

Survey shows broad support for keeping Snake River dams

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**
Capital Press

VANCOUVER, Wash. — A new survey commissioned by Northwest RiverPartners indicates broad public support for keeping the Snake River dams.

Less than 30% of respondents favor removing the four dams.

DHM Research, an independent and nonpartisan research firm in Portland, conducted the survey from July 26 to Aug. 3, reaching 1,200 Northwest residents — 400 each in Idaho, Oregon and Washington.

According to the survey, 60% of respondents indicate support for “the use of hydroelectric dams on the lower Snake River to produce electricity” while 17% oppose it, and 23% don’t know.

Only 29% of respondents agreed that the dams should be removed to protect wild animals and their habitats. The rest opposed removal or didn’t know, according to the survey, which did not indicate the percentages for other answers.

Asked to rank their top concerns about removing the dams, respondents most often highlighted higher electricity costs, losing a source of carbon-free energy and impacts on agriculture.

About 14% said they had no concerns about the potential removal of the dams.

Kurt Miller, executive director of Northwest RiverPartners, told the Capital Press he wasn’t sure what to expect prior to commissioning the survey.

“I was definitely pleased with



Associated Press, File

Ice Harbor Dam, one of four dams on the lower Snake River. A survey DHM Research of Portland conducted in summer 2021 shows broad support for keeping the Snake River dams.

the results,” Miller said of the survey. “I was heartened, gratified to see that.”

He pointed to messaging from advocacy groups and media attention surrounding Idaho Rep. Mike Simpson’s proposal for dam breaching and Washington Gov. Jay Inslee and Sen. Patty

Murray’s federal-state assessment of salmon recovery, including dam breaching, as reasons for his uncertainty.

“People are being told that their neighbors essentially support dam breaching, and I don’t think that’s the case,” he said. “It’s important for the public to know it’s only

a smaller minority that believes this would be good policy for the Pacific Northwest.”

Miller hopes policymakers such as Inslee and Murray pay attention to the survey’s findings.

“We want to find the most productive ways of helping salmon without harming society,” he said.

“If we’re concerned about the will of the people, it’s certainly the will of the people to keep the dams in place.”

Miller said he believes the survey results show residents understand the energy challenges ahead, citing 100% clean energy objectives, initiatives for electric cars and other forms of transportation and the loss of fossil-fuel resources such as coal and natural gas generation plants.

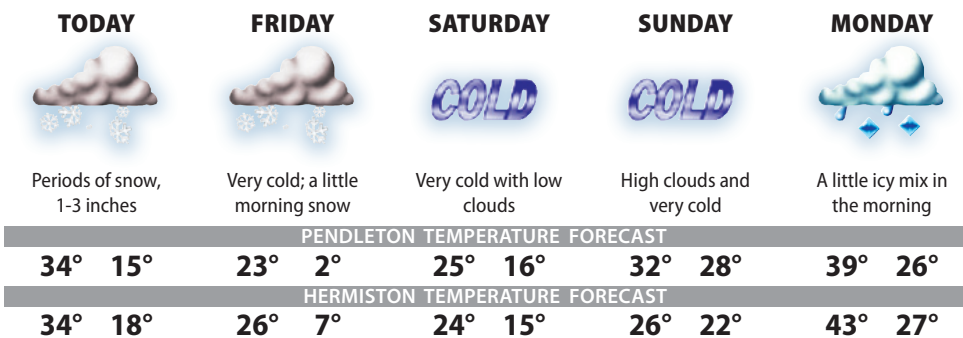
“I think what people see there is that resources that are carbon-free and can produce electricity 24-7 are going to be really important in the region’s future,” he said. “I think people can do the math.”

Efforts to breach the dams, especially Inslee’s and Murray’s proposed initiative, represent a “significant clear and present danger” to the future of the dams, and eventually the entire hydro-power system, Miller said.

“A lot of the arguments that are made in favor of breaching the lower Snake River dams are often not based on complete information, or even (based on) inaccurate information,” he said. “Our concern is that those same questionable arguments will be applied to other dams if these dams go.”

