

TODAY

Today is Tuesday, Feb. 23, the 54th day of 2021. There are 311 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 23, 1836, the siege of the Alamo began in Texas.

In 1861, President-elect Abraham Lincoln arrived secretly in Washington to take office, following word of a possible assassination plot in Baltimore.

In 1870, Mississippi was readmitted to the Union.

In 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt signed an agreement with Cuba to lease the area around Guantanamo Bay to the United States.

In 1942, the first shelling of the U.S. mainland during World War II occurred as a Japanese submarine fired on an oil refinery near Santa Barbara, California, causing little damage.

In 1945, during World War II, U.S. Marines on Iwo Jima captured Mount Suribachi, where they raised two American flags.

In 1954, the first mass inoculation of schoolchildren against polio using the Salk vaccine began in Pittsburgh as some 5,000 students were vaccinated.

In 1965, film comedian Stan Laurel, 74, died in Santa Monica, California.

In 1981, an attempted coup began in Spain as 200 members of the Civil Guard invaded Parliament, taking lawmakers hostage. (However, the attempt collapsed 18 hours later.)

In 1995, the Dow Jones industrial average closed above the 4,000 mark for the first time, ending the day at 4,003.33.

In 1998, 42 people were killed, some 2,600 homes and businesses damaged or destroyed, by tornadoes in central Florida.

In 2007, a Mississippi grand jury refused to bring any new charges in the 1955 slaying of Emmett Till, the Black teenager who was beaten and shot after being accused of whistling at a white woman, declining to indict the woman, Carolyn Bryant Donham, for manslaughter.

In 2006, Japan's Shizuka Arakawa stunned favorites Sasha Cohen of the United States and Irina Slutskaya of Russia to claim the ladies' figure skating gold medal at the Turin Winter Olympics.

Ten years ago: In a major policy reversal, the Obama administration said it would no longer defend the constitutionality of the Defense of Marriage Act, a federal law banning recognition of same-sex marriage.

Five years ago: Donald Trump won the Nevada Republican caucuses; Marco Rubio finished second while Ted Cruz placed third. A 26-year-old gunman killed four family members and torched their house in Phoenix before being shot dead by authorities.

One year ago: Chinese President Xi Jinping defended the Communist Party's response to the coronavirus as "timely and effective," but warned that the epidemic was still "grim and complex." Japan reported the third fatality from among those who'd been aboard a quarantined cruise ship. Iran raised its death toll to eight, the highest toll outside China; Italy reported 152 cases, the largest number outside of Asia, including three deaths. Italian authorities said they would shut down Venice's famed Carnival events in a bid to stop the spread of the virus.

Today's Birthdays: Pro and College Football Hall of Famer Fred Biletnikoff is 78. Author John Sandford is 77. Country-rock musician Rusty Young is 75. Actor Patricia Richardson is 70. Former NFL player Ed "Too Tall" Jones is 70. Rock musician Brad Whitford (Aerosmith) is 69. Singer Howard Jones is 66. Rock musician Michael Wilton (Queensryche) is 59. Country singer Dusty Drake is 57. Actor Kristin Davis is 56. Former tennis player Helena Sukova is 56. Actor Marc Price is 53. TV personality/businessman Daymond John (TV: "Shark Tank") is 52. Actor Niecy Nash is 51. Rock musician Jeff Beres (Sister Hazel) is 50. Country singer Steve Holy is 49. Rock musician Lasse Johansson (The Cardigans) is 48. Film and theater composer Robert Lopez is 46. Actor Kelly Macdonald is 45. Rapper Residente (Calle 13) is 43. Actor Josh Gad is 40. Actor Emily Blunt is 38. Actor Aziz Ansari is 38. Actor Tye White (TV: "Greenleaf") is 35. Actor Dakota Fanning is 27.

—Associated Press

LOCAL, STATE & REGION

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Spotted owl protections taken off chopping block

Trump-era rollbacks back under review

BY MONICA SAMAYOA

Oregon Public Broadcasting

The U.S. Interior Department is delaying and reviewing the Trump administration's last-minute rollback of federal protections for the imperiled northern spotted owl, which called for slashing protections from millions of acres of Northwest forests.

On Jan. 15, just days before leaving office, the Trump administration published a final rule revising Endangered Species Act protections for the northern spotted owl. The rule lifted critical-habitat protections for the bird from 3.4 million acres in Oregon, Washington, and California. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife's had proposed a far more modest revision, seeking to remove critical habitat status from a little over 200,000 acres in 15 counties in Oregon.

Earlier this month, Western Democrats led by Oregon Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley sent a letter to the Interior Department requesting an immediate federal review into the decision to slash millions of acres of the owls' critical habitat. The letter also questioned whether the previous Interior Secretary David Bernhardt ignored scientific recommendations made by staff.

"David Bernhardt ended his corrupt and destructive tenure at Interior with this parting blow to science and the



Don Ryan/AP file

A northern spotted owl flies after an elusive mouse jumping off the end of a stick in the Deschutes National Forest near Camp Sherman in 2003.

public interest, raising even more questions about scientific meddling by Trump political appointees," Wyden said in an emailed statement. "I'm glad to see Biden's Interior understands the urgency of stopping this dangerous rule from going into effect and is committed to science, not corporate interests."

Wyden said he hopes other Trump administration rollbacks will be permanently reversed to protect the northern spotted owl and other threatened species.

On Monday, the Interior Department said it will be review-

ing the changes and delaying the effective date of the rule from March 16 to April 15.

