

Public lands could face brunt of solar eclipse visitors

As many as a million visitors are expected

By AMANDA PEACHER
Oregon Public Broadcasting

Smith Rock State Park naturalist Dave Vick peered through his spotting scope perched on a red rock cliff. He pointed the scope toward a tall ponderosa pine, spotting a downy mass in the middle of a 6-foot-wide nest. Inside was a 2-week-old bald eagle, or eaglet, named Solo because he was the only hatchling in this year's brood.

The floppy little bird was guarded by a stately adult bald eagle — one of the two in a nesting pair that lives here year-round. Solo then stared expectantly at the parent bird, opening his beak slightly.

It was a typical quiet, spring day for these raptors and the many other species in the park. But come August, Solo and the other park wildlife will experience a rare celestial event — a total solar eclipse that will travel across the entire midsection of Oregon. For two minutes, the park will go dark. Nocturnal creatures will stir, daytime animals will fall asleep, and the temperature will drop dramatically and suddenly.

Thousands of human visitors are expected to visit the

state park, and many other wild places within the eclipse's path, to experience the rare event. And land managers are expecting still more people who want to experience the eclipse in a memorable, wild setting to flock to rivers, wilderness areas, mountain peaks and lakes.

Potential problems

All those people amount to a huge amount of planning for public lands agencies — and potential problems.

All reservable campsites at Smith Rock are booked for the eclipse. The same goes for pretty much every other state park, U.S. Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management campsite, as well as cabins, vacation rentals and motels within the path of totality. With all bookable lodging taken, eclipse watchers are expected to spill over onto public lands to see the event.

Estimates of as many as 1 million visitors means land managers are working hard to protect the many sensitive, wild places within the 70-mile belt of the eclipse.

That includes educating visitors on how to protect wildlife. In addition to bald eagles and other raptors at Smith Rock, there are river otters, nesting golden eagles, mule deer, snakes and more. Huge crowds of human visitors can interrupt critters that are hunting, sleeping or caring for their young.



Takeshi Kuboki/Flickr

A solar eclipse in Hyogo, Japan, is pictured in this May 21, 2012, photo.

"The biggest issue is just stress for the wildlife," Vick said.

Stress can lead to sickness, weakness or even death for sensitive species. He's particularly worried about bald eagles being harassed by drone users. Drones are banned in Smith Rock park, in part because of their noise. But during a special event such as the eclipse, there might be some rule-breakers who want photos of the celestial event.

"All these sheer cliffs really amplify and echo that noise," he said.

Also within the park are delicate, ground-dwelling mosses and lichens that can be easily crushed.

Land managers are concerned about potential damage to places like the John Day Fossil Beds, where one

misstep can destroy irreplaceable fossils, and pristine spots within the Mount Jefferson Wilderness Area that could be overrun with illegal fires, trash and human waste.

Land agencies teamed up to create a special blog where campers and other visitors can get information about the eclipse and public lands.

Cash-strapped

Budget-strapped agencies like the Forest Service already face challenges with hiring an adequate number of wilderness rangers and law enforcement officers. Smith Rock State Park has only five full-time staffers plus a few volunteers. Rangers from other parks will be on site for the eclipse, but that's still just a handful of employees for thousands of visitors.



Amanda Peacher/OPB

Smith Rock naturalist Dave Vick is concerned that expected crowds during the solar eclipse could impact wildlife like the park's resident bald eagles.

That equation will be about the same at Forest Service and BLM campgrounds, trails and dirt roads. And with the eclipse happening during one of the hottest months of the year, there's one topic that comes up at every eclipse planning meeting: wildfire.

"We're concerned about fire danger," said Josie Barnum, another Smith Rock ranger.

She's hoping visitors obey the parks' bans on campfires and smoking.

"The idea of evacuating all those people on a normal day in a fire is very frightening," Barnum said. "To think about it happening when there's double or triple volume of people in the park would be really, really terrifying."

With so many people in these wild spaces, the likelihood of serious injuries requiring search and rescue teams goes up. Rescuers gobble up time and resources.

"That takes staff away from other priorities happening up here," Barnum said. And that's assuming rescue crews can even get to an injured hiker. Highways and roads are expected to be clogged on the day of the eclipse.

