

**West Extension Irrigation District (WEID)
Drought Contingency Plan
Water Curtailment and Allocation Procedures**

A. Drought History / Assessment of Vulnerability

With the construction and operation of the Umatilla Basin Project in 1916, it was planned that the irrigators in the Umatilla, Irrigon and Boardman area would be able to receive a full water supply for their crops. The West End of the project, now WEID, was premised upon return flows from upstream irrigators being available during the critical summer months.

During average flow years, most irrigators received water throughout the season, with an every other week rotation schedule for flood irrigators. In dry years, delivery in some areas was scant and crop damage occurred.

In 1977, severe drought conditions occurred and the entire district was placed on a rotation. Irrigators received water every other week, regardless of type of on-farm delivery system. Operational and management spills were eliminated, which required much more intensive water control management than normal and many hours of overtime. Deficit water supply conditions occurred on some field crop acreage resulting crop loss and in reduced yields.

Drought conditions occurred in 1994. The District supplied the minimum necessary water supply to all users. Water was distributed evenly to all users on a regular rotation or on-order basis. Operational and management spills were eliminated, which required much more intensive water control management than normal and many hours of overtime. No user had to forego their water delivery. All irrigators were asked to use extreme care in their use of the water. However, deficit water supply conditions occurred on some field crop acreage resulting in reduced yields.

B. Planning for Drought

All of the irrigation districts in the basin and the Watermaster meet monthly to review current issues pertaining to irrigation water, i.e. supply, diversion, data, records, pending rules, innovative ideas, etc. This is an on-going program, and especially when there is a subject that is essential for review, such as a drought condition.

C. Information Sources

The WEID cooperates closely with NRCS and the BOR in maintaining current awareness of snowpack in the upper watershed.

NRCS and US Weather Service provides public forecast information for potential runoff from January through early spring months in all river basins in Oregon. This information is readily available on computer Internet web sites for BOR, USGS, NRCS and US Weather Service.

Storage in the reservoirs and river flows are readily available on a continuing basis through the BOR Hydromet, on-site visits and through NRCS Sno-tel System data files. Runoff projections are known immediately upon release via the Internet. When the data appears to be bad, on-site visits are made by district staff to personally read or verify the gauges.

D. Triggers for Drought

These are the triggers that indicate a drought season is imminent:

- The lack of low elevation winter precipitation becomes critical at 50% normal by March 1,
- The March 1 McKay and Cold Springs Reservoirs storage is at 75% of normal,
- The projected runoff for April - June reaches 75% of normal,

E. WEID Curtailment and Allocation Plan & Procedures

Upon recommendations of the WEID staff, the Board of Directors makes the final decision and gives direction for curtailment and allocation of water each year based on the projected reduced water supply.

When a drought is realized, the WEID will begin asking for voluntary cutbacks from users before going on a full-scale unilateral cutback program.

Curtailment Procedures

- Implement an intensive program management and control of all water within the District.
- Decrease operation and management spills leaving the District to near zero.
- Provide educational information to District users on how to reduce water use.
- Intensify aquatic weed control along canals and laterals to reduce water use consumption of riparian area weeds, under Federal, State and local laws.
- Evaluate the potential for providing financial incentives to users for reduced delivery. Examples of this would be reducing annual water charges in order for irrigators to use their wells or city water sources, or look for energy incentives.

Allocation Procedures

Allocation steps will be taken in this order:

- 1) Voluntarily reduce irrigated acres or reduce water supply
- 2) Voluntary sharing of water
- 3) District implement a water schedule program that allocates water among irrigators on a rotation basis
- 4) District implement a reduced water supply to municipal and industrial uses.
- 5) District allocate a reduced water supply uniformly to all acreage.
- 6) District continue allocated water supply and implement a rotation of all irrigators.
- 7) Water will be shut off when it is deemed impractical to maintain canal and lateral flow for deliveries to users.

F. Evaluation

WEID will evaluate its procedures at end of the drought year irrigation season to determine effectiveness of decisions and procedures. Evaluation will include the effects on the water users, stream flows, and on fish and wildlife in district owned and operated facilities.

Adopted by Board of Directors
Resolution 01-004, July 19, 2001