Future Climate Projections
Sherman County

August 2018

A Report to the Oregon Department of Landscape Conservation and Development

Prepared by
The Oregon Climate Change Research Institute

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OCCRI

Oregon Department of
Land Conservation
and Development

Future Climate Projections: Sherman County

A report to the Oregon Department of Landscape Conservation and Development

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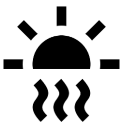
August 2018

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

This report presents future climate projections for Sherman County relevant to specific natural hazards for the 2020s (2010–2039 average) and 2050s (2040–2069 average) compared to the 1971–2000 average historical baseline. The projections were analyzed for a lower greenhouse gas emissions scenario as well as a higher greenhouse gas emissions scenario, using multiple global climate models. This summary lists only the projections for the 2050s under the higher emissions scenario. Projections for both time periods and both emissions scenarios can be found within relevant sections of the main report.

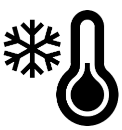


Heat Waves

Extreme heat events are expected to increase in frequency, duration, and intensity due to continued warming temperatures.

In Sherman County, the frequency of hot days with temperatures at or above 90°F is projected to increase on average by 33 days (with a range of 14 to 46 days) by the 2050s under the higher emissions scenario compared to the historical baseline.

In Sherman County, the temperature of the hottest day of the year is projected to increase by 8°F (with a range of 3 to 13°F) by the 2050s under the higher emissions scenario compared to the historical baseline.



Cold Waves

Cold extremes are still expected to occur from time to time, but with much less frequency and intensity as the climate warms.

In Sherman County, the frequency of days at or below freezing is projected to decline on average by 7 days (with a range of 2 to 11 days) by the 2050s under the higher emissions scenario compared to the historical baseline.

In Sherman County, the temperature of the coldest night of the year is projected to increase by 8°F (with a range of 0 to 14°F) by the 2050s under the higher emissions scenario compared to the historical baseline.

Heavy Rains

The intensity of extreme precipitation events is expected to increase slightly in the future as the atmosphere warms and is able to hold more water vapor.

In Sherman County, the magnitude of precipitation on the wettest day and wettest consecutive five days per year is projected to increase on average by about 20% (with a range of 6% to 50%) and 14% (with a range of -2% to 34%), respectively, by the 2050s under the higher emissions scenario compared to the historical baseline.

In Sherman County, the frequency of days with at least ¾” of precipitation and the frequency of days exceeding a threshold for landslide risk is not projected to change substantially.

River Flooding

Flood risk to Sherman County from the Columbia River is not expected to change substantially based on insubstantial projected changes in non-regulated flood magnitudes on the Columbia River at John Day.

Mid- to low-elevation tributaries, such as the John Day River, that are near the freezing level in winter, receiving a mix of rain and snow, may experience an increase in winter flood risk due to warmer winter temperatures causing precipitation to fall more as rain and less as snow.

Non-regulated flood magnitudes on the John Day River at McDonald Ferry are projected to increase by the 2050s compared to the historical baseline under both emissions scenarios.

Drought

Drought conditions, as represented by low summer soil moisture and low summer runoff, may become less frequent in Sherman County by the 2050s compared to the historical baseline.

Wildfire

Wildfire risk, as expressed through the frequency of very high fire danger days, is projected to increase under future climate change. In Sherman County, the frequency of very high fire danger days per year is projected to increase on average by about 40% (with a range of -13 to +103%) by the 2050s under the higher emissions scenario compared to the historical baseline.

Air Quality

Under future climate change, the risk of wildfire smoke exposure is not projected to change substantially in Sherman County under a medium emissions scenario.

Windstorms

Limited research suggests very little, if any, change in the frequency and intensity of windstorms in the Pacific Northwest as a result of climate change.

Dust Storms

Limited research suggests that the risk of dust storms in summer would decrease in eastern Oregon under climate change in areas that experience an increase in vegetation cover from the carbon dioxide fertilization effect.

Increased Invasive Species & Pests

Warming temperatures, altered precipitation patterns, and increasing atmospheric carbon dioxide levels increase the risk for invasive species, insect and plant pests for forest and rangeland vegetation, and cropping systems.

Loss of Wetland Ecosystems

Freshwater wetland ecosystems are sensitive to warming temperatures and altered hydrological patterns, such as changes in precipitation seasonality and reduction of snowpack.

Introduction

Industrialization has given rise to increasing amounts of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide, which is causing the Earth's climate to warm (IPCC, 2013). The effects of which are already apparent here in Oregon (Dalton *et al.*, 2017). Climate change is expected to influence the likelihood of occurrence of existing natural hazard events such as heavy rains, river flooding, drought, heat waves, cold waves, wildfire, and air quality.

Oregon's Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) contracted with the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute (OCCRI) to perform and provide analysis of the influence of climate change on natural hazards. The scope of this report is limited to the geographic area encompassed by the eight Oregon counties (thus including the counties, the cities within them and the Burns Paiute Tribe) that are part of the two Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) 16 grants DLCD received. Those counties include: Wasco, Hood River, Harney, Lake, Malheur, Wheeler, Sherman, and Gilliam Counties. Outcomes of this analysis include county-specific data, graphics, and text summarizing climate change projections for climate metrics related to each of the natural hazards lists in Table 1. This information will be integrated into the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan (NHMP) updates for the eight counties, and can be used in other county plans, policies, and programs. In addition to this report, sharing of data, and other technical assistance will be provided to the counties.

Table 1 Natural hazards and related climate metrics evaluated in this project.

Heavy Rains Wettest Day ◆ Wettest Five Days Landslide Threshold Exceedance	**Heat Waves** Hottest Day ◆ Warmest Night "Hot" Days ◆ "Warm" Nights
River Flooding Annual maximum daily flows	**Cold Waves** Coldest Day ◆ Coldest Night "Cold" Days ◆ "Cold" Nights
Drought Summer Flow ◆ Spring Snow Summer Soil Moisture	**Air Quality** Unhealthy Smoke Days
Wildfire Fire Danger Days	**Windstorms ◆ Dust Storms** **Increased Invasive Species & Pests** **Loss of Wetland Ecosystems**

Future Climate Projections Background

Introduction

The county-specific future climate projections prepared by OCCRI are derived from 10–20 global climate models (GCM) and two scenarios of future global greenhouse gas emissions. Future climate projections have been "downscaled"—that is, made locally relevant—and summaries of projected changes in the climate metrics in Table 1 are presented for an early 21st century period and a mid 21st century period compared to a historical baseline. (Read more about the data sources in the Appendix.)

Global Climate Models

Global climate models are sophisticated computer models of the Earth's atmosphere, water, and land and how these components interact over time and space according to the fundamental laws of physics (Figure 1). GCMs are the most sophisticated tools for understanding the climate system, but while highly complex and built on solid physical principles, they are still simplifications of the actual climate system. There are several ways to implement such simplifications into a GCM, which results in each one giving a slightly different answer. As such, it is best practice to use at least ten GCMs and look at the average and range of projections across all of them. (Read more about GCMs & Uncertainty in the Appendix.)

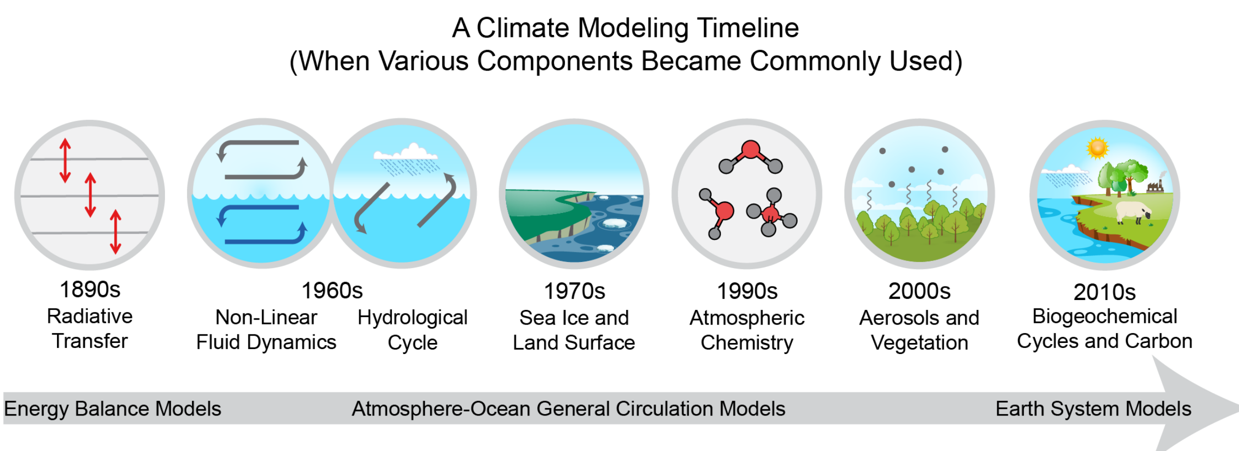


Figure 1 As scientific understanding of climate has evolved over the last 120 years, increasing amounts of physics, chemistry, and biology have been incorporated into calculations and, eventually, models. This figure shows when various processes and components of the climate system became regularly included in scientific understanding of global climate calculations and, over the second half of the century as computing resources became available, formalized in global climate models. (Source: science2017.globalchange.gov)

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

When used to project future climate, scientist give the GCMs information about the quantity of greenhouse gases that the world would emit, then the GCMs run simulations of what would happen to the air, water, and land over the next century. Since the precise amount of greenhouse gases the world will emit over the next century is unknown, scientists use several scenarios of different amounts of greenhouse gas emissions based on plausible societal trajectories. The future climate projections prepared by OCCRI uses emissions pathways called Representative Concentration Pathways (RCPs). There are several RCPs and the higher global emissions are, the greater the increase in global temperature is expected (Figure 2). OCCRI considers a lower emissions scenario (RCP 4.5) and a higher emissions scenario (RCP 8.5) because they are the most commonly used scenarios in published literature and the downscaled data is available for these scenarios. (Read more about Emissions Scenarios in the Appendix.)

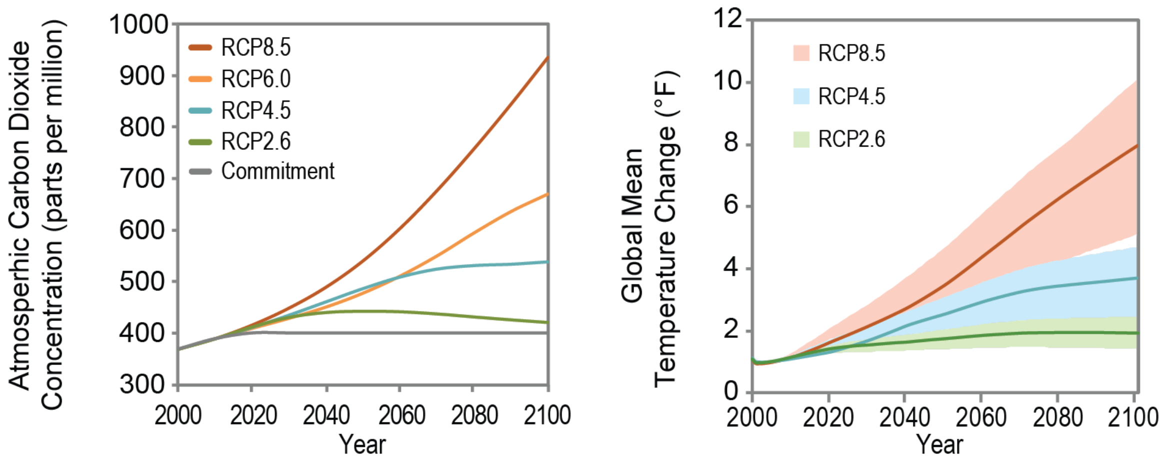


Figure 2 Future scenarios of atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations (left) and global temperature change (right) resulting from several different emissions pathways, called Representative Concentration Pathways (RCPs), which are considered in the fourth and most recent National Climate Assessment. (Source: science2017.globalchange.gov)

Downscaling

Global climate models simulate the climate across adjacent grid boxes the size of about 60 by 60 miles. To make this coarse resolution information locally relevant, global climate model outputs have been combined with historical observations to translate large-scale patterns into high-resolution projections. This process is called statistical downscaling. The future climate projections produced by OCCRI were statistically downscaled to a resolution with grid boxes the size of about 2.5 by 2.5 miles (Abatzoglou and Brown, 2012). (Read more about Downscaling in the Appendix.)

Future Time Periods

When analyzing global climate model projections of future climate, it is best practice to compare the average across at least a 30-year period in the future to an average historical baseline across at least 30 years. For the future climate projections produced by OCCRI, two 30-year future periods are presented in comparison with a 30-year historical baseline (Table 2).

Table 2 Historical and future time periods for presentation of future climate projections

Historical Baseline	Early 21st Century "2020s"	Mid 21st Century "2050s"
1971–2000	2010–2039	2040–2069

How to Use the Information in this Report

Under a changing climate, past trends, while valuable, may no longer be, on their own, reliable predictors of future outcomes. Future projections from GCMs provide an opportunity to explore a range of plausible outcomes taking into consideration the climate system's complex response to increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases. It is important to be aware that GCM projections should not be thought of as predictions of what the weather will be like at some specified date in the future, but rather viewed as predictions of the long-term statistical aggregate of weather, in other words, "climate", if greenhouse gas concentrations follow some specified trajectory.[1]

The projections of climate variables in this report, both in the direction and magnitude of change, are best used in reference to the historical climate conditions under which a particular asset or system is designed to operate. For this reason, considering the projected changes between the historical and future periods allows one to envision how current systems of interest would respond to climate conditions that are different from what they have been. In some cases, the projected change may be small enough to be accommodated within the existing system. In other cases, the projected change may be large enough to require adjustments, or adaptations, to the existing system.

[1] Read more: https://nca2014.globalchange.gov/report/appendices/faqs#narrative-page-38784

Average Temperature

Oregon's average temperature warmed at a rate of 2.2°F per century during 1895–2015. Average temperature is expected to continue warming during the 21st century under scenarios of continued global greenhouse gas emissions; the rate of warming depends on the particular emissions scenario (Dalton *et al.*, 2017). By the "2050s" compared to the 1970–1999 historical baseline, Oregon's average temperature is projected to increase by 3.6 °F with a range of 1.8°–5.4°F under a lower emissions scenario (RCP 4.5) and by 5.0°F with a range of 2.9°F–6.9°F under a higher emissions scenario (RCP 8.5) (Dalton *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, summers are projected to warm more than other seasons (Dalton *et al.*, 2017).

Average temperature in Sherman County is projected to warm during the 21st century at a similar rate to Oregon as a whole (Figure 3). Projected increases in average temperature in Sherman County compared to the 1971–2000 historical baseline range from 1.0–3.6°F by the 2020s and 1.8–7.3°F by the 2050s, depending on emissions scenario and climate model (Table 3).

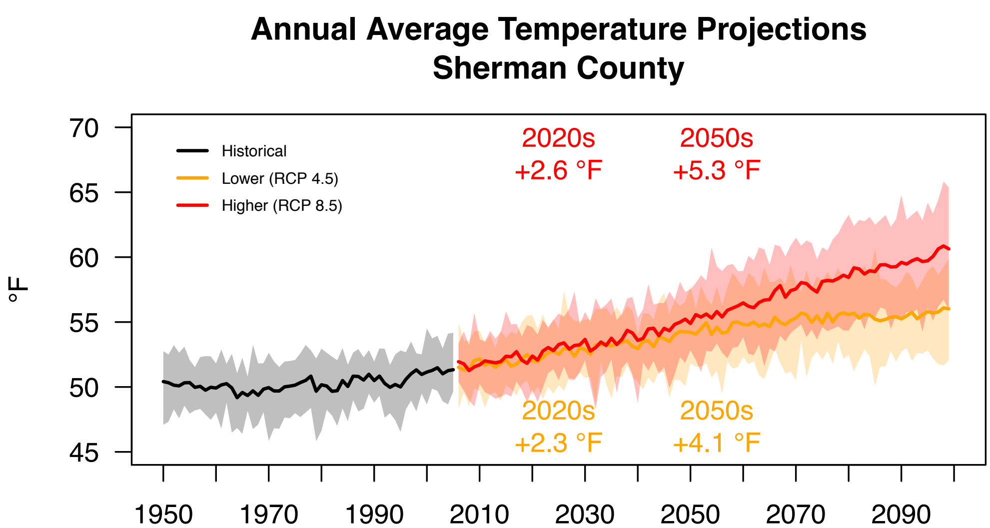


Figure 3 Annual average temperature projections for Sherman County as simulated by 20 downscaled global climate models under a lower (RCP 4.5) and a higher (RCP 8.5) greenhouse gas emissions scenario. Solid line and shading depicts the 20-model mean and range, respectively. The multi-model mean differences for the 2020s (2010–2039 average) and the 2050s (2040–2069 average) compared to the historical baseline (1971–2000 average) are shown.

Table 3 Average and range of projected future changes in Sherman County's average temperature from the historical baseline (1971–2000 average) for the 2020s (2010–2039 average) and 2050s (2040–2069 average) under a lower (RCP 4.5) and higher (RCP 8.5) emissions scenario based on 20 global climate models.

	Change by Early 21st Century "2020s"	Change by Mid 21st Century "2050s"
Higher (RCP 8.5)	+2.6°F (1.5 to 3.6)	+5.3°F (2.9 to 7.3)
Lower (RCP 4.5)	+2.3°F (1.0 to 3.5)	+4.1°F (1.8 to 5.7)

Heat Waves

Extreme heat events are expected to increase in frequency, duration, and intensity in Oregon due to continued warming temperatures. In fact, the hottest days in summer are projected to warm more than the change in mean temperature over the Pacific Northwest (Dalton *et al.*, 2017). This report presents projected changes for three metrics of heat extremes for both daytime (maximum temperature) and nighttime (minimum temperature) (Table 4).

Table 4 Heat extreme metrics and definitions

Metric	Definition
Hot Days	Number of days per year maximum temperature is greater than or equal to 90°F
Warm Nights	Number of days per year minimum temperature is greater than or equal to 65°F
Hottest Day	Annual maximum of maximum temperature
Warmest Night	Annual maximum of minimum temperature
Daytime Heat Waves	Number of events per year with at least 3 consecutive days with maximum temperature greater than or equal to 90°F
Nighttime Heat Waves	Number of events per year with at least 3 consecutive days with minimum temperature greater than or equal to 65°F

In Sherman County, all the extreme heat metrics in Table 4 are projected to increase by the 2020s and 2050s under both the lower (RCP 4.5) and higher (RCP 8.5) emissions scenarios (Table 5). For example, compared to the 1971–2000 historical baseline, by the 2050s under the higher emissions scenario, the number of hot days greater than or equal to 90°F is projected to increase by 33 days on average with a range of about 14 to 46 days. Likewise, the temperature of the hottest day of the year is projected to increase by 8.0°F on average with a range of 2.9°F to 13.1°F and the frequency of daytime heat waves is projected to increase by 2.7 events per year.

Projected changes in the frequency extreme heat days (i.e., Hot Days and Warm Nights) are shown in Figure 4. Projected changes in the magnitude of heat records (i.e., Hottest Day and Warmest Night) are shown in Figure 5. Projected changes in the frequency of extreme heat events (i.e., Daytime Heat Waves and Nighttime Heat Waves) are shown in Figure 6.

Table 5 Mean and range of projected future changes in extreme heat metrics for Sherman County from the historical baseline (1971–2000 average) for the 2020s (2010–2039 average) and 2050s (2040–2069 average) under a lower (RCP 4.5) and higher (RCP 8.5) emissions scenario based on 20 global climate models.

	Change by Early 21st Century "2020s"		Change by Mid 21st Century "2050s"	
	Lower	**Higher**	**Lower**	**Higher**
Hot Days	+12.1 days (5.0–19.3)	+14.5 days (5.7–20.4)	+23.8 days (10.0–36.1)	+33.1 days (13.9–45.8)
Warm Nights	+3.7 days (0.5–7.5)	+4.6 days (1.9–7.8)	+9.2 days (1.4–17.9)	+15.8 days (3.9–32.6)
Hottest Day	+3.3°F (0.7–6.4)	+4.0°F (1.0–7.2)	+6.0°F (2.4–12.2)	+8.0°F (2.9–13.1)
Warmest Night	+2.3°F (0.5–4.3)	+2.7°F (0.7–4.5)	+4.3°F (1.2–7.7)	+6.4°F (3.3–9.7)
Daytime Heat Waves	+1.4 events (0.6–2.3)	+1.6 events (0.8–2.2)	+2.3 events (1.4–4.1)	+2.7 events (1.7–4.5)
Nighttime Heat Waves	+0.5 events (0.0–1.0)	+0.6 events (0.2–1.0)	+1.3 events (0.1–2.5)	+2.1 events (0.1–3.8)

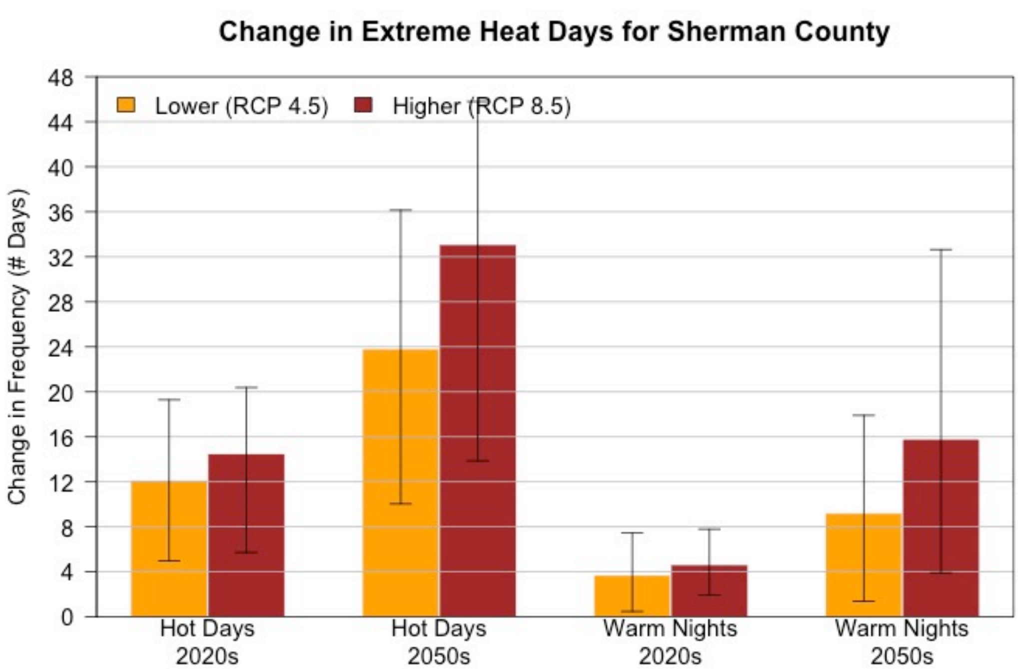


Figure 4 Projected future changes in the number of hot days (left two sets of bars) and number of warm nights (right two sets of bars) for Sherman County from the historical baseline (1971–2000 average) for the 2020s (2010–2039 average) and 2050s (2040–2069 average) under a lower (RCP 4.5) and higher (RCP 8.5) emissions scenario based on 20 global climate models. The bars and whiskers display the mean and range, respectively, of changes across the 20 GCMs. Hot days are defined as days with maximum temperature of at least 90°F; warm nights are defined as days with minimum temperature of at least 65°F.

