

Storm leaves trail of damage, injuries in Wallowa

By ANDREW CUTLER AND PHIL WRIGHT
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA — Bruce Eien said he remembers feeling a sense of déjà vu Thursday, Aug. 11, in the aftermath of the severe storm that rolled through Wallowa County.

“It looked like how people were walking around after 9/11 — in a daze,” he said. “That’s exactly what it was.”

The Enterprise resident, who has family that lives in Wallowa where much of the damage from large hail was centered, was touring the county to look at the damage in the aftermath of the storm.

“We were driving around, checking on all of the people we knew,” he said, “making sure they were OK.”

Earlier in the day, the National Weather Service in Pendleton issued a severe thunderstorm warning for much of Wallowa County until 5 p.m. Aug. 11. The warning included 2-inch hail and winds up to 50 mph. Camden Plunkett, a meteorologist for the weather service, said there were reports of baseball-sized hail in the county.

“For the hail that was received in Wallowa County, we are leaning toward tennis ball-sized hail up to 2½ inches,” he said. “We did also



This photo, submitted by Nicole Bellows, of Lostine, shows unique storm clouds rolling through Wallowa County on Thursday, Aug. 11, 2022. “I had never seen anything like it. My husband is from Kansas and his remark was, ‘If I was in Kansas I would say it’s a tornado. It was moving fast and headed northeast,’” Bellows said.

Nicole Bellows/Contributed Photo

have some reports of ping-pong ball-sized hail about 1.5 inches in La Grande as well.”

Plunkett said his office did hear about multiple injuries as a result of the hail, something Eien said he’s heard while he was in Wallowa as well.

“We are hoping everyone is all right,” he said, adding the county also received

“frequent lightning strikes.”

Staff at Wallowa Memorial Hospital, Enterprise, confirmed the hospital treated “multiple” patients for injuries from the hailstones. Staff also reported how unusual this was, with one commenting she has lived in Eastern Oregon more than 40 years and this was a first for her.

Eien said around 4 p.m. the power went out in Enterprise and about the same time, his wife received a text from her parents in Wallowa.

“We lost everything,” he recalled the text saying. “We immediately got in the car. We didn’t know what that meant.”

Eien said as they reached Wallowa, the damage sharp-

ened into focus — cars with shattered windshields, downed trees and homes with severe damage.

“There was a tree that hit a house, some trees in front of the high school went over,” he said. “Telephone lines, power lines went down.”

Power was out for 887 customers in Wallowa into the early morning hours of Aug. 12. According to the Pacific Power website, 887 customers were without power following the storm. The outage was first reported shortly before 4 p.m.

“We have crews working around the clock to restore services to all those affected,” the Pacific Power website says. “We estimate power will be restored by 5 a.m.”

Power also is out to about 13 customer in the Minam area. The outage was also reported shortly before 4 p.m. and is expected to be restored around 5 a.m.

Power was out in other parts of the county, according to Pacific Power’s Twitter feed.

More than 5,300 customers in Enterprise and Wallowa were without power late in the afternoon. The cause of the outage was severe storm damage, according to the utility’s Twitter feed.

Plunkett said the storm was a perfect chain of events

to cause the large hailstones.

“We had really strong updrafts and then we had really strong wind shear that allowed an organized supercell thunderstorm to develop,” he said.

The storm took about 90 minutes to pass through the county, Plunkett said, and once it crossed into Idaho, the storm weakened significantly.

