

Drop in the bucket

Recent rains don't relieve our parched summer forecast

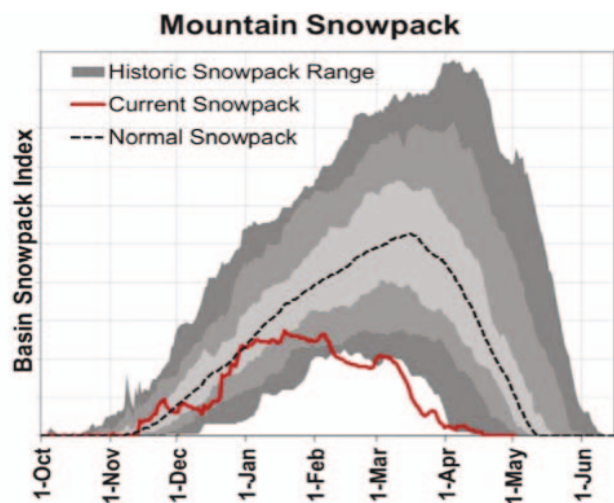
Brown declares drought in Grant, other counties

By Scotta Callister
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY – File the past week's heavy rains in the "looks can be deceiving" category.

Officials say that shot of moisture, while welcome, isn't enough to deter the region's now-inevitable plunge into extreme drought this summer.

Last Friday, Gov. Kate Brown made it official, issuing a drought declaration for Grant County and seven other



Deschutes, Jackson, Josephine, Lane, Morrow, Umatilla and Wasco.

In all, 15 counties now are

under drought declarations, a measure that allows more flexibility in managing water when the supplies dry up.

The declaration follows a sobering report from the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, which warned that streamflows will be significantly lower than normal this season due to the winter's record-low snowpacks.

"The winter of 2015 will go down in Oregon history books as the year that was dominated by bare ground in the mountains," said Julie Koberle, NRCS hydrologist.

The agency reported Oregon's snowpack, as of May 1, stood at 11 percent of normal. Only 15 of 112 snow monitoring sites across Oregon had any snow at all.

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ODF: Get ready for a hot one

Agency plans June 4 briefing for landowners

Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY – The Oregon Department of Forestry's John Day Unit will hold a pre-fire season meeting for Grant County forestland owners at its office, 415 Patterson Bridge Road, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Thursday, June 4.

ODF fire managers will provide the most current outlook for the 2015 fire season, along with information on what landowners should expect

if a fire occurs on their land. Landowners will learn how they can assist in the fire suppression efforts on their land and what resources are available to them to repair and restore their property following a fire.

"As most folks are already aware, ongoing drought conditions have set the stage for a potentially severe fire season in Grant County and around the state," says Rob Pentzer, ODF's John Day Unit Forester. "This meeting is intended to help landowners understand what happens if they have a fire."

For more information, contact the John Day ODF office at 541-575-1139.



Contributed/EPA Region 10

EPA on-scene coordinator Brooks Stanfield and a contractor check the air at a residence, as the investigation into fumes in Southwest John Day continued last week.

EPA knocks on doors in fume probe

Crew working with city, DEQ to find source

By Scotta Callister
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY – An Environmental Protection Agency emergency response team is looking into the odors seeping into homes and businesses in the southwest part of the city.

The EPA crew arrived last Thursday and continued its work through the holiday weekend, going door-to-door to take indoor air readings at homes and offices in a 10-block area of the city.

Judy Smith, EPA community outreach coordinator, said the state Department of Environmental Quality is

sending someone this week to work with the interagency investigation.

The testing comes after local agencies, including the city fire, police and public works departments, responded to complaints about fumes rising from basements and crawl spaces.

The first report came in March, when the problem cropped up at the Soil and Water Conservation District offices on Canyon Boulevard. The concern ramped up earlier this month when the problem appeared to migrate underground to nearby residences and buildings, including the Grant County Library and the Canyon Creek Apartments.

"Our immediate concern

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IT'S A RENDEZVOUS!

Fun for everyone at Mt. Vernon celebration

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

MT. VERNON – Festivities for Saturday's Cinnabar Mountain Rendezvous started with a parade through town and included games and food at the park.

Cinnabar volunteer Karen Hinton said this year's event was a lot of work to put together, but worth it. She said she was glad the weather held, since it had been rainy through the night and that morning.

"We had a good turnout and everyone who attended had a lot of fun," she said.

Game winners

- Ax throw: Josh Moulton
- Women's ax throw: Ersela Dehiya
- Frying Pan toss: Ersela Dehiya
- Bore and buck: Artie Dickens
- Choker Set: Terry Harper
- All Around: Terry Harper
- Horse shoes: 1st, Wade Keith and Alex Titus; 2nd, Wade Wadell and Toby Thomas
- Team scavenger hunt: 1st place, Sydnee and Sophie Brockway, Trinity Hutchison
- Duck Race: 1st, Bill Hickerson; 2nd, Wayne Saul; 3rd Kim Ballard.
- Golden spike hunt: Maudean Brown

Look for parade results online and in next week's paper.



Bransyn Harper rides a pony with his mom, Shilo Burton, at his side.



Eagle photos/Angel Carpenter

The Cinnabar Mountain Rendezvous parade gets started May 23 with Grant County Search and Rescue volunteer Kelly Collins leading the colorful entries in Mt. Vernon.



A youngster enjoys his fire truck ride in the parade.



Grand Marshals of the Cinnabar Mountain Rendezvous Lyle and Linda McCumber ride the parade route.

Wolf tracked in Grant County

A collared wolf turns up in south Grant County

By Sean Ellis
EO Media Group

ADRIAN — A lone wolf that inexplicably spent more than five weeks in an area of Malheur County not considered typical wolf habitat has moved on.

The wolf, known as OR22, moved into Grant County a little over a week ago, according to Philip Milburn, a district wildlife biologist in the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Ontario office.

The male wolf, which separated from a Northeast Oregon pack in February, moved into Malheur County on April 10 and bucked conventional wisdom by spending much of its time here in sagebrush country west of Adrian and south of Vale.

OR22, which has a tracking collar, even made a brief foray into farm country near Adrian, where it was seen by

several farmers napping in a wheat field and by ditch workers as it swam across a canal.

Before OR22, no other wolf was known to have spent more than a brief period in the county, Milburn said.

"I don't know why he took a month-long break in Malheur County, but he did," Milburn said. "He's been a little unique. There's probably no telling where he will ... move to."

The wolf was moving 10-plus miles a day in recent days and was south of Prairie City last week.

"We're pretty happy he's moved on," said Malheur County Cattleman's Association president Chris Christensen. "Obviously, he didn't like Malheur County and that's a good thing."

Fish and wildlife biologists found two cow carcasses the wolf had been feeding off and believe they played a major factor in the wolf's decision to hang around so long. Both died before

OR22 found them, and the wolf started moving West after they were removed, Milburn said.

Milburn and Christensen said one of the biggest lessons learned from OR22's visit to the county is that dead livestock carcasses are an enticement to keep wolves around and should be removed quickly.

"Having a readily available food source ... can really hold these animals in non-typical wolf habitat," he said. "That's a pretty good lesson."

Milburn said communicating with people during the wolf's stay here turned out to be helpful.

Milburn used emails to update media, local officials and the livestock industry on the wolf's movements and notified producers who were directly impacted through text messages and phone calls.

"Good communication when something like this happens really helps so people are not having to rely on third-hand information," he said.

STUDENT
ART

BALD EAGLE



James Kreamier
Grade 7
Long Creek School
Teacher: Cindy Wimer

