Umpqua Basin Low Flow Monitoring Report of 1998-2018 Data



Prepared by: Denise Dammann Consulting for Partnership for the Umpqua Rivers (PUR)

2020

Low flow streamflow measurements have been taken at high priority sites throughout the Umpqua Basin since 1998 in partnership with Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) and Douglas County. The objective of these "grab" sample measurements began to document low flow conditions in the high priority Watershed Availability Basins (WABs) identified under the Oregon Plan by OWRD and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) where gaging stations are not present. Specific locations of stream flow measurement sites have also been selected based in the ability to benefit ecological values by restoring the flow through instream flow protections and providing data for restoration projects.

This report compiles the 21 years of low flow measurements (1998-2018) from these sites, Compares interannual data to look at trends, and relates the data to climactic conditions to better understand stream flow resiliency. Yearly low flow data reports have been produced (UBWC 1998-2014 and PUR 2015-2018), but the data has previously never been pulled together and analyzed in this way. Furthermore, compiling this data will make it easily usable to other natural resource professionals managing aquatic resources in the Basin.



Photos: Page 1 – Camp Creek, Page 2 – The confluence of North Myrtle and South Myrtle Creeks

There are 41 flow measurement sites that have been sampled a range of 1-21 years depending on the objectives at the site and availability of funds (see Figure 1 and Table 1 – all figures and tables are at the end of the document). Stream flows were taken by OWRD and Douglas County from 1998-2018 throughout the low flow period from May to October approximately every 1-2 weeks. Stream flows were taken with a calibrated handheld Acoustic Doppler velocimeter (Flow Tracker) and discharge was calculated using techniques described in Turpinseed and Sauer (2010).

Five of the sites have also been sampled for continuous summer stream temperature (Calapooya near Oakland, Camp near Scottsburg, North Myrtle at Myrtle Creek, Pass Creek at Drain, and Windy Creek near Glendale) in conjunction with the Umpqua Basin Reference Temperature Project (Smith 2003-2005, Dammann and Smith 2006, and Dammann, 2007-2018). However, the Calapooya and Camp Creek sites only have corresponding flow data since 2011 and North Myrtle, Pass, and Windy Creeks since 2004.

Flow data at each of the sites were compiled and graphed with the instream water right (ISWR) for the site to show seasonal flows and trends at each site (Figure 2). (Instream water rights protect instream flows for the benefit of fish, water quality, and recreation. Instream water rights operate fundamentally the same way "out-of- stream" water rights do, except rather than a quantity required to be used, the water is required to be maintained in the stream.) For sites with more than 5 years of data, the lowest flow from each year was input into Table 2 in order to look at trends. The lowest flows for the sites are shown in red on that Table. 2001, 2002, 2014, and 2015 were the years that had the most sites with their lowest flows during the period of record.

Comparison to Climactic Conditions:

In order to relate the flows to climactic condition, the data were compared to the drought index, Standard Precipitation Evapotranspiration Index (SPEI). SPEI is an extension of the widely-used Standard Precipitation Index (SPI) and takes into account evapotranspiration in determining drought (National Center for Atmospheric Research, 2020a and 2020b). On short timescales SPI and SPEI are closely related to soil moisture while at longer timescales, they can be related to groundwater and reservoir storage (National Center for Atmospheric Research, 2020b). SPEI ranges from 3 to -3 with 3 being extremely wet, 0 neutral, and -3 extreme drought (University of Idaho, 2020).

The SPEI for each year during the low flow period was determined using University of Idaho (2020) SPEI indices (Table 2). A 3-month SPEI and 8-month SPEI, which take into account the 3 and 8 month period prior, were compared to the study data during the low flow period from summer through early Fall. Since SPEI may vary throughout the Umpqua Basin, for most of the years on Table 2, there are two SPEI's listed because there is a range of drought conditions within the study area. For the entire period of record, the 3-month SPEI was 0 to -3 with no years with a positive SPEI; the 8-month SPEI ranged from -2.5 to 1.5 (Table 2).

The highest 3-month SPEI (wettest) was 2010 and the lowest (or driest) were 2003 and 2015. 1999-2001 and 2004 also had higher 3-month SPEI indices indicating wetter climactic conditions during the summer. In addition to 2003 and 2015, other years with negative 3-month SPEI indices were 1998, 2013, 2014, 2017 and 2018. Interestingly, the year with the most streams at their lowest flows in the period of record was 2001; 2002, 2014, and 2015 also had a lot of streams at their lowest flows (Table 2). While 2014 and 2015 had low 3-month SPEI indices, 2001 and 2002 did not (Table 2). In 2014, the 8-month SPEI indicates wetter conditions, but the 3-month SPEI indicates dryer conditions in the short term. However, 2001 and 2002 had lower 8-month SPEI's indicating that the longer term drought situation throughout the water year strongly influenced their summer flows. In fact, the lowest 8-month SPEI for the 2001 water year was actually in March (University of Idaho, 2020).

