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LOCAL, STATE & REGION

PORTLAND POLICE

Black drivers disproportionately stopped

Associated Press

PORTLAND — Police in Portland stopped a disproportionate number of Black motorists last year, even as they pulled over fewer drivers overall in 2020 compared with 2019.

Black people, who made up about 8% of the city's population, made up nearly 12.6% of drivers stopped by traffic officers in 2020, according to Portland police data released this week. Latino drivers accounted for 11.2% of traffic stops in 2020 and make up around 10% of the population in the city.

Nearly 7,000 — or 28% — of the total stops made were Black or Latino drivers. According to the most recent Census Bureau estimates, from 2019, Black and Latino residents make up about 17% of the city's population.

During the past five years, Portland police officers have stopped significantly more people of color behind the wheel and fewer white drivers on city streets, the data shows, though not all drivers stopped are necessarily residents of Portland.

Portland officers made 24,991 driver stops across the city in 2020, a 24% decrease from the previous year. The decline is attributed to fewer drivers on the road because of the pandemic, reduced police availability as resources shifted to the near nightly demonstrations last summer and changes to traffic enforcement in 2020.

The Portland Police Bureau has since taken steps to reduce addressing minor violations in an attempt to address the disparate effect on Black residents. As of June 2021, officers have been directed to focus traffic enforcement efforts on high crash corridors, reckless driving, speed enforcement and other moving violations that place people in immediate danger.

They're not to focus on stopping motorists for low-level infractions, such as equipment failures or expired plates, to reduce disproportionate stops of people of color. And if police do stop drivers, officers must explain that the motorist can deny a request to search their cars.

As of this spring, the police bureau no longer has a dedicated traffic division of officers, as they were pulled to fill vacancies in patrol.

EVAPORATION, IRRIGATION DIVERSIONS ENDANGER CRITICAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

BY ALEX SCHWARTZ
(Klamath Falls) Herald and News

Last month, biologists and irrigators drained Tule Lake's largest unit of open water to mitigate avian botulism outbreaks on Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge.

Now, record heat and irrigation diversions threaten to undo that work.

Tulelake Irrigation District, Ducks Unlimited and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service teamed up to move thousands of acre-feet of water from the refuge's larger, muddier Sump 1A to its smaller Sump 1B. They intended to eliminate as much shallow water (the ideal breeding grounds for botulism in late summer) as possible and encourage the germination of wetland plants.

But for the past three weeks, farmers on federal leaselands in the southwest chunk of the refuge have been diverting water from Sump 1B to irrigate grain, alfalfa and row crops like potatoes. That, combined with intense, unseasonable heat that has accelerated evaporation, has made the sump lose more than 1,300 acre-feet of water since the beginning of July.

"It started dropping like a rock," said TID Manager Brad Kirby.

Kirby said the heat was more to blame than the irrigators, who according to his calculations make up 20% of Sump 1B's water loss at most.

"It's not our desire to see 1B dry, but I can't control evaporation," Kirby said. "The effect of diverting the minimal diversions that we are taking out of there pales in comparison to the evapotranspirative loss."

Kirby said heavy smoke from the Bootleg Fire has actually slowed the evaporation, causing the sump's level to stabilize over the past four days. TID has also put a limitation on the amount of water that can come out of Sump 1B to 15-20 cubic feet per second, or about 40 acre-feet per day.

When Sump 1A began to drain, TID and refuge managers didn't actually know how much water it held, only being able to estimate it through a formula developed in the 1980s. Because decades of keeping the sump submerged had caused the lake bed to silt in so severely, blurring the line between water and land, less water was available to pump into Sump 1B than Kirby expected.

"We took what we thought to be an overly conservative approach to identifying the amount of water that was in



Submitted photo

Due to this summer's incredibly hot and dry conditions, a botulism outbreak on Sump 1B at Tule Lake was probably in the cards even without irrigation diversions.

1A," he said.

Irrigators and biologists had initially expected that some water from Sump 1A wouldn't fit into Sump 1B and would be leftover to use for irrigation. Kirby said the district gave leaseland farmers a rough idea of how much that would be (making no promises), but that there wasn't even enough water to fill Sump 1B after the chips fell. On top of that, a long stretch of unseasonably hot days meant the old formula underestimated evaporation from the sump.

Still, Kirby felt the district needed to provide some water to the leaseland farmers in the Southwest Sump, a significant portion of which has been idled due to the lack of surface water coming from Upper

Klamath Lake.

"We're trying to do everything that we can to keep some water in 1B and keep it from dropping as fast as it was, and try to get it to hold, while also minimizing the impacts to the community," Kirby said.

The legality of the diversions is as muddy as the bottom of Tule Lake.

The Kuchel Act, passed in 1964, allowed the leasing of refuge lands for farming as long as agricultural activity was consistent with the refuge goals of "proper waterfowl management." Farming grain and leaving some behind as bird food generally aligns with that directive, but some argue that the planting of alfalfa and row crops doesn't contribute to waterfowl habitat or food.

Kirby was not able to say how much of the irrigated leaselands are alfalfa and row crops versus grain.

Rachel Zwilling, water policy advisor for Defenders of Wildlife, said while she under-

stands the drought has been hard on everyone in the Klamath Basin and farmers need to make a living, few areas are in as dire straits as Lower Klamath and Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuges, which haven't received a full water allocation in decades and rely on the Klamath Project for water.

Due to this summer's incredibly hot and dry conditions, a botulism outbreak on Sump 1B was probably in the cards even without irrigation diversions. But Zwilling said that Project irrigators taking from what little water Tule Lake refuge does have certainly isn't helping.

"Because wetland availability is already so limited, further diminishing it in any way is a huge problem," she said. "It's another big impact that further reduces habitat availability and increases the risk of disease."

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