

2022 ANNUAL REPORT FOR:



CITY OF BEND



PRESCRIBED FIRE, SMOKE, AND PUBLIC HEALTH:

A Community Response Plan for the Bend Smoke Sensitive Receptor Area

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, 2021 through December 31, 2022 regarding the implementation of the Bend Smoke Sensitive Receptor Area (SSRA) Community Response Plan (CRP).

Overview of the 2022 Prescribed Fire Year

In the early part of 2022, firefighters conducted pile burning operations. Brief windows of favorable conditions existed for some small-scale understory burning in late winter. The majority of understory burning began in April and lasted through mid-May. Near the end of May, the Forest Service took an agency-wide pause to review prescribed burning procedures. In the fall, persistent dry weather prevented understory burn operations. Firefighters conducted pile burning ignitions starting near the end of October and continuing through December.

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 Requirements** 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.

Smoke and your health campaign

In order to increase community awareness and understanding of how to minimize health risks presented by wildfire smoke, Deschutes County (DC) entered into a contract with a creative firm in December 2021. The contract was to develop collateral and strategy for a campaign to increase educational awareness of what residents can do to protect their health during times of elevated smoke. Deliverables include: develop a media and educational campaign, make improvements to the Central Oregon Fire website, and develop print, display, broadcast and social media ads. The target audience for these materials is the general public, healthcare providers, Spanish-speaking residents and populations that are more vulnerable to smoke. Funding for this project was provided through a competitive grant from DEQ.

The campaign materials developed include:

- Updates and changes to the wireframes of the Central Oregon Fire website
- Three PSA's
 - Spanish 45s PSA: <https://vimeo.com/734849008/b83d3a7298>
 - English 30s PSA: <https://vimeo.com/732081410/486fa4e186>
 - English 90s PSA: <https://vimeo.com/722721789/28d3556c86>
- Posters (Spanish and English)
 - [Protect Your Health \(Spanish\)](#)
 - [Monitor Your Health \(Spanish\)](#)
 - [Keep Indoor Air Clean \(Spanish\)](#)
 - [Be Prepared this Fire Season \(Spanish\)](#)
- Email outreach campaign
- Social Media posts

The contract has been completed and DC has access to the majority of original materials. Printed copies of the posters have been delivered and are available to distribute to health care offices, community settings, and with community partners.

In June and July, Deschutes County Health Services (DCHS) posted several of the graphics from this campaign to increase awareness of how to be ready for smoke. Social media postings were shared on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. An email marketing campaign was also developed for DCHS email subscribers that opted in to a 4 message series with additional resources. Ads were placed on local TV networks as well as Facebook and Instagram. The creative firm reported over 4,000 visits to the Central Oregon Fire website in the month of July were referred from social media, along with a total of 55,000 impressions across all channels.

There will be a strategic plan to disseminate these materials in alignment with prescribed fire season and throughout wildfire season in 2023.

(B) Summary of Communication Methods

The [Central Oregon Fire website](#) continues to serve as 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 (Deschutes National Forest, Bureau of Land Management, Oregon Department of Forestry). The website is 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. Comprehensive information about smoke and health is now part of this website, with the videos and graphics referenced previously in the report.

The user data collected for the website is incomplete for the year 2022. We don't have any recorded users from January 1- April 25th. Unfortunately the reason for the data lapse is unknown but may be partly related to the redesign of the wireframes. The analytics we have for April-December show a total of 1,169,232 visits from 275,095 users to the website overall. The most visited pages in order are the [home page](#) with 161,204 visits from 47,888 users; the [interactive maps](#) page showing air quality and burning activity reports received 159,649 views by 56,161 users.

We continue to use text alerts to alert subscribers to new activity that will result in visible smoke, such as high profile understory burns. Currently 15,661 users are subscribed to these text alerts – an increase of 4,000 from twelve months ago.

Printed rack cards and business cards continue to be 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. Sixteen news releases alerting the public and partners about pending prescribed fires were issued in the previous 12-month period.

Supplemental posts outlining various phases of prescribed fire operations, including test fire, ignition progression and completion of ignitions are added to the account for high-visibility understory burns.

The Central Oregon Fire Info Twitter account (@CentralORFire) has 17,176 followers and is used to supplement information provided on the Central Oregon Fire Info website. For example, the public is notified of daily pile burning updates not captured by a press release via Twitter posts. Links to press releases are posted to the Twitter account. The Twitter feed displays on the website to provide access to those who are not Twitter users.

