

Western wildfires calm in cool weather, but losses grow

The Associated Press

MEDFORD — Cooler weather on Tuesday, July 27, helped calm two gigantic wildfires in the U.S. West, but a tally of property losses mounted as authorities got better access to a remote area of Southern Oregon where the nation's largest blaze is burning.

Authorities were hopeful that cool temperatures, increased humidity and isolated showers will help them make more progress against the Bootleg Fire in Oregon. Crews have it more than halfway contained after it scorched 640 square miles of remote land.

"The mild weather will have a short-term calming effect on the fire behavior. But due to the extremely dry conditions and fuels, as the week progresses and temperatures rise, aggressive fire behavior is likely to quickly rebound," a situation report said July 27.

The lightning-sparked fire has charred more than 413,000 acres and destroyed 161 homes, 247 outbuildings and 342 vehicles in Klamath and Lake counties, the report said, cautioning that the numbers could increase as firefighters work through the inner area of the fire.

On July 18, a day of especially extreme fire activity, the blaze spawned a fire tornado in the Fremont-Winema National Forest, scientists say. The phenomenon occurred when smoke rose nearly 6 miles into the sky and formed giant clouds, Bruno Rodriguez, a meteorologist assigned to the Bootleg Fire, told the Herald and News of Klamath Falls.

Those massive clouds, combined with intense heat from the fire, intensified the updraft and pulled rotating



Bootleg Fire Incident Command/Contributed Photo

In this photo provided by the Bootleg Fire Incident Command, trees burn at the Bootleg Fire in southern Oregon, Sunday, July 25, 2021.

hot air from the Earth's surface to the base of the clouds, creating a tornado, Rodriguez said.

Neil Lareau, a professor of atmospheric science at the University of Nevada, told the newspaper that extensive tree damage, scoured road surfaces and damage to the soil indicate winds speeds between 111 mph and 135 mph.

"Prior to last year, there had only been two well-documented tornado-strength vortices generated by fires," said Lareau, who began studying the phenomenon after fire-generated tornadoes occurred last fall. "A decade ago, we could not have even imagined this. But here we are."

Scientists told the newspaper that fire-generated tornadoes need urgent study because it's suspected they can hurl embers far afield and potentially start new blazes.

The National Weather Service confirmed the tornado but said the agency wasn't sure how to categorize it. That's because, unlike a normal tornado that could travel for miles, the wind from a fire tornado will stop as soon as it gets too far from the fire's heat.

"If they don't have the heat from the fire, then they don't have the updraft. Without the updraft, it would weaken very quickly," said Ryan Sandler, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service in Medford.

Elsewhere, high heat was expected to return to the northern Rocky Mountains, where thick smoke from many wildfires drove pollution readings to unhealthy levels.

Unhealthy air was recorded around most of Montana's larger cities and in portions of northern Wyoming and eastern Idaho, according to data from U.S. government air monitoring stations.

Meanwhile, teams reviewing damage from the massive Dixie Fire in the mountains of Northern California have so far counted 36 structures destroyed and seven damaged in Indian Falls, said Nick Truax, an incident commander for the fire. It's unclear if that figure included homes or smaller buildings. The assessment was about half done, Truax said in an online briefing July 26, and the work depends on fire activity.

Gov. Brown signs very ambitious clean energy bill

Plan is among the most aggressive in United States

By SARA CLINE
The Associated Press/Report for America

PORTLAND — Oregon's clean energy bill, which sets one of the most ambitious timelines in the country for moving to 100% clean electricity sources, was signed by Gov. Kate Brown on Tuesday, July 27.

The legislation lays out a timetable for the state's two major power companies — Portland General Electric and Pacific Power — to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with electricity sold to consumers. Additionally, it bans the expansion or new construction of power plants that burn fossil fuels and allocates \$50 million in grants for community-based energy projects, among other measures.

"With these policies, we will create jobs in a 21st-century, clean-energy economy," Brown said. "We will reduce carbon emissions. And, we will make sure the economic, environmental and health benefits of our clean energy economy reach all Oregonians, especially those who have been dis-

proportionately impacted by climate change and pollution."

The bill requires Portland General Electric and Pacific Power to submit plans to reduce emissions by 80% from a baseline amount by 2030, 90% by 2035 and 100% by 2040.

At least 17 other states and the District of Columbia have already adopted similar goals, according to the Clean Energy States Alliance.

But officials say Oregon's timeline is the "strongest electricity emissions reduction timeline in the country." The deadline is nearer than nearly every other state that has adopted a clean power plan, including Washington and California.

"Already, we are seeing the devastating impacts of climate change, from more frequent drought to more severe wildfire seasons that put our homes and our families in jeopardy," said Rep. Jason Kropf, D-Bend, who is a sponsor of the bill. "This bill will put Oregon on a pathway for a more environmentally sound future and create economic opportunity and jobs for our working families."

Environmental activists have called the bill's passage a huge victory, especially as the state and country continue to see

the worsening effects of climate change. But the bill, which passed in Oregon's Senate 16-12 and in the House 35-20, has also been criticized.

