

Jefferson Watershed Drought Committee (JWDC) Meeting 1/9/2018

Jefferson County Extension Office Conference Room, Whitehall

Time: 3:00pm - 4:45pm

In Attendance:

Andy Bobst, Tom Harrington, Doug Dodge, Brandy Janzen, Todd Nelson, Mike Sanctuary, Evan Norman

Overview of previous meeting:

Exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity drive vulnerability assessments.

Current meeting overview: Drought forums, vulnerability discussion, groundwater interests, timeline for drought coordinator and meetings, watershed resources, timelines

Drought forums: Will be used as an accessibility to drought documents. Not enough interest from last meeting to get conversations going. Follow link here to view presentations, articles on drought mitigation and resilience.

Vulnerabilities and impacts brainstorming:

Livestock & agriculture:

- Increasing amount of water you release to crops each time to increase return flows

Increasing fire potential:

- Public health and exposure in the wildland urban interface
- Decreasing moisture in wood, fuel moisture monitoring (available data)

Economic vulnerability:

- Fisheries recreation.
- Camping along river and access to land to utilize.

Social relations:

- Subdivisions and irrigation allotments

Lack of inflow controls to the Jefferson:

- Storage of water and losing water to upper users with water rights taking water before it makes its way to our valley and other operators.

Ecological resilience:

- Range conditions & forage health
- Drought letters get sent out based NRCS soils data

Water temperature vulnerability:

- Flows were sustained this last year, while temperature was increased
- Drought detrimental to water quality (temperature)

Weed issues:

- Timing and intensity of precipitation drives increases
- Cheatgrass

Ecological response from sedimentation

- High sediment loads end up in low velocity areas (Jefferson Slough)

Groundwater:

- Boulder River Study and Jefferson River Studies and models
- Whitehall model used subdivision and densities of those subdivisions pumping from shallow vs deep aquifers.
- Consumption from subdivisions equate to a very small CFS
- Irrigation water recharging groundwater recharging springs to Jefferson River/Slough
- Using pivot to set on more water to create storage, biodegradable canals

Other conversation:

- Recent die offs of cottonwoods from lack of flood response
- Fencing for beaver in area for cottonwoods
- Pivot and flood irrigation change
- Tree uptake, pines dying off from beetle kill, leaving water in soil
- Increasing juniper trees, take 25-30 gpd in summer from soil
- Changes in land use type
- Temperature reduction projects on tributary streams
- Projects that can be proactive and limit the amount of times the drought management plan triggers are activated
- Water storage reservoirs- releasing from bottom instead of top to release cold water.

Timeline:

Project and vulnerability/impacts assessment, mitigation strategies, public meetings to be held by August 2018

Montana Water Summit- March 6-7th, Helena

- a. Setting the Stage: Examining impacts to Montana's water quality and quantity from a changing climate and increased population growth and development.
- b. Panels on water policy, bridging gap between water quality and quantity, water use, water efficiency and conservation.

Next meeting: February 1st, 2:30-4:00 pm