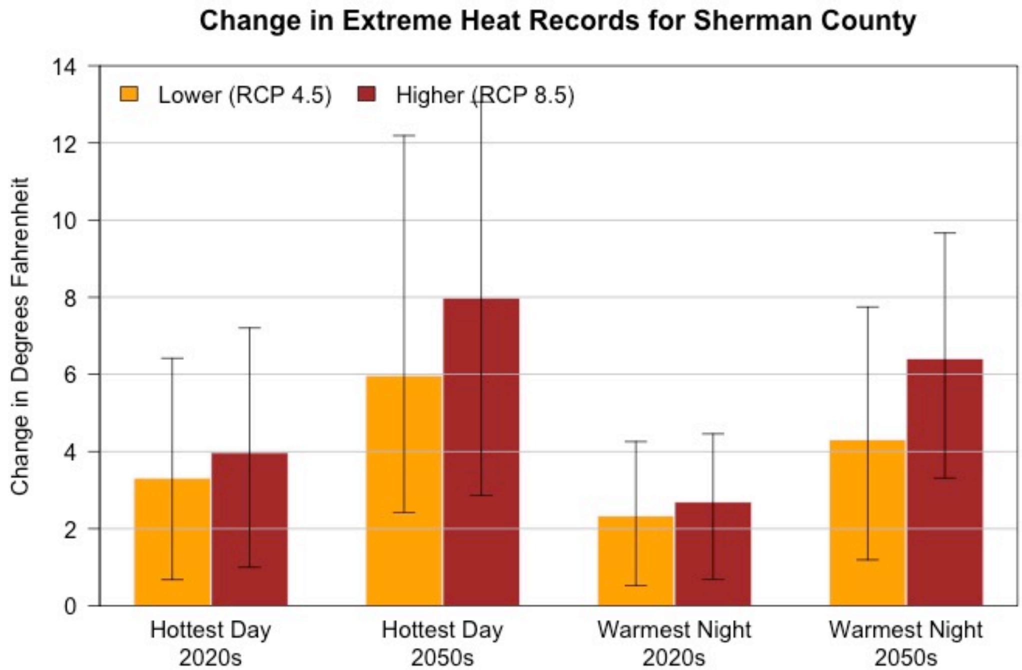


Figure 5 **Projected future changes in the hottest day of the year (left two sets of bars) and warmest night of the year (right two sets of bars) for Sherman County from the historical baseline (1971–2000 average) for the 2020s (2010–2039 average) and 2050s (2040–2069 average) under a lower (RCP 4.5) and higher (RCP 8.5) emissions scenario based on 20 global climate models. The bars and whiskers display the mean and range, respectively, of changes across the 20 GCMs.**

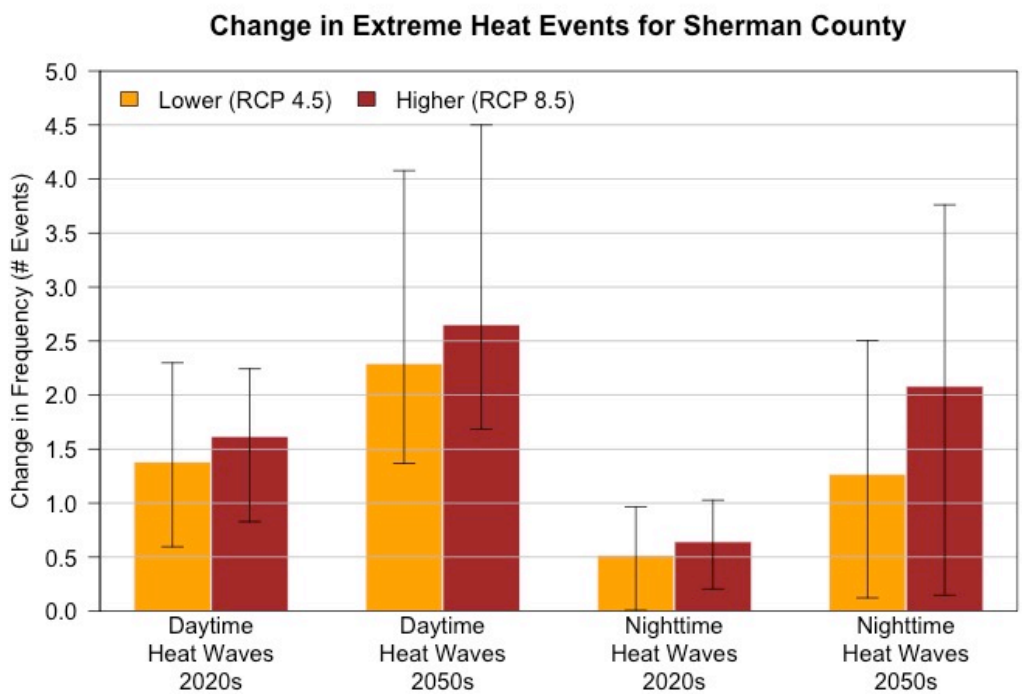


Figure 6 **Projected future changes in the number of daytime heat waves (left two sets of bars) and number of nighttime heat waves (right two sets of bars) for Sherman County from the historical baseline (1971–2000 average) for the 2020s (2010–2039 average) and 2050s (2040–2069 average) under a lower (RCP 4.5) and higher (RCP 8.5) emissions scenario based on 20 global climate models. The bars and whiskers display the mean and range, respectively, of changes across the 20 GCMs. Daytime heat waves are defined as events with three or more consecutive days with maximum temperature of at least 90°F; nighttime heat waves are defined as events with three or more consecutive days with minimum temperature of at least 65°F.**

Key Messages:

⇒ Extreme heat events are expected to increase in frequency, duration, and intensity due to continued warming temperatures.

⇒ In Sherman County, all the extreme heat metrics in Table 4 are projected to increase by the 2020s and 2050s under both the lower (RCP 4.5) and higher (RCP 8.5) emissions scenarios (Table 5).

⇒ In Sherman County, the frequency of hot days with temperatures at or above 90°F is projected to increase on average by 33 days (with a range of 14 to 46 days) by the 2050s under the higher emissions scenario compared to the historical baseline.

⇒ In Sherman County, the temperature of the hottest day of the year is projected to increase by 8°F (with a range of 3 to 13°F) by the 2050s under the higher emissions scenario compared to the historical baseline.

Cold Waves

Over the past century, cold extremes have become less frequent and severe in the Northwest; this trend is expected to continue under future global warming of the climate system (Vose *et al.*, 2017). This report presents projected changes for three metrics of cold extremes for both daytime (maximum temperature) and nighttime (minimum temperature) (Table 6).

Table 6 Cold extreme metrics and definitions

Metric	Definition
Cold Days	Number of days per year maximum temperature is less than or equal to 32°F
Cold Nights	Number of days per year minimum temperature is less than or equal to 0°F
Coldest Day	Annual minimum of maximum temperature
Coldest Night	Annual minimum of minimum temperature
Daytime Cold Waves	Number of events per year with at least 3 consecutive days with maximum temperature less than or equal to 32°F
Nighttime Cold Waves	Number of events per year with at least 3 consecutive days with minimum temperature less than or equal to 0°F

In Sherman County, the extreme cold metrics in Table 6 are projected to become less frequent or less cold by the 2020s and 2050s under both the lower (RCP 4.5) and higher (RCP 8.5) emissions scenarios (Table 7). For example, by the 2050s under the higher emissions scenario, the number of cold days less than or equal to 32°F is projected to decrease by 7 days on average with a range of about 2 to 11 days. Likewise, the temperature of the coldest night of the year is projected to increase by 8.2°F on average with a range of 0.3°F to 13.9°F and the frequency of daytime cold waves is projected to decrease by 1.0 events per year.

Projected changes in the frequency extreme cold days (i.e., Cold Days and Cold Nights) are shown in Figure 7. Projected changes in the magnitude of cold records (i.e., Coldest Day and Coldest Night) are shown in Figure 8. Projected changes in the frequency of extreme cold events (i.e., Daytime Cold Waves and Nighttime Cold Waves) are shown in Figure 9.

Table 7 **Mean and range of projected future changes in extreme cold metrics for Sherman County from the historical baseline (1971–2000 average) for the 2020s (2010–2039 average) and 2050s (2040–2069 average) under a lower (RCP 4.5) and higher (RCP 8.5) emissions scenario based on 20 global climate models.**

	Change by Early 21st Century "2020s"		Change by Mid 21st Century "2050s"	
	Lower	**Higher**	**Lower**	**Higher**
Cold Days	-3.3 days (-6.3 to 1.5)	-4.3 days (-7.3 to -1.2)	-6.4 days (-9.1 to -1.9)	-7.1 days (-11.0 to -2.3)
Cold Nights	-0.3 days (-1.2 to 0.4)	-0.6 days (-1.2 to 0.1)	-0.8 days (-1.4 to 0.0)	-0.9 days (-1.5 to -0.0)
Coldest Day	+2.1°F (-1.9 to 5.0)	+3.6°F (0.4 to 6.8)	+5.4°F (0.8 to 10.2)	+6.4°F (0.1 to 10.5)
Coldest Night	+2.6°F (-2.4 to 7.7)	+4.6°F (0.5 to 10.9)	+6.8°F (1.8 to 12.4)	+8.2°F (0.3 to 13.9)
Daytime Cold Waves	-0.5 events (-1.0 to 0.4)	-0.6 events (-1.2 to -0.2)	-0.9 events (-1.4 to -0.3)	-1.0 events (-1.6 to -0.3)
Nighttime Cold Waves	-0.0 events (-0.2 to 0.1)	-0.1 events (-0.2 to 0.0)	-0.1 events (-0.2 to 0.0)	-0.1 events (-0.2 to 0.0)

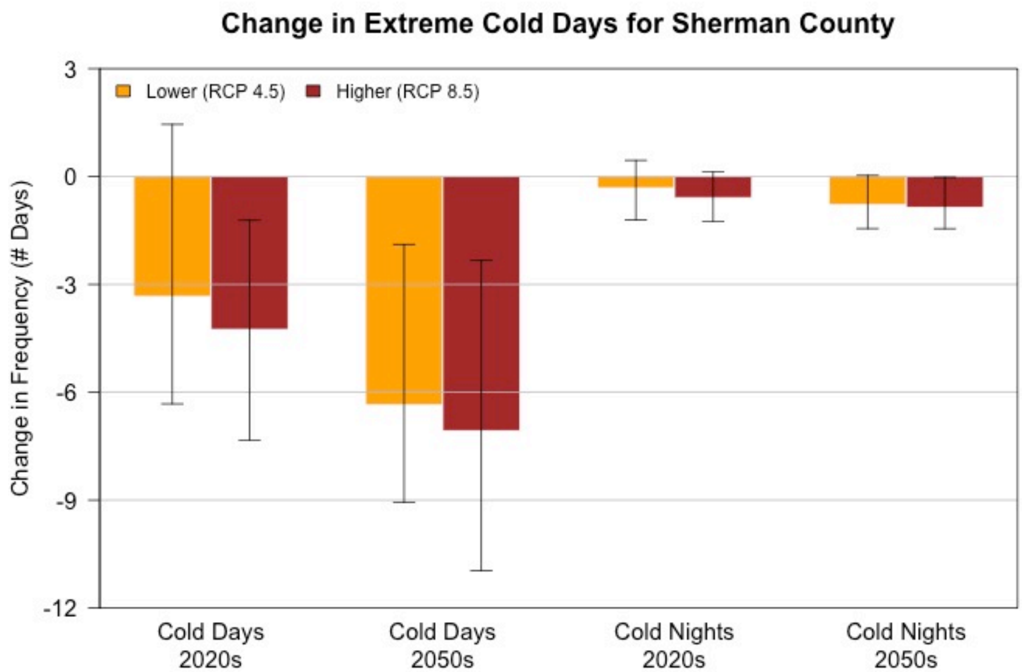


Figure 7 **Projected future changes in the number of cold days (left two sets of bars) and number of cold nights (right two sets of bars) for Sherman County from the historical baseline (1971–2000 average) for the 2020s (2010–2039 average) and 2050s (2040–2069 average) under a lower (RCP 4.5) and higher (RCP 8.5) emissions scenario based on 20 global climate models. The bars and whiskers display the mean and range, respectively, of changes across the 20 GCMs. Cold days are defined as days with maximum temperature at or below 32°F; cold nights are defined as days with minimum temperature at or below 0°F.**

