

## Washington's April third coldest since 1895

By **DON JENKINS**  
Capital Press

Washington shivered through its third coldest and 10th wettest April in the past 128 years, the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration reported Monday.

Average temperatures were 4.4 degrees lower than normal. Since 1895, only April 1955 and April 2011 were colder. The cold, rain, snow and wind impacted pollinators, plants and people.

"It's definitely unusual to be this wet and cold," north-central Washington orchardist April Clayton said. "The problem we have is we're still dealing with cold temperatures, so the bees aren't as active."

As expected in a La Nina year, northern tier states such as Washington, Oregon and Idaho were cool and wet in April, while southern tier states were warmer and drier than normal, according to NOAA's climate report for the month.

Oregon had its 10th coldest and seventh wettest April. Idaho had its 11th coldest and 36th wettest April. Montana had its fifth coldest April, while North Dakota its eighth.

Northern California was cooler and wetter than average, while Southern California was warmer and drier. New Mexico, the Western state most impacted by drought, had its 11th warmest and second driest April.

NOAA carves up Washington into nine climate divisions. Northeast Washington was notable for tying its coldest average nighttime temperatures. The other record years were 1909 and 2008.

Average temperatures in three Central Washington divisions were all near-record cold. Most areas were wet, too, though there was some variation.

Adams and Lincoln counties will need above-average rainfall in late May and June for wheat yields to rebound from last year's drought-depressed harvest, Washington State University Extension director Aaron Esser said.

"We don't have the soil moisture to work with," he said. "There's still a potential for a good crop, but we could be closer to where we were last year," he said. "If we can have an average crop this year, I will be tickled pink."

The cold, Esser said, has slowed down plants and made working outdoors unpleasant. "When you get this wind, it has a bite."

May has started wet and cold, too. Over the first eight days of the month, rainfall at the five Yakima basin reservoirs was 332% of normal. Washington's snowpack was 125% of average as of Tuesday. It was 80% of normal on April 1.

Clayton said cherry trees in her Douglas County orchards have been more affected by the cold and wet spring than the apple trees. Worse than this year's cold was a nighttime low in the teens in the spring two years ago, she said.

"It has been in the low 30s versus 18 degrees," Clayton said.

Washington State Climatologist Nick Bond attributed the state's April snowpack surge partly to the La Nina. A La Nina also prevailed in 1955 and 2011, the only two Aprils colder than this year's.

In an early outlook, the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center favors a La Nina prevailing again next winter.

# Interior Department spends \$240M to repair aging water systems

By **SIERRA DAWN McCLAIN**  
Capital Press

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Department of the Interior will invest \$240.4 million in fiscal year 2022 to repair aging water infrastructure in 11 states.

The money comes from the infrastructure law Congress passed last year, which in total allocated \$8.3 billion for water infrastructure.

This \$240 million portion will be spent on 46 projects, including repairs to canal linings, dam spillways, water pipeline replacements and other aging water systems.

"As western communities face growing challenges accessing water in the wake of record drought, these investments in our aging water infrastructure will safeguard community water supplies and revitalize water delivery systems," Interior Department Secretary Deb Haaland said in a statement Monday.

Reclamation selected projects for funding in major river basins and regions where the agency operates. The investment includes repair projects in Oregon,



Yakima Tieton Irrigation District

**The Yakima-Tieton Project, which now encompasses 35,000 acres, was developed in the early 1900s by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in partnership with the local water district.**

Washington, Idaho and California.

### Oregon

- \$60,000 to rehabilitate 2,800 linear feet of the main canal in Umatilla with geo-foam lining and new concrete panels; will also install draining systems.

### Washington

- \$100,000 for the Columbia Basin, to replace 1,500 linear feet of the West Canal.
- \$1,660,000 to install aqualastic lining on 55,773 linear feet of the Yakima-Ti-

eton Main Canal, an interim measure until the 111-year-old canal can be replaced or upgraded.

### Idaho

- \$2,500,000 to remove and replace two large concrete siphons — 4,000 feet of C-Lateral West 11.0 siphon and 3,062 feet of Conway Gulch 4.4 siphon, Boise area.
- \$4,200,000 for the Falls Irrigation District Pump Station upgrade, which will refurbish and modernize the pumping plant below American Falls Dam.

- \$8,300,000 to line 6 miles of the New York Canal near Boise with a geocomposite membrane capped with steel-reinforced concrete.