The streams that had the lowest flows of the period of record in 2001 or 2002 were predominately in the South Umpqua River and Cow Creek systems. Cow Creek is a tributary to the South Umpqua River and both of these are dependent on storage from Galesville Reservoir. According to Susan Douthit, OWRD, Douglas County Watermaster (personal communication, 2020), during the summer of 2002 many water users were regulated in order to maintain instream flows in both Cow Creek and the South Umpqua River. The number of water users shut-off from diverting water and the date of the water rights that had to be regulated, indicates the river was very low at that time. Summary records for 2001 aren't easily available, but in the winter of 2001 Galesville Reservoir was 30 feet below the elevation in 2002 and the Winter and Spring of 2001 was very dry (Susan Douthit, OWRD, personal communication, 2020). This is consistent with the longer-term SPEI data. In addition, yearly flow data from the long-term Cow Creek and South Umpqua River sites all show that the lowest flows the earliest in the season (June-July) for the entire period of record were in 2001 and 2002 (Figure 2).

While Calapooya Creek is not in the South Umpqua Subbasin, the Calapooya Creek near Umpqua site recorded its lowest flows and earlier low flows in 2001 and 2002 (Figure 2). Summary records from 2002 indicate that the Watermaster's staff during that time worked intensely in the South Umpqua Subbasin regulating water users for instream water rights first and then moved to the Calapooya watershed. In 2001, they also regulated much of the South Umpqua Subbasin before moving up to Calapooya, according to Dave Williams, Retired OWRD Douglas County Watermaster, personal communication, 2020.

The flow data from 2001 in the Umpqua Basin show how in some years, the short-term climactic conditions can influence the stream flow and in some years the longer term climactic conditions have more cumulative influence on the low flows.

There are many reasons that streams may have lower flows on a given year. It could be climactic conditions (such as low precipitation, early snowmelt, hot weather, or a combination) or it would be more water taken out through withdrawals. While instream water rights are in place to protect the aquatic life, if the instream water right is junior to another water right, the flow from the senior water right is protected first. In addition, since these are grab samples taken approximately every 1-2 weeks, the lowest flows may have been missed, therefore this data gives a picture of the situation, but may not have captured the exact low flow of the season.

Comparison of Low Flows to Underlying Geology:

The geology of an area influences both the stream types and flow regimes. Young volcanic landscapes, such as those in the High Cascades of Oregon, are characterized by springs and ground water-fed stream with less sediment (Jefferson, et al., 2010). The flow regime in younger geologic types is characterized by shallow subsurface stormflow which have flashier hydrographs and are more capable of moving larger amounts of sediment (Jefferson, et al., 2010). In Tague and Grant (2004), the authors analyzed low flow regimes in the Willamette River basin based on geological type, specifically high Cascades, with younger volcanics, versus Western Cascades, with older geologic more weathered types. They found that historic averages of low flow volumes have a strong relationship in both low and higher order streams. Low order streams that are predominately from the high Cascades have 4-5 times the summer streamflow volumes by unit drainage area compared to those primarily sourced in the Western Cascades. August streamflow was highly correlated with the proportion of High Cascade geology, but mean annual flow was not. This is most likely due to winter wet season streamflow being derived from the surface and shallow subsurface runoff systems. Both timing and magnitude of flow regime have a strong linear relationship to percent High versus Western Cascade geology, regardless of mean basin elevation, which suggests that geology has a strong direct control. Western Cascades are dominated by a well-developed flow network of shallow subsurface flow paths, with little storage, whereas High Cascades behavior is consistent with a deeper groundwater system. (Tague and Grant, 2004)

Gordon Grant expanded this study to the Umpqua Basin (unpublished, presented by Gordon Grant to a Douglas Climate Change Coalition meeting on September 30, 2015). According to Grant, the North Umpqua has more basalt and deep pumice deposits which would result in a low drainage efficiency from groundwater being stored longer. The South Umpqua and Lower Umpqua subbasins have more Western Cascade / Tyee sandstone regions resulting high drainage efficiency as in Tague and Grant (2004). Safeeq, et al., (2014) also found that areas of high streamflow sensitivity also have higher summer streamflow compared to lower sensitivity areas.

