

Drought in the NW Climate Hub Region

Moderate drought (D1-tan) expanded in central and southwestern Oregon due to ongoing low stream flow conditions, low precipitation, and below normal snowpack. Severe drought (D2-orange) conditions have developed in the southwestern corner of the state.

Conditions in Washington remain abnormally dry (D0-yellow) with moderate drought conditions (D1-tan) conditions expanding slightly in the north-central region.

Despite recent above normal precipitation, abnormally dry (D0-yellow) and moderate drought (D1-tan) conditions remain in central Idaho. Severe drought (D2-orange) continues in portions of Blaine and Camas counties.

Near-record setting snow and rain throughout February in southeast Alaska have alleviated abnormally dry conditions (D0-yellow). For the first time since January 2018, no portion of Alaska is experiencing dry or drought conditions.

Drought maps are published every Thursday. Click on the U.S. Drought Monitor link below to view the latest map. Click on each icon below to get information about the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS), to submit data via the CoCoRHaS network, or to report drought impacts and observations.

NIDIS Drought.gov U.S. Drought Portal
CoCoRHaS Community Rain Hail Snow Network
Drought Conditions & Impacts Reporter
U.S. Drought Monitor

U.S. Drought Monitor

USDA Northwest Climate Hub

March 24, 2020
(Released Thursday, Mar. 26, 2020)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0	D1	D2	D3	D4
Current	83.45	7.18	8.23	1.14	0.00	0.00
Last Week 03-17-2020	83.48	7.32	8.14	1.05	0.00	0.00
3 Months Ago 12-24-2019	71.18	21.71	7.10	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Calendar Year 12-31-2019	70.58	22.31	7.10	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year 10-01-2019	88.75	7.34	2.51	0.79	0.61	0.00
One Year Ago 03-26-2019	78.77	13.28	6.59	1.35	0.00	0.00

Intensity:
None (White)
D0 Abnormally Dry (Yellow)
D1 Moderate Drought (Tan)
D2 Severe Drought (Orange)
D3 Extreme Drought (Red)
D4 Exceptional Drought (Dark Red)

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

Author:
Brad Rippey
U.S. Department of Agriculture

droughtmonitor.unl.edu

Share Your Drought-Related Projects and Activities

Share Your Drought-Related Projects and Activities with the Pacific Northwest Drought Early Warning System to help connect groups and learn from one another. Project submissions will be solicited twice a year. Now Projects and activities will be displayed on the soon to be re-launched Drought.gov website (expected late spring 2020).

Webinars

Northwest River Forecast Center Water Supply Briefing 2 April. Monthly water supply briefings held January through late spring on the first Thursday of each month. Click here for details.

National Weather Service Alaska Climate Outlook Briefings: a monthly webinar series on Fridays at 12 pm AKT by the Alaska Climate Assessments and Policy Center that reviews recent climate and looks ahead at future climate predictions. Click each date below to register for the monthly webinar.
17 April- click here to register

Pacific Northwest Drought & Climate Outlook 27 April 2020 11am PST. The Pacific Northwest Drought Early Warning System hosts a series of region-specific, drought and climate outlook webinars to provide timely information on current drought status and impacts, a preview of current and developing climatic events, and special topics.
18 March -click to register

Adapting to Human Health Impacts of Climate Change, a series of free, online trainings available through the Tribal Climate Health Project. Interactive trainings are held on the 3rd Tuesday each month at 10:00-11:30 (PST) from January-August 2020. Trainings will provide steps, tools, templates, case studies, and other resources to help attendees and their communities build adaptation strategies. Recordings will be available online.

Recorded Webinars

The Northwest Climate Adaptation Science Center hosted a series of skills-building webinars that explore approaches to actionable science.

Boundary-Spanning for Collective Action: Managing Wildfire Risk in the West, explores how land managers in the US West are increasingly trying to expand the pace and scale of wildfire risk reduction by working across larger landscapes and ownership boundaries. Case studies of forests and rangelands in Oregon, Idaho and other western states provide useful examples.