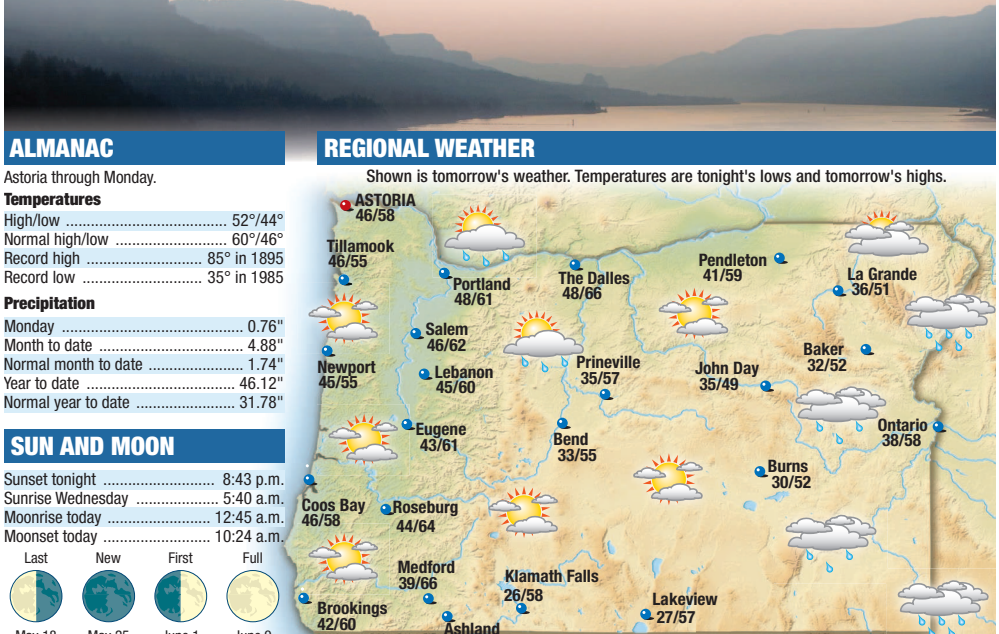
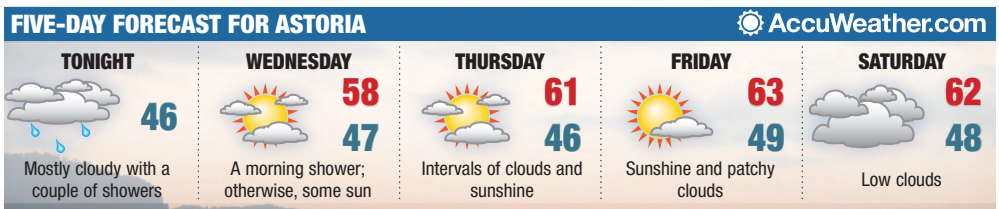
To limit crowding, officials will close the road into the park once it's full. Latecomers will have to walk 1/2 mile or more to reach the entrance. Sheriff's deputies and fire crews will be staged nearby. The park will have emergency medics at the ready on the canyon rim. There will be education and interpretive sites about "Leave No Trace" ethics and parks rules banning drones, smoking and fire.

Agencies all across Oregon are taking similar precautions to protect places in the eclipse path, including the Painted Hills and the Mount Jefferson Wilderness.

But despite all the extra work and necessary precautions that go into planning for a day like this, Barnum is excited to experience the eclipse in the place where she works.

"Smith Rock is definitely a very special place," Barnum said. "If we can preserve it and give people an amazing experience watching the eclipse when they come out here, that's pretty cool. It makes me feel good about what we do."