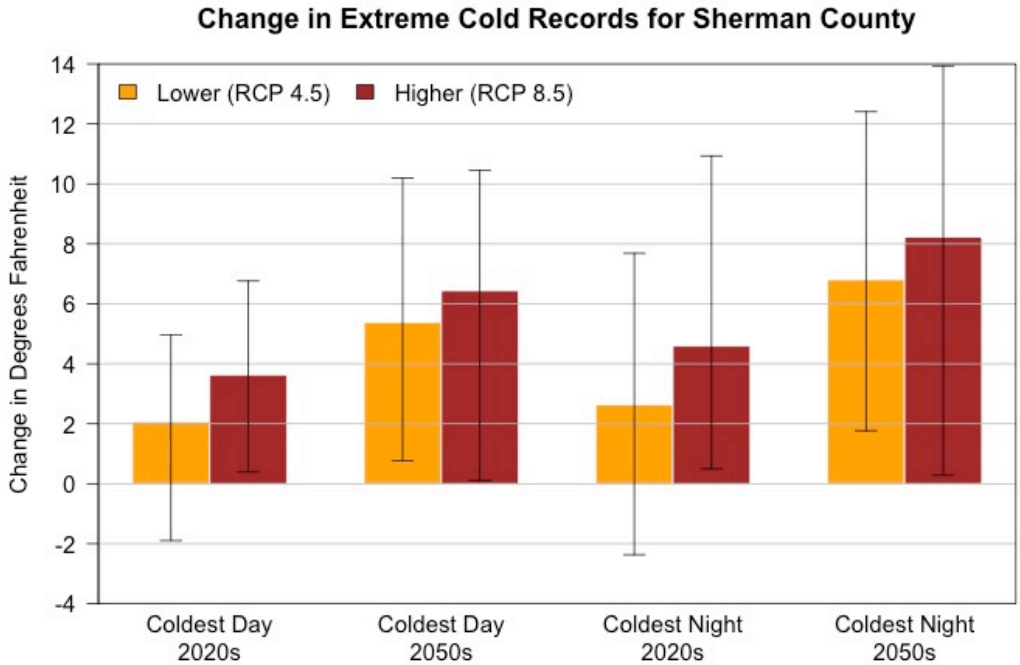


Figure 8 Projected future changes in the coldest day of the year (left two sets of bars) and coldest night of the year (right two sets of bars) for Sherman County from the historical baseline (1971–2000 average) for the 2020s (2010–2039 average) and 2050s (2040–2069 average) under a lower (RCP 4.5) and higher (RCP 8.5) emissions scenario based on 20 global climate models. The bars and whiskers display the mean and range, respectively, of changes across the 20 GCMs.

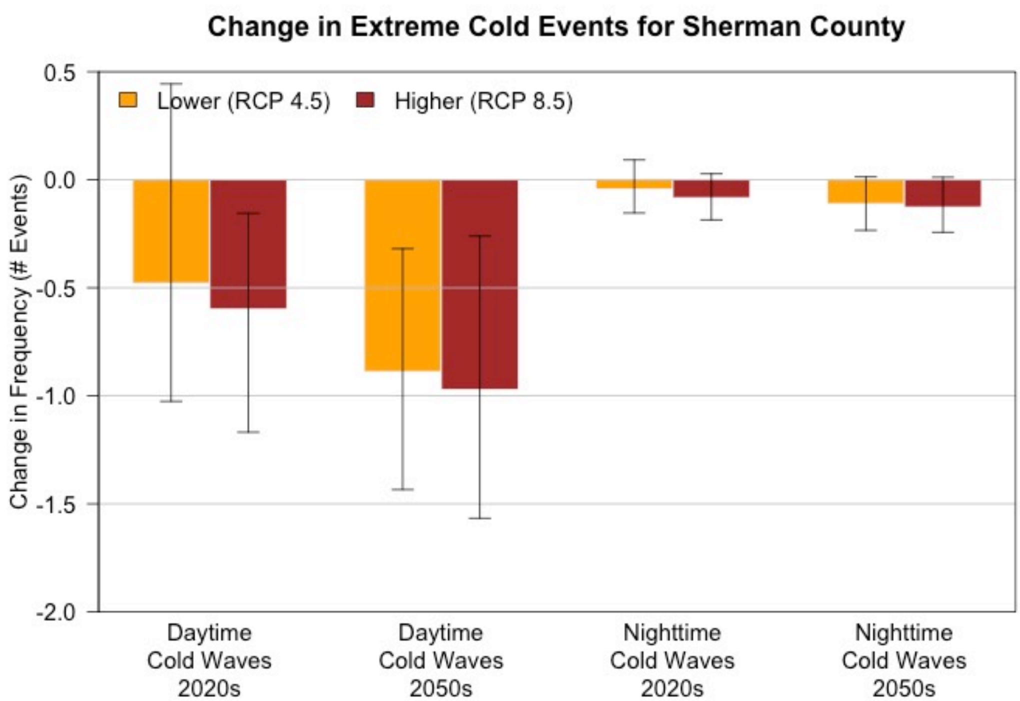


Figure 9 Projected future changes in the number of daytime cold waves (left two sets of bars) and number of nighttime cold waves (right two sets of bars) for Sherman County from the historical baseline (1971–2000 average) for the 2020s (2010–2039 average) and 2050s (2040–2069 average) under a lower (RCP 4.5) and higher (RCP 8.5) emissions scenario based on 20 global climate models. The bars and whiskers display the mean and range, respectively, of changes across the 20 GCMs. Daytime cold waves are defined as events with three or more consecutive days with maximum temperature at or below 32°F; nighttime cold waves are defined as events with three or more consecutive days with minimum temperature at or below 0°F.

Key Messages:

⇒ Cold extremes are still expected to occur from time to time, but with much less frequency and intensity as the climate warms.

⇒ In Sherman County, the extreme cold metrics in Table 6 are projected to become less frequent or less cold by the 2020s and 2050s under both the lower (RCP 4.5) and higher (RCP 8.5) emissions scenarios (Table 7).

⇒ In Sherman County, the frequency of days at or below freezing is projected to decline on average by 7 days (with a range of 2 to 11 days) by the 2050s under the higher emissions scenario compared to the historical baseline.

⇒ In Sherman County, the temperature of the coldest night of the year is projected to increase by 8°F (with a range of 0 to 14°F) by the 2050s under the higher emissions scenario compared to the historical baseline.

Heavy Rains

There is greater uncertainty in future projections of precipitation-related metrics than temperature-related metrics. This is because of the large natural variability in precipitation patterns and the fact that the atmospheric patterns that influence precipitation are manifested differently across GCMs. From a global perspective, mean precipitation is likely to decrease in many dry regions in the sub-tropics and mid-latitudes and increase in many mid-latitude wet regions (IPCC, 2013). That boundary between mid-latitude increases and decreases in precipitation is positioned a little differently for each GCM, which results in some models projecting increases and others decreases in Oregon (Mote *et al.*, 2013).

In Oregon, observed precipitation is characterized by high year-to-year variability and future precipitation trends are expected to continue to be dominated by this large natural variability. On average, summers in Oregon are projected to become drier and other seasons to become wetter resulting in a slight increase in annual precipitation by the 2050s. However, some models project increases and others decreases in each season (Dalton *et al.*, 2017).

Extreme precipitation events in the Pacific Northwest are governed both by atmospheric circulation and by how it interacts with complex topography. Atmospheric rivers—long, narrow swaths of warm, moist air that carry large amounts of water vapor from the tropics to mid-latitudes—generally result in coherent extreme precipitation events west of the Cascade Range, while closed low pressure systems often lead to isolated precipitation extremes east of the Cascade Range (Parker and Abatzoglou, 2016).[2]

Observed trends in the frequency of extreme precipitation events across Oregon have depended on the location, time frame, and metric considered, but overall the frequency has not changed substantially. As the atmosphere warms, it is able to hold more water vapor that is available for precipitation. As a result, the frequency and intensity of extreme precipitation events are expected to increase slightly in the future (Dalton *et al.*, 2017). This report presents projected changes for four metrics of precipitation extremes (Table 8).

Table 8 Precipitation extreme metrics and definitions

Metric	Definition
Wettest Day	Annual maximum 1-day precipitation per water year
Wettest Five-Days	Annual maximum 5-day precipitation total per water year
Wet Days	Number of days with precipitation greater than 0.75 inches per year
Landslide Risk Days	Number of days per water year exceeding the USGS landslide threshold[3]: https://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/ofr20061064 ○ P3/(3.5-.67*P15)>1 where ○ P3 = Previous 3-day precipitation accumulation ○ P15 = 15-day precipitation accumulation prior to P3

[2] Verbatim from the Third Oregon Climate Assessment Report (Dalton *et al.*, 2017)

[3] This threshold was developed for Seattle, Washington and may or may not have similar applicability to other locations.

In Sherman County, the magnitude of precipitation on the wettest day and wettest consecutive five days is projected to increase on average by the by the 2020s and 2050s under both the lower and higher emissions scenarios (Table 9). However, some models project decreases in these metrics for certain time periods and scenarios. For example, by the 2050s under the higher emissions scenario, the magnitude, or amount, of precipitation on the wettest day of the year is projected to increase by 19.6% on average with a range of about 5.6 to 50.0%. Likewise, the magnitude of precipitation on the wettest consecutive five days of the year is projected to increase by 13.5% on average with a range of -2.1 to 33.9%. The average number of days per year with precipitation greater than ¾" isn't projected to change substantially.

Landslides are often triggered by rainfall when the soil becomes saturated. A cumulative rainfall threshold serves as a surrogate for landslide risk. For Sherman County, the average number of days per year exceeding the landslide risk threshold is projected to remain about the same. It is important to note that the landslide threshold used in this report was developed for Seattle, Washington and may or may not have similar applicability to other locations.

Projected changes in the magnitude of extreme precipitation events (i.e., Wettest Day and Wettest Five-Days) are shown in Figure 10. Projected changes in the frequency of extreme precipitation events (i.e., Wet Days and Landslide Risk Days) are shown in Figure 11.

Table 9 Mean and range of projected future changes in extreme precipitation metrics for Sherman County from the historical baseline (1971–2000 average) for the 2020s (2010–2039 average) and 2050s (2040–2069 average) under a lower (RCP 4.5) and higher (RCP 8.5) emissions scenario based on 20 global climate models.

