazards have been seen, or are feared to occur, in the area. This will be best captured by a dropdown list or “pick all that apply” list. For this option there needs to be a list. Where to gather that information, will likely come from the literature review. There is a concern that a list alone will limit the responses received, and the group decided that “other” with an ability to enter information will be provided as an option as well.
 - The group discussed how drought impacts are different from drought hazards? Through discussion it was defined that a “hazard” is an event that occurs and the “impacts” are the effect that is felt from the event. (Sandra: Hazard could be scarcity. Impact could be effects like crop productivity)
 - When determining how to gather information on impacts the group discussed options. It was determined that it would be valuable to “categorize” impacts. This can happen in a few different ways.
 - Concern of possible impact vs. actual occurrence.
 - Personal experience/concern vs. community experience/concern. The personal vs the community based.

- Categorize into social/emotional/human health – financial/economical – environmental. (include examples).
- Sensitivity to drought and how to gather information on this topic. Some info will be gained in literature review and from Ecology data. What can we find out from a survey question?
 - Question about sensitivity should include wet water availability and legal curtailment. Public records request was submitted and information will be provided to the project on curtailment history in both major watersheds.
 - Curtailment is not exclusive in ability to measure sensitivity. Tribal and domestic rights cannot be curtailed.
 - Local precipitation drought may be different from reduced groundwater or low instream flows. This is a sensitivity factor to include.
- Projects question can include a drop down for project categories, but also an “other” for suggestions not previously listed.
 - Project could include:
 - Trust of water rights. Temporary leases for those who have to share with those who have not. Riparian restoration for aquifer recharge. Infrastructure improvements, additional storage, education.
- What drought severity index does Okanogan County use?
 - Department of Ecology’s standards. Based on previous season snowpack and predictions of stream flow levels, and precipitation.
- Review dissemination method:
 - The survey will be electronic and made available online. Information about survey will be shared in radio, newspaper, social media platforms, email contact list, and website. Okanogan CD staff are available to assist those who would like to call in and have assistance entering responses over the phone. QR code made available by end of the week for signing up for a contact list.

Outreach:

- Continuing conversation from survey dissemination flowed into outreach efforts.
 - The Okanogan CD will create contact list for receiving updates and survey.

- Community meetings will be held:
 - GOAL:
 - Meetings in each designated area of focus. EX. Twisp, Nespelem, Okanogan, Tonasket, Pateros
 - Overview this project and keep people involved through the process
 - Hear input on needs and concerns and project ideas.
 - PROCESS:
 - OCD will choose the venue bring proposed dates for meetings to begin July-August for the June meeting.
 - Bring flyers for review for the June meeting. Once discussed at the meeting, will finalize and send out to papers, post on socials, and ask for help to start posting around local hot spots, and sharing on partner socials.
 - We will have a QR code linked to a comms list, inviting public to stay engaged for updates on this process and send out monthly updates.
 - Besides this mixed media plan, any other feedback on strategy for outreach?
 - CONTENT:
 - ~Meetings will be 2hrs and go from 6pm-8pm
 - We will be diving deeper into collecting risk assessment information based on the survey structure. This is where we get specific for communities.
 - We can talk about this further in June so please think of if there are any specific community needs to plan for in these meetings.
 - Goals and takeaways from meetings?

Next Steps

- Group: review google drive and comment on Glossary/survey questions
- Group: find and review literature specific to Okanogan county
- Group: specifics for community meetings
- Set up meeting with Okanogan CD, MWC, and WWT for drawing sub-region boundaries

Meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.