

Linn County to seek drought disaster declaration

ALBANY — The mid-valley has not seen significant rainfall for more than two months and temperatures are above normal — hitting triple digits several times — prompting Linn County Commissioners Roger Nyquist and Will Tucker to request that Gov. Kate Brown declare a drought state of emergency for Linn County.

The action came at the Tuesday morning meeting of the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Sherrie Sprenger was not present.

The resolution, prepared by new county emergency manager Ric Lentz, notes that current “snow pack and rainfall are insufficient to fully support Linn County farm and ranch operations” and have also negatively impacted crop yields as well as the health and welfare of livestock.

Declaration of a drought emergency would also help the city of Sodaville receive financial aid from the Oregon Water Resources Department to pay for hauling potable water for local residential use.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the entire western portion of the United States is experiencing unprecedented drought. It is being driven by a combination of lack of rainfall plus unusually high temperatures.

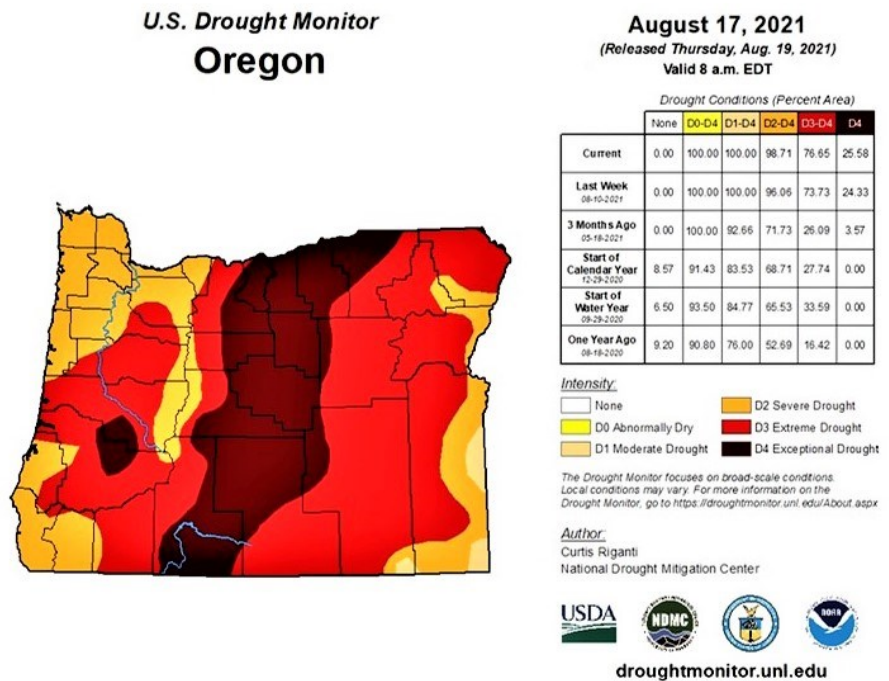
States affected include Oregon, Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Washington.

Last month, Gov. Brown issued an executive order that directed state agencies to stop watering lawns and washing offices windows.

According to Drought.gov, July was the sixth driest in the past 127 years in Oregon, down .76 inches of rainfall over normal and it was the 13th driest year in the last 127 years, down 9.59 inches from normal.

In other business the commissioners:

- Approved an agreement to manage six U.S. Forest Service campgrounds east of Sweet



Home through Dec. 31, 2022. Parks Director Brian Carroll said the program has worked well since it began in 2011 and the Forest Service plans to advertise a new prospectus for operating its campgrounds in the spring of 2022. Carroll anticipates the length of the contracts will likely be expanded from five years to 25 years or more.

- Approved application for a \$1.74 million Justice Reinvestment Grant presented by Tony Howell, manager of the county’s alcohol and drug program. Funds are used to finance work release programs, transitional leave programs, reducing recidivism and specialty courts. 10% of funds must be spent on community-based victim services.
- Approved an agreement to provide 35 beds at the Linn County Jail for the Department of Corrections at a rate of \$93.81 per day. The agreement will run through June 30, 2022.
- Learned that the Juvenile Department received 21 referrals

in July and there are 173 young people on probation. Of those, 59 are considered high-risk.

- Approved an intergovernmental agreement with the Oregon Youth Authority for \$649,884. The funds help pay for a probation officer, a part-timer Victim Assistant, psychological evaluations, plus a probation officer to supervise the juvenile sex offender caseload.
- Approved moving \$1 million in American Recovery Program funds into materials and services.
- Approved adjusting the Veterans Services budget by adding \$12,773, reflecting increased funds from the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Appointed Alyssa Boles as interim Planning Director until a replacement for Robert Wheeldon, who has retired, is found.

Media contact: Alex Paul, Linn County Communications Officer, 541-967-3825 or email apaul@co.linn.or.us.

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