

# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT FOR:



CITY OF BEND



## PRESCRIBED FIRE, SMOKE, AND PUBLIC HEALTH: A Community Response Plan for the Bend Smoke Sensitive Receptor Area

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### **Introduction**

This report is provided to meet the requirements of OAR 629-048-0180 (3)(f) in order to maintain the exemption from the one-hour air quality threshold in the Oregon Smoke Management Plan granted on December 7, 2019 for the Bend Smoke Sensitive Receptor Area. This report describes actions taken from the period of December 7, 2020 through December 6, 2021 regarding the implementation of the Bend Smoke Sensitive Receptor Area (SSRA) Community Response Plan (CRP).

### **Overview of the 2021 Prescribed Fire Year**

Following a pause of prescribed fire operations for nearly the entirety of 2020 due to COVID, prescribed fire in 2021 returned to closer to normal operations. Early in 2021 pile burning operations took place with broadcast burn operations beginning in March and running through early June, then picking up again for a few weeks in October, with the remainder of 2021 being occupied by additional pile burning.

The following sections (A-D) are intended to address OAR 629-048-0180 (3)(f) (A) - (D) which states:  
*... SSRAs that have received an exemption must demonstrate they are implementing their community response plan through an annual report provided by the local health authority detailing:*

- (A) Compliance with requirements in [629-048-0180](2);*
- (B) A summary of methods used to communicate to the public and vulnerable populations;*
- (C) A log of dates and times the community initiated their response plan;*
- (D) A record of local meetings to discuss or update the community response plan.*

### **(A) Compliance with OAR 629-048-0180 (2)**

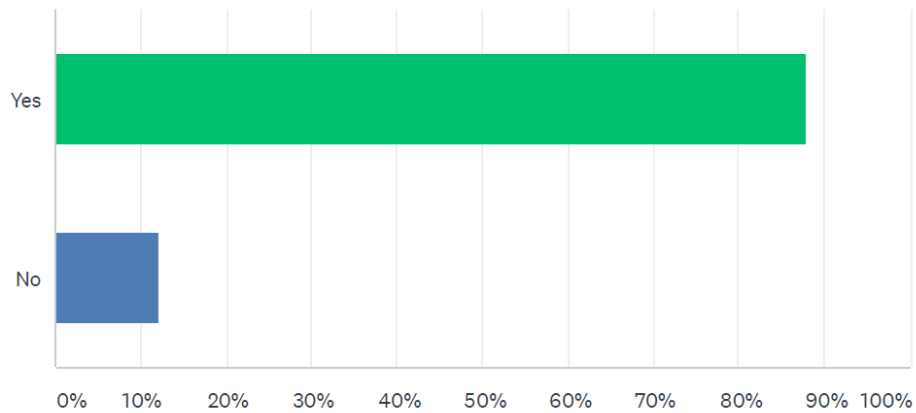
The approved Bend SSRA CRP continues to be relevant and reflective of the smoke and public health issues in Bend. Implementation of the CRP revolves around the Central Oregon Fire website and the prescribed fire and health information it contains, along with other complimentary efforts. The Central Oregon Fire website as described in the CRP has been maintained and updated with new information throughout the year covered by this annual report, this includes the blog or newsfeed, interactive maps as well as prescribed fire and health information.

In order to ensure that the CRP continues to be relevant and useful to the population it is targeted to, the smoke and public health coordination group drafted and conducted a public survey in June. Over 1000 responses were recorded and largely validated the approach being used. Results are summarized in the following charts. Of particular interest is the high percentage of people that have taken one or

more actions to protect themselves from smoke based on recommended actions identified and incorporated into the CRP.

