

Feds sign management decision for Columbia River dams

By **GEORGE PLAGEN**
Capital Press

PORTLAND — The Trump administration has signed off on a new operations plan for 14 dams in the Columbia River Basin that commits to improving fish passage and habitat, but does not call for breaching dams on the lower Snake River to protect endangered salmon and steelhead.

On Monday, Sept. 28, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation and Bonneville Power Administration signed a joint agreement for managing the Columbia River System, capping a long and litigious process that began in September 2016.

“We believe our decision carefully balances the region’s needs for clean, reliable energy, supports the economic vitality of the communities that depend on the rivers, and includes durable actions that offset impacts on fish and wildlife affected by the Columbia River System,” said John Hairston, acting BPA administrator.

Built between 1938 and 1976, the Columbia River System provides flood control, irrigation, electricity, navigation and recreation benefits across the Pacific Northwest. On average, the system generates 8,500 megawatts of power, enough for eight cities the size of Seattle.

Dam operators must also balance the needs and survival of native fish species protected under the Endangered Species Act.

A federal judge in Portland invalidated the previous Colum-



Associated Press, File/Capital Press

The Trump administration has signed off on a new operations plan for 14 dams in the Columbia River Basin, including Ice Harbor dam near Burbank, Wash., that commits to improving fish passage and habitat, but does not call for breaching dams on the lower Snake River to protect endangered salmon and steelhead.

bia River System plan in 2016 and ordered the agencies to issue a new environmental study considering more drastic measures to preserve salmon and steelhead runs throughout the basin.

U.S. District Judge Michael Simon said the study should evaluate removing Lower Granite, Little Goose, Lower Monumental and Ice Harbor dams on the lower Snake River in Washington, which environmental groups argue is necessary for both Pacific salmon and orca recovery.

Earlier this year, the agencies rejected breaching the dams, finding it would raise electricity rates as well as transportation and production costs for farmers. They instead recommended an alternative increasing the amount of water spilled over dams to boost fish migration, rehabbing wetland and riparian habitat and modifying some fish passage structures.

That recommendation, or “preferred alternative,” was ultimately adopted in the final Environmental Impact Statement and

Record of Decision.

Kristin Meira, executive director of the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association, a trade group that represents ports and businesses that depend on river transportation, expressed satisfaction with the operations plan, which she said will move the region toward a more sustainable future.

“Salmon, orcas and other wildlife are threatened by climate change impacts on marine environments, just as humans are threatened by fire and drought,” Meira

said. “The clean power and efficient commerce provided by the system’s hydroelectric dams and navigation locks are key to our region’s ability to reduce our carbon footprint — one of the most important steps in the fight against climate change.”

Environmental groups, however, criticized the decision for not following through with dam removal.

Todd True, an attorney at Earthjustice, which brought the original lawsuit on behalf of conservation and fishing groups in conjunction with the Nez Perce Tribe and state of Oregon, said the new operations plan is not materially different from past plans struck down by the courts.

“To say we need a new approach, that we need leadership from our elected representatives, and that we need to find a solution that works for all of us is to state the obvious,” True said. “And it is equally obvious that there is great urgency to do this — for salmon, for orcas and for the future of our region.”

Robb Krehbiel, representative for Northwest Programs at Defenders of Wildlife, said science is proven that the lower Snake River dams harm salmon by raising water temperatures to lethally high levels. Fewer salmon, in turn, harms orcas that depend on the fish as a source of food.

