

**Climate Assessment Response Committee (CARC) Meeting (Draft Minutes)
November 29, 2012**

Members Present:

Bobbie Kriz-Wickham, Chair
Jack Daniel
Barb Cooksley

Brandi Flyr for Brian Dunnigan
Mike Hayes
Mark Kuzila
Al Berndt

Members Absent:

Senator Tom Carlson
Senator Chris Langemeier
Merwin Fricke

Rick Koelsch
Jeremiah Blake

Audience members present included: Brian Fuchs, NDMC; Mark Svoboda, NDMC; Doug Klein, USDA-FSA; Allen Dutcher, state climatologist; Dean Groskurth, USDA-NASS; Nick Streff, USDA-NASS; Kelly Brunkhorst, Nebraska Corn Board; Martha Shulski, HPRCC-UNL; Neil Dominy, NRCS; Barb Mayes Boustead, NWS Omaha/Valley; Bruce Anderson, UNL Extension; Eric Zach, NGPC; Al Laukaitis, Lincoln Journal Star; Jack Wergin, Bureau of Reclamation; Andrews Baker, USDI-BIA Winnebago Agency; Heather Hansen, USDI-BAI Winnebago Agency; Rebecca Davis, USDA-RMA; Sarah Hidzig-Kraeger, USDA- FSA; Cathy Anderson, USDA-FSA; Mike Sander, USDA-FSA; Tom Sands, NDOR; Jason Lambrecht, USGS- Nebraska Water Science Center; Darrell Podany, Senator Johanns Office; Kristen Hassebrook, Nebraska Cattlemen; Scott Sprague, DHHS; Jordan Dux, Nebraska Farm Bureau; Marcia Trompke, CNPPID; Pat O'Brien, NRD, Dayle Williamson, Senator Ben Nelson's Office; and Lindsey Salestrom, NDA.

Chair Bobbie Kriz-Wickham called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. in the Farm Service Agency's Conference Room at 71st and A Street in Lincoln, Ne. Bobbie thanked FSA for the meeting space and mentioned there would be an Agriculture, Natural Resources and Wildlife subcommittee meeting at the same location in the afternoon.

Minutes from the September 7, 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 September 4, 2012, compared to a map with current conditions. The maps showed intensification of drought conditions across the plains with Nebraska being the most widely affected state. 100% of the state is still showing severe drought to exceptional drought conditions across the state.

The current Snow/water equivalent map shows much of the Rocky Mountains 70%-89% of normal regarding snowpack. However, the snow/water equivalent ranking percentile map shows these amounts are still at 21%-50% of normal.

The drought conditions are expected to persist throughout the winter months in the central plains, western and southern portions of the country with developing drought in parts of TX.

Models are trending toward Neutral conditions through the winter months which make the weather patterns hard to predict.

Brian Fuchs, also with the National Drought Mitigation Center gave the water supply update and reported that Lake McConaughy is 59.8% full, up slightly from the 54.1% elevation in September. According to civil engineer Cory Steinke, "The lake should continue to steadily rise until mid-November when the maintenance outage at the Kingsley Hydroplant is complete and releases begin for the Nebraska Public Power District's system and to meet Federal Energy Regulatory Commission minimum requirements at the North Platte Diversion Dam." At that point, he said, increases in the lake's elevation will depend upon the rate of inflow.

The Republican River Basin reservoir conservation pool capacities are as follows: The Hugh Butler Reservoir is at 15.2 % (14.0%) of conservation pool, Enders is at 34.9% (36.7%) of conservation pool, Harry Strunk is at 48.7% (37.0%) of conservation pool, and Swanson is at 33.7% (35.6%) of conservation pool.

The Harlan County Reservoir conservation pool is 60.9% full (64.3%), with 201,994 acre feet of water in storage.

Fuchs said the drought of 2012 has continued to impact water supply across the state and the depleted soil moisture across Nebraska will lead to less available runoff potential. The Hydrologic impacts due to drought will increase in magnitude in 2013 without any significant changes as the 2012 drought becomes a multi-year event.

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%-50% of normal. 30 day temperatures range across the state from normal in the southeast to 6 degrees above normal in the northwest. It was noted that October was cooler than normal.

Current snow depth and snow pack in southern Canada and North Dakota are far more advanced than last year.

Short Term Climate Issues include:

- Subsoil Recharge
- Wheat Condition
- Desiccation
- Temperatures
- Corn Stubble
- Wind Erosion
- Foundation Problems
- Trees and Windbreaks
- Reservoir Recharge
- Groundwater Tables
- Pumping Restrictions
- Drought: Hydrological vs Agricultural

Nick Streff with National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) followed Dutcher's presentation and gave an executive summary of crop production. This year had the lowest corn production since 2006 yield. Harvest was 3-4 weeks ahead of schedule. Soybeans produced the same as they did in 2008. The Final Crop report will be released January 11th with county levels becoming available February 21.

Streff also urged farmers and ranchers to complete the Ag Census.

Rebecca Davis with the Risk Management Agency (RMA) gave an overview of crop insurance and payments made on crops in Nebraska for 2012.

Al Bernt with Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) gave a report on the 2012 fire season; he said it was the worst on record for Nebraska since 1919. 65 structures were lost in the fires with 1205 fires being reported in the state. Every county experienced a fire. Two of the fires received the highest level of federal priority. Bernt said fire years like this seem to breakout ever 5-6 years. In 2012 there were "Mega fires" which burnt hotter and faster due to the weather conditions.

Bobbie then opened the floor to all CARC members for updates.

Jack Daniel mentioned that 81 water systems had restrictions on them in 2012. Generally this happens after three dry years, yet the drought is extreme enough the restrictions went into place after only one year. There are 1250 water systems in the state.

Bobbie discussed briefly the activity on the department's drought central page and the hay hotline. She then invited Martha Shulski with NOAA High Plains Regional Climate Center to speak about the Nebraska Automated Weather Data Network funding.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:12 pm.