

## Water: Umatilla County approves deal with NOWA

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Shrinking water levels in the area's basalt aquifers have taken farmland out of production or moved it to less profitable dryland crops. NOWA was launched with a grand vision of a water recharge project that would build three pipes from the Columbia River and allow farms to use that water instead of groundwater, giving the aquifers time to recharge. The water pulled from the river would be mitigated by municipal water rights transferred and left in the river.

Factors ranging from government bureaucracy to a lawsuit against Westland Irrigation District have slowed the project, however. The county's purchase of the interest discussed Wednesday would help preserve the central arm of the project by keeping the option open to pipe water to the

depot area.

Once the final deal goes through, the county will be guaranteed intake capacity of 30 cfs year-round and will have first right to an additional 15 cfs except for July 15-Sept. 30. It will also obtain an easement to build a pipeline to pump the water to the former depot.

The depot is in the final stages of being transferred from the U.S. Army to the locally-controlled Columbia Development Authority. The CDA plans to market portions of the depot for industrial development, and water availability will improve the land's marketability.

Commissioners voted unanimously Wednesday to sign the option agreement.

"There is no question about the importance of this project to industrial and agricultural growth of the region," commissioner Bill Elfering said.

## Wildfire risk picks up in parts of Northwest

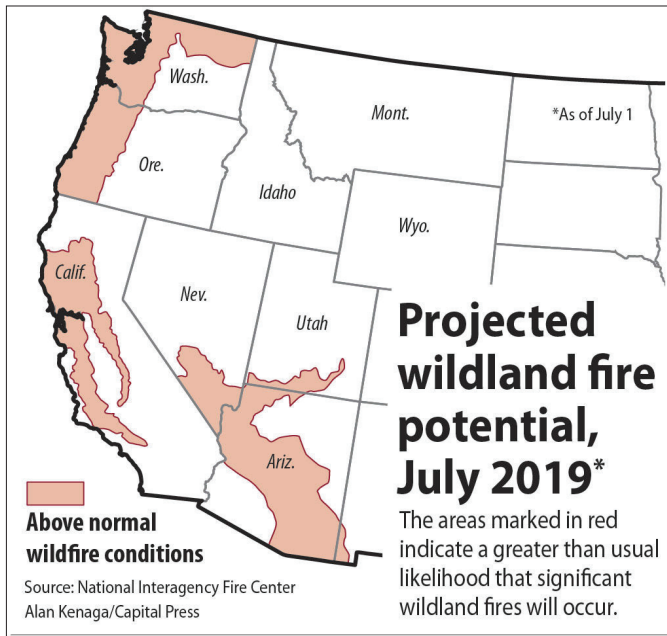
By BRAD CARLSON  
Capital Press

BOISE, Idaho — Western wildfire risk is increasing in spots following a slow start to the season, the National Interagency Fire Center reported. An exception is Alaska, where fires are already active.

"From what I am hearing from the field, the fine fuels across the Great Basin are now cured and able to support fire activity should it occur," said Bryan Henry, NIFC Predictive Services acting national fire weather program manager. "The higher elevations are delayed still. The only surprise out there nationally is how wet the Northern Rockies have been and continue to be."

Much of the Northwest has normal risk, NIFC reported. But areas west of the Cascade Crest in Washington and Oregon, and north along the Canadian border, likely have above-normal risk as heavy fuels remain drier than usual.

Moderate to severe drought remains across much of Washington and Oregon, particularly in western portions. Above-normal tem-



peratures are expected especially west of the Cascades, where below-average summer rainfall is likely. Predicted above-average precipitation for the Rocky Mountains and Great Basin may extend into eastern Oregon and Washington.

In the Northern Rockies, NIFC expects normal significant large fire potential, except across the northern Idaho panhandle and north-

western Montana, where the potential should be above normal through early September in part because of continued moderate drought. Temperatures likely will be above average in much of the region.

