

NOVEMBER 2020



WestFAST News

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Chair – Patrick Lambert; Federal Liaison Officer – Deborah Lawler

[Higher Atmospheric Thirst from Climate Change to Increase Fire Danger and Drought in California and Nevada](#)



NOAA 11/18/20. Since the start of the 21st century California and Nevada have suffered extreme wildland fires and droughts that have caused devastating impacts to ecosystems and society. A common feature of these events has been very high evaporative demand—the “thirst” of the atmosphere—which has largely been driven by increased air temperatures caused by anthropogenic climate change. New research, funded by the National Integrated Drought Information System and the California-Nevada Applications Program (CNAP), a CPO RISA team, shows that climate change projections point to increases in evaporative demand, fire danger and drought in California and Nevada. The research, published in *Earth’s Future*, examined how the frequency of extreme fire danger

and three-year droughts based on evaporative demand metrics could change through the end of the 21st century. Higher evaporative demand during summer and autumn—peak fire season in the region—means faster drying of soil moisture and vegetation, and more flammable fuels that can cause fires to burn faster and hotter. Days with extreme fire danger in summer and autumn were found to increase 4-10 times by the end of the century. Multi-year droughts are also projected to increase, with much greater impacts from increased evaporative demand found in water-limited hydroclimates like the Great Basin and Southern California. Future adaptation planning efforts for wildfire management agencies, forest management, and water resource managers should account for a greater likelihood of more extreme events. The research was led by the Desert Research Institute and Western Regional Climate Center, with co-authors from CNAP and in collaboration with University of California, Merced. [View the study](#) »

[Study Uses Novel Approach to Assess Extreme Event Impacts in Alaska](#)



NOAA 11/18/20. Coastal planners and managers seeking to support climate adaptation in the Arctic

need information on potential risks, vulnerabilities, and impacts to weather extremes and climate change. However, assessing historical trends and potential socioeconomic impacts is especially difficult in the Arctic given limitations on the availability of weather observations and historical impacts. Using a novel interdisciplinary approach, a new study led by the Alaska Center for Climate Assessment and Policy (ACCAP), a CPO Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments (RISA) team, revealed multiple weather-related impacts from extreme events in Alaska and suggests the frequency and timing of these extreme events will change in the decades to come. The authors integrated archival analysis, observational data, and climate model downscaling to synthesize information on historical and projected impacts of extreme weather events in Nome, Alaska. They identified over 300 impacts (1990–2018) based on analyses of the Nome Nugget newspaper articles and Storm Data entries. Historical impacts centered on transportation, community activities, and utilities. An analysis of observed and ERA5 reanalysis data indicated that impacts are frequently associated with high wind, extreme low temperatures, heavy snowfall events, and winter days above freezing. Downscaled output (2020–2100) from two climate models suggested that there will be changes in the frequency and timing of these extreme weather events. For example, extreme cold temperature is projected to decrease through the 2040s and then rarely occur afterwards, and extreme wind events show little change before the 2070s. Significantly, their findings also reveal that not all weather-related extremes will change monotonically throughout the twenty-first century—extreme snowfall events, for instance, will increase through the 2030s before declining in the 2040s. The dynamical nature of projected changes in extreme events has implications for climate adaptation planning. [Read the paper »](#)

Upcoming Meetings

[Western Governors Association 2020 Winter Meeting](#)

Virtual Meeting
December 10, 2020

[Western States Water Council Spring 2021 \(195th\) Meetings](#)

TBD: El Paso, TX, or Virtually via Zoom
March 23-26, 2021

Upcoming Events

[WestFAST Webinar: Salinity in the Western United States](#), Tuesday, December 8, 2020, at 1:00PM MST

Other Federal News

NOAA/NIDIS 11/02/20. [Drought Prediction Sensitivity to Land Surface Conditions](#)

NRCS/WA 11/02/20. [USDA funds conservation innovation with \\$14.6 million investment in new tools, technology development](#)

NRCS/OR 11/03/20. [NRCS Oregon awards 5 Conservation Innovation Grants to develop new technologies for agriculture](#)

NRCS/CO 11/03/20. [NRCS Pine Gulch Fire Disaster Team Begins Assessing Impacts of Wildfire](#)

NRCS/SD 11/03/20. [NRCS Announces EQIP Program Sign-Up](#)

NRCS/WY 11/04/20. [Alamo Creek–Bighorn River Watershed Named One of NRCS's Top Priorities](#)

NRCS/WY 11/04/20. [NRCS Announces EQIP Signup for 2021 Funding, apply by December 7th, 2020](#)

NRCS/WY 11/04/20. [USDA Seeks New Partnerships to Safeguard, Restore Wetland Ecosystems](#)

The WESTERN STATES FEDERAL AGENCY SUPPORT TEAM (WestFAST) is a collaboration between 12 Federal agencies with water management responsibilities in the West, including: BLM, DOD, EPA, FWS, NASA, NOAA, NPS, NRCS, Reclamation, USACE, USFS, and USGS. WestFAST was established to support the Western States Water Council and the Western Governors' Association in coordinating Federal efforts regarding water issues.