### California

- \$1,469,400 to replace irrigation lateral 119.64-2.6 in the Yuma Area to reduce risk of failure and shrink losses.
- \$6,448,650 to replace irrigation lateral 102.3.
- \$9,231,950 to replace irrigation lateral 119.64-7.5.
- \$8,173,450 to replace irrigation lateral 123.45-1.3-2.8.
- \$8,975,640 to replace irrigation lateral 123.45-1.3 and 2.8.
- \$1,707,340 to replace irrigation lateral 123.45-1.3-2.2 Phase 2.
- \$4,390,520 to replace irrigation lateral 123.45-1.3-3.2 RT.
- \$4,195,225 to replace irrigation lateral 2.2 Box.
- \$10,607,000 to replace irrigation lateral 99.8-0.51-3.
- \$200,000 to replace a maintenance and fabrication building for infrastructure.
- \$7,500,000 for the Mid-Canal Storage Project on the Coachella Canal, which would repair the canal's lining and create 750

acre-feet of in-line storage.

- \$75,000 to replace the Navajo and Concow laterals and concrete pipe.
- \$637,172 to refurbish check gates at Pilot Knob, the last diversion off the All-American Canal and Colorado River.
- \$1,368,111 to refurbish two bypass and clarifier inlet gates on the Colorado River.
- \$250,000 to repair imbeds on the Gila Diversion Gate, an Imperial Dam project.
- \$100,000 for supervisory control and data acquisition for major checks and turnouts.
- \$5,957,539 to replace Sludge Pipe, an Imperial Dam project.
- \$3,000,000 to conduct seismic upgrades and risk reductions on the 3-mile-long Terminal Check portion of the Putah South Canal near Solano.
- \$3,000,000 to rehabilitate the Stony Gorge Spillway Gate near Orland.

These applicants received the first round of funding. A second application period for extraordinary maintenance funding is planned for October 2022.

## Groundwater users in south-central Idaho may face curtailment

By **BRAD CARLSON**  
Capital Press



**Gary Spackman**

Some groundwater users in south-central Idaho could face curtailment May 20 as the drought continues.

Idaho Department of Water Resources Director Gary Spackman predicts in an order a 162,600 acre-foot shortfall to senior-priority surface water users in the 2022 irrigation season. That's for groundwater users in the Eastern Snake Plain.

The department starting May 20 will curtail more than 328 groundwater rights with priority dates junior to Dec. 25, 1979, unless the groundwater right hold-

ers join and comply with an approved mitigation plan or prove they will not harm senior users.

State law prioritizes senior water rights. The Eastern Snake Plain for many years saw conflicts between holders of senior surface water rights and junior groundwater pumpers. Groundwater pumpers in 2015 reached a settlement with a coalition of senior surface water right holders including irrigation entities and fish farms.

The state, for its Eastern Snake Plain delivery call, has approved mitigation plans with Idaho Ground Water Appropriators, Southwest Irrigation District, Goose Creek Irrigation District, the Water Mitigation Coalition and a group of participating cities.

"By law, we have to keep people with senior water rights whole," Mathew Weaver, the department's deputy director, said in a release. "We want to make the junior groundwater pumpers aware that despite the settlement agreements between the Surface Water Coalition, IGWA and the participating cities, if

junior groundwater pumpers are not participating in an approved mitigation plan, they could be subject to curtailment this year."

Joining a groundwater district and complying with a state-approved mitigation plan offers protection from curtailment and litigation.

The Water Resources director at the start of irrigation season determines any shortfall to holders of senior rights and how groundwater pumpers will make up for it. An updated order is issued in July.

Bob Turner, Idaho Ground Water Appropriators executive director, said the settlement agreement

calls for groundwater districts to contribute 240,000 acre-feet per year.

He said the 162,600-acre-foot shortfall the order predicts is based on current conditions.

"If they worsen, that number will increase," Turner said. "If there is less (water) than anticipated, there is going to be more impact to canals and that number increases. So you go farther down the priority list to get that amount of water."

He said the order of July 2021 went back to rights from 1977 to address a shortfall of about 170,000 acre-feet.

# LANE GARDEN COMPOST

COMPOST-ENRICHED SOIL

NEW ACCOUNTS - FIRST ORDER

**\$100 OFF**  
45 YARDS OR MORE

**\$50 OFF**  
15 YARDS OR MORE



Use this coupon to save \$50 on 15 yards or more, or save \$100 on 45 yards or more! Exclusively for first-time wholesale orders.



**LANE**  
FOREST PRODUCTS

laneforest.com



laneforest.com

Call to Order!  
**(888) 345-9085**