"Robust critical habitat protections are essential to ensuring the survival of the northern spotted owl. The Trump administration's arbitrary and sweeping reduction of protected areas was conducted without public input or scientific basis. Interior is reviewing the Trump administration's rollback of northern spotted owl critical habitat designations to adequately protect this threatened species and the habitat it needs for recovery," U.S. Department of Interior spokesperson said in an emailed statement.

In December, the species received a separate blow to its chances for recovery when the former administration declined to "uplist" the species from threatened status to endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said the species warranted uplisting but it considered other species on the list to be higher priorities.

A notice is expected to be published in the Federal Register in the next few days.

Nearly half of PGE's customers, more than 420,000, were impacted by outages during these storms, PGE President Maria Pope said Monday.

Crews are in the last phases of slow work that only restores power to about 10 customers at a time, she said. "Ongoing wind as well as ice and tree damage continue to impact our system's wires and poles, making restoration very challenging," Pope said in a news conference. "We continue to make progress to get your power back on, but not as quickly as we all would like."

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No power for 24,000-plus 10 days after big storms

BY KALE WILLIAMS

The Oregonian

More than 24,000 customers were still without power in northwest Oregon on Monday, 10 days after a series of powerful ice storms walloped utilities across the region.

The majority of the outages were in Clackamas County, where more than 8,700 people were still in the dark Monday. Marion County accounted for another 7,800 outages with the rest scattered among Multnomah, Polk, Washington and Yamhill counties.

Portland General Electric had said last week that it hoped to have power restored to all but 15,000 customers by Friday night. But officials with the utility said that, as crews have surveyed the damage, the estimates for restoration for lengthened.

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STATE & REGION BRIEFING

Oregon fines lake community \$429K after fish deaths

The state has fined Fishhawk Lake Reserve and Community northwest of Portland \$439,200 for draining a reservoir, which is blamed for killing more than 30,000 fish.

The homeowners association plans to appeal the fine. Fishhawk Lake is a private community around a reservoir formed in the 1960s by an earthen dam. The association maintains the lake, processes water and treats sewage.

The lake feeds into Fishhawk Creek and the Nehalem River. The homeowners association drained the lake in 2019 to fix a broken drain in the dam.

A state investigation found draining the lake and the turbidity it caused downstream killed 20,539 endangered coho salmon, 4,047 steelhead trout, 5,346 cutthroat trout and 459 trout of

undetermined species.

The state also directed the homeowners association to create a water-quality management plan.

The state Department of Fish and Wildlife is seeking a separate claim against the association for the fish kill, but didn't disclose the amount.

The homeowners association has denied being responsible for a fish kill.

Avalanche dangers close 3 mountain passes in Washington

Three major mountain passes in Washington state were closed overnight due to avalanche dangers after heavy rain fell on a large snowpack from recent storms, state transportation officials said.

Snoqualmie Pass along Interstate 90, Stevens Pass on U.S. Highway 2 and White Pass on U.S. Highway 12 were closed Sunday at 6 p.m. and remained

closed Monday morning.

It was unknown how long the pass would be closed.

In Oregon, Mt. Hood Meadows ski resort remained closed Monday due to high winds, rain and ice and ongoing power outages from recent storms. Gusts as high as 89 mph have been recorded at Mt. Hood's Cascade Express weather station. Temperatures are just below freezing at 30 degrees. The resort is scheduled to resume normal operations Tuesday.

2 dead after fishing boat capsizes at Tillamook Bay

Two fishermen from Warrenton died after a 38-foot commercial fishing boat capsized Saturday at the Tillamook Bay bar entrance.

The U.S. Coast Guard was watching the Coastal Reign as a precaution as the

Warrenton-based vessel crossed the bar.

The boat capsized at about 4:40 p.m. All four people on board entered the water and were recovered by 6 p.m. and taken to hospital.

Two people were located in the water and recovered by a boat team, according to the Coast Guard. One was unresponsive. One person climbed onto rocks at a nearby jetty and was rescued by an aircrew.

The fourth person was eventually recovered by a boat team by the jetty near debris that was floating. The person was unresponsive and died.

Family members said Todd Chase, a 51-year-old Warrenton man, died after he was recovered by jetty rocks.

The family of Zach Zappone, 41, of Warrenton, said he died after being taken to a Portland hospital in critical condition.

—Bulletin wire reports

Plan allows more smoke from prescribed burning

BY MONICA SAMAYOA

Oregon Public Broadcasting

The Environmental Protection Agency is seeking public comment for rule changes that would allow more smoke in Oregon from prescribed burning on forestlands.

The State Implementation Plan's Smoke Management Plan revisions allow for more prescribed burning while still protecting public health within any federal, state and private forestlands in Oregon.

Prescribed burning helps restore and improve forestlands by burning fuels like brush, smaller trees and dead vegetation, reducing wildfire risks to nearby communities.

But Smoke Management Plan rules have made the practice difficult to carry out. Communities that have already been heavily hit by low air quality were off limits to additional air problems from prescribed burning. As a result, vast stretches of forest

could not be treated with fire, resulting in increased wildfire dangers.

Manager Michael Orman said the goal for the revisions is to keep air quality levels below the federal government's air quality standards — while also finding a balance with increasing prescribed burns and protecting public health. One of those changes is increasing communication with communities.

"The plan that we put in place now incorporates community response planning as part of that activity," he said. "Communities are encouraged to develop plans to notify their community members of potential smoke impacts, when burning is happening and the purpose of those burns."

The rulemaking was undertaken by the state's Department of Environmental Quality, the Department of Forestry and the Oregon Health Authority. The plan was submitted to the EPA in June 2019.

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