NASA map of eclipse's path



REGIONAL CITIES

| City | Today | Wed. | Thu. | City | Today | Wed. | Thu. |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Baker City | 52/32 | 52/35 | 52/35 | Olympia | 57/43 | 60/43 | 60/43 |
| Bend | 52/33 | 52/35 | 52/35 | Penelope | 52/41 | 59/43 | 59/43 |
| Brookings | 54/42 | 58/45 | 58/45 | Portland | 56/48 | 61/48 | 61/48 |
| Eugene | 57/43 | 61/39 | 61/39 | Roseburg | 58/44 | 64/43 | 64/43 |
| Ilwaco | 53/49 | 55/48 | 55/48 | Salem | 57/46 | 62/43 | 62/43 |
| Klamath Falls | 49/26 | 58/29 | 58/29 | Seaside | 52/48 | 55/47 | 55/47 |
| Medford | 59/39 | 66/42 | 66/42 | Springfield | 51/41 | 57/42 | 57/42 |
| Newberg | 56/46 | 60/43 | 60/43 | Vancouver | 57/44 | 61/41 | 61/41 |
| Newport | 53/45 | 55/43 | 55/43 | Vancouver | 55/48 | 60/46 | 60/46 |
| North Bend | 56/46 | 58/45 | 58/45 | Yakima | 60/41 | 71/42 | 71/42 |

TOMORROW'S NATIONAL WEATHER

Show non positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.

NATIONAL CITIES

| City | Today | Wed. | Thu. | City | Today | Wed. | Thu. |
|----------------|-------|-------|-------|----------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Atlanta | 90/65 | 89/68 | 89/68 | Chicago | 87/67 | 85/67 | 85/67 |
| Boston | 77/57 | 84/67 | 84/67 | Denver | 73/43 | 68/34 | 68/34 |
| Chicago | 87/67 | 85/67 | 85/67 | Des Moines | 88/67 | 77/57 | 77/57 |
| Denver | 73/43 | 68/34 | 68/34 | Detroit | 85/66 | 87/68 | 87/68 |
| Des Moines | 88/67 | 77/57 | 77/57 | El Paso | 78/54 | 85/59 | 85/59 |
| Detroit | 85/66 | 87/68 | 87/68 | Fairbanks | 71/44 | 70/46 | 70/46 |
| El Paso | 78/54 | 85/59 | 85/59 | Honolulu | 84/73 | 84/73 | 84/73 |
| Fairbanks | 71/44 | 70/46 | 70/46 | Indianapolis | 85/66 | 85/68 | 85/68 |
| Honolulu | 84/73 | 84/73 | 84/73 | Kansas City | 84/66 | 79/60 | 79/60 |
| Indianapolis | 85/66 | 85/68 | 85/68 | Las Vegas | 79/62 | 79/59 | 79/59 |
| Kansas City | 84/66 | 79/60 | 79/60 | Los Angeles | 68/55 | 70/55 | 70/55 |
| Las Vegas | 79/62 | 79/59 | 79/59 | Memphis | 88/68 | 87/70 | 87/70 |
| Los Angeles | 68/55 | 70/55 | 70/55 | Miami | 87/78 | 88/79 | 88/79 |
| Memphis | 88/68 | 87/70 | 87/70 | Nashville | 90/68 | 90/71 | 90/71 |
| Miami | 87/78 | 88/79 | 88/79 | New Orleans | 86/70 | 86/72 | 86/72 |
| Nashville | 90/68 | 90/71 | 90/71 | New York | 79/63 | 86/69 | 86/69 |
| New Orleans | 86/70 | 86/72 | 86/72 | Oklahoma City | 80/61 | 85/61 | 85/61 |
| New York | 79/63 | 86/69 | 86/69 | Philadelphia | 80/60 | 80/70 | 80/70 |
| Oklahoma City | 80/61 | 85/61 | 85/61 | St. Louis | 90/72 | 85/71 | 85/71 |
| Philadelphia | 80/60 | 80/70 | 80/70 | Salt Lake City | 65/40 | 50/37 | 50/37 |
| St. Louis | 90/72 | 85/71 | 85/71 | San Francisco | 63/51 | 67/49 | 67/49 |
| Salt Lake City | 65/40 | 50/37 | 50/37 | Seattle | 54/47 | 61/49 | 61/49 |
| San Francisco | 63/51 | 67/49 | 67/49 | Washington, DC | 82/65 | 94/73 | 94/73 |
| Seattle | 54/47 | 61/49 | 61/49 | | | | |
| Washington, DC | 82/65 | 94/73 | 94/73 | | | | |

Weather (W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, i-ice.