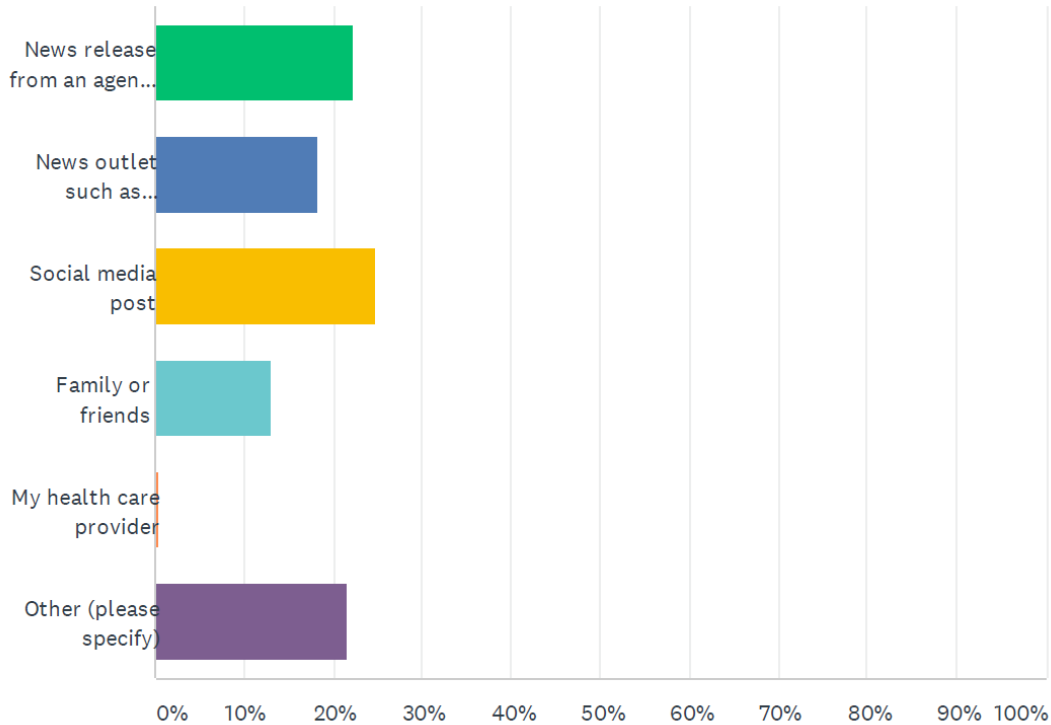
## Do you use centraloregonfire.org for prescribed fire, smoke or air quality information?

Answered: 1,056 Skipped: 1



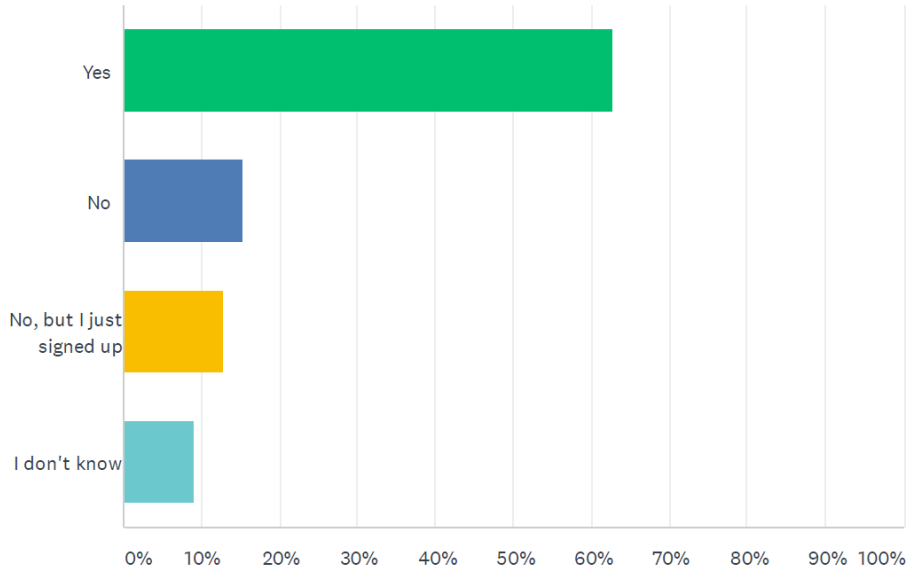
## How did you find out about centraloregonfire.org ?