An Introduction to the New U.S. National Fire Danger Rating, provides details on the current rating system and new spatial fire danger tools designed for assessing local fire weather conditions. Emphasis is put on how to communicate fire danger ratings to a variety of audiences such as firefighters, Incident Management Team members, fire management officers, line officers and the public.

The Return of Fire, researchers from the Northwest Fire Consortium discuss the return of fire to western U.S. landscapes in the context of wildfire history.

Covid-19 FAQ & Safety Tips

Frequently Asked Questions about Covid-19 and USDA programs, check out information on food access, food safety, pet safety, Forest Service, and more.

Wondering if your cleaning products are effective against Covid-19? Check out this list of disinfectants from the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

Funding opportunities

Alaska Fuels Management and Community Fire Assistance Program. This Bureau of Land Management opportunity provides funds to restore and maintain fire-resilient landscapes through hazardous fuel reduction, fire education and training, development of monitoring and maintenance of fuels reduction, and more. **Applications due 30 March 5pm AKST.**

ReConnect Loan and Grant Program provides loans and grants to construct, improve, or acquire facilities and equipment in order to provide broadband service in rural areas. The program supports community resilience by assisting access to high-speed internet for homes, healthcare and public safety facilities, schools, libraries, farms, ranches, factories, and other production sites. **Applications due 31 March 2020 *extended.**

Beginning Farmer & Rancher Development Program, a USDA program has resources available to promote education, mentoring, and technical assistance. Partnerships and collaborations led by or including nongovernmental, community-based organizations and school-based agricultural, educational organizations with expertise in new agricultural producer training are encouraged to apply. **Applications due 2 April 2020 *extended.**

USDA Rural Development Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants are available to help rural communities to connect to each other using telecommunications to overcome the effects of remoteness and low population density. The program teleconnects teachers with students and medical service providers with patients, which can bolster adaptive capacity to climate change through education and improved health care access. **Applications due 10 April 2020.**

Pollution Prevention Grant Program provides funds for technical assistance to businesses and facilities to develop and adopt pollution prevention practices. Technical assistance can include information, training, or tools. Documentation and case studies required with the funds will be used to highlight and share prevention strategies. **Applications due 30 April *extended**

Tribal Wildlife Grants Program funds are available to be of wildlife and habitat of cultural or traditional importance to tribes, including species that are not hunted or fished. Support can include planning for conservation, management actions, research, natural history studies, habitat mapping or preservation, field surveys and population monitoring, conservation easements, and public education. **Applications due 4 May 2020 by 8:59pm PST.**

USDA Community Facilities Technical Assistance and Training Grant Program supports sustainable rural economies recovering from disaster through e-connectivity, technology, workforce training and other strategic innovations. Funds are available to communities with a Major Disaster Declaration from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Guidance is available if requested **before 27 April.** **Electronic applications due 30 April by 9pm PST. Paper applications due 5 May by 4pm local time.**

Farmers Market Promotion Program provides funding for projects that enhance direct producer-to-consumer markets and increase access to agricultural products. Activities may include outreach, training, and technical assistance to farmers markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, agritourism activities, online sales or other direct producer-to-consumer opportunities. A 25% match is required. **Applications due 11 May.**

Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials Funding. The Natural Resources Conservation Service CIG program offers national and state-specific technical and financial assistance to producers to help compensate for any risks associated with implementation of new conservation practices, systems and approaches. Trials require evaluation of irrigation practices from the system and farm levels, and should focus on one of the following areas: irrigation technology, precision agriculture, or soil health demonstration trials. **National program applications due by 11 May 2020.**

State CIG funding deadlines
Alaska - applications **due 15 May** Idaho - applications **due 8 May**
Oregon - applications **due 8 May**

USDA Local Food Promotion Program provides funding to develop, coordinate and expand local food business through strategies like feasibility studies, market research, training and technical assistance. The goal is to increase access to and availability of locally produced agricultural products. A 25% match is required. **Applications due 11 May by 8:59pm PST.**

