

# Wasco County Wildfire Season Briefing

July 2015



**Mid-Columbia Fire & Rescue**

**Wasco County Sheriff's Office**

**Wasco County Emergency Management**

# Welcome & Introductions

- Mid-Columbia Fire & Rescue
- Wasco County Sheriff's Office
- Wasco County Emergency Management
- Others Response Agencies Present

# Purpose of This Meeting

- Information Sharing:
  - 2015 Wildfire Outlook
  - Home Preparedness for Wildfires
  - Readiness for Evacuations
  - General Personal Preparedness
  - Citizen Alert Program
- Increased Community Resiliency
- Participant Feedback

## Recent Large Wildfires in Wasco Co.

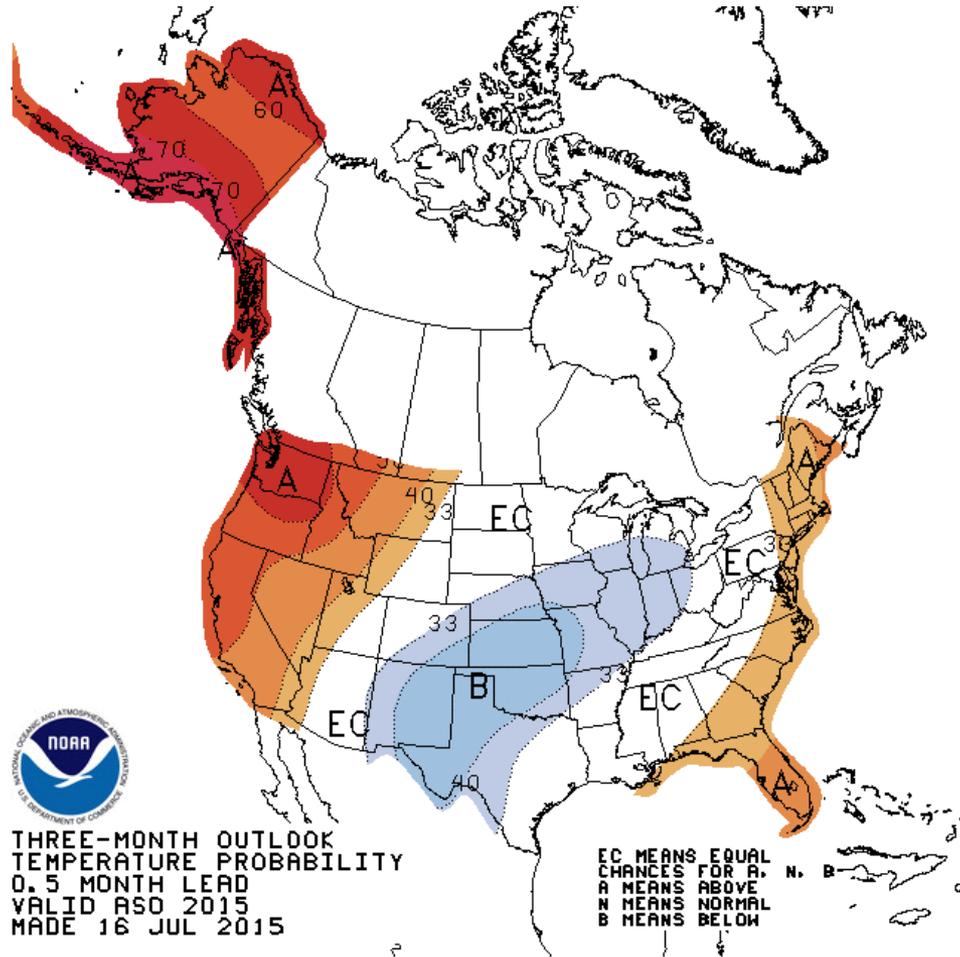
- 2015 – Several small fires to date...
- 2014 – Rowena Fire (West of The Dalles): #1 Fire in the Nation for 3 days, hundreds of homes evacuated, one home lost, 3,680 acres burned, total estimated cost \$4.3 million.
- 2013 – Government Flats Fire (South of The Dalles): Widespread evacuations, 4 homes lost, 11,434 acres burned, total estimated cost \$12.9 million.

