

# Drought

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drologist.

This winter follows a pattern that’s become familiar during Oregon’s recent winters, with plenty of rain but limited snow due to warm temperatures.

This year, for example, Oregon has gotten 88 percent of normal precipitation but 40 percent of normal snow, data shows.

The same trend — except more striking — was present during 2015 and 2014.

Dello says that trend is characteristic of what climate scientists have projected for Oregon’s future.

There will still be years with normal or big snowpack — such as 2016 and ’17 — but years with well-below average snowpack will be more common, she said.

“There’s certainly variability from year to year,” Dello said. “Last year was a big snow year. But years like 2015 and now 2018 are becoming more likely.”

## Salem fall / winter temperatures

Average high: 54.2

Average low: 41.3  
Average temp: 47.7  
Normal average temp: 44.8  
Takeaway: 2.2 degrees warmer than normal

**December**  
Average high: 47.2  
Average low: 32.0  
Average temp: 39.6  
Normal average temp: 40.1  
Takeaway: 0.5 cooler than normal

**January**  
Average high: 52.1  
Average low: 39.4  
Average temp: 45.7  
Normal average temp: 41.2  
Takeaway: 4.5 degrees warmer than normal

*Source: National Weather Service*

## Oregon’s statewide snowpack and precipitation, compared to normal, on Feb. 8

SWE Precip.  
2018 40% 88%  
2017 131% 121%  
2016 120% 117%  
2015 27% 104%  
2014 46% 57%  
Natural Resources Conservation Service



**Mount Jefferson rises above the North Santiam River.** ZACH URNESS / STATESMAN JOURNAL

# Wildfires

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2016 record of 756,344. The 2017 number was still the second-highest in history, even though the park was surrounded by two wildfires in the summer.

Places where fire wasn't an immediate threat did set attendance records, including Eastern Oregon and especially the northern Oregon Coast, numbers show.

Havel said smoke in the valley and fire in the mountains pushed many people onto the northern and central coast.

"There were a few places that just went through the roof," Havel said. "Our staff love serving our visitors, but it takes a toll."

## Which parks saw a big increase and set records?

The biggest increase in visitation was at the northern Oregon Coast.

State parks on the coast had 29.5 million visits, up from 28.6 million a year ago and as low as 21 million in 2011.

Two parks where visits went through the roof in 2017 were Tolovana Beach State Recreation Site, near Cannon Beach, and Heceta Head Lighthouse State Scenic Viewpoint, near Florence.

Tolovana jumped to 1.1 million visits in 2017, almost doubling the 2016 total of 644,000. Heceta Head was even more striking, hitting 1 million visits after seeing just 215,000 a year ago.

- The most popular park on the Oregon Coast was Newport's Yaquina Bay State Recreation Site, at almost 1.7 million visits.

- Oregon's most popular camping spot remained Fort Stevens State Park at 257,000 camper nights.

Two national monuments in Oregon broke attendance records. Lewis and Clark National Historic Park hit 293,000 visits (up from 282,000 in 2016) while John Day Fossil Beds National Monument reached 215,000, up from as little as 130,925 in 2009.

## Which parks saw a major decline?

The parks that saw the biggest decline, not surprisingly, were those closed by the Eagle Creek Fire in the Gorge.

Crown Point State Scenic Corridor (home of Vista House) dropped to 580,000 visits, from almost 800,000 the year before. Rooster Rock, Guy Talbot and Bridal Veil also saw declines fol-

lowing months-long closures.

Detroit Lake State Park, expected to see major increases because of its location in the center of the eclipse path of totality, saw a decline in day use visits but a small increase in camping nights. Detroit was near the 11,000-acre White-water Fire, which burned much of the summer and fouled the air.

One surprise was that Harris Beach State Park, just a few miles from the Chetco Bar Fire, the state's largest of the season, saw numbers close to normal.

Part of that could be because the park was converted into a shelter for people displaced by the fire, Havel said.

