



Ellen Morris Bishop

Scott Hampton and his service dog check the depth readings at josephoregonweather.com's SnowBee snow depth gauge in the valley north of Joseph. "Historically we get good snows in the mountains during February and March," he said. "The incoming system is part of that pattern."

Snowpack: Winter weather could enhance summer stream flow

Continued from Page A1

"This week we're getting cooler arctic air that's coming down from Canada," he said. "For the next seven to 10 days or more we'll see wetter weather and more Pacific moisture overriding the cold air, which gives us more opportunities for snow."

"The apparent weakening of the current El Nino may lead to a cooler spring with more storm impact," he said. "That could keep snow in the mountains later in the year, and ultimately, enhance summer stream flow."

Summer stream flow in the Grande Ronde River at Troy, as well as the Lostine and Wallowa Rivers, is anticipated to be nearly 100 percent of normal, according to the February 7 NRCS report. The Imnaha flow is predicted to be somewhat lower, at about 89-90 percent.

"Stream flow predictions are based on averages of what similar conditions have produced in the past," Oviatt said. "The numbers could change with a big early spring warm-up and runoff, or the accumulation of a lot more snow."

Wallowa County weather watcher Scott Hampton is optimistic that mountain snowpack will continue to increase. "Historically we've been getting good snows in the mountains during February and March," he said. "The incoming system

that will bring snow this week is part of that pattern." Hampton's website josephoregonweather.com provides forecasts and a wealth of local weather and other data for the Wallowa Valley. He's happy to see wind-blown spindrifts of snow curling from the high Wallowa Peaks. "Those winds create drifts that pack and seal the snow's surface," he said. "That's another way to keep it from melting or evaporating too fast."

The rest of Oregon is not as fortunate as Wallowa County. The northern Cascades have a mere 58 percent of the normal snowpack, and only 76 percent of normal water-year moisture. Summer stream flow is expected to be below average in the western half of the state according to the February 7 NRCS report.

"While a few more months of winter means there is still time for snowpack conditions across Oregon to improve, a full snowpack recovery throughout the entire state is unlikely," Oviatt said.

Based on current conditions and long-range weather forecasts, water supplies may be limited this summer across much of Oregon. The NRCS report cautions that water users should be aware that nearly 75 percent of the state is currently listed in a severe or extreme drought status by the NRCS National Drought Monitor.

Moonshine: Turning a passion into a career

Continued from Page A1

as opportunity for work at Terminal Gravity Brewing where he did a little bit of everything.

In fact, Webb credits Terminal Gravity for indirectly providing a stepping-stone into his career in glasswork. It was there that Webb met colleague Jake Kurtz. Kurtz, who also works at Moonshine Glass Art, was a coworker at Terminal Gravity and first introduced Webb to Ford.

Kurtz and Ford, who between the two have over 50 years of glass-blowing experience, brought Webb into the craft, teaching him what they know. Webb reiterated the importance that the two played in shaping his new career. "I can't thank Russell Ford and Jake Kurtz enough for bringing me into this," said Webb.

Webb discovered in just six months of working with glass that this was what he wanted to do. He needed to open his own shop. "I was surprised at how it all came so naturally to me," said Webb. And while the business is so much more than just creating and selling art, teaching others came naturally to Webb as well. "I didn't know I would be good at talking people through the process ... but it came naturally too."

Determined to turn his passion into a career, Webb combined all of his savings and some loans to make his dream a reality. He remarked, "I did everything I had to do to make this happen."

But web also acknowledged that he could not have done any of this on his own. "I want to express my gratitude to this whole place," said Webb with a hand gesture towards Mount Joseph. He continued, "to all these people, everyone who helped me get all of this together ... probably over 40 people came in and helped on their own time."

Webb gave special credit to his wife, Emily Bright. During the three month process of getting the shop open for business, Bright really stepped up and supported Webb in number of ways. "Emily is the only way I



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Sterling Webb of Moonshine Glass Art walking through his creative process with members of the Wallowa County Chieftain.

could do this."

It wasn't a simple task getting the shop up-and-running. There's quite a lot of overhead required to work in glass. The main furnace, set to an intimidating 2,070 degrees during working hours — 1,800 the rest of the time, "runs constantly for three years at a time," Webb said. Between all the equipment and energy costs, a shop like this takes a lot of preparation and planning.

For Webb, every step and every struggle is well worth it. "Every day I come here and it doesn't feel like work to me. When I come here I'm inspired," he said. Not one to take all the credit himself, however, "I've got a great team."

And to Webb, all of this is only a starting point. "I totally look forward to incorporating more people into this shop ... to making

it bigger and better," said Webb.

Informally, Webb keeps an open door policy — if he's there anyone is welcome to come in and he will do his best to accommodate. "That's just how I roll," said Webb.

Beyond that, the estab-

lished hours are Thursday through Saturday: 10 a.m. — 6 p.m. It may be another month before the business's website is up and running.

For now, interested customers can schedule classes with Emily Bright at 541-398-2090.



Wallowa Mountain Chapter 21st Annual BIG GAME BANQUET

When: Saturday, March 9, 2019
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ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Kade Kilgore

This week's athlete of the week honor goes to Joseph High School basketball player, Kade Kilgore. The senior is the all-around man on the team, equally adept at offense and defense. Coach Olan Fulfer said he is the most consistent player on the squad.

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Tickets: \$100 each
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Drawing to be held April 6, 2019

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