

Drought looms as snowpack melts early

ZACH URNESS
STATESMAN JOURNAL

So much for a normal summer.

Snowpack is melting at rapid speed in Oregon's mountains and forecasters are concerned about yet another drought hitting the state.

A boiling April erased many of the gains made during a snowy winter and is threatening hope for a normal summer.

Conditions remain far better than a year ago, when historic drought gripped the state, and reservoir storage is generally healthy.

Even so, problems such as low streamflow, fish mortality, early wildfires and limited irrigation have become legitimate concerns, forecasters said.

"At this point, I wouldn't be surprised to see drought expand into Western Oregon during the next month, unless we get some major precipitation," National Weather Service hydrologist Matt Bryant said. "If we weren't coming off the worst drought in recent history (last year), I think we'd probably be talking about this a lot more."

Average temperatures

were 8.5 degrees higher than normal in the Cascade Range during April, and 6.5 degrees higher in the Willamette Valley, Bryant said.

"That's pretty significant," he said. "It's not a record, but anything above 3 or 4 degrees is a pretty big departure from normal."

The result was a major reduction in snowpack.

On April 1, Oregon's snowpack was 105 percent of normal, above average in virtually every segment of the state.

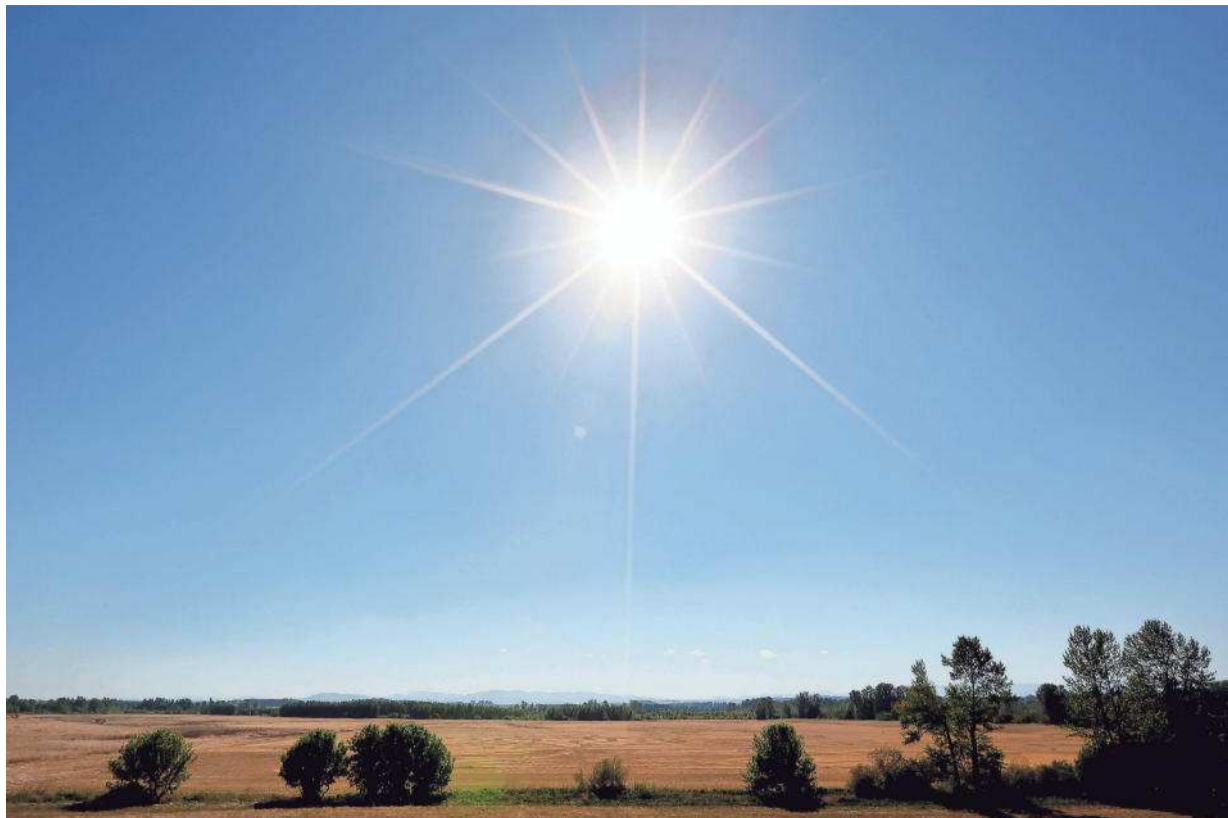
On May 6, Oregon's snowpack was 56 percent of normal, well below average in every segment of the state except the southwest.

