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Herald Times Reporter

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Snow drought presents climate stress test



ILLUSTRATION BY HOLLY MAHAFFEY/USA TODAY NETWORK; GETTY IMAGES

Low snowpacks bring worries about water, wildfires

Alejandro N. Flores
Boise State University
THE CONVERSATION

Across much of the Western United States, winter 2026 was the year the snow never came.

Many ski resorts got by with snow-making but shut down their winter operations early. Fire officials and water supply managers are worried about summer.

Where I live in Boise, Idaho, temperatures hit the low 80s Fahrenheit in mid-March. The same heat dome sent temperatures soaring to 105 F in Phoenix.

Ordinarily, water managers and hydrologists like me who study the Western United States expect the mountain snowpacks to be at their fullest around April 1. Snowpacks are natural reservoirs of water that farms and communities depend on through the hot, dry summer. Their snow water equivalent, meaning the amount of liquid water in the snowpack, is seen as a bellwether for water supplies.

See **DROUGHT**, Page 4A



A recent assessment of drought conditions from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Integrated Drought Information System suggests 2026 will be a tight year for water supplies.

MARIO TAMA/
GETTY IMAGES



A key concern is whether the historic snow drought is setting up the West for a bad fire season. That's still an open question. JEFF TOPPING/GETTY IMAGES

MANITOWOC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



Peggy Pitz collects an award from the Chamber of Manitowoc County in 2025 in this file photo. PROVIDED BY CHAMBER OF MANITOWOC COUNTY

Peggy Pitz retiring as executive director

MSO picks Jennifer Spiering to fill position

Brandon Reid
Manitowoc Herald Times Reporter
USA TODAY NETWORK - WISCONSIN

MANITOWOC - The Manitowoc Symphony Orchestra has selected Manitowoc native Jennifer Spiering to serve as its next executive director, the organization announced April 13.

Leadership transition underway at the MSO

Spiering will succeed Peggy Pitz, who is retiring after more than a decade as executive director and nearly three decades of overall leadership with the symphony.



An official start date has not been announced, but a news release said Spiering will shadow Pitz during the transition to support continuity and knowledge transfer.

"We are delighted to welcome Jennifer Spiering into the MSO family," said Mark Maurer, president of the MSO Board of Directors, who also thanked Pitz for 27 years of dedication to the organization.

In the release, Pitz stated: "Since returning to Manitowoc in 1999, it has been an honor and privilege to serve

See **PITZ**, Page 2A

Drug disposal event April 25 at Froedtert Holy Family

Alisa M. Schafer
Manitowoc Herald Times Reporter
USA TODAY NETWORK - WISCONSIN

MANITOWOC COUNTY - This month, Froedtert Holy Family Memorial Hospital is helping residents include drug disposal on their spring cleaning

list. The drug disposal event allows residents to take their unwanted drugs and medications for responsible disposal that doesn't include polluting the water as they are flushed down the toilet.

This event is only open to households. Businesses can call 920-683-

4333 for disposal information.

Drive-thru collection service on April 25

Residents can take their unwanted drugs and medications to the main entrance of Froedtert Holy Family, 2300

Western Ave., from 9 a.m. until noon April 25.

Stay in the car and follow traffic controllers, who will guide people through the drive-thru collection service, completely free of charge.

See **DRUGS**, Page 2A

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