Taxpayers could get kicker

By CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE
Capital Bureau

SALEM — State economists say the state may have nearly \$200 million more than expected in net available resources, narrowing Oregon's projected budget gap to about \$1.4 billion.

The May economic and revenue forecast provides the best estimate of how much the state can expect to realize in revenue before the Legislature adjourns in July. Legislators are busy trying to resolve the gap between what it expects to bring in and how much it would cost to maintain state services at current levels.

Today's higher than expected revenue forecast also brings Oregon closer to triggering the kicker, although that's not a sure bet, said state economist Mark McMullen.

Overall, the state's rate of economic growth is slowing, although "Oregon's economy is bigger than ever and getting bigger every day," McMullen said.

Gov. Kate Brown said in a statement that the fore-

cast included good news about revenue growth and the state's economy, but cuts to key services remained possible.

"... This doesn't change the fact that Oregon still has a structural deficit," Brown said. "This means in the long term, whether the economy is good or bad, the state will struggle to pay for education, public safety, child welfare and health care."

The governor said she was meeting with business and labor leaders every week to prevent significant cuts to such services, which may be required in order to close the budget gap without new revenues.

Patrick Critser, chairman of the Oregon Business Plan and the CEO of the Tillamook County Creamery Association, reiterated the Oregon Business Plan's stance in a written statement today, saying that new revenues alone "will not fix the state's basic budget problems."

However, Critser said the coalition of businesses behind the Oregon Business Plan "remained optimistic" and

"encouraged" by engagement from the Legislature and the governor.

State Sen. Mark Hass, D-Beaverton, said the revenue outlook does not change what he has characterized as the need for changes to the state's tax system, a sentiment echoed by Senate Majority Leader Ginny Burdick, D-Portland:

"We can't dig out of this hole with cuts alone," Burdick said in a statement. "We need to reform and stabilize our revenue system as well." Burdick said legislators were examining "both sides of the ledger."

Meanwhile, Republican leaders in the Legislature said higher than expected tax revenues were evidence in favor of spending cuts. House Minority Leader Mike McLane, R-Powell Butte, called the forecast "more evidence that Oregon needs to tighten its belt and get serious about the unsustainable rate of spending in Salem."

The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.

DEATHS

May 14, 2017
HORD, John Dalton II, 73, of Astoria, died in Astoria. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

May 13, 2017
MASSEY, Peggy Ann, 76, of Warrenton, died in Portland. Ocean View Funeral & Cremation Service of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

TUESDAY
Sunset Empire Parks and Recreation District, 4 p.m., 1225 Ave. A, Seaside.
Clatsop County Human Services Advisory Council, 4 to 5:30 p.m., 800 Exchange St., Room 430.
Astoria Historic Landmarks Commission, 5:15 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.
Clatsop County Board of Commissioners joint work session with city councils, 5:30 p.m., McMenamins Hotel and Sand Trap Pub, 1157 North Marion Ave., Gearhart.
Seaside School District, 6

p.m., 1810 S. Franklin, Seaside.
Port of Astoria Commission, 6 p.m., 10 Pier 1 Suite 209.
Shoreline Sanitary District Board, 7 p.m., Gearhart Hertig Station, 33496 West Lake Lane, Warrenton.
Seaside Planning Commission, 7 p.m., work session, City Hall, 989 Broadway.

WEDNESDAY
Seaside Tourism Advisory Committee, 3 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.
Cannon Beach Budget Meeting, 5:30 p.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

LOTTERIES

OREGON
Monday's Pick 4:
1 p.m.: 7-7-8-2
4 p.m.: 4-4-0-5
7 p.m.: 0-0-5-8
10 p.m.: 2-1-1-1
Monday's Megabucks:
1-15-17-24-33-39
Estimated jackpot: \$6 million

WASHINGTON
Monday's Daily Game:
7-8-6
Monday's Hit 5: 08-26-27-32-37
Estimated jackpot: \$100,000
Monday's Keno: 02-03-07-13-19-22-31-33-35-37-38-42-51-53-54-67-70-71-75-76
Monday's Lotto: 04-05-16-27-29-39
Estimated jackpot: \$6.6 million
Monday's Match 4: 02-04-10-23

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