Comparing the flows in this study to those in Tague and Grant (2004) to see if the flows showed the same patterns would be ideal. However, the following limitations are present. First the streams of the Umpqua study are in areas with water withdrawals for irrigation. This influence would mask much of the natural streamflow regime. Also, as previously mentioned, the grab sample measurements would not necessarily correspond to the exact low flow measurements, and since they are grab samples, the data points are limited for comparison. Furthermore, most of the sites in the Umpqua basin flow

measurements project are in the South Umpqua and Lower Umpqua Subbasins (Table 1). Since there are very few in the North Umpqua, there would be limited data for comparison.

How to Obtain the Data:

This report is available through PUR's website (umpquarivers.org). All of the all of the data and graphs are available for distribution in MS Excel format through PUR or Denise Dammann Consulting (ddammann@jeffnet.org). The grab sample measurements are available through the Douglas County Watermaster's Office or from the OWRD Miscellaneous Measurements website (https://apps.wrd.state.or.us/apps/sw/misc_measurements_view_only/).

Associated stream temperature data and analysis at the five reference temperature sites is also available through PUR or Denise Dammann Consulting.

Acknowledgments:

This project is funded by grants from Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) (Grant # 217-2054-14224) and the Southwestern Oregon Bureau of Land Management Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) (Grant #L16AC00267 Stream Flow and Grant # L16AC00267 Stream Flow 2017) as part of the Umpqua Basin Stream Flow and Temperature Monitoring Project through PUR. Data were collected by Oregon Water Resources Department and Douglas County.

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Figure 1. Map of Low Flow Monitoring from 1998-2018 (as part of the larger Umpqua Basin Stream Flow and Temperature Monitoring Project)

Table 1. Grab sample low flow data collected by "Stream walkers" 1998-2018. (UBWC 1998-2014 and PUR 2015-2018)

Stream walker flow measurement sites	Туре	Subbasin	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Berry Creek near Tenmile	Historic	SU																					
Billy Creek near Drain	Historic	U																					
Brush Creek near Elkton	Historic	U																					
Calapooya Creek at Rochester Covered Bridge Gage	Gage / Historic	U																					
Calapooya Creek near Oakland, OR	Current	U																					
Calapooya Creek near Umpqua, OR	Current	U																					
Camp Creek near Scottsburg, OR	Current	U																					
Canyon Creek at Canyonville, OR	Current	SU																					
Cavitt Creek near Glide, OR	Current	NU																					
Coffee Creek near Tiller	Historic	SU																					
Cow Creek at Riddle	Historic	SU																					
Cow Creek below Riddle	Historic	SU																					
Cow Creek Gage above Galesville	Gage / Historic	SU																					
Cow Creek near Azalea	Gage / Historic	SU																					
Cow Creek near Riddle, OR	Current	SU																					
Days Creek near Days Creek, OR	Current	SU																					
Deer Creek at Roseburg, OR	Current	SU																					
Elk Creek near Elkton, OR	Current	U																					
Elk Creek near Tiller, OR	Current	SU																					
Hardscrabble Creek near Drain	Historic	U																					
Hubbard Creek near Umpqua, OR	Current	U																					
Jackson Creek near Tiller	Historic	SU																					
Little River at Glide, OR	Current	NU																					
Lookingglass Creek near Winston	Current	SU																					
Morgan Creek near Lookingglass	Historic	SU																					
North Myrtle Creek at Myrtle Creek, OR	Current	SU																					
Paradise Creek near Elkton, OR	Current	U																					
Pass Creek at Drain, OR	Current	U																					
Quines Creek near Azalea, OR	Current	SU																					
South Myrtle Creek at Myrtle Creek, OR	Current	SU																					
South Umpqua River at Canyonville	Historic	SU																					
South Umpqua River at Roseburg	Historic	SU																					
South Umpqua River near Brockway	Current	SU																					
South Umpqua River near Riddle, OR	Current	SU																					
South Umpqua River near Roseburg	Current	SU																					
Starveout Creek near Azalea	Historic	SU																					
Tenmile Creek near Tenmile	Current	SU																					
Weatherly Creek near Scottsburg, OR	Current	U																					
Windy Creek at Glendale, OR	Current	SU																					
Windy Creek near Glendale, OR	Current	SU																					
Wolf Creek near Umpqua, OR	Current	U																					

*Subbasins: NU = North Umpqua, SU = South Umpqua, U = Umpqua

Table 2. Grab sample low flow data collected by "Stream walkers" 1998-2018. (UBWC 1998-2014 and PUR 2015-2018) Low flows for sites with more than 5 years of data. Table includes corresponding Standard Precipitation Evapotranspiration (SPEI) indices for each year.