Answered: 1,055 Skipped: 2



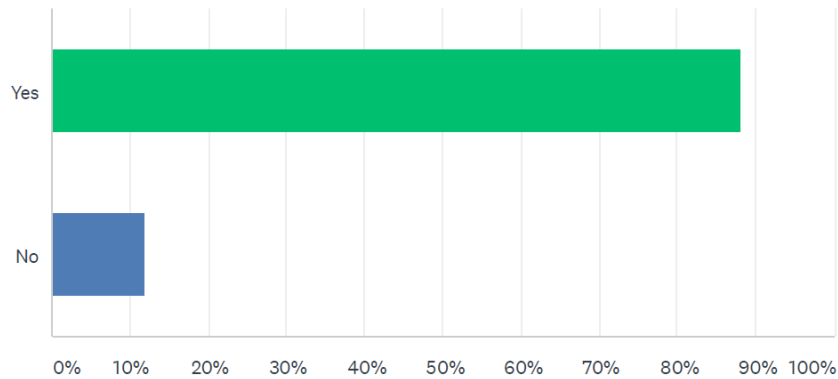
# Have you signed up for COFIRE text alerts by texting COFIRE to 888-777?

Answered: 1,054 Skipped: 3

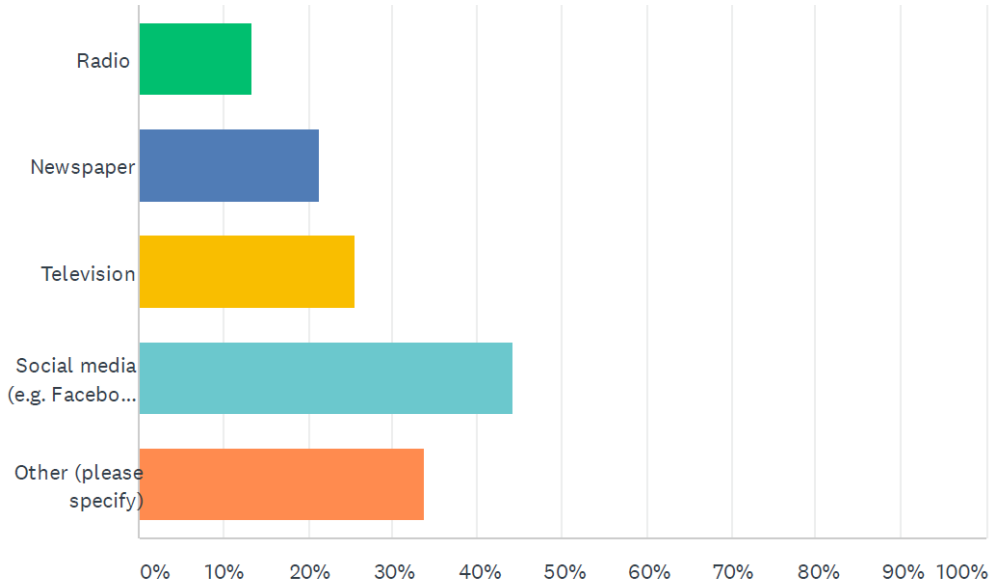


# Do the text alerts and posts on [centraloregonfire.org](http://centraloregonfire.org) provide (or link you to) sufficient information about upcoming prescribed burning and potential smoke impacts?

