

La Nina forms and likely to stay through winter

Cool, wet winter on tap for much of Pacific Northwest

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press

SALEM — A La Nina has formed, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported Thursday, Oct. 14, portending a wet and cold winter in parts of the Northwest.

NOAA's Climate Prediction Center forecast the La Nina will peak at moderate strength from November through January. The center hedged a little, estimating a 13% chance the La Nina will diminish before winter.

"We have to have a little humility," Washington state climatologist Nick Bond said, reacting to the forecast. "But as much as we can, we can count on it."

La Nina winters generally lead to cool and wet winters in the northern tier of the U.S., including Idaho. Above-average snowpacks in the Cascades, especially in Washington, are the norm. Last winter, a La Nina prevailed. Melting snow helped large Washington irrigation districts withstand this year's drought.

Farther south, however, La Nina has the opposite effect. A La Nina winter



Snow blankets the forest Wednesday, Oct. 13, 2021, along Interstate 84 in the Blue Mountains outside Pendleton.

Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File

could worsen drought conditions in California and the Southwest.

Oregon roughly south of Roseburg falls in a transition zone where the effects of La Nina are hard to predict, Oregon state climatologist Larry O'Neill said.

During last winter's La Nina, drought worsened in

southern Oregon.

"I tend to temper expectations for that part of the state," O'Neill said. "The real wildcard is southwest Oregon and most of Eastern Oregon. Washington tends to have a strong La Nina signature. People see that, and they seem to forget Oregon." Below-average sea-sur-

face temperatures along the equator in the mid-Pacific start a La Nina. The cool ocean changes wind patterns and storm tracts.

In the past week, the ocean surface in the mid-Pacific has averaged 0.6 degrees Celsius below average, enough to trigger the atmospheric changes. Wind

anomalies confirm La Nina conditions are here, according to NOAA.

After peaking in early winter, this La Nina is expected to linger in a weakened state until the early spring, NOAA said.

The second of back-to-back La Nina winters generally start and end sooner than

the first, Bond said.

"They do tend to wimp out a little early," he said. "I think it's still going to deliver us some good mountain snow."

In forecasting the strength and staying power of this La Nina, NOAA evaluated 22 climate models. Most predict that sea-surface temperatures will be below average in November, December and January.

While NOAA gave a slight chance for the ocean to return to average temperatures, it ruled out that seas will warm up enough to trigger an El Nino, which foreshadows a warm and dry Northwest winter. Washington's "snow-pack drought" in the winter of 2014-15 occurred during an El Nino.

NOAA will issue a winter forecast Oct. 21. The Climate Prediction Center leans heavily on the sea temperatures in seasonal outlooks. Climatologists are researching how climate change will influence the Pacific's cool-and-warm cycle.

Bond said some research suggests the cycle will be less pronounced. That could be good news for the drought-stricken Southwest, but leave winter forecasters with less to go on, he said.

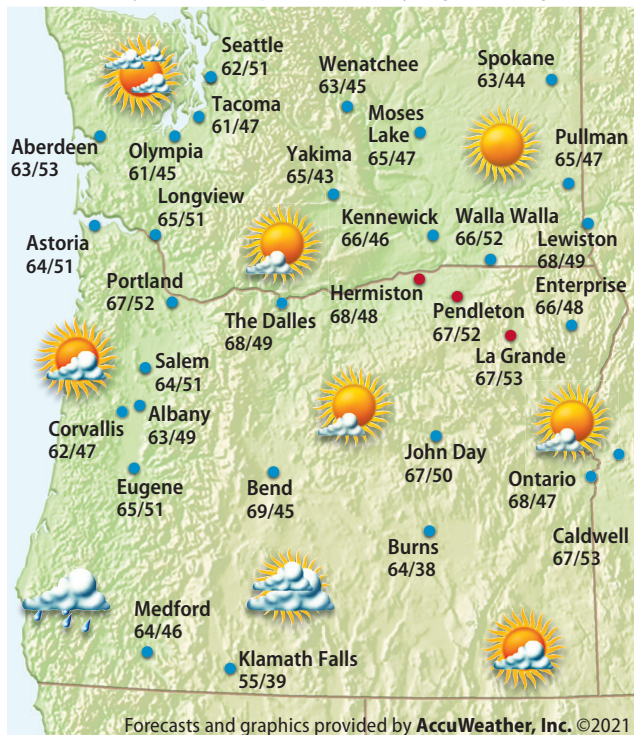
"We lose some of that predictability and that's a little bit of a drag," Bond said.

Forecast for Pendleton Area

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Plenty of sun	Cloudy and breezy with a shower	Warmer with clouds and sun	A couple of morning showers	Cloudy
PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
67° 52°	65° 43°	71° 53°	57° 46°	59° 47°
HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
68° 48°	69° 42°	72° 52°	63° 47°	63° 49°

OREGON FORECAST

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



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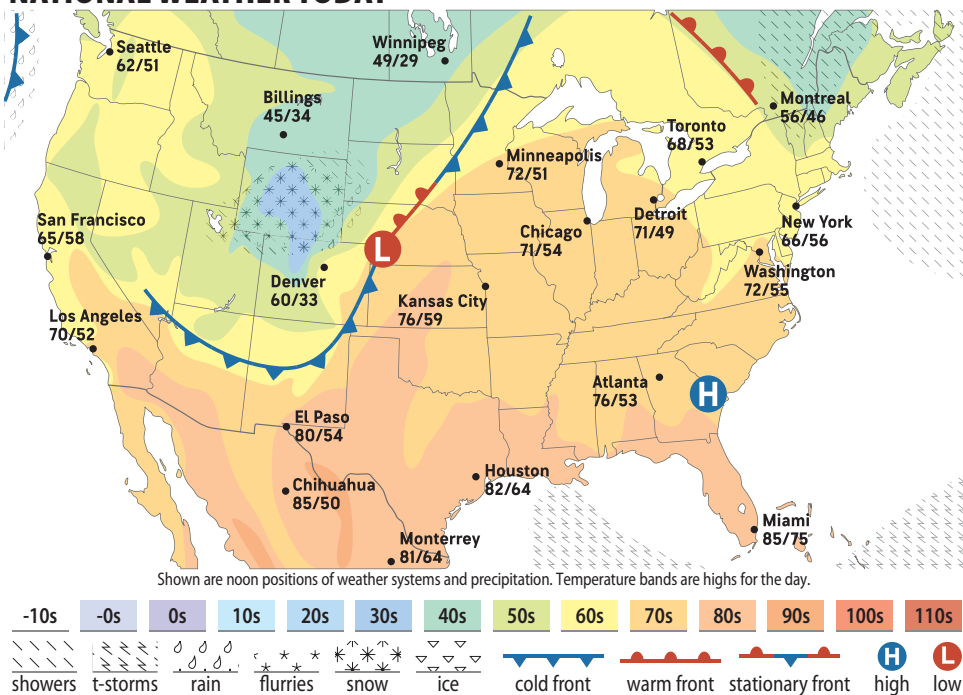
PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	63°	44°
Normals	64°	41°
Records	85° (1940)	20° (1917)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	0.06"	
Normal month to date	0.59"	
Year to date	5.06"	
Last year to date	9.26"	
Normal year to date	9.80"	
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	68°	48°
Normals	65°	38°
Records	85° (1940)	23° (1976)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	0.04"	
Normal month to date	0.42"	
Year to date	2.71"	
Last year to date	2.00"	
Normal year to date	6.09"	
WINDS (in mph)		
Today	NE 4-8	
Wed.	WSW 8-16	
Boardman	NNE 4-8	
Pendleton	SW 10-20	
SUN AND MOON		
Sunrise today	7:17 a.m.	
Sunset tonight	6:02 p.m.	
Moonrise today	6:01 p.m.	
Moonset today	6:07 a.m.	