# Rowena Fire - 2014



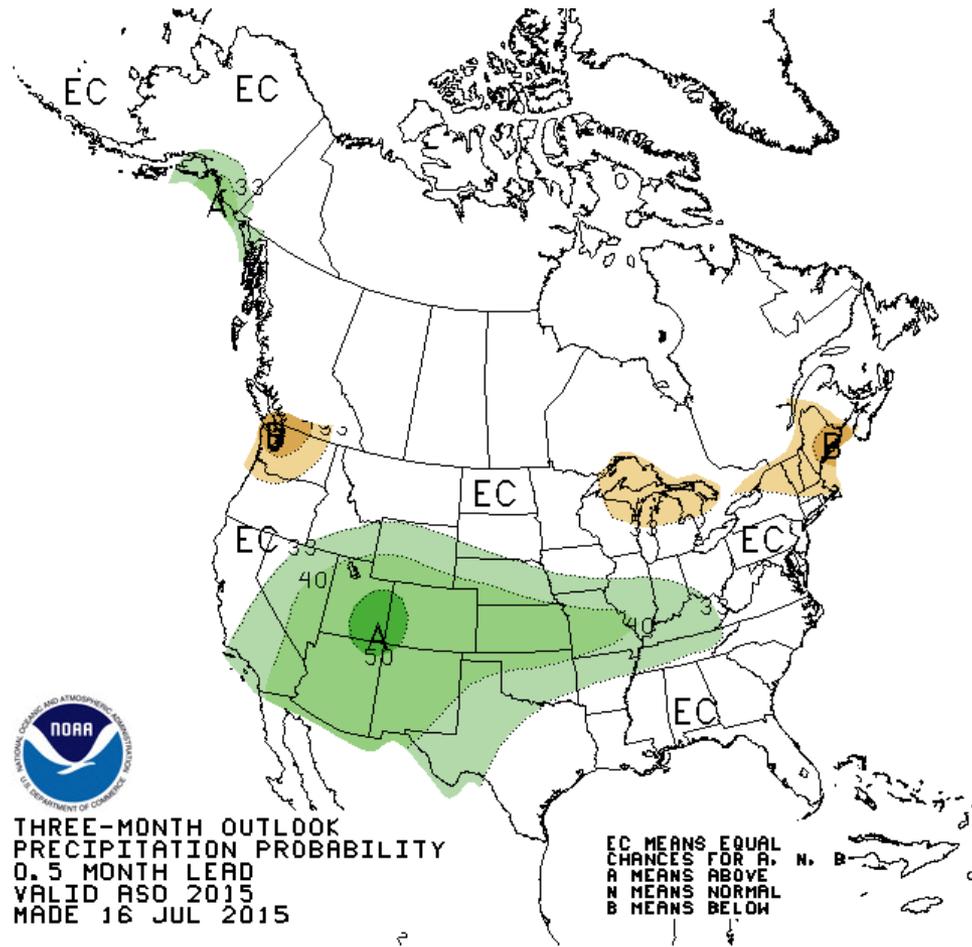
# 2015 Wildfire Outlook

Temperatures:  
Above average  
for much for  
most of the  
western  
United States.



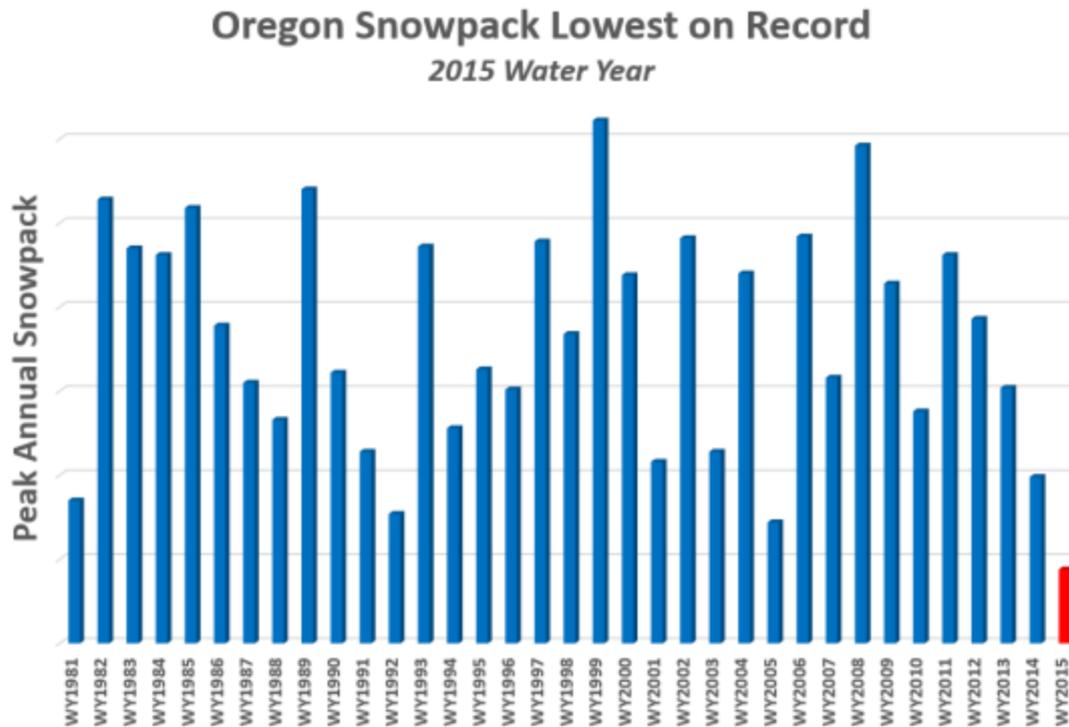
# 2015 Wildfire Outlook, cont.

Precipitation:  
Below average  
for northern  
Oregon.



# 2015 Wildfire Outlook, cont.

- Extreme Drought in Oregon
  - 23 of 36 Counties have declared drought emergency.



**State-wide, Oregon's snowpack this winter peaked at the lowest levels measured in the last 35 years.**

# Personal Steps Towards Readiness



# Resource: Firewise Communities

- The Firewise Communities Program encourages local solutions for safety by involving homeowners in taking individual responsibility for preparing their homes from the risk of wildfire.
- Firewise is a key component of Fire Adapted Communities — a collaborative approach that connects all those who play a role in wildfire education, planning and action with comprehensive resources to help reduce risk.
- To save lives and property from wildfire, NFPA's Firewise Communities program teaches people how to adapt to living with wildfire and encourages neighbors to work together and take action now to prevent losses.

# *Oregon Ready, Set, Go!*

- **READY**

- Fireproof your home and create defensible space to protect against wildfires.
- Make a wildfire action plan addressing evacuation, communications and plans for pets/livestock.
- Know how to respond safely and leave early if threatened by wildfire.
- Register now for Wasco County Citizen Alert.

# *Oregon Ready, Set, Go! cont.*

- SET
  - Create a 72 hour kit for your home including food and emergency supplies, as well as kits for your car and workplace in case a wildfire prevents you from going home.
  - Create a special go-kit and be sure to include important documents, medications, etc.
  - When a wildfire occurs, make sure to stay tuned in for information about evacuation areas and be prepared to leave immediately if an evacuation order is issued.
  - Know the three levels of evacuation: Level 1- Get Ready, Level 2- Get Set. Level 3- Go!

# *Oregon Ready, Set, Go! cont.*

- GO!
  - Leave early! Knowing when to leave, what to take, where to go, and how to get there will help keep you and your family from being caught in smoke, fire, or road congestion while evacuating during a wildfire.
- Visit [www.oregonrsg.org](http://www.oregonrsg.org) for more information.

# Planning for Evacuations

- Evacuation Levels
  - **Level 1 – Get Ready:** Residents should be aware of the danger that exists in their area, and monitor local media outlets for information. Residents with special needs (such as a susceptibility to breathing problems in wildfires or those with animals/pets) should take note and begin making arrangements to evacuate. Evacuations at this time are voluntary.
  - **Level 2 – Get Set:** This level indicates there is significant danger to your area, and residents should either voluntarily relocate to a shelter or with family/friends outside of the effected area, or if choosing to remain, to be ready at a moments notice.
  - **Level 3 – Go!:** Danger to your area is current or imminent, and you should leave immediately. Listen to local media, and watch for emergency personnel who may be coming by to give further instructions regarding the evacuation.

# Planning for Evacuations, cont.

- Evacuation FAQ's
  - **Who orders evacuations?** Fire Incident Command/Law Enforcement.
  - **Who conducts the actual evacuation notices and how?** First responders notify residents door to door as available and via the Citizen Alert emergency notification system.
  - **Why are evacuations ordered?** Evacuations are ordered when there is an immediate, serious threat to resident life safety.
  - **When can residents return home?** Residents can return home when the evacuation is reduced from a Level 3 to a Level 2 or 1. Residents should stay aware of changing conditions and know that they may have to leave again once they have been allowed to return home.
  - **How are residents notified they can return home?** Evacuation levels are published via local media and through the Citizen Alert system.

# General Personal Preparedness

- **Make a kit.** [www.ready.gov/kit](http://www.ready.gov/kit)
  - Prepare to evacuate quickly or survive in your home. Be sure to include provisions for special considerations (e.g. “Seal the Room”, medical needs, communications, etc).
- **Make a plan.** [www.ready.gov/make-a-plan](http://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan)
  - Identify a plan to leave quickly (including escape routes) or shelter in your home, communicate with loved ones, address special needs and care for pets. Plan for different hazards and circumstances.

## General Personal Preparedness, cont.

- **Be informed.** [www.ready.gov/be-informed](http://www.ready.gov/be-informed)
  - Get to know your local hazards and resources!
  - Prepare yourself for wildfire.
    - Firewise Communities [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org)
    - Oregon Ready, Set, Go! [www.oregonrsg.org](http://www.oregonrsg.org)
  - Monitor Media: Radio, internet/social media, TV
  - Register for Wasco County Citizen Alert.

# Wasco County Citizen Alert

- **Receive alerts about emergencies and other important community messages** by signing up for the Citizen Alert Emergency Notification System. This includes critical information such as severe weather, wildfires, floods, street and road closures, missing persons, law enforcement activities and evacuation notifications.
- You will receive time-sensitive messages wherever you specify, such as your home, cell, or business phone, email, text messages, hearing impaired receiving devices, and more. You pick where, you pick how.
- **Individuals with disabilities who need assistance can register by calling the Wasco County Communications Manager at 541-506-2760.**
- [www.co.wasco.or.us](http://www.co.wasco.or.us)



Questions/Feedback?

Thank you for  
participating.