Source Reduction Assistance Grant Program supports research, investigation, study, demonstration, education and training to help business and facilities find cost-savings while reducing their environmental footprint in the face of more frequent extreme weather events. **Applications due 15 May *extended.**

USDA NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Alternative Funding Arrangement (AFA). This program is an extension of the classic RCPP that allows for greater flexibility and "out of the box" projects limited to 15 awards. Project areas can include innovative approaches to leverage the federal investment in conservation, projects that use pay-for-performance conservation approaches, or large-scale infrastructure investment projects that generate conservation benefits for agricultural producers and nonindustrial private forest owners. **Applications due 18 May.**

USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program support efforts to increase the competitiveness of specialty crops, including fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture). Support is available to enhance sustainability, pest and disease control, conservation-focused research, and nutrition education. **Applications due 27 May.**

Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+) Expansion for Moisture and Drought open 23 March. WHIP+ covers losses of crops, trees, bushes, and vines that occurred as a result 2018-2019 disaster events. Recent expansions include sugar beet and milk losses, and quality reduction.
WHIP+ Factsheet

Opportunity

Vacancy Announcement: Intertribal Agriculture Council Technical Assistance Specialist (TAS), Alaska Region. The TAS will facilitate government-to-government meetings between Tribes and the USDA, identify problems and issues, advocate for appropriate USDA programs and educate Tribes and individuals of program benefits, and develop relationships between partners. Extensive travel is required. **Application deadline 31 March.**

Information

Potential improvements to flash drought prediction may be achieved using shorter timescales, more frequent updates, and additional data such as soil moisture and land-atmosphere interactions. Improving predictive models could help land managers and others mitigate negative impacts. The study addresses drivers of flash drought, current limitations to prediction, and provides insight on how to progress early warnings. These insights make a case for existing observational networks like the US Drought Monitor's Drought Conditions & Impacts Reporter and the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network (CoCoRaHS) (links above).

Spring snow cover loss is accelerating, especially during the month of June in the Northern Hemisphere, with 2019 showing the 17th lowest snow cover on record. High latitudes, including Alaska, are seeing more significant decreases but similar trends are seen at mid-latitudes across the Northwest. Spring snowpack loss has implications on permafrost thawing, the timing of runoff and the length of the growing season, among others.

Fallowing cattle-feed farmland is a way to alleviate western water shortages, according to models of the nation's food, energy and water system supply chain. A recent study finds that the largest portion of freshwater used on farms in the western US go to cattle-feed crops, such as alfalfa and grass hay. One way to alleviate severe regional water shortages is rotational fallowing, which is considered a simple and affordable approach to significantly reduce water use.

Dry Farming for a Drought Resilient Future. get details on dry farming techniques for the Pacific Northwest such as benefits, current research, and information on the Dry Farming Collaborative- a collection of growers working together to advance the science of dry farming in the region. Read more in the Corvallis Advocate.
Additional information on dry farming on the Northwest Climate Hub website.

Forage reserve established in eastern Idaho. The Idaho Statesman Journal announces the County Line Forage Reserve, established by the Bureau of Land Management, is intended to help ranchers maintain herds and access forage when public lands are unavailable due to fire damage recovery. The new reserve was created with the expectation of more frequent and intense fire across the state.

Beaver provide year-round water on Idaho ranch, BEEF Magazine interviews rancher Jay Wilde who recruited beaver to help cultivate reliable sources of forage and water to sustain a cattle operation on his property. Now Wilde teaches others how to implement beaver-assisted restoration.
Land owners across the western US are working to adopt similar restoration strategies, read detailed case studies here.

Oregon Water Conditions Report, a biweekly report, released on 23 March indicates variability in snow water equivalent in basins across the state, with significantly drier conditions in the southwest and above normal conditions in some northeastern basins.

