

INTERIOR SECRETARY POLICY SPEECH

Climate change, 'extremists' nature's new threats

By MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Interior Secretary Sally Jewell on Tuesday called for "a major course correction" in the way the nation conserves its public lands, waters and wildlife, saying climate change and other trends threaten natural areas "in existential ways."

In a major policy speech, Jewell called climate change one of several threats facing public lands and water, including an "extreme movement" by armed groups to seize them; a push by some politicians to sell them to the highest bidder; and increased development nearby.

"Climate change — the most pressing issue of our time — threatens our land and water in existential ways, with longer, hotter fire seasons, record-breaking droughts and more frequent and severe superstorms," Jewell said.

Citing a new analysis by a nonprofit conservation and scientific group, Jewell said natural areas in the West are disappearing at the rate of a football field every two-and-a-half minutes. The trend is especially alarming "because healthy, intact ecosystems are fundamental to the health of our nation," she said.

Jewell also denounced an armed takeover of an Oregon national



AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta, File

In this Dec. 9, 2015 photo, Interior Secretary Sally Jewell testifies on Capitol Hill in Washington before the House Natural Resources Oversight Committee hearing on the Animas River Spill in Colorado.

wildlife refuge.

The 41-day standoff this winter "propped up dangerous voices that reject the rule of law, put communities and hard-working public servants at risk, and fail to appreciate how deeply democratic and American our national parks and public lands are," said Jewell, who began her fourth year as Interior secretary this month.

More than two dozen armed occupiers took over the Malheur

National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon in January, demanding that the government turn over the land to locals and release two ranchers imprisoned for setting fires. The standoff left one man dead and exposed simmering anger over the government's control of vast expanses of Western land.

At least 25 people have been indicted on federal charges of conspiracy to impede employees at the wildlife refuge from performing

their duties.

The takeover followed an armed confrontation with government agents two years ago by Nevada rancher Cliven Bundy and at least 18 other people. Bundy's son Ammon Bundy led the Oregon standoff.

Besides rejecting the demands of extremists, officials must address the dual threats of climate change and development, Jewell said, noting that her speech comes as the National Park Service celebrates its 100th anniversary.

"If we stay on this trajectory, 100 years from now, national parks and wildlife refuges will be like postage stamps of nature on a map," she said, offering a bleak vision in which "isolated islands of conservation with run-down facilities" will be visited by crowds akin to those who now go to zoos "to catch a glimpse of our nation's remaining wildlife and undeveloped patches of land."

That can't — and won't — happen, Jewell said, if America acts now.

"This country's national parks, forests, refuges and public lands are some of the most valuable assets that we collectively own," she said. "At a time when they face threats from land grabs to climate change, we can't afford to turn our backs on

them. Let us use this special year of the (Park Service) centennial to set a new path for conservation in the 21st century."

On other topics, Jewell said the Park Service and other agencies need to do a better job reaching out to "underrepresented communities."

"The majority of visitors to national parks today look like me: older and whiter," Jewell said. "We need to kick off the new century of American conservation by issuing a giant, open invitation to every American to visit their national parks and public lands."

Officials also need to ensure that when a diverse class of fourth-graders does visit a national park, "they see park rangers who look like them, or talk to wildlife biologists who share their background. Or see signs in their first language," Jewell said.

National parks for too long "have ignored important parts of our nation's story," Jewell said, calling for more parks and historic sites focused on women, minorities and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups.

Jewell said she will kick off the effort herself, traveling to parks and other sites this summer on what aides call a "conservation road tour" from coast to coast.

State vendors who owe taxes, other debt continue to be paid

By HILLARY BORRUD Capital Bureau

SALEM — For years, contractors behind on their taxes have been able to continue collecting checks from the state of Oregon because most state agencies had no procedures in place to detect whether vendors owed taxes or other public debt.

It is difficult to gauge the size of the problem because the state has not tracked contractor debt, despite repeated suggestions to do so from state auditors since the late 1990s. Agencies started taking initial steps to address the problem after lawmakers passed a bill last year to encourage them to identify whether contractors owe money to the state.

