

Busy wildfire season forecast across much of West



Don Seabrook/The Wenatchee World
U.S. Forest Service firefighters from Leavenworth cut brush near houses in northern Wenatchee, Wash., in 2015.

By BRAD CARLSON
Capital Press

Forecasters say they expect a busy wildfire season in much of the West.

The National Interagency Fire Center's Predictive Services unit said in a May 1 report that it expects warmer and drier-than-average conditions.

Fire forecasters said they are concerned about the heavy 2017 growth of brush and grasses across wildlands, coupled with newly grown grass that will cure by July across California, the Great Basin and Oregon. At the same time in these areas, higher timbered elevations are at greater risk of fire due to a below-average snowpack.

Basil Newmerzhucky, a federal meteorologist in Salt Lake City, said in an interview he's concerned about elevated wildfire prospects for Idaho's west central mountains — generally from McCall west to the Oregon line — and for southeastern Oregon.

"Western Idaho is a concern because we are expecting much warmer, drier conditions compared to the average summer," he said. Snowpack is at or just below normal there, and at or above normal to the east.

Newmerzhucky sees fairly high fire risk in the Idaho-Oregon-Nevada border region due to lower precipitation recently. From October through April, precipitation was about 70 percent of normal in south-

west Idaho and 50 to 70 percent of normal in southeastern Oregon.

The report said southeastern Oregon's warm, dry April stood out in contrast to cooler, wetter conditions in much of the Northwest.

Newmerzhucky said the risk of big fires jumps in wetter-than-normal years at lower elevations. Grass and brush grow profusely, and when they dry — a quick process, since they are light — they leave big, less frequently interrupted areas of wildfire fuel, he said.

In dry years, grass and brush often carry into the next year but do not grow as profusely, making it more likely that a fire will hit a fuel-free patch quickly and burn out, he said.

Forecasters also expect a heightened risk of significant wildland fires across southwest Idaho, northern Nevada and northern Utah, the report said.

Higher elevations in the Cascade Range, northern Sierra Nevada and possibly the northern Rocky Mountains may see elevated fire potential should warmer, drier-than-average conditions develop as expected, the report said. Above-normal potential for large fires is expected east of the Cascades, and in Oregon's southwest corner.

Higher snowpack typically shortens timberland fire seasons because the bigger plants on the forest floor take longer to dry out and become fire fuel, Newmerzhucky said.

A year into post, Cobra is focused on improving state technology

By CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Katy Cobra was the very public face of the department when she was director of the Oregon Department of Agriculture. But as the state's chief operating officer, Cobra works behind the scenes of state government.

The Eastern Oregon native says it's a bit of a change from her prior post — the "customer" has changed from farmers, ranchers and consumers of agricultural products to the enterprise of state government itself.

"But the principles and the way that I operate are very much the same," Cobra said in an interview.

Since becoming COO and director of the Department of Administrative Services in October 2016, she's been working to foster state agency leadership and upgrade state information technology.

Cobra's role involves helping state agencies implement the policies of the governor, to communicate with each other, and finding ways to streamline state services.



Katy Cobra

Gov. John Kitzhaber created the position of COO in early 2011, part of his effort to make state government more efficient. It can partly be described as that of a "manager's manager" — the person in between the governor and state agency heads.

Cobra estimates that about 75 percent of her time is spent on COO duties, and the remaining 25 percent leading the Department of Administrative Services, which oversees a broad range of statewide services such as procurement and risk management, and houses the offices of the state economist and chief information officer.

When she was appointed, Cobra made a list of her priorities in the new post: recruit a younger and more diverse state workforce; advocate for accountability and transparency in state government; fos-

ter government leadership and restore trust in government.

Next generation

A year and a half later, she's the first to say that the state will have to work hard, especially in a prosperous economy, to hire the next generation of public servants to stave off a wave of impending retirements.

As of mid-2017, 34 percent of the state workforce was eligible to retire. Under Cobra's leadership, the Department of Administrative Services has created an online "toolkit" that state agencies can use to think through their succession planning.

But she says that the state will have to find a way to make a career in government attractive to young workers.

"A lot of work needs to be done there," Cobra said. "A lot of opportunity for those that don't work in government, but again, how do you convince them that you can really do cool things working in state government? I don't think people put those two words together, 'state government,' and 'cool.'"

And then there's another workforce challenge Cobra has been focused on: leadership.

While critics of the governor have pointed to turnover among state agency heads, Cobra says she doesn't think the amount of turnover is abnormal, especially in an era where people move more frequently between positions and employers.

"We're seeing workforce turnover more often anyway," Cobra says. "We see that at the agency director level for a whole host of different reasons."

Not all of those agency director departures, of course, were voluntary, such as the August departure of Oregon Health Authority Director Lynne Saxton and, in March, State Librarian MaryKay Dahlgreen.