	Change by Early 21st Century "2020s"		**Change by Mid 21st Century "2050s"**	
	Lower	**Higher**	**Lower**	**Higher**
Wettest Day	+8.8% (-19.5 to 27.8)	+11.0% (-1.4 to 25.2)	+16.3% (0.3 to 36.3)	+19.6% (5.6 to 50.0)
Wettest Five-Days	+4.7% (-21.3 to 20.5)	+6.4% (-9.7 to 23.8)	+10.7% (-5.1 to 28.8)	+13.5% (-2.1 to 33.9)
Wet Days	+0.2 days (-0.1 to 0.6)	+0.2 days (-0.0 to 0.6)	+0.3 days (0.1 to 0.6)	+0.4 days (0.1 to 0.6)
Landslide Risk Days	+0.1 days (-0.3 to 0.3)	+0.1 days (-0.1 to 0.5)	+0.1 days (-0.3 to 0.4)	+0.1 days (-0.3 to 0.6)

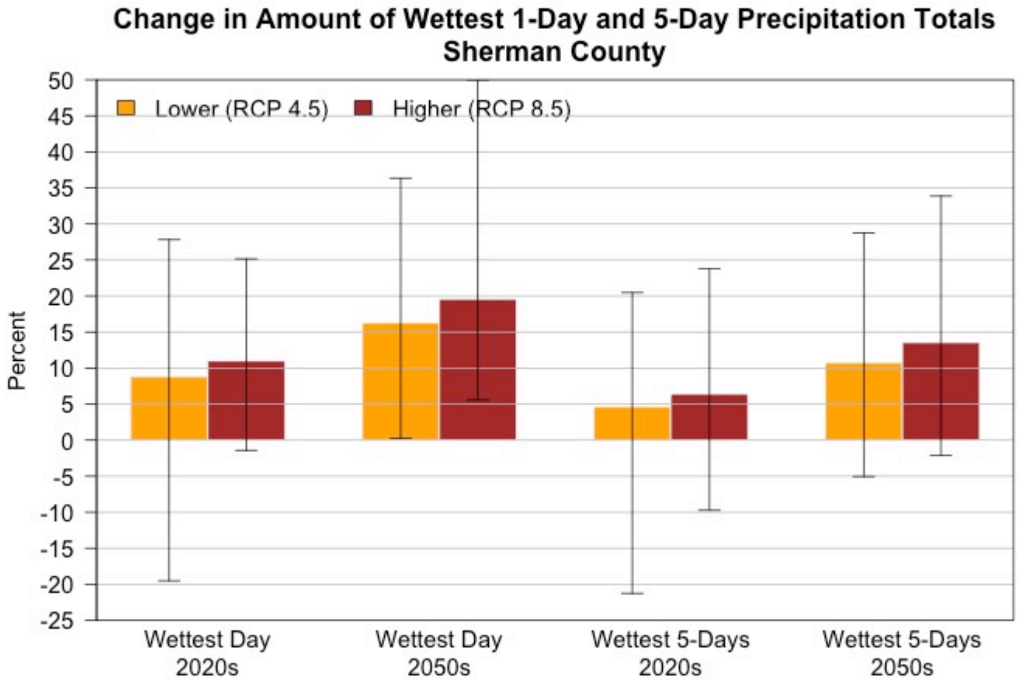


Figure 10 Projected future changes in the wettest day of the year (left two sets of bars) and wettest consecutive five days of the year (right two sets of bars) for Sherman County from the historical baseline (1971–2000 average) for the 2020s (2010–2039 average) and 2050s (2040–2069 average) under a lower (RCP 4.5) and higher (RCP 8.5) emissions scenario based on 20 global climate models. The bars and whiskers display the mean and range, respectively, of changes across the 20 GCMs.

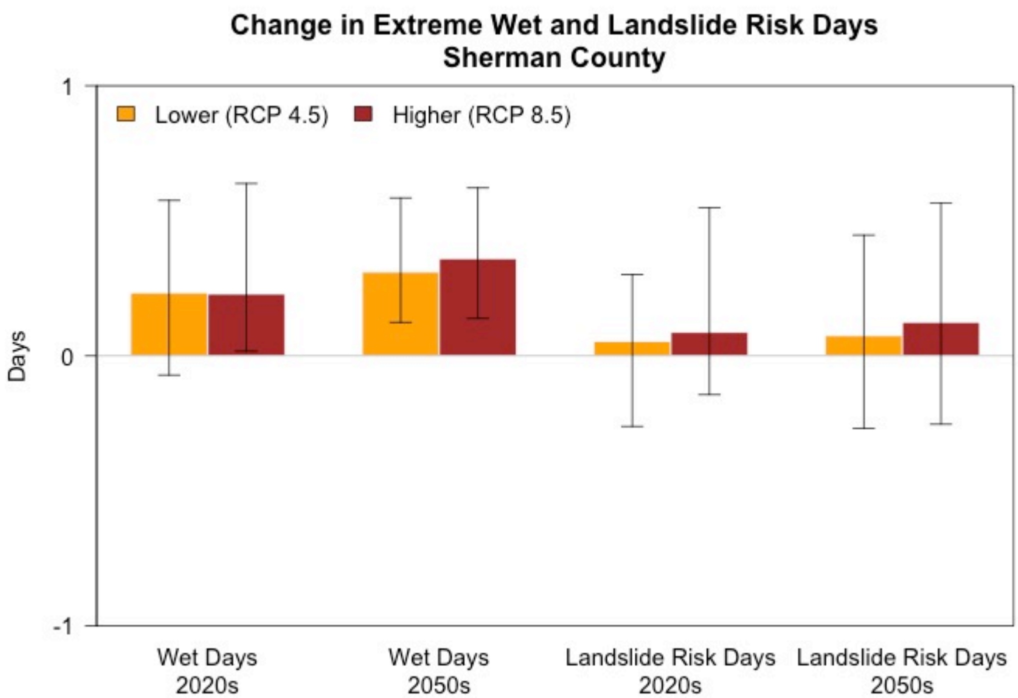


Figure 11 Projected future changes in the frequency of wet days (left two sets of bars) and landslide risk days (right two sets of bars) for Sherman County from the historical baseline (1971–2000 average) for the 2020s (2010–2039 average) and 2050s (2040–2069 average) under a lower (RCP 4.5) and higher (RCP 8.5) emissions scenario based on 20 global climate models. The bars and whiskers display the mean and range, respectively, of changes across the 20 GCMs.

Key Messages:

⇒ The intensity of extreme precipitation events is expected to increase slightly in the future as the atmosphere warms and is able to hold more water vapor.

⇒ In Sherman County, the magnitude of precipitation on the wettest day and wettest consecutive five days per year is projected to increase on average by about 20% (with a range of 6% to 50%) and 14% (with a range of -2% to 34%), respectively, by the 2050s under the higher emissions scenario compared to the historical baseline.

⇒ In Sherman County, the frequency of days with at least ¾” of precipitation and the frequency of days exceeding a threshold for landslide risk is not projected to change substantially.

River Flooding

Future streamflow magnitude and timing in the Pacific Northwest is projected to shift toward higher winter runoff, lower summer and fall runoff, and an earlier peak runoff, particularly in snow-dominated regions (Naz *et al.*, 2016; Raymondi *et al.*, 2013).[4] These changes are expected to result from warmer temperatures causing precipitation to fall more as rain and less as snow, in turn causing snow to melt earlier in the spring; and in combination with increasing winter precipitation and decreasing summer precipitation (Dalton *et al.*, 2017).

Warming temperatures and increased winter precipitation are expected to increase flood risk for many basins in the Pacific Northwest, particularly mid- to low-elevation mixed rain-snow basins with near freezing winter temperatures (Tohver *et al.*, 2014). The greatest changes in peak streamflow magnitudes are projected to occur at intermediate elevations in the Cascade Range and the Blue Mountains (Safeeq *et al.*, 2015). Recent advances in regional hydro-climate modeling support this expectation, projecting increases in extreme high flows for most of the Pacific Northwest, especially west of the Cascade Crest (Najafi and Moradkhani, 2015; Naz *et al.*, 2016; Salathé *et al.*, 2014). One study, using a single climate model, projects flood risk to increase in the fall due to earlier, more extreme storms, including atmospheric river events, and to a shift of precipitation from snow to rain (Salathé *et al.*, 2014).[5]

Some of the Pacific Northwest's largest floods occur when copious warm rainfall from atmospheric rivers combine with a strong snowpack, resulting in rain-on-snow flooding events (Safeeq *et al.*, 2015). During 1998–2014 in the California Sierra Nevada, atmospheric rivers were associated with half of all rain-on-snow events (Guan *et al.*, 2016). As a result of climate warming, rain-on-snow events are projected to decline at lower elevations, due to decreasing snow cover, and to increase at higher elevations as the number of rainy as opposed to snowy days increases (Safeeq *et al.*, 2015; Surfleet and Tullos, 2013).[6] How such changes in rain-on-snow frequency would affect high streamflow events is varied. For example, projections for the Santiam River, OR, show an increase in annual peak daily flows with moderate return intervals (<10 years) but a decrease at higher (> 10-year) return intervals (Surfleet and Tullos, 2013).

This report describes projected changes in the mean monthly hydrograph of the Columbia River at John Day. Mean monthly flows do not translate directly to flood risk because floods occur at shorter time scales. However, increases in higher monthly flow may imply increases in flood likelihood, particularly if increases are projected for months when flood occurrence has been historically high. This report also describes changes in the magnitude of flood events in terms of the water year maximum daily flows with 50%, 10%, and 4% exceedance probabilities. In other words, these are the projected changes in the magnitude of the 2-year, 10-year, and 25-year return period single-day flood events, respectively. This flood analysis compares flood magnitudes between a historical baseline (1961–2010) and the 2050s (here, 2031–2080). These longer time periods, as required by the flood analysis, overlap with the time periods used throughout the rest of the report by adding a decade to

[4] Verbatim from the Third Oregon Climate Assessment Report (Dalton *et al.*, 2017)

[5] Verbatim from the Third Oregon Climate Assessment Report (Dalton *et al.*, 2017)

[6] Verbatim from the Third Oregon Climate Assessment Report (Dalton *et al.*, 2017)

either end. An analysis of flood risk projections for the 2020s was not done because the required time period would have overlapped the historical baseline. These analyses are exploratory and should not be used for engineering or design.

On the Columbia River at John Day, the monthly hydrograph is characteristic of a snow-dominated basin with peak flows during the late spring snowmelt season (Figure 12). By the 2050s, under both emissions scenarios, the peak streamflow is projected to shift earlier in the spring as warmer temperatures cause the snowpack to melt earlier. In addition, winter streamflow is projected to increase due to increased winter precipitation and that precipitation falling more as rain than snow.

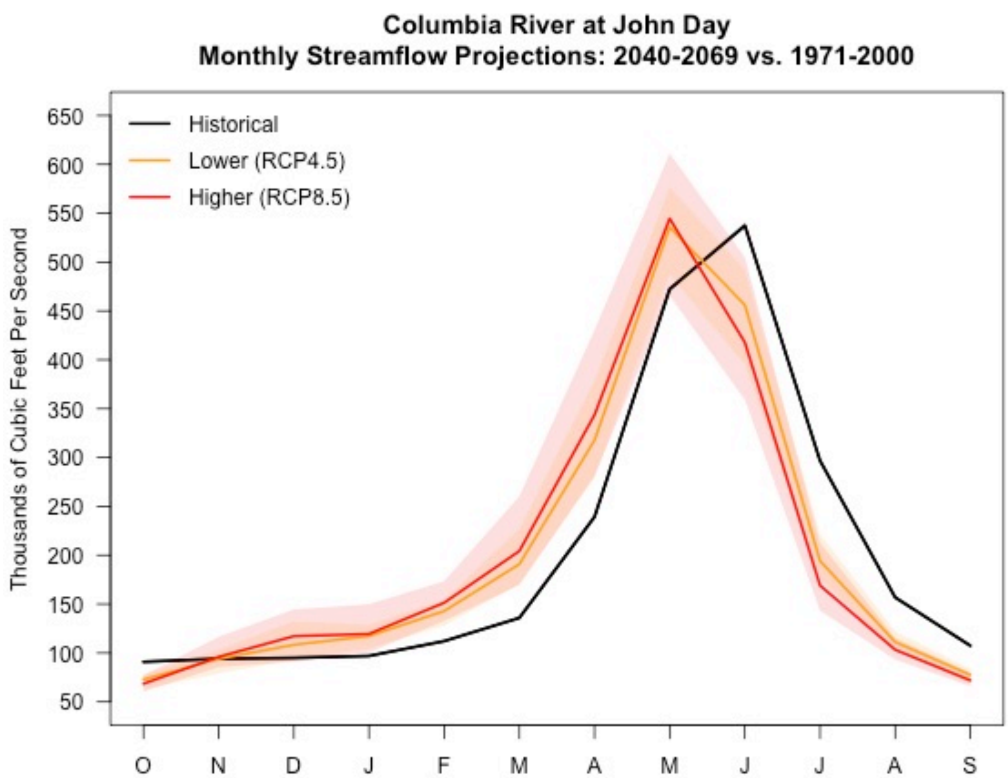


Figure 12 Simulated historical and future bias-corrected mean monthly non-regulated streamflow at the Columbia River at John Day for 2040–2069 compared to 1971–2000. Solid lines and shading depict the mean and range across ten global climate models. (Data source: Integrated Scenarios of the Future Northwest Environment, https://climatetoolbox.org/tool/Streamflow-Projections)

On the Columbia River at John Day, the magnitude of the 2-year (50% exceedance probability) and 10-year (10% exceedance probability) single-day flood events are projected, on average, to remain about the same for the period 2031–2080 compared with 1961–2010 under both the lower (RCP 4.5) and higher (RCP 8.5) emissions scenarios (Figure 13). The magnitude of the 25-year (4% exceedance probability) single-day flood event is projected to increase by about 4% under both emissions scenarios. However, some models show increases and others show decreases in the magnitude of maximum daily streamflows for each flood frequency considered. Moreover, the wide spread in individual model projections relative to the size of the mean change implied there is not strong evidence for a substantial change in non-regulated flood magnitudes on the Columbia River at John Day.

