

Vaccine

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Brown said she welcomed Biden's "audacious announcement."

"I will do everything I can to make it happen," Brown said.

Oregon's current staggered priority groups wouldn't match Biden's deadline until July 1.

States have the central authority over public health, and Brown said the present plan would stay in place until there was a guaranteed supply before she would unleash additional demand onto the already strained system.

Oregon officials were only recently told they would receive 200,000 doses per month, up from the previous 120,000 doses.

Asked how much more vaccine Oregon would need to meet Biden's schedule, Oregon Health Authority Director Patrick Allen said it would "require a doubling of those doses."

"It would need to be an increase on that kind of order of magnitude," Allen said. "Maybe 300,000."

Part of the math problem has to do with the vaccines themselves. Until recently, Oregon was only receiving the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, each of which requires two shots given about a month apart.

The state has received the initial shipments of a new vaccine from Johnson & Johnson that requires a single shot.

Brown and Allen both said their caution came from not wanting to set off the kind of policy whiplash that hit Oregonians in mid-January.

When the Trump administration announced the immediate release of a large stockpile of additional doses, Brown dropped her carefully crafted priority tier policy. She announced everyone in Oregon age 65 and over would be eligible for shots.

Trump officials said within 48 hours that there was no stockpile of new doses.

"This is a deception on a national scale," Brown said at the time.

The governor had to reverse herself and put eligibility restrictions back in place.

Biden said Thursday that he wanted the nation far enough along in its vaccination program to allow for small celebrations of July 4.

"If we all do our part, this country will be vaccinated soon, our economy will be on the mend, our kids will be back in school, and we'll have proven once again that this country can do anything," Biden said.

Though Oregon officials have a much higher level of confidence in Biden's streamlined transport system and increased manufacturing of vaccine, Allen said supply needed to be on the way first.

"We know the previous administration made previous announcements it was unable to fill," Allen said.

Oregon is currently limiting shots to health workers, residents of nursing homes, educators and day care workers, and most recently, all residents age 65 and older as of March 1.

The next eligible group can seek shots March 29. It's a long list that includes adults age 45 and older with specific medical issues, agricultural and other food processing workers, homeless people, residents of low-income housing, those displaced by last year's wildfires and wildland firefighters.

Pregnant women age 16 and over were recently added to the group.

OHA has not been able to give estimates on how many people will become eligible on March 29.

May 1 — the date that Biden wants eligibility to be offered to all adults nationwide — is currently listed as adding front-line workers — those who deal daily with the public — those living in multigenerational households, and those age 16-44 with certain medical conditions.

Brown's plan calls for everyone age 45 and older to be eligible on June 1. On July 1, all adults would be able to seek shots.

Allen said the vaccination effort involving seniors was going well statewide, though he noted some counties — such as Deschutes — were ahead of the goal to have 75% of eligible seniors inoculated, while other counties lagged behind.

Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario, joined all House Republicans in opposing the bill, saying it was too expensive and included too much nonpandemic related spending. The rest of Oregon's congressional delegation — all Democrats — supported the bill.

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Climate

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"Some of the climate model projections show that the snowpack will become more variable, and will lessen, even as precipitation amounts stay the same, but there will be more rainfall instead of snow," explained O'Neill.

In his talk, O'Neill will explain how the changing climate could affect this area's outdoor recreation potential, as less snow and higher snowlines will diminish the snow quality and season length at Hoodoo and Mt. Bachelor.

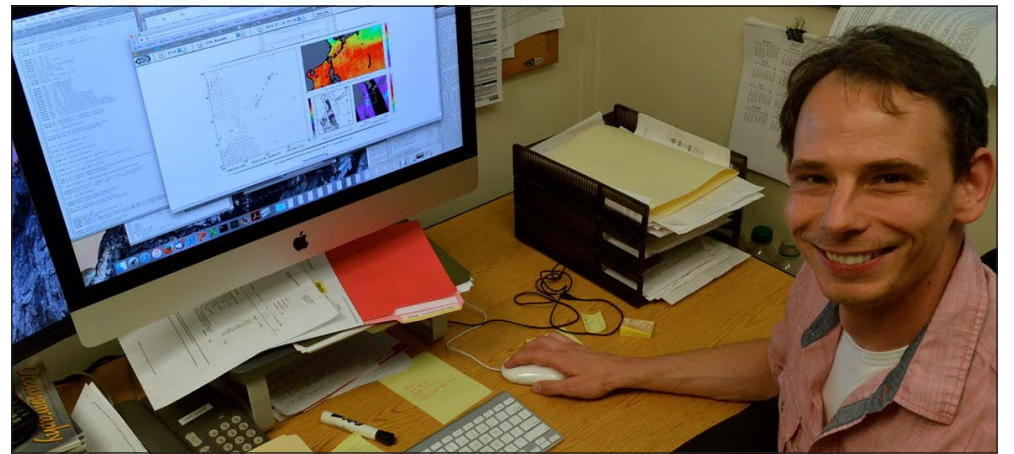
Climate change could also bring an increase in invasive species, such as cheatgrass, in Central Oregon, and impact nesting bird habitats. There's the human impact too, including an increased risk for wildfire and inconsistent flow of water for irrigators.

"That will put more stress on agriculture. There won't that spring run-off, and the climate is just going to be warmer," said O'Neill.

O'Neill's knowledge of climate change is the culmination of years of study and research in California and Oregon. He studied atmospheric science at UC Davis and then earned a master's degree in Oceanography from Oregon State University. It was at OSU where he focused his research on how the ocean and the weather interacted with each other.