The fast-melting snow isn't necessarily a disaster for the Oregon's water outlook. Most of the state's reservoirs are in "healthy condition," said Julie Koeberle, Natural Resources Conservation Service hydrologist.

In the Willamette Basin, for example, every reservoir except Cougar, which had mechanical problems, is above 75 percent full.

Detroit Lake, east of Salem, is within 7 feet of capacity.

"We're not too worried



BRENT DRINKUT/STATESMAN JOURNAL

An unseasonably hot April caused much of Oregon's snowpack to melt, raising the specter of a summer drought.

about it," said Matt Rabe, spokesman for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. "If we need to reduce outflows at some point this summer, to save more water, we'll look at doing

that. "Right now, there's a lot of docks in the water and a lot of people excited about a good start to the recreation season."

Zach Urness has been an outdoors writer, photographer and videographer in Oregon for eight years. He is the author of the book "Hiking South-

ern Oregon" and can be reached at zurness@statesmanjournal.com or (503) 399-6801. Find him on Zach Urness or @ZachsORoutdoors on Twitter.

SILVERTON BRIEFS

Standout flautist is state champion

Silverton's Marah Christenson is Oregon's 2016 solo flute champion. A high school junior who attends Silverton and home schools, Christenson won the OSAA contest on April 30 at Pacific University.

Three judges gave Christenson's performance a combined score of 964 points, six points ahead of second-place finisher Kaitlyn Clawson of South Salem High School. Hannah Sanders of McKay placed third, Joaquin Socolofsky of West Linn was fourth, and Courtney Badura of Medford High was fifth.

Last month, Christenson was also one of two featured soloists in Salem Youth Symphony's spring concert on April 24. She played Cecile Chaminade's "Concertino."

Run for the Hills adds 10K to races

Victor Point School is hosting four community footraces on Saturday, May 21 to promote fitness and raise funds for the K-8 school.

A 10K route has been added to the lineup, which includes a 1-mile kids run, 5K run/walk, and 15K

challenge course.

The first race starts at 8 a.m. For kids 12-and-under, the cost is \$10, regardless of the race. For adults, it's \$20 for the 5K, \$25 for the 10K and \$30 for the 15K. T-shirts are \$5.

Each event starts and finishes at the school, 1175 Victor Point Rd. SE. Each follows country roads through picturesque farm country in the rolling Cascade foothills south of Silverton. Register online or email questions to VPrunforthehills@gmail.com.

Kids invited to pet parade May 21

A Silverton tradition since 1932, the Kiwanis Club's Pet Parade kicks off at 10 a.m. on May 21. There is no registration or fee to participate. Children are invited to bring their pet and march in the parade. Those with no pets can dress in costume and participate too. They should meet at Coolidge and Apple streets, near Coolidge/McClaine Park at 9:30 a.m.

For more information, log onto <http://silvertonpetparade.com/>.

SHS band to play at state May 13

Silverton High School's wind ensemble

will compete against 10 other 5A schools at the OSAA State Championships at Oregon State University on Friday, May 13. The musicians' public performance is set for 2:45 p.m. in the LaSells Stewart Center auditorium.

The 35-member band's new signature piece is "Noah" composed by Russ Newbury, once a teacher of Silverton High's director Frank Petrik. The piece is highly technical and features a timpani solo in its second movement.

"I was hesitant due to the level of difficulty and technique demands of the piece," Petrik said. "The students were not deterred and still wanted to take on the challenge."

This year, the Foxes competed at OSU, Clackamas Community College, Western Oregon University and Corvallis High. For the second year in a row, they placed first in the 5A division at the Western Oregon Band Championships.