Washington Climate Resilience Plan Announced. Washington State Department of Natural Resources releases a plan to minimize the threat of climate change on local farms, forests, and communities. Suggestions from the plan include increasing renewable energy production on state lands, reforesting with adaptable tree species, and widespread planting of urban forests.
Full climate resilience plan One-page summary

Washington state legislature passes multiple bills on drought and emissions that help build climate change resilience. The drought bill (HB 1622) focuses on drought preparedness and response and provides for tools and resources that help farmers and communities build resiliency. Click here for a full legislative update with links each of the bills.

Check it Out: Can Biochar Be Used for Carbon Dioxide Drawdown in Washington State? A comprehensive new study estimates the technical potential for biochar for 26 Washington counties. In addition to carbon storage, biochar shows promise for renewable energy generation, improved air quality, soil productivity, soil-water storage, and more.

Sequestering Carbon in Cross-Laminated Timber. Wood products used for buildings and furniture keep carbon emissions from entering the atmosphere for long time periods. Cross-laminated timber represents a new opportunity to store large amounts of carbon more efficiently than traditional building materials.

Conferences, Workshops & Trainings*

*Visit websites for updates as many events are being rescheduled or moved to an online format.

Washington State Society of American Foresters 2020 Annual Meeting Leavenworth, Washington, rescheduled to Spring 2021. This year's meeting theme of "shared stewardship" and panel discussions with key partners. Forest health and wildfire hazard risk challenges are conference topic fixtures and attendees range from federal, state, tribal, and private entities.

12th Annual Oregon Conservation Education & Assistance Network (OCEAN) Connect Conference Sunriver, Oregon, rescheduled 1-3 December 2020. The conference provides technical and administrative training to natural resource conservation professionals in rural and urban contexts. This year's meeting features climate-focused panel discussions and presentations on risk management, landscape resilience, mitigation strategies, climate adaptation tools and information, and more.

Climate Change 101: Introduction to Climate Change Adaptation Planning 19-21 May in Blue Lake, California. The Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals and partners will hold the first of two trainings for tribal environmental, natural resource, and emergency management personnel who expect to be or are currently involved in climate change adaptation and resilience planning. The course provides an overview to planning for climate change impacts, highlighting the work of tribes that have completed an adaptation plan or vulnerability assessment.

Idaho Forest Restoration Partnership 2020 Annual Conference Postponed. The in-person meeting is postponed but information about alternative webinars will be posted on their website.

Soil and Water Conservation Society's 75th Annual Conference 26-29 July Des Moines, Iowa. The conference theme of "Expanding Horizons: Where Conservation Meets Innovation" inspires 12 focal topics including soil health, applied data in agriculture, water resources, monitoring, and more.

The 2020 National Soil Moisture Workshop 12-13 August National Agricultural Library in Beltsville, Maryland. This workshop brings leaders in soil moisture research and development together in an interactive workshop to exchange ideas and enhance collaborations. **Abstracts due 1 June. Registration due 1 August.**

National Tribal & Indigenous Climate Conference, Tribal Resilience for Seven Generations 31 August-4 September in St. Paul, Minnesota. Proposal submissions across environmental and social tracks are requested. Topics include climate-related impacts, assessments, tools, adaptation, mitigation, actions, and the intersection of western science and adaptation strategies with Traditional and Indigenous Knowledge. The emphasis is on open to all US tribal nations and indigenous peoples across the world, with an emphasis on including elders and youth. Oral and poster presentations due 1 May, *extended. **Registration opens soon.**

Tribal Climate Camp September 8-12 2020 Anchorage, Alaska. Applications are now being accepted for the 2020 Tribal Climate Camp that support teams of tribal leaders, climate change coordinators, planners, and program managers to build skills, gather information, and develop tribal policy needed to address climate change impacts.
Check out a video on the 2019 Tribal Climate Camp

Save the Date: Western Forest and Conservation Nursery Association and the Intertribal Nursery Council Joint Annual Conference 22-24 September Santa Fe, New Mexico. This year's theme is "Seeds, Seedlings, and Outplanting in Dry Environments."

Agroforestry in the Pacific Northwest Workshop Eugene, Oregon 2020 has been postponed until the fall. The workshop is intended for technical assistance providers, extension staff, and anyone else who works with farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners to promote agroforestry.