



WHAT'S UP WITH WATER IN THE WEST?

Q&A WITH WESTERN WATER OFFICIALS

Reclamation officials talk dams, Klamath Basin, hydropower, drought

By SIERRA DAWN McCLAIN
Capital Press

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation — the federal agency that oversees water resource management in 17 Western states — has big projects planned in both its Columbia-Pacific Northwest Region and its California Great Basin Region.

To get a bird's-eye view, Capital Press reporter Sierra Dawn McClain talked with officials from the two regions about plans surrounding dams, hydropower, drought and the Klamath Basin. The text has been edited for length and clarity.

Columbia-Pacific Northwest Region

Columbia River Basin, Idaho, Washington and parts of Montana, Oregon and Wyoming

For a preview on upcoming projects in the Columbia-Pacific Northwest Region, the Capital Press interviewed Michael Coffey, the region's public affairs officer.

Capital Press: What specific projects does Reclamation have planned for the region to increase water storage capacity in the near future?



Michael Coffey

Coffey: I'll call out two in Idaho first.

One is the Anderson Ranch Dam Raise in the Boise River Basin. We're collaborating with Idaho Water Resources Board on that project. We're looking at raising the dam for an additional 29,000 acre-feet of new water storage. That's huge for farmers.

Then there's the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer Recharge. We've been working with the Idaho Department of Water Resources on that. To date since 2015, we've recharged about 1.8 million acre-feet of water into the aquifer, and we'll continue each year to improve those water levels.

In Washington, we've got something called the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan. The purpose is to address water resources and ecosystem improvement. Under the integrated plan, we've got a few storage projects coming up.

We've got the Kachess Drought Relief Pumping Plant in initial development. They're proposing to access 200,000 acre-feet of inactive storage for use in severe drought.

We're also looking at performing hydrologic modeling at



U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

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Scoggins Dam, northwest Oregon.

Atmospheric river helps refill Willamette Valley reservoirs

By GEORGE PLAVERN
Capital Press

PORTLAND — An atmospheric river brought heavy rainfall to the Willamette Valley this week, which the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers expects will help refill some of its reservoirs stretching from Portland to south of Eugene.

Despite torrential downpours that set multiple one-day records for precipitation on Feb. 28, most areas still recorded overall deficits for the month.

According to the National



Corps of Engineers

The Lookout Point Dam on the Middle Fork Willamette River is one of 13 in Oregon's Willamette Basin.

Weather Service, the Salem area saw the most rain with 1.76 inches. That brought its monthly total to 2.8 inches, or about 60% of normal.

Portland International Airport received 1.66 inches of rain, bringing total February precipitation to 2.77 inches, or roughly 75% of normal. Rainfall was lighter in Eugene, which got 0.48 inches, bringing its monthly total to just under 0.98 inches — just 20% of normal.

The Army Corps operates the Willamette Valley

Project, a series of 13 dams and reservoirs built for flood control that also provide stored water for irrigation, fish and wildlife, recreation and hydroelectricity.

Erik Petersen, the Corps' operations manager for the Willamette and Rogue basins, said that "while every drop of precipitation helps right now, the atmospheric river appears to be impacting areas north of the Willamette Valley more significantly."

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Russia-Ukraine uncertainty pushes wheat prices higher

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

Uncertainty over Russia's invasion of Ukraine pushed wheat futures higher this week, but market analysts aren't sure how high they'll go.

Both nations are major wheat producers.

"It is 'top of the fold' and the only story that is trading right now," said Dan Steiner, grain merchant at Morrow County Grain Growers in Oregon.



Dan Steiner

December wheat futures prices reached a high of \$9.41 per bushel on the Chicago market March 1. Futures have increased by \$1.43 to \$1.57 during the past several weeks, analysts said.

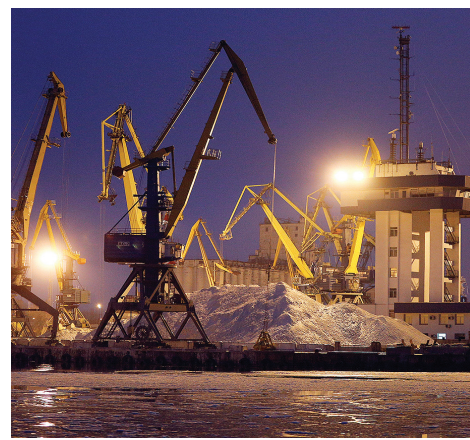
"You don't see this happen very often," said Byron Behne, senior merchant at Northwest Grain Growers in Walla Walla, Wash. "It is similar to the move that happened in 2014," when Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine.

At that time, wheat prices were below \$6 per bushel, but rose to more than \$7 per bushel, Behne said.

"I don't know the size of this move, given we were starting at \$8, what to expect here," he said. "This is the highest the wheat futures



Byron Behne



Efrem Lukatsky/Associated Press File

The Mariupol port in Ukraine in 2018.

have been since 2012."

Old-crop white wheat cash prices haven't been affected, Behne said.

"It's kind of been on its own planet all year just because of the small crop," he said, adding that the Ukraine crisis has helped the new crop white wheat prices more.

On the cash market, soft white wheat prices ranged from \$10.50 to \$11.25 per bushel this week at Portland. They ranged from \$10.50 to \$11 a month ago.

"No idea on how high they might go," said Darin Newsom, a wheat analyst in Omaha, Neb. "It depends on how the situation escalates. Right now, wheat is just one market out of many that nobody wants to sell. In markets

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