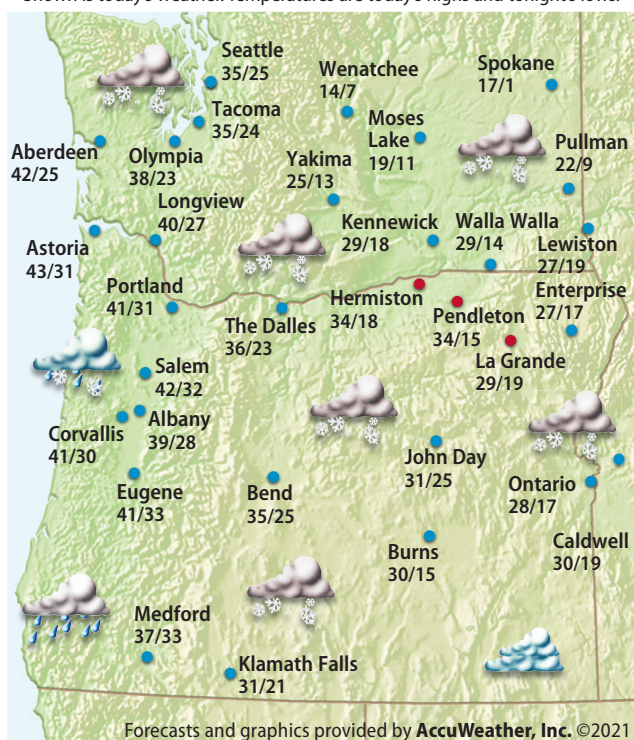
Northwest RiverPartners serves not-for-profit, community-owned electric utilities in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Nevada and Wyoming and represents partners that support clean energy, low-carbon transportation and agricultural jobs.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

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



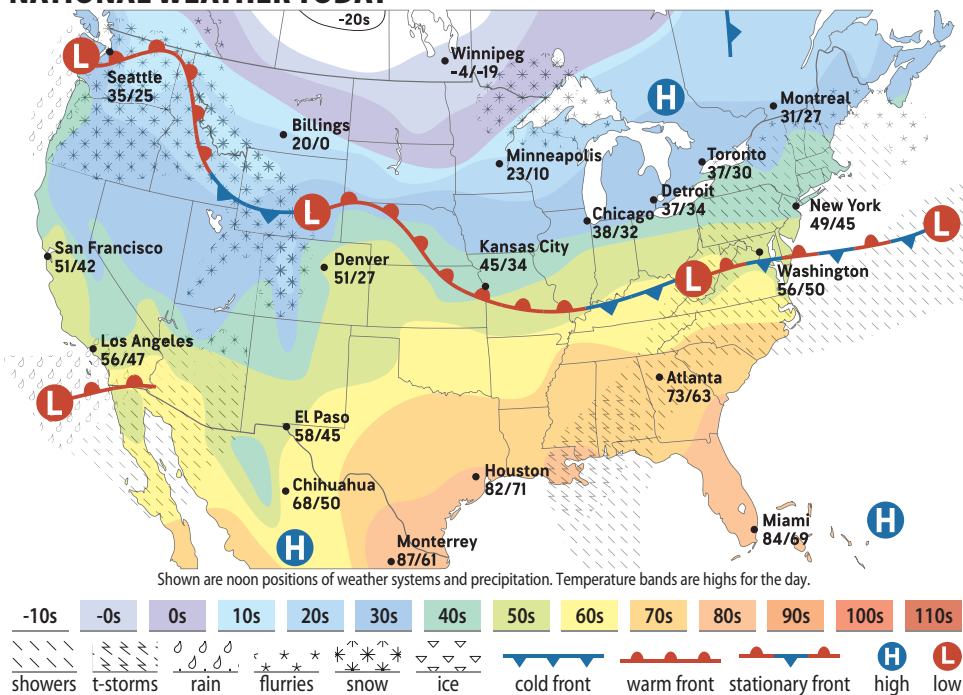
ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	17°	13°	
Normals	41°	28°	
Records	65° (1975)	-13° (1990)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.16"		
Month to date	1.71"		
Normal month to date	1.41"		
Year to date	9.09"		
Last year to date	13.06"		
Normal year to date	13.14"		
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	20°	18°	
Normals	42°	28°	
Records	59° (2018)	-14° (1990)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.08"		
Month to date	1.64"		
Normal month to date	1.04"		
Year to date	6.71"		
Last year to date	4.46"		
Normal year to date	8.56"		
WINDS (in mph)			
Today	Fri.		
Boardman	NW 6-12	SW 3-6	
Pendleton	WSW 7-14	WSW 4-8	
SUN AND MOON			
Sunrise today	7:36 a.m.		
Sunset tonight	4:20 p.m.		
Moonrise today	4:00 a.m.		
Moonset today	1:37 p.m.		
New First Full Last			
Jan 2	Jan 9	Jan 17	Jan 25

