



# JACKSON COUNTY

Oregon

## Administrator's Office

**Danny L. Jordan**  
*County Administrator*

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March 23, 2022

Ryan Andrews, Hydrologist  
Oregon Water Resources Department  
Co-Chair, Oregon Drought Readiness Council  
725 Summer Street NE, Suite A  
Salem OR 97301  
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Traci Naile  
Operations and Preparedness Manager  
Oregon Office of Emergency Management  
Co-Chair, Oregon Drought Readiness Council  
P.O. Box 14370  
Salem OR 97301  
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RE: Jackson County Drought Declaration

Dear Mr. Andrews and Ms. Naile:

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners request that the Governor of Oregon issue an Executive Order for all of Jackson County under the provisions of Oregon Revised Statute Chapter 536, Water Resources Administration, as a direct result of severe and continuing drought conditions.

There is the potential for Jackson County's agricultural and livestock, natural resources, recreational, tourism, and related economies to experience widespread and severe damage resulting from extreme water conditions within our County.

The annual water supplies available for irrigators and ranchers within Jackson County are a function of both available water storage in the Rogue and Applegate Rivers, in various reservoirs (Willow, Howard Prairie, Hyatt, Emigrant, Agate, Fish, and Four Mile Lakes), and the estimated seasonal inflow from winter snowpack.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has estimated that in this water year, October 1, 2021, through March 1, 2022, the Rogue Basin is at 74 percent median snowpack and 73 percent of total average precipitation and, as of March 1, 2022, storage for the reservoirs was well below average with ranges from 12 to 67 percent of average. Long-term snowpack monitoring sites in the Rogue Basin have recorded below-average levels for snow water equivalent, including four snow courses on Mt. Ashland that have been measured continuously for over 40 years. As of March 1, 2022, the USDA reports that streamflow forecasts decreased slightly from the month prior; however, water managers in Jackson County should prepare for near median to well below median water supplies if conditions remain similar.

Mr. Ryan Andrews  
Ms. Traci Naile  
March 23, 2022  
Page 2 of 2

Jackson County has approximately 40,000 acres of irrigation district lands being irrigated, in part, from stored water, and many of irrigation districts may choose to delay opening day and may be forced to curtail water sources later this summer. As of March 2022, irrigation storage, as part of the United States Bureau of Reclamation Rogue Basin Project, is at 13 percent of average. In addition to irrigation district lands, there are approximately 170,000 acres of irrigated lands that have individual water rights that will be affected by low reservoir and streamflow levels. Many farmers, ranchers, and vineyards rely solely upon natural water sources, which are not augmented by local reservoirs, and these natural tributaries to the Rogue and Applegate Rivers are in extreme jeopardy of drying as they rely upon annual snowpack to run.

The United States Drought Monitor indicates that over 90 percent of the State of Oregon is experiencing drought conditions. As of March 1, 2022, Jackson County, specifically, is in either Severe (D2) or Extreme (D3) Drought.

Today, the Board of Commissioners signed Order No. 47-22 (attached) proclaiming that a local disaster is declared and requesting that the Governor declare a State drought emergency for Jackson County. In making this proclamation, the Board has determined that additional action by, and support from, the State is needed. This may include assistance from the Oregon Water Resources Department and other Oregon executive branch agencies, operating within their statutory authorities. The Jackson County Board of Commissioners, therefore, requests an Executive Order from the Governor declaring a drought emergency in Jackson County.

We extend, in advance, our appreciation for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

  
Danny Jordan  
County Administrator

Attachment

By Email Only

cc: By Email to Holly Powers, Jackson County Emergency Manager, [powershd@jacksoncounty.org](mailto:powershd@jacksoncounty.org);  
Shavon Haynes, District 13 State Watermaster [Shavon.L.Haynes@oregon.gov](mailto:Shavon.L.Haynes@oregon.gov)

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

STATE OF OREGON, COUNTY OF JACKSON

IN THE MATTER OF PROCLAIMING THAT A ) ORDER NO. 47-22  
LOCAL DISASTER IS DECLARED AND )  
REQUEST THE GOVERNOR TO DECLARE A )  
STATE DROUGHT EMERGENCY FOR )  
JACKSON COUNTY, OREGON )