On the John Day River at McDonald Ferry, the magnitude of the 2-year (50% exceedance probability), 10-year (10% exceedance probability), and 25-year (4% exceedance probability) single-day flood events are projected to increase for the period 2031–2080 compared with 1961–2010 under both the lower (RCP 4.5) and higher (RCP 8.5) emissions scenarios (Figure 14).

Across the western US, the 100-year and 25-year peak flow magnitude is projected to increase at a majority of streamflow sites by the 2070–2099 period compared to the 1971–2000 historical baseline under the higher emissions scenario (RCP 8.5) (Maurer *et al.*, 2018). However, along the Columbia River bordering Oregon, peak flows are projected to decrease as a result of the complex interaction between earlier snowmelt and the transition of precipitation falling more as rain and less as snow in this snow-dominated basin (Maurer *et al.*, 2018).

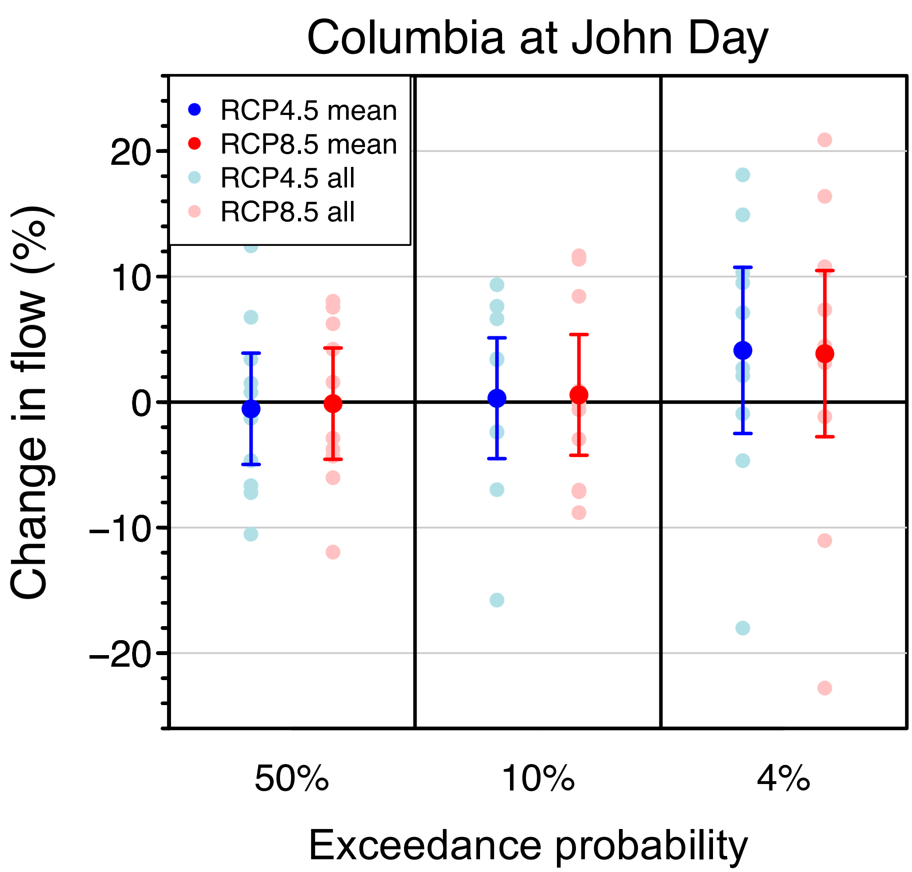


Figure 13 Projected change in water year maximum daily non-regulated bias-corrected streamflows with 50%, 10%, and 4% probability of exceedance for the Columbia River at John Day between 1961–2010 and 2031–2080 under lower (RCP 4.5) and higher (RCP 8.5) emissions scenarios. Larger blue and red dots and bars depict the mean plus and minus two standard errors across all projections (ten global climate models). The smaller light blue and light red dots represent individual models. (Data source: Integrated Scenarios of the Future Northwest Environment, https://climate.northwestknowledge.net/IntegratedScenarios/; Figure source: David Rupp, OCCRI)

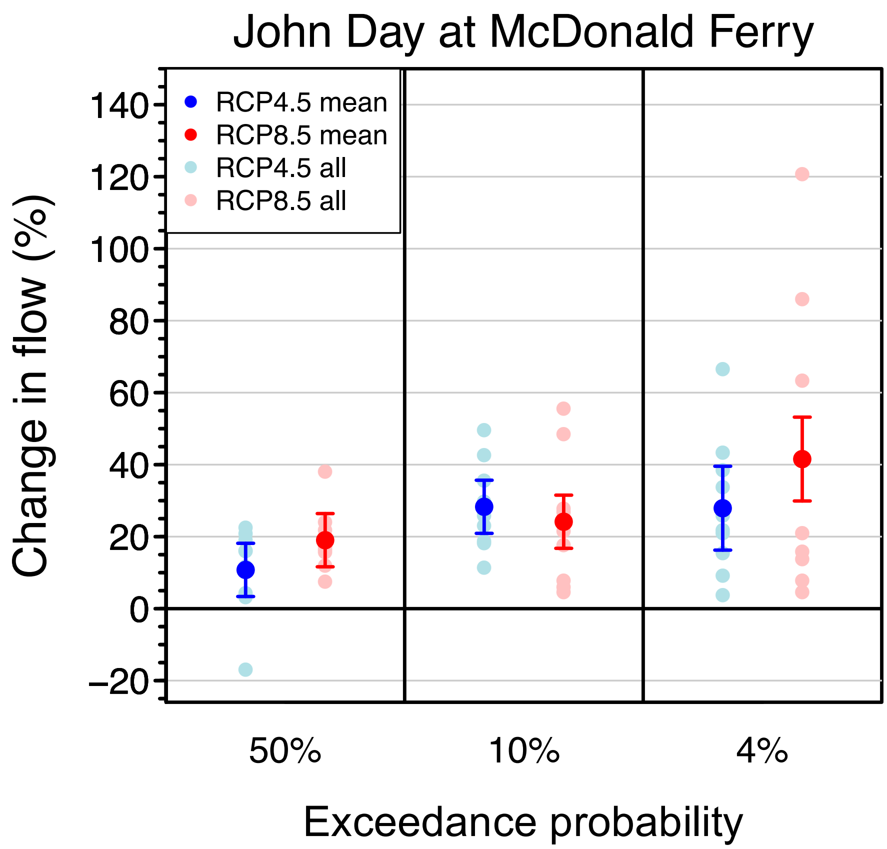


Figure 14 **Projected change in water year maximum daily non-regulated, non-bias-corrected streamflows with 50%, 10%, and 4% probability of exceedance for the John Day at McDonald Ferry between 1961–2010 and 2031–2080 under lower (RCP 4.5) and higher (RCP 8.5) emissions scenarios. Larger blue and red dots and bars depict the mean plus and minus two standard errors across all projections (ten global climate models). The smaller light blue and light red dots represent individual models. (Data source: Integrated Scenarios of the Future Northwest Environment, https://climate.northwestknowledge.net/IntegratedScenarios/; Figure source: David Rupp, OCCRI)**

Key Messages:

⇒ Flood risk to Sherman County from the Columbia River is not expected to change substantially based on insubstantial projected changes in non-regulated flood magnitudes on the Columbia River at John Day.

⇒ Mid- to low-elevation tributaries, such as the John Day River, that are near the freezing level in winter, receiving a mix of rain and snow, may experience an increase in winter flood risk due to warmer winter temperatures causing precipitation to fall more as rain and less as snow.

⇒ Non-regulated flood magnitudes on the John Day River at McDonald Ferry are projected to increase by the 2050s compared to the historical baseline under both emissions scenarios.

Drought

This report presents future changes in two variables indicative of drought conditions—summer soil moisture[7] and summer runoff. Across the western US, mountain snowpack is projected to decline leading to reduced summer soil moisture in mountainous environments (Gergel *et al.*, 2017). In parts of eastern Oregon, summer soil moisture is projected to increase on average, but the range of projected changes is large and depends on the models' projected change in precipitation, with some models projecting increases and others decreases (Gergel *et al.*, 2017).

Climate change is expected to result in lower summer streamflows in snow-dominated basins across the Pacific Northwest as snowpack melts off earlier due to warmer temperatures and summer precipitation decreases (Dalton *et al.*, 2017). See, for example, the decrease in summer flows expected for the Columbia River at John Day (Figure 12) by the 2050s under both lower and higher emissions scenarios.

Changes in drought conditions for low summer soil moisture, and low summer runoff are presented in terms of a change in the frequency of the historical baseline 1-in-5 year event (that is, an event having a 20% chance of occurrence in any given year). The future projections, displayed in the orange and brown bars of Figure 15, are the frequency in the future period of the magnitude of the event that has a 20% frequency in the historical period. In Sherman County, summer runoff and summer soil moisture are projected to increase on average under both lower (RCP 4.5) and higher (RCP 8.5) emissions scenarios by the 2050s. While soil moisture storage is projected to increase in the Northwest Interior, individual GCMs projections for the lowlands are varied since summer soil moisture depends on winter, spring, and summer precipitation (Gergel *et al.*, 2017). The magnitude of low summer soil moisture and low summer runoff expected with a 20% chance in any given year of the historical period being projected to occur less frequently by the 2050s under both emissions scenarios (Figure 15). The 2020s were not evaluated in this drought analysis, but can be expected to be similar but of smaller magnitude to the changes for the 2050s.

[7] Soil moisture projections are for the total moisture in the soil column from the surface to 140 cm below the surface.

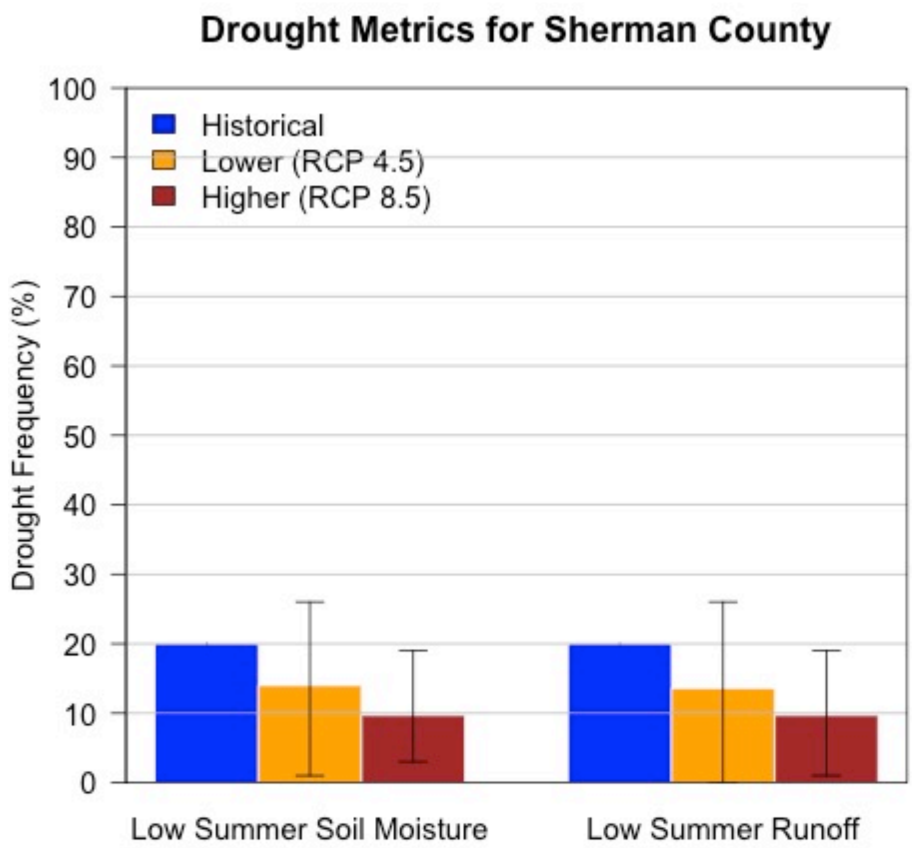


Figure 15 Frequency of the historical baseline (1971–2000) 1-in-5 year event (by definition 20% frequency) of low summer soil moisture (average of June-July-August) and low summer runoff (average of June-July-August) for the future period 2040–2069 for lower (RCP 4.5) and higher (RCP 8.5) emissions scenarios. The bar and whiskers depict the mean and range across ten global climate models. (Data Source: Integrated Scenarios of the Future Northwest Environment, https://climate.northwestknowledge.net/IntegratedScenarios/)

Key Messages:

⇒ Drought conditions, as represented by low summer soil moisture and low summer runoff, may become less frequent in Sherman County by the 2050s compared to the historical baseline.