Lower elevations in the Great Basin have seen grasses cure in most areas below 5,000 feet except in northeastern Nevada and parts of eastern Idaho and western Wyoming. Boise-based NIFC said fine-

fuel loading is well above normal in many lower elevations, though some brush is yet to dry; when that live-fuel moisture drops, large-fire potential will increase quickly in July. The region has above-normal potential for large fires in August and September at lower elevations in western Nevada, and normal potential elsewhere.

Northern California has above-normal July potential for significant large fires, except in the higher-elevation Mendocino National Forest near the central coast. NIFC said factors include dead and down fuels in the northern Sacramento Valley, heavy brush growth and a robust, mostly cured crop of fine fuels. Rainfall was well above average in the 2018-19 season. Risk likely is below normal in the Northern Sierra above 6,000 feet. High-elevation snowpack was above average entering July. Snowmelt likely will conclude by late July, though soil and fuel moisture should linger. Conditions that are warmer and drier than average are expected through October.

## Boquist: Conduct hearing scheduled for July 8 in Salem

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come heavily armed?"

I'm probably not the originator of that phrase. It's probably been used in many other circumstances in the last four decades of military and government service.

So the origination of this whole discussion was, you know, over a month ago, and it went back and forth, including — there are emails on what is legal, what is not legal. Do you have the authority to arrest? If you have the authority arrest, you know, what happens? And of course, there's correspondence with the state police involved in this. There's electronic correspondence with the Marion County District Attorney. Because remember, if you're going to arrest somebody, you have to prosecute them if it's a criminal deal, because other than that, it's false imprisonment.

This comment actually come up multiple times before I actually shared the comment directly with the superintendent of state police and a captain in the building in, you know, that was out there. And of course, their response is the same as response back that, "okay, it's not our job to come arrest you." OK. And if you notice, nobody got arrested.

Now, the media is quite familiar with this are all kinds of threats floating around all kinds of quotes. The best one in the building here is they're going to arrest us and bring him in and chains and orange jumpsuits. But none of that happens.

So in the video tape the KGW took that has doesn't release the entire 15 minutes of the interview, which our communications director asked me to do the interview. The reason is quotable, because it is a quote from, you know, at least a dozen conversations before directly with the Oregon State Police on you know, "it would be illegal for you to come arrest, it would be a false arrest."

And of course, they see this is purely political free speech and discussion, you know, within the politics and the realms.

Did you think about what sort of response you would get?

Absolutely. And what was your thought?

The thought is, is that all of the qualified law enforcement officers and the people would know that they should not be violating the law, and that this was purely a political issue, which it is.

It is purely outright political retribution. And the fact that I have a document, which

I've given to you, that says there is no complaint, informal or formal, and that it was instigated by news reporters — reporters plural — both in writing, I was told, and verbally, that this is a political issue. One hundred percent. It is unfortunate the rest of the tape was not put out.

Were you expecting this would garner national media attention?

I don't think I would expect national media attention at all. And of course, I mean, considering the written responses, there's no complaint. I mean, you gotta realize the media picked up and started running with this. And the real response has been over the last 72 hours in which, you know, people are claiming there's a formal complaint and informal complaint. And there's all this. And of course, that's the media.

In hindsight, do you regret the comments?

In hindsight, yeah, that's an interesting thing. It's like foresight, if you can see for here's my philosophy in life. So the answer is no. Here's what everybody goes around and saying, "well, in hindsight, I would do something different."

Well, the problem is, if you were starting all over ... you'd have the same circumstances in the same place, you'd make the same comment. So I look back in hindsight is know, if I, if I made a mistake, not saying I did in any particular case, or not, I'd probably make the same statement. So the notion like you can go back and, you know, change the circumstances, to me, is nonsensical. What you do is you learn by your mistakes and go forward.

You were in the building Saturday, but not on the floor. Why was that?

