

Heat and ongoing drought hurt health of Oregon forests

By SIERRA DAWN MCCLAIN
Capital Press

CORVALLIS — Drought, coupled with last year's heat waves, have weakened the health of forests across Oregon.

"In Oregon, we're facing several emerging issues: drought, fire, tree decline, insect outbreaks, tree pathogens and invasive species," said David Shaw, Oregon State University professor and forest health specialist with the Forestry and Natural Resources Extension.

Shaw was speaking to about 230 people at OSU's biennial State of the State Forest Health in Oregon Conference on Tuesday, March 1.

Shaw motioned to the latest U.S. Drought Monitor map, an assortment of yellow, orange, red and maroon swatches representing the ongoing severity of Oregon's drought.

"This (drought) pattern that we're in has some serious consequences for forest health," he said.

It matters when too many trees die, said Andrew Gray, research ecologist with the U.S. Forest Service's Pacific Northwest Research Station, because healthy forests are needed to support wildlife, timber, water, recreation, carbon storage and wildfire resilience.

The past few years, Oregon forests have been suffering from biotic and abiotic factors — biotic meaning from living things, such as invasive plants and bacteria, abiotic meaning from non-living things such as fire and atmospheric conditions.



A section of forest that burned moderately in Oregon's Bootleg Fire in 2021. Drought, plus the record-high heat waves that year, have weakened the health of forests across Oregon

Sierra Dawn McClain/Capital Press

"Between the abiotic and biotic stresses, the common thread is drought," said Danny DePinte, Oregon aerial survey coordinator for the U.S. Forest Service, who coordinates remote sensing and aerial analysis of forests via drones, planes and satellites.

The connection between drought and forest health is some-

times self-evident: dry fuels burn more easily. But drought also weakens trees, making them more susceptible to pests.

For example, DePinte said Southwest Oregon is facing an uptick in Douglas fir mortality to a pest called the flatheaded fir borer.

Robbie Flowers, a U.S. Forest Service entomologist, is also

seeing intensified pest pressure.

"(Insects that defoliate trees) are coming into a larger, more prominent role in the era of these heat events and ongoing drought," said Flowers.

In Central Oregon, for example, Flowers said bark beetles are a major concern.

According to DePinte, the aerial

survey coordinator, another factor that damaged Oregon's forests last year was the "heat dome" that formed in June.

After the heat wave, researchers and "citizen scientists" compiled images and other records showing massive sunburn damage throughout Oregon's forests: trees scorched orange.

"It was a landscape-scale type of event," said DePinte.

The records conservatively mapped 229,000 acres of heat damage across Oregon and Washington.

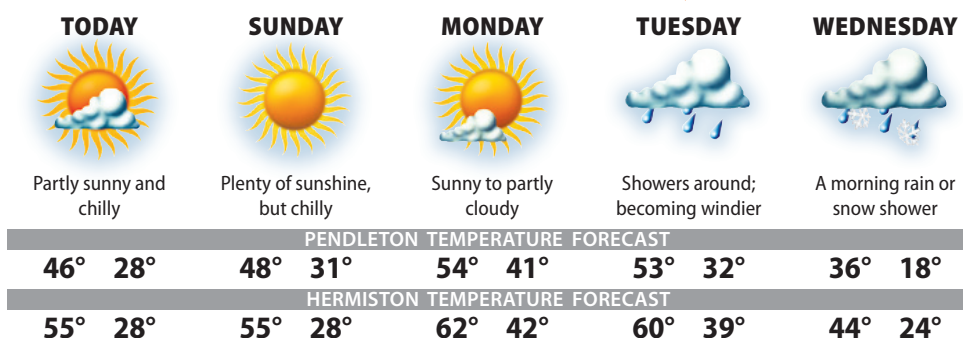
"It was potentially the largest documented scorch event in history," said Shaw, the extension specialist.

David Still, OSU professor in the Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society, said some impacts were less obvious than sunburn. Some perfectly green pine needles, for example, dropped to the ground or stopped photosynthesizing effectively after being superheated.

"There was a real jolt to the whole system," said Still.

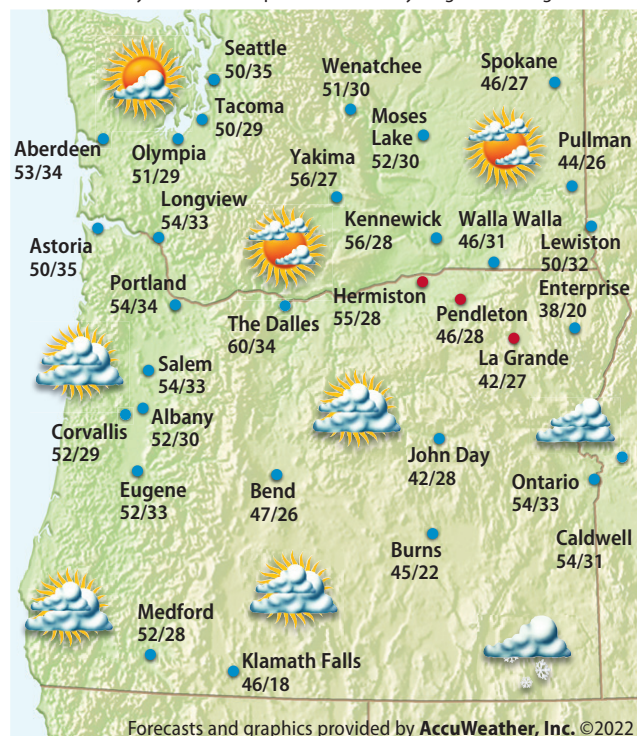
According to Jessica Halofsky, director of the U.S. Forest Service's Western Wildland Environmental Threats Assessment Center, solutions will vary by region, but some potential solutions include conducting more prescribed fire treatments, thinning stands, improving beetle control, creating fuel breaks, removing non-native species and planting tree species that are more disease- and drought-resilient.