But early efforts have focused on testing ways state agencies can improve data sharing, not actually identifying how much is owed by individual vendors.

As an example, a pilot project this year suggested nearly 300

vendors for the Oregon Department of Transportation might be delinquent on taxes or some other debt to the state worth at least \$25.

Bob Estabrook, a spokesman for the Department of Revenue, said that quantifying the amount of delinquent debt owed by state contractors is not currently part of the project.

"I don't know that it would necessarily be that difficult for us to figure that out," Estabrook said.

State auditors have recommended since 1997 that the government intercept future state payments to contractors who are delinquent on their state debt, according to an audit released by the Secretary of State's Office last fall.

The federal government and at least 40 other states already use the method known as "vendor offset." After an upfront investment, the system is largely automated and officials in other states told Oregon auditors it reduced future debt because companies that wanted

state contracts knew they had to pay taxes and other debts.

There's a considerable amount of money in play. According to the audit, the state was owed \$758 million in delinquent taxes in 2014.

State Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, said the state should not hire contractors who are delinquent or out of compliance on their taxes.

"I don't think contractors and vendors should be doing business with the state of Oregon if they have delinquencies or a failure to comply with taxes," Johnson said, adding that tax compliance should be an "absolute requirement" for companies that contract with the state.

At a Feb. 10 legislative hearing, a state accounting manager told lawmakers the pilot project had identified vendors for the Oregon Department of Transportation who were delinquent on taxes and other debts.

Of the nearly 5,600 taxpayers who were also ODOT vendors, 5

percent of corporate taxpayers and 8 percent of individual taxpayers were delinquent, said Robert Hamilton, manager of the statewide accounting reporting services unit at the Oregon Department of Administrative Services.

Tammy Baney, chair of the Oregon Transportation Commission and a Deschutes County commissioner, said she would like to see a list of the vendors who are delinquent.

"It is certainly important to the (Oregon Transportation Commission) and to ODOT that our vendors are current on their taxes," Baney said. "If you have a list, we have been wanting to have the list ... Boy, I'd sure love to see that."

The EO Media Group/Pamplin

Media Group requested a list of the vendors identified as delinquent, but Estabrook said the pilot project that began last year is still in its early phase. For example, the state is checking whether some of the delinquent debtors are appealing the debt or are in bankruptcy.

Estabrook said the agency likely will not release the information even after the pilot project is complete, because it generally does not provide information about specific taxpayers.

An exception is the list of the top 50 delinquent debtors the agency posted online this year.

ODOT late last year did begin requiring vendors for non-highway transportation projects be current on their taxes.

Corrections

The East Oregonian works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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AccuWeather.com Forecast
TODAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY SUNDAY
Mostly sunny, warm and pleasant
Partly sunny and very warm
An afternoon t-storm in spots
Cloudy and breezy
Rain and drizzle possible
PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST
85° 50° 82° 54° 75° 51° 67° 48° 62° 38°
HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST
87° 52° 84° 51° 78° 54° 72° 50° 66° 40°

ALMANAC

PENDLETON

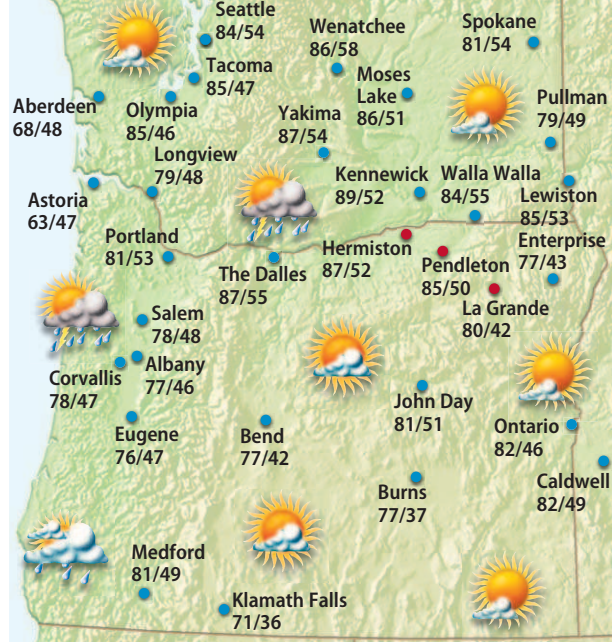
through 3 p.m. yesterday
TEMPERATURE HIGH LOW
Yesterday 80° 45°
Normals 63° 40°
Records 88° (1934) 23° (1966)
PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"
Month to date 0.21"
Normal month to date 0.76"
Year to date 4.20"
Last year to date 3.01"
Normal year to date 4.76"