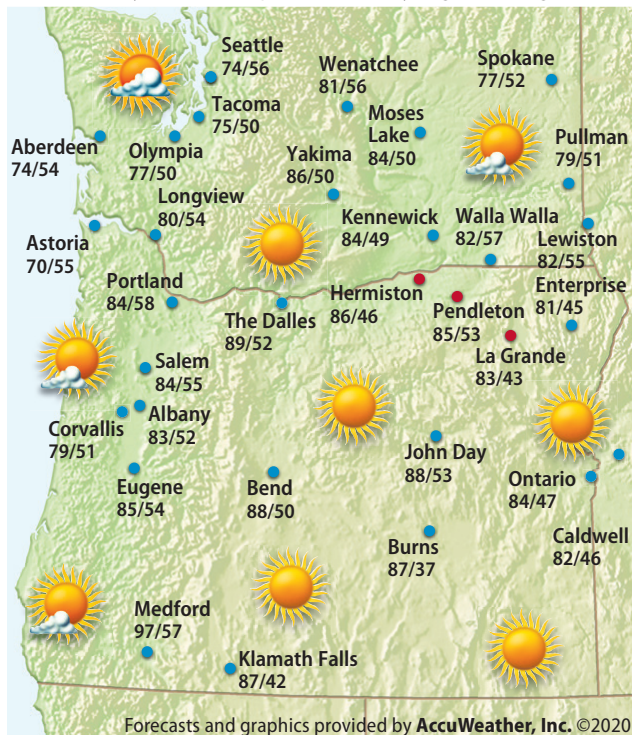
“We need governors and members of Congress to bring stakeholders together and determine a plan that saves salmon and orcas, honors our treaty obligations to tribes and supports struggling fishing communities,” Krehbiel said.

Forecast for Pendleton Area

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Sunshine	Mostly sunny and very warm	Sunny and very warm	Sunny and remaining warm	Pleasant with plenty of sunshine
PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
85° 53°	86° 53°	85° 50°	82° 48°	79° 50°
HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
86° 46°	87° 47°	86° 50°	84° 47°	82° 44°

OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	82°	47°
Normals	71°	45°
Records	89° (1992)	27° (1911)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.14"
Normal month to date	0.56"
Year to date	8.75"
Last year to date	10.85"
Normal year to date	8.98"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	82°	44°
Normals	73°	43°
Records	88° (1976)	27° (1933)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.07"
Normal month to date	0.44"
Year to date	1.73"
Last year to date	4.76"
Normal year to date	6.59"

WINDS (in mph)

Today	Fri.
Boardman	ENE 3-6
Pendleton	NW 4-8

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	6:54 a.m.
Sunset tonight	6:35 p.m.
Moonrise today	6:59 p.m.
Moonset today	6:29 a.m.

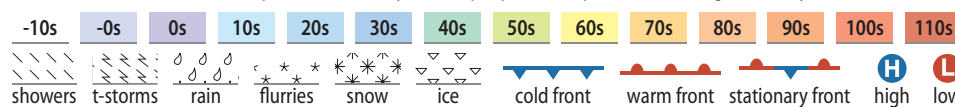
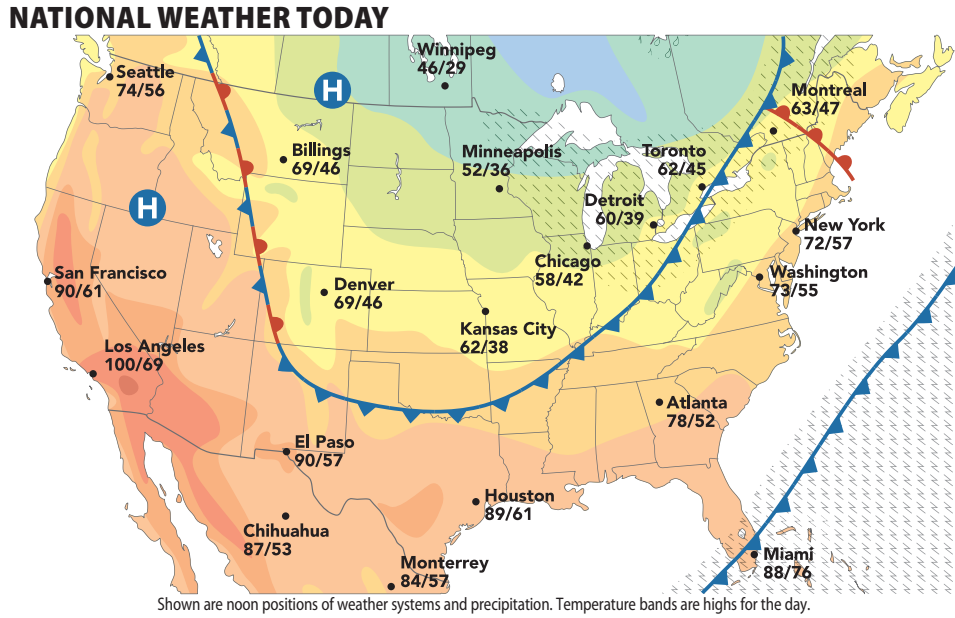


NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 111° in Chino, Calif. Low 18° in Angel Fire, N.M.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Les Schwab Tire Centers sold to California investment firm

By **MIKE ROGOWAY**
The Oregonian

BEND — Les Schwab Tire Centers has reached a deal to sell the company to Meritage Group, a San Francisco-based investment firm, ending family ownership of one of Oregon’s best-known businesses.

Bend-based Les Schwab Tire announced plans to sell the 68-year-old business in December 2019, citing the difficulties of running a business in its fifth generation of family ownership. Tire baron Les Schwab started the business in his hometown of Prineville in 1952 and grew it into one of Oregon’s largest companies with nearly 500 stores in 10 Western states, and annual sales of \$1.8 billion.

The business remained in Schwab’s family after his death in 2007.

When Les Schwab Tire announced its sale plans last year, Bloomberg reported the owners hoped for \$3 billion in the deal. Les Schwab and Meritage did not report terms of the Tuesday, Sept. 29, deal but said the current management team will remain in place and Les Schwab will continue operating as it has.

“We see Les Schwab Tires as an ideal investment,” Aubrey Barth, Meritage’s managing director, said in a statement. “The company’s exceptional employees and programs, strong financials, and respected, customer-focused brand set it up for success for years to come.”

Meritage’s founder, billionaire investor and climate change activist. Simons helps run a number of investment funds in addition to Meritage. It wasn’t immediately clear how Les Schwab fits into his investment thesis or what the deal will mean to the company’s operations and employees.

Meritage manages more than \$10 billion in assets. It has large holdings in Google, Charter Communications, Microsoft, Salesforce and Sherwin Williams Co., among others. It also owns Portland beverage distributor Columbia Distributing.

“Meritage Group has a history of preserving culture and values while growing its companies with investment over time. This is a great fit, and aligns well with Les’ vision and all we have built together,” Les Schwab CEO

Jack Cuniff said.

Les Schwab Tire’s sale is the latest in a succession of large, Oregon-based businesses to sell. Precision Castparts, Mentor Graphics and Vigor Industrial, among many others, have found new owners in the past few years.

Oregon now has few large, locally owned companies based here. It’s a trend that has worried economists for years, fearful that out-of-state owners would cut satellite operations in a downturn before trimming their headquarters.

When it announced sale plans, though, Les Schwab maintained any new owner would keep the company together and retain its Bend headquarters and Prineville distribution center.

“As our family grows and ages, it has been very important to us to remain committed and aligned behind our grandfather’s vision,” the Schwab family said in a statement. “While it was hard to make the decision to sell the Company, we are very confident Meritage Group will continue that commitment and alignment, and will build on all we have accomplished over the past 68 years.”

IN BRIEF

Five Points Creek pack takes down calf

UNION COUNTY — The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife reported wolves in the Five Points Creek area recently killed a 550 calf.

Hunters in a timbered U.S. Forest Service allotment found the 7-month old calf dead on Sept. 21, according to ODFW’s depredation investigation report. The calf’s owner contacted ODFW the next day for an investigation.

The calf likely died around Sept. 20, according to the report, which also stated:

“The attack scene and premortem injuries are clear signs of predator attack and the size and location of the bite injuries are similar to injuries observed on other cattle attacked by wolves.”

Fish and Wildlife attributed the depredation to the Five Points Pack.

ODFW in April reported the pack in 2019 produced three pups that survived to the end of the year and was counted as a breeding pair. Radio-collar data showed the pack roamed a 183-square-mile area with 50% of location data points on public lands and the other 50% on private lands.

— EO Media Group

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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