	3 Month SPEI (Range):																						Minimum Minimum		
		1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Flow	ISWR	
	8 Month SPEI (Range):																								
							1		_	1				_		-		_		_					
Stream walker flow measurement sites	Туре							_																	
Berry Creek near Tenmile	Historic																								
Billy Creek near Drain	Historic			1.37	0.18	0.61	0.00	0.30	0.46	0.14	0.44	0.98	0.31	0.93	0.85	0.69	0.66	0.30					0.00	3	
Brush Creek near Elkton	Historic																								
Calapooya Creek at Rochester Covered Bridge Gage	Gage / Historic																								
Calapooya Creek near Oakland, OR	Current													11.40	10.70	10.80	5.43	4.74	3.12	6.30	7.10	3.80	3.12	10	
Calapooya Creek near Umpqua, OR	Current	4.62	6.76	1.90	0.29	0.10	0.30	4.21	7.26	2.92	2.67	7.19	2.77	7.19	8.37	3.71	2.57	3.30	0.49	2.85	3.70	0.89	0.10	12	
Camp Creek near Scottsburg, OR	Current													1.78	1.61	2.47	1.14	1.05	0.30	0.40	1.20	0.37	0.30	5	
Canyon Creek at Canyonville, OR	Current		0.98	1.25	0.1	0.15	0.25	0.6	0.75	1.74	0.88	0.78	1.41	1.49	2.44	2.11	1.19	0.16	0.2	0.46	1.2	0.49	0.10	2	
Cavitt Creek near Glide, OR	Current										4.1	6.26	4.01	6.03	6.99	8.16	5.06	3.12	3.25	4.3	5.1	3.4	3.12	5	
Coffee Creek near Tiller	Historic	0.87	0.76	0.51	0.15	0.14	0.16	0.31	0.59	0.57	0.66	0.71	0.39	0.78	0.86	0.97	0.69	0.26					0.14	2	
Cow Creek at Riddle	Historic																								
Cow Creek below Riddle	Historic																								
Cow Creek Gage above Galesville	Gage / Historic					5	7.95				7.21	9.33	5.48	9.76	12.5	9.22	6.35	5.24					5.00	10	
Cow Creek near Azalea	Gage / Historic					21.8	40.4				41.1	34.5	29.3	29.5	81.4	54.9	40.5	38.4					21.80	10	
Cow Creek near Riddle, OR	Current				13.3	14.3	52.7	43.8	41.8	53.7	49.4	57.6	17.6	56.7		72.3	61.4	37		77			13.30	20	
Days Creek near Days Creek, OR	Current	0.63	1	0.59	0.11	0.16	0.31	0.52	0.39	0.65	0.58	0.39	0.12	0.45	1.06	1.05	0.63	0.23	0.17	0.64	1	0.15	0.11	2	
Deer Creek at Roseburg, OR	Current	0.88	0.29	0.64	0.09	0.1	0.11	0.3	0.7	0.4	0.65	0.41	0.29	1.05	1.9	1.5	0.35	0.03	0.08	0.31	0.73	0.14	0.03	4	
Elk Creek near Elkton, OR	Current		7.73	6.34	1.04	2.8	1.16	4.69	5.4	3.77	3.41	5.16	4.12	12.2	10.6	8.03	3.2	2.2	0.44	1.67	6	3.07	0.44	10	
Elk Creek near Tiller, OR	Current	2.94	2.7	2.41	0.42	0.55	0.99	0.95	1.03	1.02	1.68	2.45	1.03	0.78	2.37	2.92	1.38	0.44	0.95	0.16	3.3	1.9	0.16	3	
Hardscrabble Creek near Drain	Historic										0			0.05	0.44	0	0	0					0.00	1	
Hubbard Creek near Umpgua, OR	Current	1.05	1.36	1.01	0.13	0.32	0.63	0.71	0.85	0.58	1.4	1.36	1.1	1.58	1.2	1.52	0.56	0.51	0.4	0.6	0.88	0.59	0.13	4	
Jackson Creek near Tiller	Historic							-											-						
Little River at Glide. OR	Current		41.1	22.1	12.8	16.4	13.8	31.4	19.6	23.5	20.6	30.6	16.8	23.6	26.3	30	19.9	12.3	14.4	19	20.4	15.1	12.30	15	
Lookingglass Creek near Winston	Current	3 23	4 27	7 14	4 69	4 06	3 13	3.78	4.2	4 16	5.8	7.82	2 54	3.8	7 04	3 55	4 86	0.38	4 84	47	5.5	5.8	0.38	5	