But most director departures, Cobra says, were retirements and directors moving on to other jobs.

Cobra, who works "in concert" with the governor's office to help and evaluate state agency leaders, says each situation is different.

"There isn't a standard process we use," she says. "It is situation specific."

Lisa Sumption, director of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, says Cobra recognized the need for

more training for new agency directors.

"Katy saw the gap, and said, we need a new agency directors' forum," Sumption said.

Sumption and State Department of Transportation Director Matt Garrett are both quick to praise Cobra.

"She focuses, I think, her attention on doing what is right, what is just, rather than doing what is politically expedient," Garrett said. "I'm a big Katy Cobra fan."

Garrett describes Cobra's leadership style as both collaborative and consistent.

Sumption says Cobra is also helpful in "navigating" discussions about state agency budgets at the Legislature.

State Sen. Alan DeBoer, R-Ashland, who sits on legislative committees focused on information technology and general government operations, says he's "impressed" with her work so far.

"I can only tell you from my experience meeting with her and her testifying in front of committees, that I'm very impressed with her," DeBoer said. "I think she'll do a great job."

Gov. Kate Brown said in

a statement that Cobra "has become invaluable to my vision for effective and efficient government services."

Hurdles

Yet other hurdles lie ahead. The state has had mixed success updating legacy technology systems. A new statewide phone system has encountered hiccups. The state's human resources system, which is 30 years old, is also in need of updating.

Rather than building its own system, the state is using software-as-a-service technology that the contractor, IBM, will continually update.

Cobra is looking for ways to streamline state technology, says Sumption, who chairs a state government leadership steering committee on information technology.

"She's focusing in on the efficiencies of government to say, 'Hold on, we don't need 100 payroll systems or 100 HR systems. We need one, and we're not really that unique,'" Sumption said.

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

DEATHS

May 6, 2018
BIRKBY, Jack Lester, 92, of Arch Cape, died in Arch Cape. Caldwell's Funeral & Cremation Arrangement Center of Seaside is in charge of the arrangements.

May 5, 2018
ROBINSON, Thomas John, 72, of Seaside, died in Seaside. Caldwell's Funeral & Cremation Arrangement Center of Seaside is in charge of the arrangements.

FIVE-DAY FORECAST FOR ASTORIA AccuWeather DOWNLOAD THE APP

Tonight	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
49	62 / 53	58 / 49	56 / 46	59 / 46
Clear to partly cloudy	Partly sunny, a shower in the afternoon	A little morning rain, then a shower	Cloudy with a shower in the area	Partly sunny

ALMANAC Astoria through Sunday.

Temperatures
 High/low 61°/48°
 Normal high/low 59°/44°
 Record high 80° in 1987
 Record low 31° in 1965

Precipitation
 Sunday 0.00"
 Month to date 0.02"
 Normal month to date 0.75"
 Year to date 32.72"
 Normal year to date 30.79"

SUN AND MOON
 Sunset tonight 8:31 p.m.
 Sunrise Tuesday 5:52 a.m.
 Moonrise today 2:20 a.m.
 Moonset today 12:05 p.m.

Source: Jim Todd, OMSI

TOMORROW'S TIDES
 Astoria / Port Docks

Time	High	Time	Low
7:34 a.m.	6.7 ft.	2:08 a.m.	3.5 ft.
9:32 p.m.	6.9 ft.	2:38 p.m.	1.2 ft.

NATIONAL CITIES

City	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Atlanta	82	60	s	81	62	pc
Boston	59	46	pc	62	49	pc
Chicago	70	53	s	76	58	s
Denver	82	53	c	78	51	s
Des Moines	82	58	s	78	60	c
Detroit	67	46	s	74	50	s
El Paso	96	71	pc	98	68	pc
Fairbanks	52	35	pc	63	36	c
Honolulu	81	72	pc	80	71	pc
Indianapolis	73	48	pc	75	54	s
Kansas City	83	61	s	83	62	t
Las Vegas	99	73	s	101	76	s
Los Angeles	78	56	pc	79	61	pc
Memphis	86	60	pc	85	66	s
Miami	86	72	pc	85	71	sh
Nashville	80	55	pc	80	69	s
New Orleans	90	68	s	90	69	s
New York	70	52	pc	70	54	pc
Oklahoma City	89	66	pc	88	67	pc
Philadelphia	73	51	pc	75	50	s
St. Louis	79	56	s	79	61	s
Salt Lake City	82	56	pc	82	59	s
San Francisco	68	53	pc	67	56	pc
Seattle	70	52	pc	75	54	pc
Washington, DC	76	58	pc	77	57	s

REGIONAL WEATHER
 Shown is tomorrow's weather. Temperatures are tonight's lows and tomorrow's highs.

Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2018

REGIONAL CITIES

City	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Baker City	77	38	pc	82	51	pc
Bend	76	47	pc	80	48	pc
Brookings	60	47	s	60	50	sh
Eugene	72	48	pc	74	51	pc
Ilwaco	60	50	pc	60	53	pc
Klamath Falls	77	43	s	79	45	s
Medford	83	54	s	82	54	pc
Newberg	73	51	pc	73	53	pc
Newport	60	47	pc	59	50	sh
North Bend	61	49	pc	62	52	sh
Ontario	48	87				
Portland	55	78				
The Dalles	54	87				
Prineville	46	83				
John Day	48	83				
Baker	38	82				
Burns	38	83				
La Grande	45	81				
Medford	54	82				
Brookings	48	60				
Ashtland	54	81				
Brookings	48	60				
Brookings	48	60				

TOMORROW'S NATIONAL WEATHER
 Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.

ON THE RECORD

DUII

- At 8:44 p.m. Sunday, Brandon J. Campuzano Luna, 18, of Seaside, was arrested by Oregon State Police on U.S. Highway 101 and Second Avenue in Seaside and charged with driving under the influence of intoxicants. Officers allegedly smelled marijuana in the car, which contained a 16-year-old passenger, during a traffic stop.
- At 3:23 p.m. Sunday, Emily Rachel Castiglione, 33,

- of Longview, Washington, was arrested by the Clatsop County Sheriff's Office on Old Highway 30 in Knappa and charged with DUII.
- At 2:37 a.m. Sunday, Douglas Evelsizer, 60, of Seaside, was arrested by Seaside police on the 430 block of Holaday Drive and charged with DUII.
- At 9:09 p.m. Saturday, Steven Mark Crane, 63, of Forest Grove, was arrested by Warrenton police on the 100 block of

- Main Street and charged with DUII. He allegedly admitted to using drugs prior to driving.

Assault

- At 1:03 a.m. Sunday, Travis Lyman Tait, 47, of Astoria, was arrested by the Clatsop County Sheriff's Office on Lewis and Clark Road and charged with fourth-degree assault, menacing and harassment. He allegedly punched his adult son in the head and threatened other people at the residence.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

MONDAY
Seaside Budget Committee, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.
Astoria City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

TUESDAY
Clatsop County Planning Commission, 10 a.m.,

Judge Guy Boyington Building, 857 Commercial St.
Cannon Beach City Council, 5:30 p.m., regular meeting and work session, City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.
Warrenton City Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.
Lewis & Clark Fire Department Board, 7 p.m., main fire station, 34571 Highway 101 Business.

LOTTERIES

OREGON
Sunday's Pick 4:
 1 p.m.: 9-4-5-1
 4 p.m.: 6-5-4-6
 7 p.m.: 1-2-7-0
 10 p.m.: 1-9-3-6
Sunday's Lucky Lines: 02-07-09-14-18-21-26-29
 Estimated jackpot: \$36,000
Saturday's Pick 4:
 1 p.m.: 8913
 4 p.m.: 8331
 7 p.m.: 8620
 10 p.m.: 0612
Saturday's Lucky Lines: 01-05-11-13-17-24-28-30
 Estimated jackpot: \$34,000
Saturday's Megabucks: 21-24-26-32-33-35
 Estimated jackpot: \$5.6 million

Saturday's Powerball: 14-29-36-57-61, Powerball: 17
 Estimated jackpot: \$233 million
Friday's Pick 4:
 1 p.m.: 2508
 4 p.m.: 6599
 7 p.m.: 5805
 10 p.m.: 5358
Friday's Lucky Lines: 02-06-09-15-17-23-25-30
 Estimated jackpot: \$33,000
Friday's Mega Millions: 4-5-10-12-18, Mega Ball: 21
 Estimated jackpot: \$40 million

WASHINGTON
Sunday's Daily Game: 7-3-2
Sunday's Keno: 15-16-18-19-23-26-29-32-34-46-48-49-50
 51-59-60-64-67-71-75
Sunday's Match 4: 01-04-13-20
Saturday's Daily Game: 4-8-0
Saturday's Hit 5: 05-14-17-19-20
 Estimated jackpot: \$130,000
Saturday's Keno: 01-06-14-15-20-24-28-29-33-36-43-51-54-55-57-58-66-69-70-73
Saturday's Lotto: 06-07-08-09-13-47
 Estimated jackpot: \$1.8 million
Saturday's Match 4: 10-12-19-21
Friday's Daily Game: 0-3-8
Friday's Keno: 03-05-23-26-29-33-38-41-42-44-46-47-49-50-59-60-63-66-71-72
Friday's Match 4: 08-09-15-23

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