NRCS 11/05/20. [USDA Announces Funding of 31 WaterSMART Initiative Priority Areas](#)

NOAA 11/09/20. [U.S. sees average precipitation and slightly above-average temperature in October 2020](#)

NOAA 11/09/20. [How will climate-change change El Niño and La Niña?](#)

EPA 11/10/20. [EPA Announces Nearly \\$500 Million for Water Infrastructure Projects in Northern California](#)

NRCS 11/10/20. [USDA Announces Updated Conservation Practice Standards](#)

NRCS/SD 11/10/20. [Medicine Creek Conservation Implementation Strategy \(CIS\) Project](#)

NOAA/NIDIS 11/11/20. [NIDIS Tribal Drought Engagement Strategy](#)

NOAA 11/12/20. [November 2020 La Niña update: just us chickens](#)

EPA 11/12/20. [EPA Announces \\$20 Million to Improve Access to Drinking Water in Tribal Communities](#)

NOAA 11/13/20. [Remarkably warm October fuels march toward 2nd-hottest year](#)

NRCS/NV 11/13/20. [Apply by December 13 for Fiscal Year 2021 EQIP and AMA Funding](#)

NOAA 11/16/20. [October 2020: “Only” the fourth-warmest October on record](#)

EPA 11/18/20. [WHAT THEY ARE SAYING: Administrator Wheeler Announces National Goal to Increase Recycling Rate](#)

EPA 11/18/20. [EPA Invites Iowa, California, and Rhode Island to Apply for \\$695 Million in Water Infrastructure Loans](#)

USDOJ 11/18/20. [Trump Administration Strengthens Rapid Response to Invasive Mussels to Protect Western Waters](#)

USFS 11/18/20. [USDA Forest Service Announces Key Changes to NEPA Procedures](#)

USBR 11/19/20. [Trump Administration finalizes Shasta Dam raise plan to increase water storage for Californians and the environment](#)

EPA 11/19/20. [EPA Receives 67 New Requests for WIFIA Financing Totaling Over \\$9 Billion](#)

EPA 11/19/20. [U.S. EPA Invites California to Apply for \\$695 Million in Water Infrastructure Loans](#)

EPA 11/19/20. [EPA Grant Will Help Ohkay Owingeh Protect Water Quality](#)

USBR 11/20/20. [Reclamation seeks public comment on draft environmental impact statement on hatchery infrastructure improvements](#)

NRCS/KS 11/23/20. [Kansas NRCS Announces Funding for Rattlesnake Creek and Middle Creek Watersheds Through NRCS Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program](#)

RD 11/23/20. [USDA Launches AskUSDA to Improve and Streamline Customer Experience](#)

USBR 11/23/20. [Statement on the Memorandum of Understanding to Promote Clean and Renewable Hydropower](#)

EPA 11/23/20. [U.S. Navy to upgrade wastewater treatment plant on California’s San Clemente Island following agreement with U.S. EPA](#)

USACE 11/24/20. [20-058 Corps of Engineers deploys Advance Measures Technical Assistance Team to Idaho for Post-Wildfire Analysis](#)

NOAA 11/25/20. [What to expect this winter: November update to NOAA’s 2020-21 Winter Outlook](#)

NRCS/CA 11/25/20. [NRCS Announces Application Deadline for California Wildfire Disaster Recovery Funding](#)

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NRCS/ID 11/25/20. [Idaho NRCS Snow Survey Introduces New Team Members](#)

EPA 11/30/20. [New Interim Strategy Will Address PFAS Through Certain EPA-Issued Wastewater Permits](#)

PEOPLE

BLM 11/13/20. [Monticello Field Office Welcomes New Field Manager](#)

NPS 11/16/20. [Olympic National Park Welcomes New Chief Ranger](#)

NPS 11/17/20. [National Park Service Names Chip Jenkins Superintendent of Grand Teton National Park](#)

BLM 11/19/20. [BLM Announces New West Desert District Manager](#)

NRCS/ID 11/25/20. [Idaho NRCS Snow Survey Introduces New Team Members](#)

NPS 11/28/20. [Craig Kenkel Named Acting General Superintendent of Golden Gate National Recreation Area](#)

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