Morgan Creek near Lookingglass	Historic	5.25	0.05	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.17	1 53	0	0		,	5.5	0.0	0.00	1	
North Myrtle Creek at Myrtle Creek OB	Current	3 30	2.86	1 /1	0.08		0.43	0.88	1.86	2 68	2 21	2 04	0.89	2 9/	4.54	3.03	2 60	0.38	0.44	2 40	3 30	1 20	0.00	-	
Paradise Creek near Elkton OR	Current	5.55	2.00	1.41	0.00	0.03	0.43	0.00	1.00	2.00	0.83	1 22	0.05	1 1/	1 01	1 19	0.32	0.30	0.22	2.40	0.77	0.30	0.05	3	
Pass Creek at Drain OR	Current	2 61	2 20	2 00	0.27	0.92	1 07	2 01	2 24	1 21	1 28	1.22	1 20	1.44	2 12	2.86	1 20	1 17	0.22	1 50	2 20	0.00	0.22	5	
Quines Creek near Azalea, OR	Current	2.01	2.20	2.09	0.37	0.92	1.07	2.91	2.34	1.51	1.20	1.30	1.29	4.05	5.15	2.80	1.29	1.17	0.50	1.50	2.30	0.95	0.30	2	
South Murtle Creek at Murtle Creek OP	Current	1 16	2 60	2 27		0.20	0.26	0 22	0.65	1 01	1 42	0.07	0 12	1.6	E 10	2 20	2.24	0 22	0.71	1 20	4	0.73	0.00	2	
South Umpgua Diver at Canyonville	Uistoria	4.40	5.00	2.27	21.7	0.29	27.2	0.52	0.03	1.01	1.45	70.37	42.5	1.0	5.10	3.29	2.24	20.22	0.71	1.20	4	0.72	20.00	2	
South Umpqua River at Dasaburg	Historic				25.7	38.4	37.2	71.6	50		48.3	120	42.5	59.4	01.4	49.2	44.5	29.8					29.80	00	
South Unipqua River at Roseburg	Filstoric Cumpant				35.4	41.0	71	/1.0	00	01.1	103	130	07.7	450	104	120	101	F0 7		100	100	02.2	35.40	90	
South Umpqua River near Brockway	Current				43.6	43.2	72.9	85	88	91.1	107	108	85.9	152	184	136	101	58.7	57	106	190	83.3	43.20	90	
South Umpqua River near Riddle, OR	Current				48.3	54.6	/2.8	99.2					75.6							108			48.30	/0	
South Umpqua River near Roseburg	Current			_	38.7	47.3	63.1	68.8	93.4	82.8	98.3	114	52.9			_		57.9	53.4		_	69.5	38.70	60	
Starveout Creek near Azalea	Historic	0	0.63	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	1	
Tenmile Creek near Tenmile	Current	0.62	0	0.17	0	0	0.19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.28	0.74	0.08	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	2	
Weatherly Creek near Scottsburg, OR	Current										1.03		0.76	1.1	1.04	1.05	0.73	0.68	0.24	0	0	0.25	0.00	2	
Windy Creek at Glendale, OR	Current	2.16	2.13	1.6	0.06	0.06	1	0.22	0.69	1.37	1.31	1.76	0.45	1.8	2.36	1.88	0.96	0.08	0.02	1.55	3.2	1.03	0.02	3	
Windy Creek near Glendale, OR	Current													1.64	2.25	1.63	1.17	0.00	0.00	1.10	2.40	0.80	0.00	3	
Wolf Creek near Umpqua, OR	Current												0.61	2.09	1.17	1.38	0.7	1.5		0.6	0.74	0.42	0.42	4	
Number of sites with lowest flows occuring this year		2	2	3	13	10	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	3	2	3	5	10	10	5	4	4			

 SPEI
 COLOR

 1.5 to 1
 1

 1 to 0.5
 0

 0.5 to 0
 0

 0 to -0.5
 -0

 -1 to -1.5
 -1

 -1.5 to -2
 -2 to -2.5

-2.5 to -3

Flow Data Present

Lowest Flow



Figure 2. Grab sample summer low flow data. Graphs include all data. A second graph is included for sites with more variability in flows to help display the lowest of flows. (UBWC 1998-2014 and PUR 2015-2018)


















































































