

April 7, 2020

IN THIS EDITION: Local • Home & Living • Sports \$1.50



In HOME, 1B
Recipes
rely on
staples

QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish
To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Alice Knapp of Baker City.

BRIEFING

State asks people
to avoid outdoor
burning

Several state agencies are asking residents to avoid outdoor debris burning during the coronavirus pandemic.

According to a press release, smoke could cause problems for the public and for first responders, including:

- Smoke inhalation can cause upper respiratory symptoms, which could be incorrectly attributed to COVID-19, leading to unnecessary testing or self-isolation.

- Exposure to smoke and other forms of air pollution can increase the risk of contracting infectious respiratory disease such as COVID-19, increase the severity of existing respiratory infections, and worsen underlying chronic respiratory conditions.

- First responders and other emergency services are operating at a reduced capacity and have limited resources to respond to out-of-control burns.

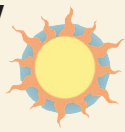
Agencies supporting the voluntary burn ban include the Department of Environmental Quality, Department of Forestry, State Fire Marshal's Office and Oregon Health Authority.

WEATHER

Today
61 / 29



Sunny
Wednesday
66 / 33



Full forecast on the back
of the B section.

The space below is for
a postage label for issues
that are mailed.

March Storms Maintained Mountain Snowpack Above Average

Submerged In Snow



Lisa Britton/For the Baker City Herald

Snow has nearly buried an outhouse at the Anthony Lake campground in the Elkhorn Mountains.

By Jayson Jacoby
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Wes Morgan isn't worried about having too little water to distribute to farmers in southern Baker County this spring and summer.

But he is wondering whether he might at times have too much.

This is the sort of predicament that people in Morgan's business don't particularly mind, to be sure.

He manages the Burnt River Irrigation District, which doles out water to farmers and ranchers along the district's namesake river between Unity Reservoir and the Durkee Valley about 25 miles southeast of Baker City.

With the mountain snowpack running above average in most places, Morgan is confident that 2020 will be the second straight year without a drought.

"I'm going to have plenty of water," Morgan said Monday morning. "I think the big question now is how it's going to come out."

By that he means how quickly the snowpack melts.

The differences from one spring to the next can be dramatic, and have similarly outsized effects on how much water is available, and when.

A spring heatwave, for instance, can flush much of the snow into streams in just a few days.

N.E. Oregon Snowpack Report

Measuring Site	Elevation	Snow Water Equivalent (inches)				Snow Depth
		Now	Average	% of avg.	Last year	
Aneroid Lake	7,300	18.0	24.2	74	20.4	62
Anthony Lakes	7,125	29.0	26.0	112	27.8	83
Beaver Reservoir	5,150	14.5	7.9	184	15.1	37
Bourne	5,800	14.5	14.4	101	15.1	40
Eilertson Meadow	5,440	10.2	5.1	200	16.5	21
Gold Center	5,340	10.9	2.0	545	13.6	23
High Ridge	4,980	30.5	20.0	152	31.6	76
Milk Shakes	5,580	46.4	N/A	N/A	31.6	125
Moss Springs	5,850	36.2	24.0	151	26.0	80
Mount Howard	7,910	15.6	16.0	98	17.2	46
Schneider Meadow	5,400	25.3	25.5	99	38.5	62
Taylor Green	5,740	28.2	19.9	142	27.8	57
Tipton	5,150	11.8	11.5	103	15.5	37
Wolf Creek	5,630	18.2	16.2	112	20.1	53
AVERAGE				159		

That's the situation that Morgan, in common with other irrigation district managers around the region, would like to avoid because much of that snowmelt would end up flowing downstream and thus not be available for irrigation in summer, when it's needed most. And with Unity Reservoir more than 90% full, Morgan doesn't have space to store a glut of water now.

But with temperatures falling below freezing most mornings recently, the snowpack has been melting slowly.

And at higher elevations around Northeastern Oregon, it hasn't been melting at all.

A series of storms over the past week or so has deepened the snowpack at several measuring sites.

One example is an automated station in a meadow just east of Anthony Lake.



Lisa Britton/For the Baker City Herald

Gunsight Mountain near Anthony Lakes.

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County
limits
use on
Snake
River

By Jayson Jacoby
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Baker County Commissioner Mark Bennett believes the county has found a balance in its effort to reduce the risk of spreading coronavirus in the county while still allowing people to safely enjoy one of the county's favorite outdoor destinations.

But reaching that point required an adjustment.

"I'm always sorry when there's confusion," Bennett said Monday.

That confusion arose Friday afternoon when the county announced that it had closed, at least until April 17, the 41-mile Snake River Road, most of which follows the western shore of Brownlee Reservoir, the county's most popular fishing and boating spot.

The county's press release stated that "access will continue to be provided for local residential users."

What wasn't clear is whether that access applied to all Baker County residents or only to people who have property along the road. There are homes, some year-round and some vacation residences, on Brownlee.

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Baker
teachers
prepare
online
lessons

By Chris Collins
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With new information coming in daily, Baker teachers are gearing up for next week's unveiling of the state's plan to provide "Distance Learning for All" to cope with the closure of schools because of the coronavirus pandemic.

As part of that preparation, staff is reaching out to students and their families in various ways. Some are using Facebook to greet students, others are making use of the ParentSquare computer application that provides communication between schools and families and still others are using the Google Meet video application, said Superintendent Mark Witt.

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THURSDAY — GO! MAGAZINE ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE