

Spring:

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This year, Joseph is off to a rough start, with 1.68 inches of precipitation measured in January and February, nearly 1.1 inches below normal.

In Wallowa, November and December are the wettest months, with May actually tied for third on average and June fifth. Yet April

through June still brings 5.8 inches on average. Last year, those three months saw a combined 1.21 inches. In January and February this year, the town is already 0.69 inches below average.

Lostine, a third area where weather.gov takes measurements, also was well below average a year ago. The town sees 5.93 inches on average from April to June, the best stretch of the year. Data for the first four months of 2021

was not available, but May and June, traditionally the two wettest months, saw a combined 1.12 inches, just more than 3 inches below average.

According to the Climate Prediction Center on weather.gov, the chances of Wallowa County seeing drought-killing conditions do not appear great. The outlook for April-June calls for near-normal temperatures, but slightly below normal precipitation.

Idaho:

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Mike McCarter, the leader of the Greater Idaho-Move Oregon's Border movement, said Wallowa County's 2020 vote was close in spite of voters not knowing some of the benefits of a border move.

"We hardly spent anything on our 2020 cam-

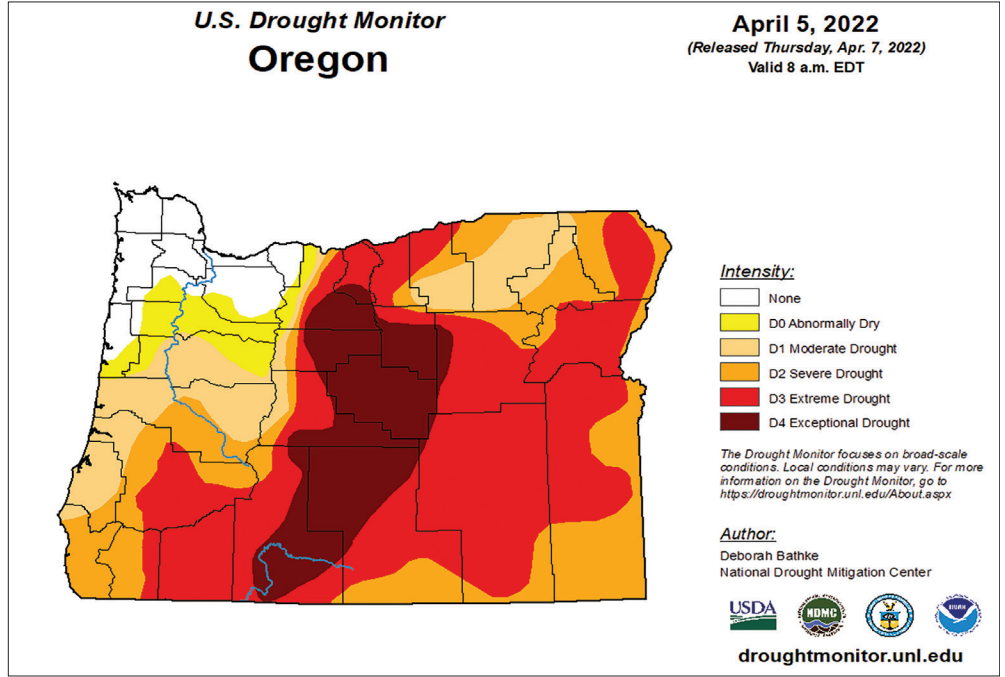
paign, and voters didn't even know what they were voting on," he said in a press release. "This year voters will get a better chance to hear about how much better Idaho's low-tax, conservative governance is than Oregon's governance."

McCarter added in the release that the culture of Eastern Oregon better fits with the culture of Idaho.

"The location of state borders is arbitrary. The cur-

rent location of the Oregon/Idaho border doesn't match the real cultural boundary," he said. "The majority of southern and eastern Oregon votes for conservative governance like Idaho has. It's better to move the border than to ask all of those half a million Oregonians to move to Idaho."

To view the petition, visit www.greateridaho.org/petitions-to-put-greater-idaho-on-the-ballot.



U.S. Drought Monitor
The various drought levels in Oregon are shown on the U.S. Drought Monitor website. As of April 5, 2022, when the last report was taken, nearly half of Wallowa County (49.13%) was in D3, or extreme drought.

Drought:

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"I think it would be responsible for us to pursue declaring a drought. I don't want to do this every year, but we're still recovering from last year, too," he said. "Those soil conditions and I think even into what is going to be our groundwater conditions are going to continue to recover for a while. With that, it would be my recommendation that we pursue declaring a drought."

Commission Chairwoman Susan Roberts asked if the county needs more information from a Soil and Water Conservation District, but Nash said that isn't necessary. "We don't at this point because the U.S. Drought Monitor shows us in D3," Nash said. "I did take a bit of a survey around the county and got varying responses and I've tried to articulate most of those."

U.S. Drought Monitor is a map that is updated each Thursday to show the location and intensity of drought across the country. As of the latest report, taken April 5 and released April 7, nearly half of Wallowa County (49.13%) was in D3, or extreme drought.

Roberts explained that the declaration is the first step toward obtaining state or federal assistance for those plagued by drought.

"What that does is we send in a form to the state through our emergency manager and then the state recognizes our declaration and approves that it and then forwards the request to the secretary of agriculture for a consideration of a drought declaration for Wallowa County," she said. "Then, if people need assistance or if the county does, we're eligible for it, but we have to make the declaration in order to get the assistance."

Roberts asked for a motion, which Nash made, and the board approved.

Other business

In another matter, the commissioners also approved \$1,500 each out of the county's hotel/motel tax fund toward three different projects. Each had requested \$2,000, but the commissioners agreed they needed to save some of the funds to better serve other requests they anticipate.

"I think that these are worthy of support," Nash said. "But I'd like to support them at a three-quarter level of \$1,500 apiece instead of \$2,000."

As Roberts explained, the funds come out of the taxes paid to the Transient Lodging Fund that is now at \$26,000. A portion of that goes to cities in the county.

"We want to spread it out for other events," Commissioner John Hillock said.

Since the three events are mostly involving people who are locals entertaining locals and not tourists visiting the county, the lesser amount seemed more appropriate. The commissioners approved:

- The Wallowa Valley Music Alliance's request to fund the Courthouse Concert Series.
- The WVMA's request to fund the Juniper Jam.
- The WVMA's to fund Joseph Mountain Jubilee.

Easements

In other business, the commissioners approved four easement requests. Approved by the Road Department and the commissioners were:

- Tammy Mauro wants to install a driveway entrance on Lostine River Road.
- Nick and Deidra Ripson want to install a driveway entrance on Dobbin Road.
- Pacific Power Co. wants to install a new power pole and provide power to a new house on North Bear Creek Road.

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