

TODAY

Today is Wednesday, April 14, the 104th day of 2021. There are 261 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

In **1912**, the British liner RMS Titanic collided with an iceberg in the North Atlantic at 11:40 p.m. ship's time and began sinking.

In **1759**, German-born English composer George Frideric Handel died in London at age 74.

In **1828**, the first edition of Noah Webster's "American Dictionary of the English Language" was published.

In **1865**, President Abraham Lincoln was shot and mortally wounded by John Wilkes Booth during a performance of "Our American Cousin" at Ford's Theater in Washington.

In **1910**, President William Howard Taft became the first U.S. chief executive to throw the ceremonial first pitch at a baseball game.

In **1965**, the state of Kansas hanged Richard Hickock and Perry Smith for the 1959 "In Cold Blood" murders of Herbert Clutter, his wife, Bonnie, and two of their children, Nancy and Kenyon.

In **1981**, the first test flight of America's first operational space shuttle, the Columbia, ended successfully with a landing at Edwards Air Force Base in California.

In **1994**, two U.S. Air Force F-15 warplanes mistakenly shot down two U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopters over northern Iraq, killing 26 people, including 15 Americans.

In **1999**, NATO mistakenly bombed a convoy of ethnic Albanian refugees; Yugoslav officials said 75 people were killed.

In **2004**, in a historic policy shift, President George W. Bush endorsed Israel's plan to hold on to part of the West Bank in any final peace settlement with the Palestinians; he also ruled out Palestinian refugees returning to Israel, bringing strong criticism from the Palestinians.

Ten years ago: North Korea confirmed it was holding an American who was detained in November 2010, reportedly for proselytizing. ABC canceled two of its longtime soap operas, "One Life to Live" and "All My Children."

Five years ago: Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders aggressively challenged each other's judgment during a Democratic debate in Brooklyn, New York.

One year ago: President Donald Trump announced that he was cutting off U.S. payments to the U.N. health agency, the World Health Organization. Louisiana again delayed its presidential primary, rescheduling it for July 11. (The late date made the primary irrelevant to the selection of the nominees.) NASCAR driver Kyle Larson was fired by the Chip Ganassi Racing team, two days after he used a racial slur on a live stream of a virtual race.

Today's Birthdays: Country singer Loretta Lynn is 89. Retired MLB All-Star Pete Rose is 80. Actor Peter Capaldi is 63. Actor-turned-race car driver Brian Foster is 61. Actor Robert Carlyle is 60. Actor Catherine Dent is 56. Baseball Hall of Famer Greg Maddux is 55. Actor Anthony Michael Hall is 53. Actor Adrien Brody is 48. Actor-producer Rob McElhenney is 44. Rock singer Win Butler (Arcade Fire) is 41. Actor Nick Krause is 29.

—The Associated Press

LOCAL, STATE & REGION

SOUTHERN OREGON DROUGHT

Tensions rise for tribes, farmers in battle over shrinking water supply

BY GILLIAN FLACCUS
Associated Press

One of the worst droughts in memory in a massive agricultural region straddling the California-Oregon border could mean steep cuts to irrigation water for hundreds of farmers this summer to sustain endangered fish species critical to tribes.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, which oversees water allocations in the federally owned Klamath Project, is expected to announce this week how the season's water will be divided up after delaying the decision a month.

For the first time in 20 years, it's possible that the 1,400 irrigators who have farmed for generations on 225,000 acres of reclaimed farmland will get no water at all — or so little that farming wouldn't be worth it. Several tribes in Oregon and California are equally desperate for water to sustain threatened and endangered species of fish central to their heritage.

A network of six wildlife refuges that make up the largest wetland complex west of the Mississippi River also depend on the project's water, but will likely go dry this year. Two of the tribes, the Klamath and Yurok, hold treaties guaranteeing the protection of their fisheries.

The last — and only — time that water was cut off for irrigators, in 2001, some family farms went out of business and a "bucket brigade" protest attracted 15,000 people who scooped water from the Klamath River and passed it, hand over hand, to a parched irrigation canal.

Tribes, for their part, say the



Gillian Flaccus/AP

Hunter Maltz, a fish technician for the Yurok tribe, pushes a jet boat into the low water of the Klamath River in March 2020 as Keith Parker, a Yurok tribal fisheries biologist, watches.

"Some people say that because of those fish, our people are still here. They're the canary in the coal mine. If they die out, it shows you that something is going very wrong here in the Basin."

— Don Gentry,
Klamath Tribes chairman

fish are intertwined with their existence going back millennia. The Klamath believe the sucker fish — the first fish to return to the river after the winter — were created to provide for and sustain their people. Further downstream, the Yurok define the seasons by the fish runs.

"Some people say that because of those fish, our people are still here," Don Gentry, chairman of

the Klamath Tribes, said of the sucker fish. "They're the canary in the coal mine. If they die out, it shows you that something is going very wrong here in the Basin."

In 1988, two species of sucker fish were listed as endangered under federal law, and less than a decade later, coho salmon that spawn downstream from the reclamation project, in the lower Klamath River, were listed as threatened.

The water necessary to sustain the coho salmon downstream comes from Upper Klamath Lake — the main holding tank for the farmers' irrigation system. At the same time, the sucker fish in the same lake need at least 1 to 2 feet of water covering the gravel beds that they use as spawning grounds.

In a year of extreme drought, there is not enough water to go around. Already this spring, the

gravel beds that the sucker fish spawn in are dry and water gauges on Klamath River tributaries show the flow is the lowest in nearly a century. A decision late last summer to release water for irrigators, plus a hot, dry fall with almost no rain has compounded an already terrible situation.

The Klamath Water Users Association sent a warning to its membership last week saying there would be "little to no water for irrigation from Upper Klamath Lake this year." It is holding a public meeting Wednesday to provide more information.

Meanwhile, sucker fish in the Upper Klamath Lake are hovering near dried-up gravel beds, fruitlessly waiting for water levels to rise so they can lay eggs, said Alex Gonyaw, a senior fisheries biologist for the Klamath Tribes.

"You can see them sort of milling around out in the lake water. They're desperately trying to get to this clean, constant lake water that they need," he said. "It's going to be like 2001. It's going to be, hopefully not catastrophic but very, very stressful for people and fish."

Some are hoping this year's crisis will help all the interested parties hash out a water-sharing compromise that could save both the ecology and economy of the Klamath River Basin before it collapses entirely.

"This is the reality of climate change. This is it. We can't rely on historical water supplies anymore. We just can't," said Amy Cordalis, counsel for the Yurok Tribe and also a tribal member. "It's no one's fault. There's no bad guy here — but I think we'd all do well to pray for rain."

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