WHEREAS, the Jackson County Board of Commissioners finds that Jackson County’s agricultural and livestock industries, and related economy, are anticipated to suffer widespread and severe economic damage, potential injuries, and loss of property resulting from extreme weather conditions within the County; and

WHEREAS, annual water supplies available for irrigators and ranchers within Jackson County are a function of both available water storage in the Rogue and Applegate Rivers, in various reservoirs (Willow, Howard Prairie, Hyatt, Emigrant, Agate, Fish, and Four Mile Lakes), and the estimated seasonal inflow from winter snowpack; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has estimated that in this water year, October 1, 2021, through March 1, 2022, the Rogue Basin is at 74 percent median snowpack and 73 percent of total average precipitation, and as of March 1, 2022, storage for the reservoirs was well below average with ranges from 12 to 67 percent of average; and

WHEREAS, long-term snowpack monitoring sites in the Rogue Basin have recorded below average levels for snow water equivalent, including four snow courses on Mt. Ashland that have been measured continuously for over 40 years; and

WHEREAS, as of March 1, 2022, the USDA reports that streamflow forecasts decreased slightly from the month prior, however, water managers in Jackson County should prepare for near median to well below median water supplies if conditions remain similar; and

WHEREAS, Jackson County has approximately 40,000 acres of irrigation district lands irrigated, in part, from stored water, and many of irrigation districts may choose to delay opening day and may be forced to curtail water sources later this summer; and

WHEREAS, as of March 2022, irrigation storage, as part of the United States Bureau of Reclamation Rogue Basin Project, is at 13 percent of average; and

WHEREAS, in addition to irrigation district lands, there are approximately 170,000 acres of irrigated lands that have individual water rights that will be affected by low reservoir and streamflow levels; and

WHEREAS, many farmers, ranchers, and vineyards rely solely upon natural water sources, which are not augmented by local reservoirs, and these natural tributaries to the Rogue and Applegate Rivers are in extreme jeopardy of drying as they rely upon annual snowpack to run; and

WHEREAS, the extended weather forecast for Jackson County projects higher than normal temperatures, and below average precipitation; and

WHEREAS, all of these conditions will result in the loss of economic stability, pasture shortages, decreases in feed production, a shortened growing season, and decreased water supplies for Jackson County's agricultural, vineyard, and livestock producers; and

WHEREAS, in addition, this multi-year cumulative drought has resulted in decreased fuel moisture and early onset fire danger; and

WHEREAS, the Jackson County Board of Commissioners determines that extraordinary measures must be taken to alleviate the suffering of people and livestock, to protect or mitigate economic loss, and to be responsive to the threat of wildfires.

Now, therefore,

The Board of County Commissioners of Jackson County hereby PROCLAIMS:

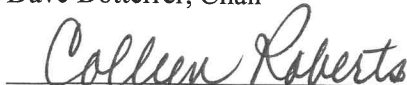
1. A local disaster is declared within Jackson County.
2. The Drought Annex of the Jackson County Emergency Operations Plan has been implemented.
3. Pursuant to Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 401.165, the Board finds that appropriate response is beyond the capability of Jackson County and is declaring a state of emergency for the purpose of assessment, evaluation, and acquiring the ability to provide appropriate available resources.
4. A request to The Honorable Kate Brown, Governor of Oregon, to declare a State Drought Emergency for all of Jackson County under the provisions of ORS 536.740 due to severe and continuing drought conditions beginning at this time, and continuing for an unknown period of time, and direct the Oregon Water Resources Department to make available in Jackson County: temporary transfers of water rights, emergency water use permits, use of existing right option agreements, and other Federal and State drought assistance and programs as needed.
5. This Proclamation shall take effect immediately from and after its issuance.

DATED this 23rd day of March, 2022, at Medford, Oregon.

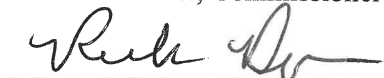
JACKSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



Dave Dotterer, Chair



Colleen Roberts, Commissioner



Rick Dyer, Commissioner

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