"Ocean temps and currents affect weather. And lower frequency variability in the atmosphere impacts the ocean," said O'Neill. "I used models and satellite observations to study that. I continued to this day studying how the earth's climate is impacted by the interaction between the ocean and the weather."

His interest in the weather from an early age comes from growing up near Rapid City,



Oregon State University/Submitted photo

Larry O'Neill is an associate professor in the Oregon State University College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences.

South Dakota, where his father worked as a foreman at a cement plant.

As a kid, he was fascinated by the variable Midwest weather. In summer he watched the thunderstorms and the occasional tornado. In winter it was blizzards and cold snaps that sent the mercury into rapid retreat.

"Especially in spring and fall, we'd get these huge changes in temperature," said O'Neill. It would be beautiful and 70 degrees and then the next day it would be 50 degrees and snowing, that was just infinitely fascinating to me."

O'Neill's family moved from South Dakota to Sacramento when he 13. It wasn't the easiest of transitions.

"Everyone was more sophisticated and we were like these country bumpkins. We didn't dress or talk right. It was a rough age to move there," he said.

But O'Neill soon found his own way. He volunteered at a local TV station, helping out the station's weatherman a few days a week.

"The forecasts weren't very good so he had to make adjustments or do his own thing, so sometimes I would have to add up numbers and do some basic calculations," said

O'Neill.

That led to an eye-opening four years at UC Davis, where his interest in oceanography blossomed. He considered at one point relocating to a tropical beach and setting up instruments in the sand to measure the ocean's impacts.

"I quickly realized that most of (the work) is in front of a computer, involving satellite data and model data," said O'Neill. "Occasionally I do get to go out and see and collect data from instruments that I employ."

O'Neill's most recent focus is on precipitation and drought variability over the Pacific Northwest, and how that impacts people and business sectors — work he does when he is wearing his state climatologist hat. Every two years that role requires him to issue an Oregon climate assessment.

He also receives grants from NASA to conduct weather and ocean monitoring work. In October he will board a 200-foot ship and spend three weeks off the coast of San Francisco conducting research and experiments, specifically on surface currents. The work includes launching radiosonde balloons and testing new equipment.

At Oregon State this past

fall he taught a graduate-level class on Fluid Earth, an introductory class on oceanography, weather, and climate. This winter semester he taught satellite oceanography, teaching students how satellites measure the temperature of the ocean, winds, and ocean color.

Doing instrumentation on a tropical beach still sounds alluring but Oregon — with all its snow, wind, rain, and temperature changes — has become his passion.

"I love the PNW now. I like the rainy season now," said O'Neill. "The first season I was here it was a shock to the system after moving from California but after that, I became fine with it. I started skiing, got some waterproof clothes for hiking, and learned how to adapt. Now that I am doing drought monitoring work I really appreciate the rain!"

The March 16 Science Pub talk with Larry O'Neill is scheduled for 6 to 7:30 p.m. Interested individuals can sign up for the talk through the OSU-Cascades website. From the campus' main page (osucascades.edu), click on "for the community" and then "science pubs."

■ Reporter: 541-617-7818, mkohn@bendbulletin.com

Horses

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McCarl insisted several times that the horses were fine, even when confronted with graphic evidence of alleged neglect.

McCarl was arraigned in January on two counts of felony animal neglect. On Thursday, she appeared in court for a settlement conference and is due back again in late April.

It's not the first time McCarl has been accused of neglecting her horses. In 2001, Lane County officials charged her with six counts of misdemeanor animal neglect. She pleaded guilty to three of the charges and was sentenced to three years probation.

In March, neighbors on SE Pony Springs Road east of Prineville began contacting authorities to report two horses in the area looked unhealthy and were clearly not being fed.

Police learned the horses belonged to McCarl, though the property was not hers, and she had recently had a falling-out with the property owner, according to court records.

One horse was a 24-year-old gray and black gelding named Tops, whose hips and ribs were prominently showing, according to police. The other was a white and brown pinto named Gracie, about 10 years old, who was diabetic, suffered persistent problems associated with a club foot and bore a deep and infected cut on one of her legs from getting tangled in barbed wire.

Veterinary treatment for Gracie would cost around \$4,000, according to Kate Beardsley, founder of the Bend-based nonprofit Mustangs to the Rescue, who also received calls regarding the horses, court records state.

Beardsley called McCarl and learned she didn't want her horses going to a rescue group,

though she didn't have the means to care for them herself. Beardsley explained to McCarl the severity of Gracie's condition but McCarl "minimized" it and insisted she'd never give up Tops and Gracie, Beardsley told police.

Crook County Sheriff's Office deputy Jacob Koski warned McCarl her conduct was entering criminal territory.

"I explained to Richele that her horses needed to be fed and watered daily and that it had to happen today," Koski wrote in a court document.

McCarl removed the horses from the property but in late October, Beardsley called police to say she'd again been hearing McCarl's horses were being neglected.

Sheriff's deputies next contacted Dennis Frisby, a property owner on SE Combs Flat Road, where Tops and Gracie were found. Frisby told deputies that McCarl's boyfriend had knocked on his door one night that summer asking Frisby if he could pasture two horses on a small, dirt-covered patch of land on Frisby's property for "two weeks" while they were moving house.

But after two months, it was clear the couple had no intention of returning for the horses, Frisby told deputies. Frisby had tracked down the boyfriend and learned he and McCarl had broken up. Frisby told deputies he called McCarl numerous times to get her to pick up her horses.

He'd tell her, "I don't want to wake up and find a dead horse," to which she'd typically reply: "I'm trying," court documents state.

Tops and Gracie were seized and earlier this year, a judge approved a forfeiture order, though McCarl fought it in court.

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