Wildfire

Over the last several decades, warmer and drier conditions during the summer months have contributed to an increase in fuel aridity and enabled more frequent large fires, an increase in the total area burned, and a longer fire season across the western United States, particularly in forested ecosystems (Dennison *et al.*, 2014; Jolly *et al.*, 2015; Westerling, 2016; Williams and Abatzoglou, 2016). The lengthening of the fire season is largely due to declining mountain snowpack and earlier spring snowmelt (Westerling, 2016). Recent wildfire activity in forested ecosystems is partially attributed to human-caused climate change: during the period 1984–2015, about half of the observed increase in fuel aridity and 4.2 million hectares (or more than 16,000 square miles) of burned area in the western United States were due to human-caused climate change (Abatzoglou and Williams, 2016). Under future climate change, wildfire frequency and area burned are expected to continue increasing in the Pacific Northwest (Barbero *et al.*, 2015; Sheehan *et al.*, 2015).[8]

As a proxy for wildfire risk, this report considers a fire danger index called 100-hour fuel moisture (FM100), which is a measure of the amount of moisture in dead vegetation in the 1–3 inch diameter class available to a fire. It is expressed as a percent of the dry weight of that specific fuel. FM100 is a common index used by the Northwest Interagency Coordination Center to predict fire danger. A majority of climate models project that FM100 would decline across Oregon by the 2050s under the higher (RCP 8.5) emissions scenario (Gergel *et al.*, 2017). This drying of vegetation would lead to greater wildfire risk, especially when coupled with projected decreases in summer soil moisture. This report defines a "very high" fire danger day to be a day in which FM100 is lower (i.e., drier) than the historical baseline 10th percentile value. By definition, the historical baseline has 36.5 very high fire danger days annually. The future change in wildfire risk is expressed as the average annual number of additional "very high" fire danger days for two future periods under two emissions scenarios compared with the historical baseline (Figure 16).

[8] Verbatim from the Third Oregon Climate Assessment Report (Dalton *et al.*, 2017)

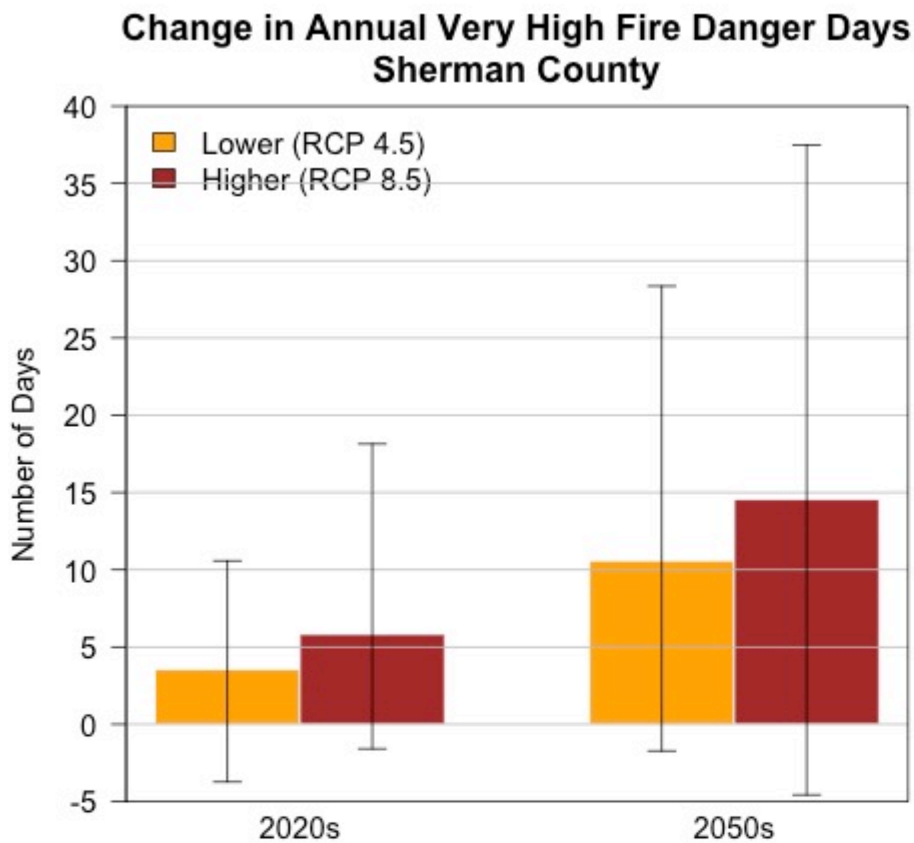


Figure 16 Projected future changes in the frequency of very high fire danger days for Sherman County from the historical baseline (1971–2000 average) for the 2020s (2010–2039 average) and 2050s (2040–2069 average) under a lower (RCP 4.5) and higher (RCP 8.5) emissions scenario based on 18 global climate models. The bars and whiskers display the mean and range, respectively, of changes across the 18 GCMs. (Data Source: Northwest Climate Toolbox, climatetoolbox.org/tool/Climate-Mapper)

Key Messages:

⇒ Wildfire risk, as expressed through the frequency of very high fire danger days, is projected to increase under future climate change in Sherman County.

⇒ In Sherman County, the frequency of very high fire danger days per year is projected to increase on average by nearly 15 days (with a range of -5 to +37 days) by the 2050s under the higher emissions scenario compared to the historical baseline.

⇒ In Sherman County, the frequency of very high fire danger days per year is projected to increase on average by about 40% (with a range of -13 to +103%) by the 2050s under the higher emissions scenario compared to the historical baseline.

Air Quality

Climate change is expected to worsen outdoor air quality. Warmer temperatures may increase ground level ozone pollution, more wildfires may increase smoke and particulate matter, and longer, more potent pollen seasons may increase aeroallergens. Such poor air quality is expected to exacerbate allergy and asthma conditions and increase respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses and death (Fann *et al.*, 2016).[9] This report presents quantitative projections of future air quality measures related to fine particulate matter (PM2.5) from wildfire smoke.

Climate change is expected to result in a longer wildfire season with more frequent wildfires and greater area burned (Sheehan *et al.*, 2015). Wildfires are primarily responsible for days when air quality standards for PM2.5 are exceeded in western Oregon and parts of eastern Oregon (Liu *et al.*, 2016), although woodstove smoke and diesel emissions are also main contributors (Oregon DEQ, 2016). Across the western United States, PM2.5 levels from wildfires are projected to increase 160% by mid-century under a medium emissions pathway[11] (SRES A1B) (Liu *et al.*, 2016). This translates to a greater risk of wildfire smoke exposure through increasing frequency, length, and intensity of "smoke waves"—that is, two or more consecutive days with high levels of PM2.5 from wildfires (Liu *et al.*, 2016).[10]

The change in risk of poor air quality due to wildfire-specific PM2.5 is expressed as the number of "smoke wave" days within a six-year period in the present (2004–2009) and mid-century (2046–2051) under a medium emissions pathway[11] (Figure 17). See Appendix for description of methodology and access to the Smoke Wave data.

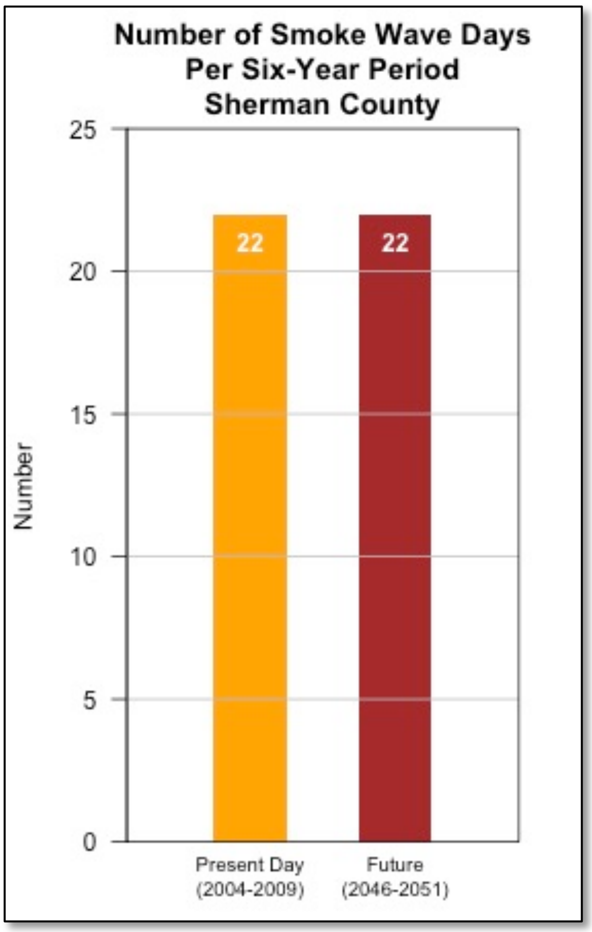


Figure 17 Simulated present day (2004–2009) and future (2046–2051) frequency of "smoke wave" days for Sherman County under a medium emissions scenario[11]. The bars display the mean across 15 GCMs. (Data source: Liu et al. 2016, https://khanotations.github.io/smoke-map/)

Key Messages:

⇒ Under future climate change, the risk of wildfire smoke exposure is not projected to change substantially in Sherman County.

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[9] Verbatim from the Third Oregon Climate Assessment Report (Dalton *et al.*, 2017)

[10] Verbatim from the Third Oregon Climate Assessment Report (Dalton *et al.*, 2017)

[11] The medium emissions pathway used is from an earlier generation of emissions scenarios. Liu et al. (2016) used SRES-A1B, which is most similar to RCP 6.0 from Figure 2.

Windstorms

Climate change has the potential to alter surface winds through changes in the large-scale free atmospheric circulation and storm systems, and through changes in the connection between the free atmosphere and the surface. West of the Cascade Mountains in the Pacific Northwest, changes in surface wind speeds tend to follow changes in upper atmosphere winds associated with extratropical cyclones (Salathé *et al.*, 2015). However, there is a high degree of uncertainty in future projections of extratropical cyclone frequency (IPCC, 2013). East of the Cascades, cool air pooling is common which can impede the transport of wind energy from the free atmosphere to the surface. Changes in this factor are likely important for understanding future changes in windstorms (Salathé *et al.*, 2015). However, this is not yet well studied. Therefore, no descriptions of future changing conditions are included in this report.

Key Messages:

⇒ Limited research suggests very little, if any, change in the frequency and intensity of windstorms in the Pacific Northwest as a result of climate change.

Dust Storms

Climate, through precipitation and winds, and vegetation coverage can influence the frequency and magnitude of dust events, or dust storms, which primarily concern parts of eastern Oregon. Periods of low precipitation can dry out the soils increasing the amount of soil particulate matter available to be entrained in high winds. In addition, the amount of vegetation cover can influence the amount of soil susceptible to high winds.