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	47°	30°	
Normals	53°	33°	
Records	75° (1968)	3° (2019)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"		
Month to date	0.36"		
Normal month to date	0.16"		
Year to date	2.80"		
Last year to date	3.02"		
Normal year to date	2.85"		
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	53°	28°	
Normals	56°	31°	
Records	70° (1987)	2° (2019)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"		
Month to date	0.43"		
Normal month to date	0.09"		
Year to date	1.49"		
Last year to date	1.61"		
Normal year to date	2.09"		
WINDS (in mph)			
Today	Sun.		
Boardman	NNE 4-8		
Pendleton	NNW 4-8		
SUN AND MOON			
Sunrise today	6:27 a.m.		
Sunset tonight	5:47 p.m.		
Moonrise today	8:02 a.m.		
Moonset today	9:26 p.m.		
First	Full	Last	New
Mar 10	Mar 17	Mar 24	Mar 31

NATIONAL EXTREMES

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

High 89° in Tampa, Fla. Low -27° in Brimson, Minn.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Bentz draws more challengers

By GARY A. WARNER
Oregon Capital Bureau

A retired U.S. Army colonel from Douglas County, a conservative activist who switched from a race in Arizona and a 2020 candidate for the U.S. Senate in Arizona have filed to run against US Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario.

Bentz is seeking a second two-year term representing the 2nd Congressional District, which covers nearly all of eastern, central and much of southwestern Oregon.

The sprawling, mostly rural area, already had a strong Republican tilt that was made even more pronounced under redistricting that extracted northern Deschutes County, the district's largest Democratic enclave, and moved it into the 5th Congressional District.

Joseph Yetter III of Azalea in Douglas County filed on Thursday, March 3, with the Oregon secretary of state to run in the Democratic primary in the 2nd Congressional District.

He is the only Democrat in the race.

Yetter's filing lists him as a physician and farmer. The candidate statement filed with the secretary of state says he is a retired U.S. Army colonel who served from 1968 to 2004.

Bentz already has two opponents in the Republican primary, both with ties to Arizona politics.

Katherine "Kat" Gallant, a conservative commentator living in Ukiah has been listed as qualified by the Oregon secretary of state to run for the 2nd Congressional District as a Republican.

Gallant had planned to run for the 1st Congressional District in Arizona in 2022. After redistricting maps for both states were finalized, Gallant said she decided to run for the seat in Oregon instead.

Gallant said she was born and raised in Pendleton, lives in Umatilla County and also has property in Arizona and Utah.

Mike Cavener of Klamath Falls, who lists several

nonprofit and political action groups in his career, filed to run for the 2nd District in early January.

Cavener filed to run in the 2020 U.S. Senate special election in Arizona, but withdrew prior to the primary vote, according to the political tracking website, Ballotpedia.

The Arizona GOP primary was won by incumbent U.S. Sen. Martha McSally, who had been appointed to the seat in 2019 by Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey. Democrat Mark Kelly defeated McSally in the special election. He is running for a full six-year term in 2022.

Unlike state offices, which fall under the Oregon Constitution, the rules for running for the U.S. House of Representatives are in the U.S. Constitution. Candidates do not have to live in the districts where they are candidates, just the state.

The filing deadline for the seat is March 8. Candidates for Congress also must file with the Federal Elections Commission to raise and spend campaign funds.

IN BRIEF

Reward offered for information in wolf poaching case

COVE — Nonprofit groups are willing to pay up to \$22,500 for information that leads to an arrest or citation regarding a wolf poached Feb. 15 near Cove.

Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife troopers found the dead radio-collared wolf Feb. 15 at the end of Haggerty Lane off High Valley Road approximately 3½ miles south of Cove while responding to a call from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife for a

mortality signal. There were no obvious signs of injury but wildlife veterinarians discovered a bullet while examining the wolf, which they said was the cause of death, according to an ODFW press release.

The wolf, a black female believed to be no more than 2 years old, was known as OR 109 was collared and released in March 2021.

Anyone with information regarding this case should contact the the Oregon State Police through the Turn in Poachers line at 800-452-7888 or email TIP@osp.oregon.gov and reference case No. SP22039030.

—EO Media Group

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