HERMISTON

through 3 p.m. yesterday
TEMPERATURE HIGH LOW
Yesterday 82° 39°
Normals 66° 40°
Records 90° (1934) 24° (1982)
PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"
Month to date 0.28"
Normal month to date 0.50"
Year to date 2.98"
Last year to date 1.78"
Normal year to date 3.64"

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today 6:00 a.m.
Sunset tonight 7:49 p.m.
Moonrise today 6:32 p.m.
Moonset today 5:34 a.m.
Full Last New First
Apr 21 Apr 29 May 6 May 13



REGIONAL FORECAST

Coastal Oregon: Times of clouds and sun today; a passing shower, except dry across the north.
Eastern and Central Oregon: Partly sunny today; a shower or thunderstorm in spots across the Cascades.
Western Washington: Mostly sunny today; a shower or thunderstorm in spots across the south in the afternoon.
Eastern Washington: Mostly sunny today. Clear to partly cloudy tonight. Some sunshine tomorrow.
Cascades: Clouds and sun, a thunderstorm in spots this afternoon; very warm across the north.
Northern California: A shower today; sun, some clouds, but sunshine in central parts.

REGIONAL CITIES

Table with 4 columns: City, Today (Hi Lo W), Thu. (Hi Lo W). Lists cities like Astoria, Baker City, Bend, Brookings, Burns, etc.

WORLD CITIES

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WINDS

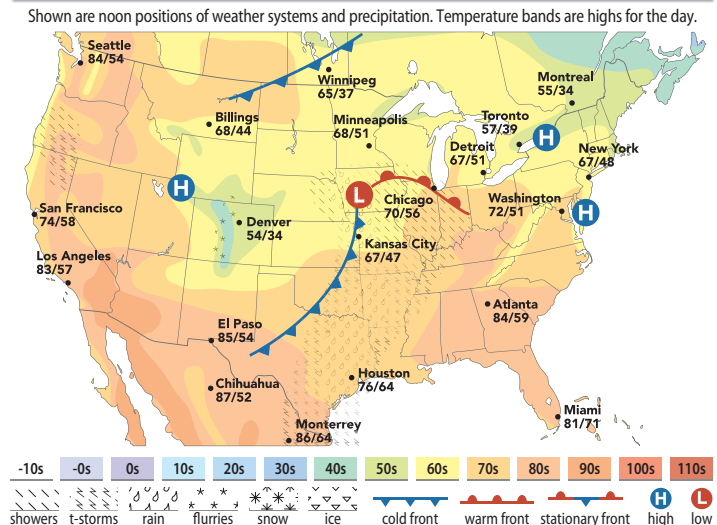
(in mph) Today Thursday
Boardman NE 3-6 WSW 4-8
Pendleton NNE 4-8 NW 4-8

UV INDEX TODAY

1 4 6 6 3 1
8 a.m. 10 a.m. Noon 2 p.m. 4 p.m. 6 p.m.
0-2, Low 3-5, Moderate 6-7, High; 8-10, Very High; 11+, Extreme
The higher the AccuWeather.com UV Index™ number, the greater the need for eye and skin protection.

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NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



National Summary: Sunshine is in store from Florida to Maine and in a large part of the West today. Showers and storms will extend from Texas and Louisiana to Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois and Indiana.

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 97° in Imperial, Calif.
Low 12° in Cabin Creek, Colo.

NATIONAL CITIES

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