One study found that in eastern Oregon, precipitation is the dominant factor affecting dust event frequency in the spring whereas vegetation cover is the dominant factor in the summer (Pu and Ginoux, 2017). The same study projected that in the summertime in eastern Oregon, dust event frequency would decrease largely due to a decrease in bareness (or an increase in vegetation cover) (Pu and Ginoux, 2017). There were no clear projected changes in other seasons or locations in Oregon. These projections compare the 2051–2100 average under a higher emissions scenario (RCP 8.5) with the 1861–2005 average.

Another study found that wind erosion in Columbia Plateau agricultural areas is projected to decrease by mid-century under a lower emissions scenario (RCP 4.5) largely due to increases in biomass production, which retain the soil (Sharratt *et al.*, 2015). The increase in vegetation cover in both studies is likely due to the fertilization effect of increased amounts of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and warmer temperatures. Tillage practices may also influence the amount of soil available to winds. Therefore, no descriptions of future changing conditions are included in this report.

Key Messages:

⇒ Limited research suggests that the risk of dust storms in summer would decrease in eastern Oregon under climate change in areas that experience an increase in vegetation cover from the carbon dioxide fertilization effect.

Increased Invasive Species & Pests

Warming temperatures, altered precipitation patterns, and increasing atmospheric carbon dioxide levels increase the risk for invasive species, insect and plant pests for forest and rangeland vegetation, and cropping systems.

Warming and more frequent drought will likely lead to a greater susceptibility among trees to insects and pathogens, a greater risk of exotic species establishment, more frequent and severe forest insect outbreaks (Halofsky and Peterson, 2016), and increased damage by a number of forest pathogens (Vose *et al.*, 2016). In Oregon and Washington, mountain pine beetle (*Dendroctonus ponderosae*) and western spruce budworm (*Choristoneura freemani*) are the most common native forest insect pests, and both have caused substantial tree mortality and defoliation over the past several decades (Meigs *et al.*, 2015).[12]

Climatic warming has facilitated the expansion and survival of mountain pine beetles, particularly in areas that have historically been too cold for the insect (Littell *et al.*, 2013). Across the western United States, the time between generations among different populations of mountain pine beetles is similar; however, the amount of thermal units required to complete a generation cycle was significantly less for beetles at cooler sites (Bentz *et al.*, 2014). Winter survival and faster generation cycles could be favored under future projections of decreases in the number of freeze days (Rawlins *et al.*, 2016).[13]

Western spruce budworm is a destructive defoliator that sporadically breaks out in interior Oregon Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) forests (Flower *et al.*, 2014). An analysis of three hundred years of tree ring data reveals that outbreaks tended to occur near the end of a drought, when trees' physiological thresholds had likely been reached. This analysis suggests that such outbreaks would likely intensify under the more frequent drought conditions that are projected for the future (Flower *et al.*, 2014), unless increasing atmospheric carbon dioxide, which may enhance water use efficiency, mitigates drought stress.[14]

More frequent rangeland droughts could facilitate invasion of non-native weeds as native vegetation succumbs to drought or wildfire cycles, leaving bare ground (Vose *et al.*, 2016). Cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum L.*), a lower nutritional quality forage grass, facilitates more frequent fires, which reduces the capacity of shrub steppe ecosystem to provide livestock forage and critical wildlife habitat (Boyte *et al.*, 2016). Cheatgrass is a highly invasive species in the rangelands in the West that is projected to expand northward (Creighton *et al.*, 2015) and remain stable or increase in cover in most parts of the Great Basin (Boyte *et al.*, 2016) under climate change.[15]

Crop pests and pathogens may continue to migrate poleward under global warming as has been observed globally for several types since the 1960s (Bebber *et al.*, 2013). Much

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[12] Verbatim from the Third Oregon Climate Assessment Report (Dalton *et al.*, 2017), p. 49

[13] Verbatim from the Third Oregon Climate Assessment Report (Dalton *et al.*, 2017), p. 49

[14] Verbatim from the Third Oregon Climate Assessment Report (Dalton *et al.*, 2017), p. 49–50

[15] Verbatim from the Third Oregon Climate Assessment Report (Dalton *et al.*, 2017), p. 70

remains to be learned about which pests and pathogens are most likely to affect certain crops as the climate changes, and about which management strategies will be most effective.[16]

Key Messages:

⇒ Warming temperatures, altered precipitation patterns, and increasing atmospheric carbon dioxide levels increase the risk for invasive species, insect and plant pests for forest and rangeland vegetation, and cropping systems.

Loss of Wetland Ecosystems

Wetlands play key roles in major ecological processes and provide a number of essential ecosystem services: flood reduction, groundwater recharge, pollution control, recreational opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat, including for endangered species.[17] Climate change stands to affect freshwater wetlands Oregon through changes in the duration, frequency, and seasonality of precipitation and runoff; decreased groundwater recharge; and higher rates of evapotranspiration (Raymondi *et al.*, 2013).

Reduced snowpack and altered runoff timing may contribute to the drying of many ponds and wetland habitats across the Northwest.[18] The absence of water or declining water levels in permanent or ephemeral wetlands would affect resident and migratory birds, amphibians, and other animals that rely on the wetlands (Dello and Mote, 2010). However, potential future increases in winter precipitation may lead to the expansion of some wetland systems, such as wetland prairies.[19]

In Oregon's western Great Basin, changes in climate would alter the water chemistry of fresh and saline wetlands affecting the migratory water birds that depend on them. Hotter summer temperatures would cause freshwater sites to become more saline making them less useful to raise young birds that haven't yet developed the ability to process salt. At the same time, increased precipitation would cause saline sites to become fresher thereby decreasing the abundance of invertebrate food supply for adult water birds (Dello and Mote, 2010).

Key Messages:

⇒ Freshwater wetland ecosystems are sensitive to warming temperatures and altered hydrological patterns, such as changes in precipitation seasonality and reduction of snowpack.

[16] Verbatim from the Third Oregon Climate Assessment Report (Dalton *et al.*, 2017), p. 67

[17] Verbatim from the Oregon Climate Change Adaptation Framework, p. 62

[18] Verbatim from the Climate Change in the Northwest (Dalton *et al.*, 2013), p. 53

[19] Verbatim from the Climate Change in the Northwest (Dalton *et al.*, 2013), p. 53

Appendix

Future Climate Projections Background

Read more about emissions scenarios, global climate models, and uncertainty in the Climate Science Special Report, Volume 1 of the Fourth National Climate Assessment (https://science2017.globalchange.gov).

Emissions Scenarios: https://science2017.globalchange.gov/chapter/4#section-2

Global Climate Models & Downscaling:
https://science2017.globalchange.gov/chapter/4#section-3

Uncertainty: https://science2017.globalchange.gov/chapter/4#section-4

Climate & Hydrological Data

Statistically downscaled GCM output from the Fifth phase of the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project (CMIP5) served as the basis for future projections of temperature, precipitation, and hydrology variables. The coarse resolution of GCMs output (100-300 km) was downscaled to a resolution of about 6km using the Multivariate Adaptive Constructed Analogs (MACA) method, which has demonstrated skill in complex topographic terrain (Abatzoglou and Brown, 2012). The MACA approach utilizes a gridded training observation dataset to accomplish the downscaling by applying bias-corrections and spatial pattern matching of observed large- scale to small-scale statistical relationships. (For a detailed description of the MACA method see:
http://maca.northwestknowledge.net/MACAmethod.php.)

This downscaled gridded meteorological data (i.e., MACA data) is used as the climate inputs to an integrated climate-hydrology-vegetation modeling project called Integrated Scenarios of the Future Northwest Environment
(https://climate.northwestknowledge.net/IntegratedScenarios/). Snow dynamics were simulated using the Variable- Infiltration Capacity hydrological model (VIC version 4.1.2.l; (Liang *et al.*, 1994) and updates) run on a 1/16th x 1/16th (6 km) grid.

Simulations of historical and future climate for the variables maximum temperature (*tasmax*), minimum temperature (*tasmin*), and precipitation (*pr*) are available at the daily time step from 1950 to 2099 for 20 GCMs and 2 RCPs (i.e., RCP4.5 and RCP8.5). Hydrological simulations of snow water equivalent (*SWE*) are only available for the 10 GCMs used as input to VIC. Table X lists all 20 CMIP5 GCMs and indicates the subset of 10 used for hydrological simulations. Data for all the models available was obtained for each variable from the Integrated Scenarios data archives in order to get the best uncertainty estimates.

All simulated climate data and the streamflow data have been bias-corrected using quantile mapping techniques. Only SWE is presented without bias correction. Quantile mapping adjusts simulated values by creating a one-to-one mapping between the cumulative probability distribution of simulated values and the cumulative probability distribution of observed values. In practice, both the simulated and observed values of a variable (e.g., daily streamflow) over the some historical time period are separately sorted and ranked and the values are assigned their respective probabilities of exceedence. The bias corrected value of a given simulated value is assigned the observed value that has the same probability of exceedence as the simulated value. The historical bias in the simulations is assumed to stay constant into the future; therefore the same mapping relationship developed from the historical period was applied to the future scenarios. For MACA, a separate quantile mapping relationship was made for each non-overlapping 15-day window in the calendar year. For streamflow, a separate quantile mapping relationship was made for each calendar month.

Hydrology was simulated using the Variable-Infiltration Capacity hydrological model (VIC; Liang et al. 1994) run on a $1/16^{th}$ x $1/16^{th}$ (6 km) grid. To generate daily streamflow estimates, runoff from VIC grid cells was then routed to selected locations along the stream network using a daily-time-step routing model. Where records of naturalized flow were available, the daily streamflow estimates were then bias-corrected so that their statistical distributions matched those of the naturalized streamflows.

The wildfire danger day metric was computed using the same MACA climate variables to compute the 100-hour fuel moisture content according to the equations in the National Fire Danger Rating System.

Smoke Wave Data

Abstract from Liu et al. (2016):
Wildfire can impose a direct impact on human health under climate change. While the potential impacts of climate change on wildfires and resulting air pollution have been studied, it is not known who will be most affected by the growing threat of wildfires. Identifying communities that will be most affected will inform development of fire management strategies and disaster preparedness programs. We estimate levels of fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) directly attributable to wildfires in 561 western US counties during fire seasons for the present-day (2004–2009) and future (2046–2051), using a fire prediction model and GEOS-Chem, a 3-D global chemical transport model. Future estimates are obtained under a scenario of moderately increasing greenhouse gases by mid-century. We create a new term “Smoke Wave,” defined as ≥2 consecutive days with high wildfire-specific $PM_{2.5}$, to describe episodes of high air pollution from wildfires. We develop an interactive map to demonstrate the counties likely to suffer from future high wildfire pollution events. For 2004–2009, on days exceeding regulatory $PM_{2.5}$ standards, wildfires contributed an average of 71.3 % of total $PM_{2.5}$. Under future climate change, we estimate that more than 82 million individuals will experience a 57 % and 31 % increase in the frequency and intensity, respectively, of Smoke Waves. Northern California, Western Oregon and the Great Plains are likely to suffer the highest exposure to wildfire smoke in the future. Results point to the potential health impacts of increasing wildfire activity on large numbers of people in a warming climate and the need to establish or modify US wildfire management and evacuation programs in high-risk regions. The study also adds to the growing literature arguing that extreme events in a changing climate could have significant consequences for human health.

Data can be accessed here: https://khanotations.github.io/smoke-map/

For the DLCD project, we looked at the variable "Total # of SW days in 6 yrs". This variable tallies all the days within each time period in which the fine particulate matter exceeded the threshold defined as the 98th quantile of the distribution of daily wildfire-specific $PM_{2.5}$ values in the modeled present-day years, on average across the study area. Liu et al. (2016) used 15 GCMs from the Third Phase of the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project (CMIP3) under a medium emissions scenario (SRES-A1B). The data site only offers the multi-model mean value (not the range), which should be understood as the aggregate direction of projected change rather than the actual number expected.

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