A final reason for the overall decline in numbers at state parks is that Maples Rest Area was transferred to management by the Oregon Department of

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# Potluck

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are informal, usually in a member’s home; there is no agenda and it's geared toward progressives who want to chat and share ideas. Meet-ups generally draw between 20 and 40 folks, and the group’s email feed is delivered to around 150.

Mayou gave information about a special gathering, “Inspiring Silverton,” which will be a potluck at 6 p.m. Friday, Feb. 16, at Silverton Grange, 201 Division St., which is just off Water Street on the southeast edge of town.

The program includes seven speakers who will begin presenting at 6:45 p.m., each sharing personal thoughts and information about their affiliated organizations. Grange members and the public are invited.

The event announcement encourages people to bring a dish, their own silverware and plates and reminds all that the grange does not allow alcohol.

Slated speakers and topics are as follows: **Dana Smith**, Building Community; **Esther Nelson**, Safety Compass; **Jamie Fuhrman**, Silverton Soup Ladies and Salem Harvest Gleaners; **Matt Plummer**, County Government, filling the gaps; **Michel Stone Finicle**, Silverton Opportunity; **Rob Sisk**, Silverton

People for Peace; **Sarah White**, Silverton Warming Center.

Contact Silverton Progressives through Facebook: [www.facebook.com/SilvertonProgressives](http://www.facebook.com/SilvertonProgressives), or email [silvertonprogressives@gmail.com](mailto:silvertonprogressives@gmail.com).

## Meet the brokers

**Christy Marsing Barber, Joshua Gorrell and Joshua Barber** invite anyone interested to stop by Silverton Wine Bar & Bistro, 101 N Water St, Silverton, between 5 and 6 p.m. Friday, Feb. 23, to "Meet the Brokers."

Have mortgage questions? **Dara Moody and Gretchen Russell** of Mort-

## Next chat

**What:** Creekside Chat

**Where:** Live Local Coffee, 111 Water St., Silverton

**When:** 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 21 (First and third Wednesdays)

**Questions and information:** Contact Justin Much, [jmuch@StatesmanJournal.com](mailto:jmuch@StatesmanJournal.com); cell 503-508-8157; or follow at [twitter.com/justinmuch](https://twitter.com/justinmuch)

gage Solutions will be on hand to answer any lending questions.

The casual event includes a no-host bar, appetizers and prizes.

# Sustainable

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increased drought, increased forest fires — these will impact our community.

“But on the other hand, we also have the ability to reduce our emissions and increase our town’s resiliency,” she added. “This opportunity has never been more in reach than it is today. The cost of clean energy has fallen quickly, and distributed energy systems are on the horizon.”

Brown said the group would like the study to be seen as a partnership with

the city and that the city would consider the results and recommendations once the study is completed.

Baldwin said the group has met with organizers of a similar undertaking in Hood River and has access to study templates and tips from that endeavor which will serve to accelerate Silverton’s.

Sustainable Silverton described itself as a citizens' committee formed in 2014 in response to the “Envision 2035” process, which was formed in the fall of 2015 as a visioning guide to the city’s strategic long-range planning. The group offered to take charge in implementing the energy study and reporting its findings to the council by June 1,

2018.

The council directed city staff to prepare a proposal that conveys the panel's support for the concept.

City Councilor Matt Plummer applauded the group for promptly preparing its study proposal, the idea for which initially emerged last fall, and making productive use of the Hood River experience in that preparation. Plummer acknowledged that he is an advocate of the group.

“I certainly support this and hope the rest of the council makes it a priority,” Plummer said.

The councilor also offered to serve as a liaison between the group and the city.

Several other councilors indicated

they were favorable, including Jim Sears who described it as a nexus between what the city’s Environmental Impact Committee is tasked with. Councilor Laurie Carter said she was behind the idea “100 percent,” adding that she would be interested to see how geothermal energy options could fit into the equation.

The Sustainable Silverton platform noted: “The first step in this process will be to analyze current uses of energy, compare Silverton with other cities doing similar work, and identify benchmarks for improvement.”

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