Answered: 1,014 Skipped: 43

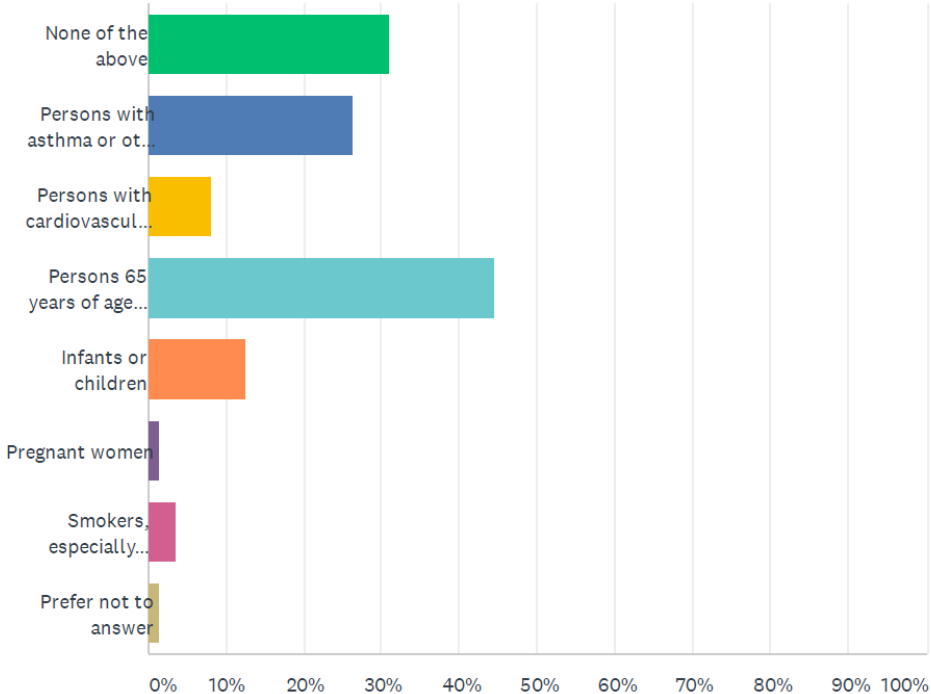


# Where do you get most of your information?



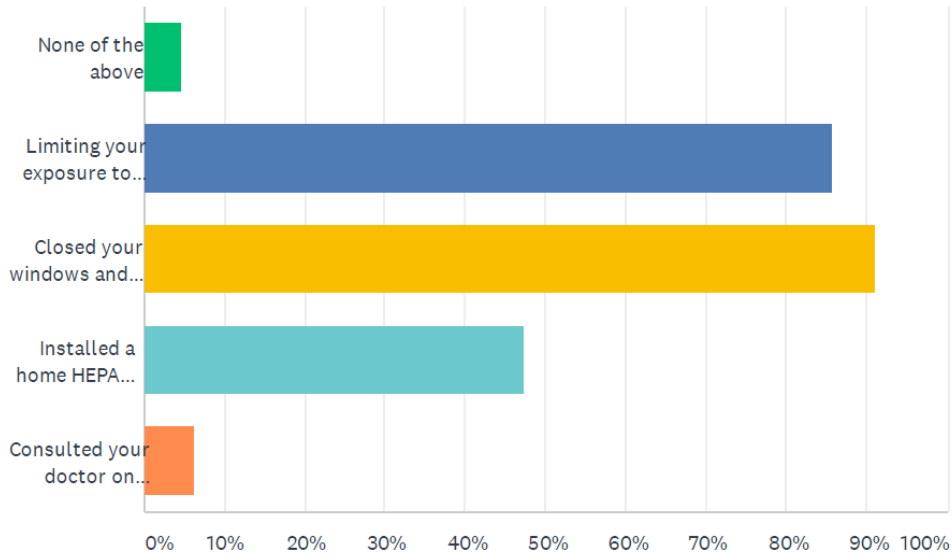
# Do you or someone in your household belong to one or more of the following smoke sensitive groups? (choose all that apply)