I went to caucus. The discussion in caucus was trying to end and sine die on that evening, period. That evening. And what bills we would give rules suspension for, and what bills we would not give rules suspension for,



Oregon Capital Bureau Photo/Aubrey Wieber

The scrutiny given to Sen. Brian Boquist, R-Dallas, intensified to unprecedented levels in June when in one day he made two comments that literally brought national media to his door.

and trying to leave. There was a belief that we would be done on Saturday night.

I was asked by Herman Baertschiger, if in exchange for killing four bills, I would try and keep the peace and not go to the floor.

I think I've only stayed for one sine die. So that was my first session in the House. Because the thing happens at the end of the session, so the public understand, is what's called the Christmas tree bill. This is the literal horse trading bill. This is the bill where people get payoffs for the votes they made. And it appears to me, this was a grand payoff that happened on Sunday, back and forth. And so I generally do not vote on the Christmas tree bill because I mean, it's pork politics, and its worst as far as I'm concerned.

And so Laurie (Monnes Anderson) and I discussed, OK, well, I leave anyway. If I leave and if whomever wants to then come in and vote and have your votes count.

When you came on the floor Sunday, were you aware that Sen. Sara Gelsler said she would not be on the floor with you?

Absolutely not. Sara has not talked to me. Nobody's talked to me. The only reports I've seen is what's in the media.

Did you insist on having a gun with you on the floor Sunday?

That is a bald faced lie.

mas tree implementation bill: pork one and pork two. Right. That's what was left.

My understanding is they horse traded, somebody horse traded. The governor threatened, this is supposedly, right. The governor, with Peter Courtney, threatened that they would she would line-item veto all of the Republican projects — basically political blackmail, extortion, which is probably legal in politics. Okay, so I'm not blaming her for horse trading. Apparently, what transpired is she did that, and said, you know, if you don't give me an opportunity to vote on the cigarette tax referral, that she'd veto these projects.

They brought back a reconsideration of the speaker's housing bill. And then they brought back the tobacco tax referral. So it was actually four bills in the last 20 minutes of the session, or whatever it was.

The Christmas tree project bill is always held hostage to the end, and that's the best way to do it: hostage. So if you're somebody that who's supposed to get a \$55 million project out in your district, mostly rural Oregon, by the way, and you don't, you know, kowtow, you can have your project line-item vetoed.

That whole process that even though this is supposed to be a public record, it's kept secret to the very end, bothers me.

Then they opened both chamber doors and both ends and they look across, and then they talk about Kumbaya. There's no Kumbaya in this building, period. There is no Kumbaya. This building has been a hostile work in place for member employees, at least since February of last year.

And so this notion of then, OK, everybody's all friendly,

and we make up, you know, simply bothers me, it's a charade.

Is there concern the divide between you and other members in this building is beyond repair?

First off, you're right, it's wide.

Here's the, here's the issue that started. On Aug., 17, 2018, I sat in the law offices of Barran Liebman with Peter Courtney, with Ginny Burdick and Senator (Jackie) Winters and myself, and an equal amount of House members. This was in regard to the sexual harassment complaints against the Legislature. It came apparent in that meeting that there was more than dishonesty happening on the side of the Legislature in dealing with the sexual harassment allegations.

You need to remember, I am a hostile witness in at least one of the lawsuits that's out there. There are two other lawsuits that I certainly will be called into. I have multiple written formal complaints that have been stonewalled in direct violation of law. Now, many of the members of the media familiar with so to say that we're going to have better relationships until this place is cleaned out, is simply false.

There needs to be outside state and federal investigators looking into the actions of the Oregon State Senate. To my knowledge, I do not know that that is not happening right now. And so, no, we're not going to have good working relationships to the clean house.

Are you going to show up to the hearing on Monday?

If there's a hearing, I'll come. I don't even know what the committee hearing is going to consider. So I don't can't make a speculation of what it is they're going to do.

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