NATIONAL EXTREMES

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

High 89° in Key West, Fla. Low 12° in Wolcott, Colo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Top state, federal officials talk wildfire management plans

By **SIERRA DAWN MCCLAIN**
Capital Press

EAGLE POINT — Oregon Gov. Kate Brown, Sen. Jeff Merkley, U.S. Department of the Interior officials and fire experts Thursday, Oct. 14, visited Southern Oregon to survey damage from last year's South Obenchain Fire and to talk about plans for managing future wildfires.

According to the officials, the West's plan for combating wildfires will include expanding forest treatments, paying federal firefighters a higher wage, converting seasonal firefighting positions into permanent jobs and investing in disaster recovery efforts.

"It's been clear for a number of years now that we are fighting fires of a new age made much more intense by climate change using tools of the last century," Brown told attendees, including firefighters from the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management.

Brown was surrounded by

charred hillsides, blackened by 2020's Labor Day fires.

The Legislature, Brown said, is investing \$220 million in modernizing Oregon's firefighting equipment, putting more "boots on the ground," helping vulnerable communities become more fire-adaptive and investing in prescriptive burning and thinning — work Brown called "incredibly important."

Merkley agreed that prescribed fire — intentional use of fire to clear vegetation on the landscape — is crucial.

"I've noticed just a huge shift in the attitude of the public about prescribed burns over this last decade," said Merkley. The public, he said, is becoming more receptive.

Merkley said he's working to secure federal dollars for hazardous fuels reduction: \$230 million in the recent continuing resolution package in Congress, \$2.4 billion in the infrastructure package that passed the Senate and is in the House, and \$650 million to \$700 million in the

2022 appropriations package.

But money may not be enough. Many prescribed burners have told the Capital Press the biggest barriers they face are legal, not monetary. Under Oregon law, prescribed burners carry heavy liability risks and must comply with strict air quality laws.

Merkley said better forest management can't happen without more firefighters.

Interior Department officials agreed, including Rachael Taylor, principal deputy assistant secretary for policy, management and budget. Taylor said the Interior Department is converting 500 seasonal firefighting positions into year-round positions that pay a minimum of \$15 per hour.

"Fire season is not a season anymore," said Taylor. "It's a year-round event."

While officials talked about the need for more firefighters, across Oregon many fire departments are preparing to lose significant numbers of staff and volunteers due to Brown's vaccine mandate for first responders.

Crane operator hurt in explosion at lumber mill

By **BENNETT HALL**
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — A crane operator was injured in an explosion at the Malheur Lumber mill on Wednesday, Oct. 13.

The man, whose name has not been released, was operating a crane at the mill when it bumped into a power line, possibly causing an electrical charge to ground out through the big machine, Grant County Sheriff Todd McKinley said.

The operator moved the crane away from the power line and got down on the ground to check for damage,

at which point one of the vehicle's tires exploded, injuring the operator. As bystanders began to gather around, a second tire blew up, but no one else was hurt, according to the sheriff.

"Everybody in town heard the booms, and those were the tires," McKinley said. "Those were big tires."

The man is employed by Boise Crane. The city of John Day contracted with the Idaho company for two cranes to place a new pedestrian bridge across the John Day River at the Hill Family Park on North Canton Street. That work was completed Oct. 12.

Malheur Lumber manager

Rich Fulton said his company also contracted with Boise Crane to move some heavy equipment at the mill before the cranes went back to Idaho.

Fulton confirmed that no one besides the crane operator was injured and said property damage from the incident was limited to the crane itself, which had a broken window in addition to the two ruined tires.

John Day City Manager Nick Green said he was told the injured crane operator was being treated at a Portland hospital and was expected to recover, but the Blue Mountain Eagle could not confirm that information.

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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