Answered: 1,008 Skipped: 49



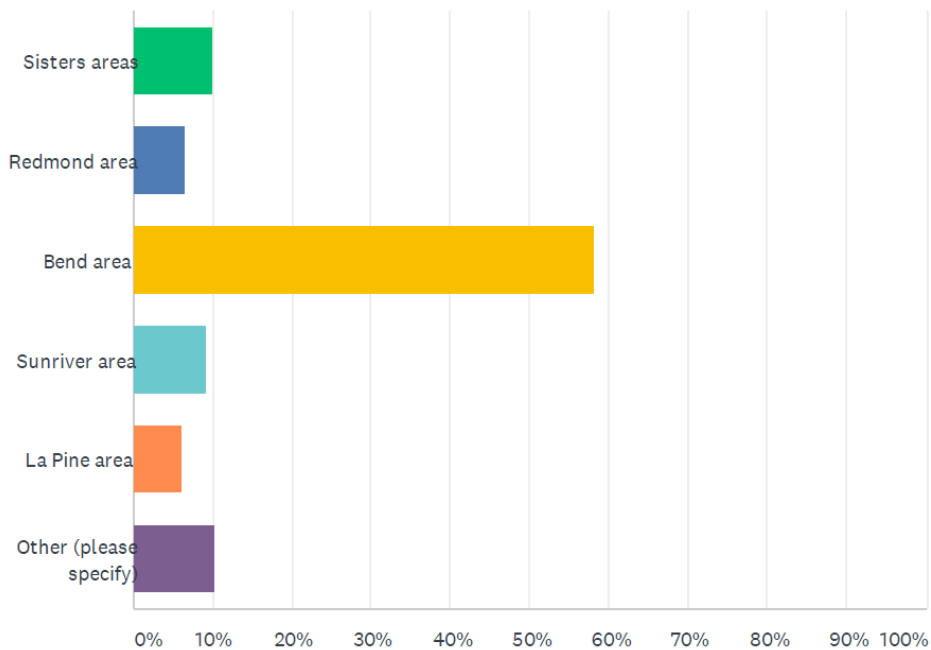
# Have you taken any of the following actions to prepare yourself and/or your household for smoke after reviewing the information on [centraloregonfire.org](http://centraloregonfire.org)? (choose all that apply)

Answered: 1,011 Skipped: 46



# Where do you live?

Answered: 1,013 Skipped: 44



## **(B) Summary of Communication Methods**

Multiple communication methods are employed to convey a variety of information, with the [Central Oregon Fire website](#) being the centerpiece of the communication strategy. All partner agencies that request access are granted permission to access to the website so each agency can post relevant information they wish to make available to the public. The website was used throughout the year to keep the public and vulnerable populations up to date on when and where to expect prescribed fire and associated smoke, both through a news feed on the main page as well as interactive maps that are updated as burns are planned and implemented. The website experienced over 326,000 users (up an additional 67,000 users from 2020) that viewed over 800,000 pages in the twelve month period beginning December 7, 2020. The main [home page](#) that features the latest news was the most visited page (274,000 views) followed by the page with [interactive maps](#) page showing air quality and burning activity (172,000 views) followed by the [smoke and air quality page](#) (55,000 views). Each news update to the website typically experiences between 3,000 and 9,000 views. In addition, a text alert service is being used to alert subscribers to new activity, particularly when smoke will be highly visible or is expected to have health impacts. There are approximately 11,640 users subscribed to text alerts – an increase of 4500 from twelve months ago. Also, printed rack cards and business cards have been developed and were re-printed to increase circulation in 2021, with the intention of raised awareness of the website. Those print materials are distributed to the public through partners across the community.

In addition to the methods described above, traditional news releases are used to alert the community to upcoming prescribed fires, particularly when those planned fires are near the community. Each news release also links to the Central Oregon Fire website if the reader is looking for more information or wants to view the interactive maps. Thirty-eight news releases alerting the public and partners about pending prescribed fires were issued in the previous 12-month period.