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 89° in Harlingen, Texas Low -33° in Hallock, Minn.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Riders located after getting lost

Panhandle Snowmobile Club helps sheriff find lost group of snowmobilers near Fish Lake

By **JAYSON JACOBY**
Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — A group of Baker County snowmobile riders rapidly shifted from recreationists to rescuers the day after Christmas when a group of riders from Washington got lost during a blizzard in the Wallowa Mountains north of Halfway.

The locals, members of the Panhandle Snowmobile Club in eastern Baker County, found the five snowmobilers, none of whom was injured, and escorted them back to a parking area about four hours after the rescue operation started.

The episode showed the value both of the GPS-equipped emergency transmitter the Washington snowmobilers carried, and of having a local cadre of riders who are familiar with the terrain and willing to help others, Baker County Sheriff Travis Ash said Monday, Dec. 27.

“They made a pretty seamless transition from enjoying their day to a rescue mission,” Ash said of the Panhandle Snowmobile Club members.

The incident started about 5:28 p.m. Dec. 26 when Ash received a phone call from Brandon Christensen, a Washington man who is friends with the five snowmobilers. Christensen told the sheriff that his friends, who had limited cell service, had called to tell him they were lost in the Fish Lake area, about 14 miles north of Halfway.

Christensen said he is an experienced snowmobiler who has participated in search and rescue missions, involving snowmobiles, with the Umatilla County Sheriff’s Office. Christensen said he was riding his snowmobile in the Tollgate area, north of Elgin, on Dec. 26

and had just returned to his cabin when he got a phone call from Mike Kelly, a friend from Burbank, Washington, near the Tri-Cities.

Kelly said he and four other riders, all of them friends with Christensen, were riding in the Fish Lake area north of Halfway and were lost in a storm that brought fog, snow and gusty winds that eradicated their tracks. The riders couldn’t find their way back to the trailhead in the dark.

“I immediately started making phone calls,” Christensen said.

One of those was to the Wallowa Avalanche Center in Joseph, where a staff member gave Christensen a phone number for Ash.

Kelly used his cellphone to send Christensen a digital map ostensibly showing their location. But the map showed them to be in the Catherine Creek area, more than 15 miles to the west. At about 5:43 p.m., the Baker County Sheriff’s Office received an SOS alert from a Garmin satellite device. The message stated that several snowmobilers, one of whom had a medical condition, were lost. The message pinpointed the group’s location near Fish Lake. Ash said it was clear this was the same group that Christensen had called him about.

Christensen said another member of the group, John Mecham, of Kennewick, brought the Garmin InReach satellite device. Ash said he told Christensen, who had intermittent cellphone contact with Kelly, to tell the group to stay where they were since the GPS message had established their location.

Christensen said his friends had ridden in the area several times, but were unable to get their bearings in the storm. They did have materials to start a fire, as well as some food.

Ash said that after confirming the group’s location he called Duane Miles, of the Panhandle Snowmobile Club, who immediately started assembling riders while Ash was en route from Baker City to Halfway.

The club members reached the five Washington men about 9:10 p.m. They were cold and tired but otherwise OK. They rode back about 9 miles to the Clear Creek Sno-Park on the road to Fish Lake.



Ash

IN BRIEF

Trio jailed after failed burglary

SUMMERVILLE — The Union County Sheriff’s Office in a press release Monday, Dec. 27, reported the arrest of three people on Christmas Eve as they removed items from a residence in Summerville.

A deputy who was patrolling Summerville Road about 8:30 a.m. on Dec. 24 recognized a suspicious vehicle at the residence, and a call to the property manager

found there should not have been anyone there.

The investigation led to the arrest of Nickole L. Thamert, 47, of Summerville, Jon M. Weathers, 51, of La Grande, and Emily A. Wilson, 38, of Summerville. According to the sheriff’s office, the three were in the process of removing items from the residence and were loading them into a vehicle.

—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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