"Hiking Oregonians' energy costs during an economic recovery is one of the dumbest ideas I have ever heard of," said Senate Republican Leader Fred Girod. "This bill just adds insult to injury to the countless Oregonians who have endured massive hardship over the last year and a half."

Opponents of the bill say the policy will increase electric prices for Oregonians, cause business energy costs to skyrocket and put strain on the power grid — possibly leading to rolling blackouts.

"This bill accomplishes nothing for our environment," Girod said. "It is simply a bill to virtue signal to extreme environmentalist groups that will cause Oregonians to pay more for less reliable energy."

Whether or not the timeline is attainable is also uncertain.

"If you go out to 2030, we think we can hit that," PacifiCorp Senior Vice President Scott Bolton told The Oregonian last month. "We were pretty clear though, beyond that we don't have a plan that shows we can get there."

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Simple ways to maintain memory as you age



It's important that adults recognize there are many ways they can protect and sharpen their minds as they age.

Adults confront various age-related side effects as they transition from middle age to their golden years. Skin may begin to wrinkle and hair may turn gray, but those are just the visible side effects of aging. Many additional effects are unseen, but those changes can have a profound effect on adults' quality of life.

According to the Mayo Clinic, various parts of the body are affected by aging. For example, the cardiovascular system changes as people grow older. Blood vessels and arteries stiffen as adults age, forcing the heart to work harder to pump blood through them.

Though many changes are linked to aging, other changes commonly associated with aging, such as a decline in

memory, reasoning and other thinking skills, are not natural. The Alzheimer's Association® notes that dementia is not a normal part of aging. There are many different types of dementia, including Alzheimer's disease, and these are the result of damage to brain cells that affect a person's ability to communicate. That damage is not inevitable, even if it's commonly associated with aging.

The Harvard Medical School notes that fleeting memory problems experienced with aging often reflect normal changes in the structure and function of the brain. But it's important that those changes not be mistaken for dementia, and it's equally important that adults recognize there are many ways they can protect and sharpen their minds as they age.

- Continue learning. HMS notes that a higher level of education is associated with improved mental functioning in old age. The reasons for that are unknown, but experts theorize that advanced education compels people to remain mentally active, which in turn helps them maintain a strong memory. Even aging men and women who are still working in challenging fields can benefit from pursuing a new hobby or learning a new skill.

- Use the tools at your disposal. It may seem counterintuitive to suggest that organizational tools like planners, maps and lists can help people maintain their memories. However, HMS notes that expending mental energy on finding car keys or trying to remember what to buy at the store makes it harder to learn new and important things.

- Let all your senses play a role. HMS reports that the more senses a person uses to learn something, the more his or her brain is involved in retaining a memory. HMS cites one study in which adults were shown a series of emotionally neutral images that were each presented along with a smell. Participants were not asked to recall what they saw, but were later shown a set of images and asked to indicate which they had previously seen. The participants had excellent recall for the odor-paired images, and researchers believe that's because additional parts of the brain were activated when participants were asked to use more than one sense.

Memory loss is not an inevitable side effect of aging, especially for adults who take steps to maintain their memories as they age.

What to expect during a colonoscopy

A colonoscopy is a necessary screening test for the prevention of colorectal cancer. Colorectal cancer is among the common cancers diagnosed in both men and women each year in the United States, advises Cancer.net. On average, 73 Canadians will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer each day, indicates the Canadian Cancer Society.

A colonoscopy exam can detect changes or abnormalities in the large intestine and rectum that may eventually develop into cancer. Though colonoscopies are effective at screening for cancer and catching illnesses at an early, treatable stage, many people are hesitant to undergo the procedure. That may be due to unfamiliarity with colonoscopies.

- Annual colonoscopies are generally recommended for people age 50 and older. Here's what to expect.
 - The day before the colonoscopy you will be asked to fast from solid food and only consume clear liquids. A doctor usually will prescribe a preparatory laxative product that will help to clean out the bowels.
 - You also may need to adjust medications you take under the guidance of your doctor, such as those that thin the blood.
 - On the day of the procedure, the medical staff will ask you to get undressed and put on a gown.
 - Sedation through pill or IV form is usually given to make the experience more comfortable. Because of this, you will likely need to have a ride home after the procedure.
 - You will be asked to lie on your side with your knees drawn in. A scope will be inserted into the rectum. The scope contains a light and camera, and is long enough to reach the entire length of the colon. Air or carbon dioxide will be pumped to inflate the colon.
 - The Mayo Clinic says the entire procedure may not take long, but it can take up to an hour to recover after sedation.
 - After the scope has been removed, there may be some residual abdominal cramping because air has been introduced. It also may feel like you need to have a bowel movement. Walking can help expel that gas and help you feel better.
- Colonoscopies are routine procedures. While it can be mildly uncomfortable due to fasting and the placement of the scope, it is an essential procedure for adults over 50.

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