At state last year, the Foxes placed fourth. Petrik said the young musicians are going into their last performance of 2016, hoping "to walk off the stage and be able to say to ourselves that we gave ev-

erything and could not give any more."

Eugene Field School retirement party

In light of the upcoming closure of Eugene Field School, the Silver Falls School District has invited the community to celebrate and reminisce about the "good ole days." Past and present students and staff will attend a party from 1 to 3 p.m. on Saturday, May 21.

The event will feature music, refreshments and stories. Memorabilia will also be on display. The Eugene Field Mouse is scheduled to appear.

The school is located at 410 North Water Street. For more information, call 503-873-6341.

Christian school auction at Festhalle

Silverton Christian School is hosting its annual Mayfair Auction on Friday, May 14 in Mt. Angel's Festhalle, 500 Wilco Highway Northeast. This is the K-8 Christian school's last year at Silverton Friends Church. Expenses for the 2015-16 school year continue through August, organizers said.

Tickets: \$15 at 503-873-5131 or at door at 5 p.m. -- Christena Brooks

Vote

Continued from Page 1A

sheer competitive nature of the project, he filed the city's entry figuring it was about as much of a long shot as winning the lottery.

"What are the chances we'd ever win something like that?" Willoughby mused out loud. "Next thing you know we made it past the first cut ... now it's down to two."

He said because the Silverton City Council emphasizes downtown appeal, the application was a natural. The only tough part was the nondisclosure element to the process.

"I couldn't speak to anyone about it — not even my wife," he said.

Then a few weeks went by and the city manager's wife, Janice Willoughby, ran into a film crew in town from Small Business Revolution that was there to do a short movie. The crew told her all about it,

and she came home excited ready to apprise her husband of all the hubbub — unaware that he was actually the one who submitted the paperwork for it.

The short film's panoramic sweep scans over many of the Silverton's adorning features, including Silver Creek, some of the town's many murals and the ornate downtown edifices.

But it also touches on troubled times, empty downtown stores of the early 90s, potential crippling economic impacts of big box stores and dormant fears harbored by those invested in a strong Silverton.

The project's buzz through Silverton's cozy downtown is infectious.

"This is big news in our little town," said Silverton Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Stacy Palmer, who said the news has gone viral.

"It's all over Facebook, and we've probably passed out 3,000 handouts all over town; every restaurant, every shop, the

dentist offices (encouraging people to vote). Even the school district is involved."

The film gathers snapshots from Silverton's variety, including local historian and a spokesperson for the project, Gus Frederick, City Councilor and yarn-shop owner Laurie Carter, another Councilor Jason Freiling, who

owns an electronics/game shop, and third-generation hair stylist Tanya Rue. The mix, along with selected scenic shots, serves to delineate Silverton's charm — and hopefully garner votes.

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Chat

Continued from Page 1A

ing%20Court), Davis and Much look forward to discussing topics of interest with area residents in an informal setting and hear-

ing about their activities, causes and concerns.

It will also provide an opportunity to meet Silver Creek Coffee House's new owner Elisha Nightingale, who is proud to serve Longbottom coffee and tea at her 111 N. Water Street locale.

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We Are Here to Help Answer All Your Questions!

Who do I call first?

When a death is unexpected and a person is not on hospice, nor in a licensed care facility, your first phone call may be to the funeral home. However, the police must be notified first. Often the funeral home will call and notify the police for you.

Once police are notified, they will come to the place of death and assess things. They will also contact EMT to come and certify the time and that a death has occurred. Afterward, the police may phone the nearest funeral home to assist in transportation of the individual. In certain cases, the medical examiner's deputy may also be requested at the scene to determine if an autopsy may be required. In other cases, an autopsy may not be necessary. If family wishes to pursue an autopsy, they should notify the funeral director.

Is embalming required?

No. Only in certain circumstances. Embalming is required in cases of communicable disease or prolonged public viewing (6 hours or longer). Most often times the funeral home will utilize mortuary refrigeration, as required after the first 24 hours of death.

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