

**Climate Assessment Response Committee (CARC) Meeting (Draft Minutes)
September 7, 2012**

Members Present:

Bobbie Kriz-Wickham, Chair
Jack Daniel
Jeremiah Blake

Brian Dunnigan
Mike Hayes
Mark Kuzila

Members Absent:

Senator Tom Carlson
Senator Chris Langemeier
Merwin Fricke

Rick Koelsch for Elbert Dickey
Al Berndt
Barb Cooksley

Audience members present included: Brian Fuchs, NDMC; Mark Svoboda, NDMC; Dan Steinkruger, USDA-FSA; Doug Klein, USDA-FSA; Allen Dutcher, state climatologist; Dean Groskurth, USDA-NASS; John Falgione, SFM; Phil Erdman, Senator Johanns Office; Kelly Brunkhorst, Nebraska Corn Board; Martha Shnlski, HPRCC-UNL; Ryan Chapman, NDEQ; Neil Dominy, NRCS, Brandi Flyr, NDNR; Barb Mayes Boustead, NWS Omaha/Valley; Dean Edson, NARD; Scott Sprague, DHHS-DPH, Rick Wilson, USGS Nebraska Water Service Center; Art Hovey, Lincoln Journal Star; Bruce Anderson, UNL Extension; Eric Zach, NGPC; Nancy Gaarder, Omaha World-Herald; and Lindsey Salestrom, NDA.

Chair Bobbie Kriz-Wickham called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. in Hardin Hall room 901 on UNL's East Campus. A conference call was also opened and Aaron Berger with UNL Extension and Patrick Laird with the Risk Management Agency were on the line.

Minutes from the June 6, 2012 meeting were reviewed and approved.

Mark Svoboda with the National Drought Mitigation Center presented the drought overview. He showed U.S. conditions on a map from June 6, 2012, compared to a map with current conditions. The maps showed extreme intensification of drought conditions across the plain with Nebraska being the most widely affected state. 100% of the state is now showing severe drought to exceptional drought conditions across the state. The last two months have been the driest on record.

The U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook released September 6 shows persisting drought conditions across most of the state with ongoing to possibly improving conditions along the Missouri River Corridor.

Models are trending toward El Nino conditions later this fall into winter.

Brian Fuchs, also with the National Drought Mitigation Center gave the water supply update and reported that Lake McConaughy is 54.1% full, down from when it peaked at 82.4% full in April.

The Republican River Basin reservoir conservation pool capacities are as follows: The Hugh Butler Reservoir is at 14.0%, Enders is at 36.7%, Harry Strunk is at 37%, and Swanson is at 35.6%.

The Harlan County Reservoir conservation pool is 64.3% full, with 201,994 acre feet of water in storage.

Fuchs said the drought has impacted water supply across the state and we will continue to see declines into the fall. Dry soils across the state and in upstream states will severely impact runoff until the soil moisture levels recover. Some irrigation districts are already contemplating reductions for 2013 deliveries and these decisions will be made in the next few months.

The Water Availability and Outlook Committee report was given by Al Dutcher, the state climatologist.

The 30 day precipitation trend shows much of Nebraska less than 25% of normal, with some spots only 5% of normal. Temperatures are 4-6 degrees above normal, similar to the drought in the 30's and 50's. There might be some recharge in September that we normally don't see due to an early harvest.

Short Term Climate Issues include: Extreme Fire Danger, Residual Damage from Range Fires, Combine Fire Potential, Wheat Planting and Moisture Availability, Rangeland Moisture Recovery, and Water Restrictions. Long Term Climate Issues include: Hydrological Concerns, Central Rockies Snow Season, Winter Conditions, Soil Moisture Recharge, Corn Belt Drought Recovery, and Pasture Growth Next Spring.

Dutcher said there is a chance for El Nino conditions to establish this fall or during the winter.

Bobbie asked members and those in the audience to share any climate information their respective organizations might have, and share the department's drought outreach, referencing the Drought Central website and the Hay and Forage Hotline.

Bruce Anderson gave an update on UNL activities regarding livestock producers and options available to them. He also mentioned more people were becoming interested in the soil moisture content.

It was discussed that multi year drought is causing concerns of how it will affect range and crop land as weeds are already becoming an issue and will become a bigger issue if we get any moisture.

Range fires that have occurred recently as we head into the fall and winter months may expose the land to cold and desecration events such as wind erosion. There will be no direct effect on grasses that have burnt, however, wind is the biggest threat.

Dan Steinkruger gave a brief FSA report on Secretarial disaster designations. He said that all emergency programs have been put into place this year. He said that farmers and ranchers will need to work out 2013 programs.

Patrick Laird with the Risk Management Agency suggested producer visit the RMA website to determine what options they will have available in 2013, especially regarding pasture, range and forage insurance programs.

Jack Daniel provided a handout to the group covering the public water systems drought impact report. He said depending on what happens next year will determine how bad things are going to get.

Mark Kuzila talked about the importance of recharge.

It was mentioned that old and shallow wells are having problems, but the NRD's may have some cost-share programs to help in the costs of fixing them.

Bobbie mentioned the mediation clinics and rural response hotline for producers needing help in dealing with their finances or stress.

Bobbie will send out a note to determine the next CARC meeting date but will be aiming for mid October or early November.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:47 a.m.