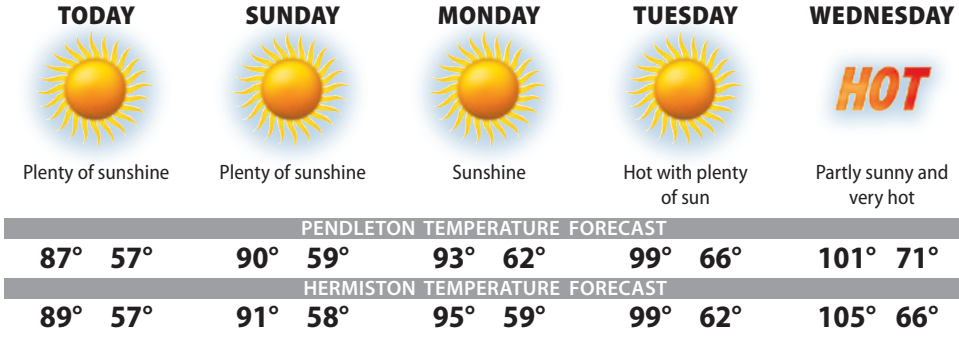
Plunkett said the expected 50 mph wind gusts did not materialize. There were reports of 60 mph gusts at the La Grande/Union County Airport.

“We did not have any confirmed wind gusts in Wallowa County,” he said.

Severe weather is not expected in the county over the next several days, but Wallowa County was in line for possible isolated thunderstorms in the afternoon on Aug. 12.

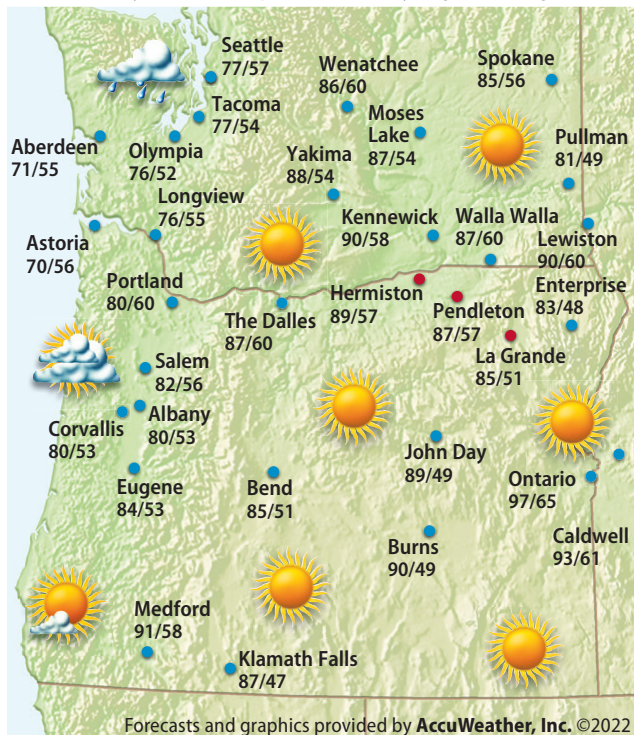
Plunkett also said there is not a lot of data available on supercells in Wallowa County. The last recorded event was a tornado with a rating of EF2 that hit June 11, 1968. EF means “enhanced Fujita scale,” and a 2 on the scale means gusts of three seconds of 111-135 mph. The Western Regional Climate Center, he said, reports that tornado came with golf ball-sized hail.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