The smoke and public health collaborative effort that oversees implementation of the CRP also connects to other partner organizations to increase the reach of information being made available to the community. Partners with the Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project (DCFP) maintain an [active webpage](#) specifically explaining why our forests need fire and help to spread word of upcoming prescribed fire through their information channels including a Facebook page in addition to their website blog. The DCFP's prescribed fire subcommittee continues work to increase public support for prescribed fire and this year added additional partners throughout the community to a new coalition of organizations participating in that effort. This effort is in its early stages but includes partners such as the Deschutes Public Library, the High Desert Museum, Sunriver, Visit Bend, the Central Oregon Trail Alliance and the Central Oregon Relators Association. Adding these organizations to the prescribed fire coalition will help us reach a larger audience with more diverse perspectives, ultimately increasing public support for prescribed fire.

## **(C) Initiation of Community Response Plan**

The strategies outlined in the CRP were initiated in 2018, prior to the plan being finalized and approved by the Oregon Department of Forestry and Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, in consultation with the Oregon Health Authority. Since the plan was approved it continues to be actively implemented and maintained on a continual basis. The plan includes a communication strategy that is maintained throughout the year, regardless of if smoke is expected from prescribed fire or wildfire, as well as a commitment to coordination between fire and health agencies, which is ongoing. At the core of the communication strategy is the Central Oregon Fire website. The focus of informational updates on

this website oscillates between prescribed fire and wildfire season based on the relevant time of year and ongoing prescribed fire or wildfire events. Structured coordination between partners is used to monitor and review implementation of the response plan and recommend changes on a seasonal basis.

It is recognized and acknowledged that 629-048-0180 (3)(f)(C) requires an actual log of dates the community initiated their response plan. So, even though the CRP is truly a year-round effort without a start or stop time that can be logged, the below summary of dates were when information was shared with the community related to prescribed fire. In addition, note that prescribed fire happening throughout the region are summarized, as the strategy in the CRP is regional in nature even though the SSRA is specific to the City of Bend. Smoke from other areas not directly adjacent to Bend have the potential impact the Bend SSRA, so burning throughout the region is summarized below.

Month	Prescribed fire activity type	Number of posts to centraloregonfire.org	Number of USFS press releases	Number of text alerts
January, 2021	Pile burning	1	1	0
February, 2021	Jackpot burning	1	0	0
March, 2021	Jackpot then transition to broadcast burning	5	2	0
April, 2021	Broadcast burning	12	9	18
May, 2021	Broadcast burning	9	6	10
June, 2021	Broadcast burning (transition to fire season updates)	3	2	2
October, 2021	Broadcast burning then transition to pile burning	13	11	9
November, 2021	Pile burning	7	6	0

**(D) Record of Local Meetings Regarding Community Response Plan**

The local coordination group for the Bend SSRA CRP met four times throughout the past 12 months. Meetings took place in a virtual format.

The first meeting of the smoke and public health coordination group was held on March 30<sup>th</sup>. The group held a meeting to discuss the upcoming prescribed fire (broadcast burning) season. Ensuring communication was following the CRP and the partners were all on the same page with messaging was the focus of the meeting.

The second meeting of the smoke and public health coordination group was held on June 8<sup>th</sup>. The group reviewed activities of the past prescribed fire season as transitions were being made to the wildfire season. The group also reviewed and modified the public survey questions.

The third meeting of the smoke and public health coordination group was held on September 1<sup>st</sup>. This meeting was held to discuss the DEQ funding opportunity for CRP implementation and brainstorm ideas on funding requests.

The fourth and final meeting of the smoke and public health coordination group was held on November 15<sup>th</sup>. The focus of this meeting was to review the survey results, discuss the past fire season and transition to fall prescribed fire, as well as identify any lessons learned and changes needed.

In addition to the meetings held with the smoke and public health coordination group, a presentation and discussion was held with the Deschutes County Public Health Advisory Board on April 28<sup>th</sup>. During the meeting the ongoing prescribed fire season was discussed, including air quality during a recent intrusion, where to go for information and interactive maps, and ensuring health care providers were linking this information up with clients who were within the demographics of the vulnerable populations identified in the CRP.

Finally, the USFS held a training for media partners on April 28<sup>th</sup> and reviewed the information available for populations vulnerable to smoke and made sure media partners shared that information when reporting so that resource is spotlighted when people need that information.