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



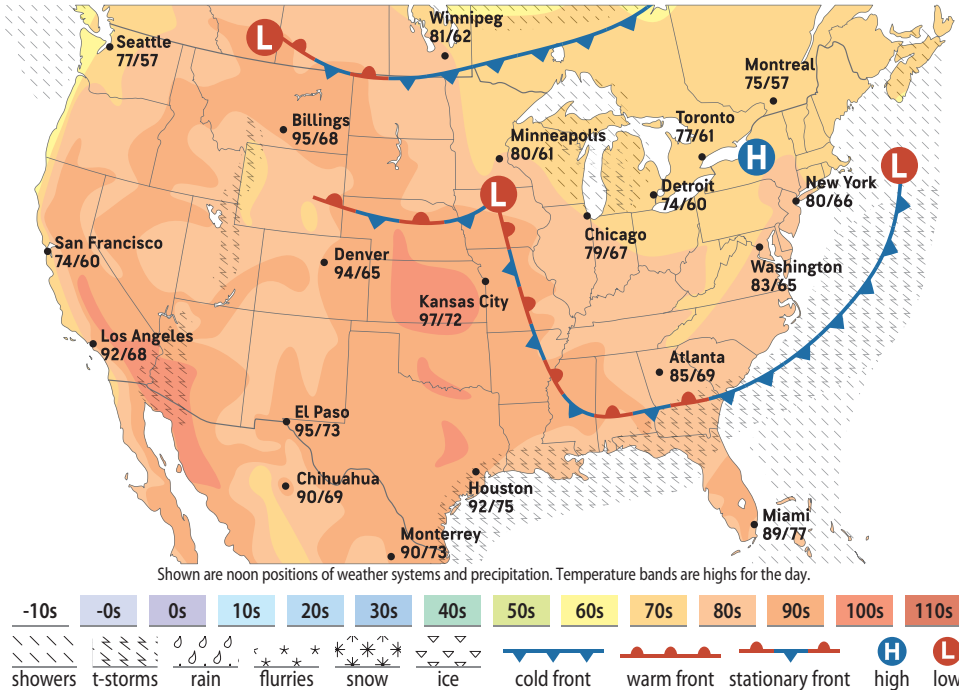
ALMANAC

Table with weather almanac data for Pendleton and Hermiston, including temperature, precipitation, and wind forecasts.

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday’s National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 107° in Palm Springs, Calif. Low 35° in Bodie State Park, Calif.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



\$11,500 reward offered for information on an illegal wolf kill in Baker County

By SIERRA DAWN MCCLAIN
Capital Press

BAKER COUNTY — Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Division troopers are seeking the public’s assistance in finding whoever shot a wolf in Baker County.

On Aug. 5, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife notified troopers that a collared wolf, OR112, might be dead at a site about 7 miles north of Halfway.

Fish and Wildlife troopers and ODFW personnel went to the site and found the dead wolf.

The wolf, a 2-year-old gray female that was part of the Keating Pack, had been shot. Troopers say it appears the wolf was killed the previous day, Aug. 4.

The Oregon Wildlife Coalition and its conservation partners are offering an \$11,500 reward to anyone who has information that leads to the arrest of one or more suspects in the case.

Amaroq Weiss, senior wolf advocate at the Center for Biological Diversity, which is part of the coalition



Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Division/Contributed Photo
Oregon State Police on Aug. 5 found this wolf, which had been shot, in Baker County.

offering the reward, said that because wolves are much larger than coyotes, there is no excuse for mistaking the two.

“Anyone with information on this or other killings should do the right thing and come forward,” said Weiss.

Oregon Cattlemen’s Association has told the Capital Press previously that while producers have long been frustrated by ODFW’s

policies related to livestock depredations, “Unlawful activity is not something OCA is ever going to encourage.”

The association has cautioned against assuming ranchers are responsible for poaching.

Anyone with information about the case should call the Turn in Poachers hotline at 800-452-7888 or email TIP@osp.oregon.gov.

IN BRIEF

OSP now says antelope in Baker County was killed legally

KEATING — The Oregon State Police on Tuesday, Aug. 9, retracted its claim from the day before that a buck antelope had been illegally killed near Keating in Baker County.

A Tuesday press release from OSP stated: “After receiving information from the public, F&W Troopers were able to determine this was a legal harvest and the meat was removed from the carcass in accordance with the wildlife laws. The buck antelope was harvested utilizing a Special Qualified Disabled Veteran Tag. Oregon State Police Fish & Wildlife Division personnel are no longer seeking the

public’s assistance regarding this matter.”

In a press release on Monday, OSP stated that fish and wildlife troopers had “received information from a citizen who found an antelope carcass on BLM land between Mother Lode Road and Skinner Lane near Keating. Troopers responded to the scene and found the butchered carcass of an antelope with the head removed. Troopers determined the antelope was likely killed sometime during the first week of August. In addition to the unlawful take, troopers also determined meat was left to waste.”

The release stated that the first controlled antelope season in this area, the 462 Pine Cr-Keating hunt, starts Aug. 13.

— EO Media group

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