During wildfire smoke events, DCHS sends updates on air quality advisories, health/safety guidance, and local resources including clean air shelter locations (when applicable) on social media channels.

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. There is a growing effort to reach vulnerable populations and non-English speaking households. The Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project (DCFP) is rebuilding an [active webpage](#) specifically explaining why our forests need fire; DCFP helps to spread word of upcoming prescribed fire through their information channels including a Facebook page in addition to their website blog. DCFP has recently added an Outreach Coordinator position as well as a Project Coordinator. With increased capacity, partnership with DCFP will continue to support local efforts to increase community resilience to smoke. Oregon Living With Fire (OLWF) helps ensure that information sharing and opportunities for engagement are happening through their channels and with partners like local, state and federal agencies, community groups, Project Wildfire in Deschutes County, the Central Oregon Fire Chiefs Association and Central Oregon Fire Prevention Cooperative among others.

2022 also saw the distribution of industrial air scrubbers and residential air purification units throughout Central Oregon, thanks to funding from Senate Bill 762 and the efforts of partners with OR Department of Human Services (ODHS) and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). Multiple partners were engaged in this work to establish clean air shelters at local schools and libraries, and to provide home units for medically vulnerable individuals. 13 air scrubbers and 750 residential air filters were distributed in Central Oregon. Additional scrubbers are being stored to support emergent needs for deployment in case of wildfire smoke events.

(C) Initiation of Community Response Plan

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	Jurisdiction	CentralOregonFire.org Posts	Deschutes NF press releases	Number of text alerts
January, 2022	Pile Burning	Deschutes NF	1	1	
	Understory Prescribed Burn	Deschutes NF	1	1	
			Total: 2	Total: 2	Total: 0
February, 2022	Understory Prescribed Burn	Deschutes NF	1	1	1
			Total: 1	Total: 1	Total: 1

March, 2022	Understory Prescribed Burn	Deschutes NF	1	1	
	Understory Prescribed Burn	Deschutes NF	1	1	
			Total: 2	Total: 2	Total: 0
April, 2022	Understory Prescribed Burn	Deschutes NF	1	1	1
	Understory Prescribed Burn	Deschutes NF	1	1	
	Understory Prescribed Burn	Deschutes NF	1	1	
	Understory Prescribed Burn	Deschutes NF	1	1	
			Total: 4	Total: 4	Total: 1
May, 2022	Understory Prescribed Burn / Interagency Training	Deschutes NF	1	1	
	Understory Prescribed Burn	Deschutes NF	1	1	1
	Wildfire Awareness Month	Deschutes NF	1	1	
	Understory Prescribed Burn	Deschutes NF	1	1	1
	Understory Prescribed Burn	Deschutes NF	1	1	1
	Understory Prescribed Burn	Deschutes NF	1	1	1
	Understory Prescribed Burn	Deschutes NF	1	1	2
	Understory Prescribed Burn	Deschutes NF	1	1	2
			Total: 8	Total: 8	Total: 8

June, 2022			0	0	0
July, 2022			0	0	0
August, 2022			0	0	0
September, 2022			0	0	0
October, 2022	Pile Burning	Deschutes NF	1	1	
	Pile Burning	Ochoco NF	1		
	Understory Prescribed Burn	BLM	1		
			Total: 3	Total: 1	Total: 0
November, 2022	Pile Burning	Deschutes NF	1	1	
	Pile Burning	Deschutes NF	1	1	
	Pile Burning	BLM	1		
	Pile Burning	BLM	1		
			Total: 4	Total: 2	Total: 0
December, 2022	Pile Burning	Deschutes NF	1	1	
			Total: 1	Total: 1	Total: 0
Year End Total			Year End Total: 26	Year End Total: 22	Year End Total: 10

Prescribed burns did not take place in West Bend in 2022; there were no intrusions to report.

(D) Record of Local Meetings Regarding Community Response Plan

The first 2022 meeting of the Smoke and Public Health coordination group was held on April 18th. The group held a meeting to discuss the upcoming prescribed fire (broadcast burning) season. An update on the DEQ grant to Deschutes County also provided. The group discussed various ways to get support from members including new members from Public Health to tailor and inform messaging and outreach strategies, and to collect any data to illustrate an understanding of known health impacts related to intrusions in Central Oregon.

Due to the early end to prescribed fire season, the group did not meet mid-summer. The County Forester left the County in August, and a Fall meeting was not convened during the transition before a new Forester was hired.

However, additional collaboration, meetings and outreach took place in support of the CRP deliverables. DCHS staff attended the Wildfire Smoke Coordination calls as they were scheduled throughout fire season. DC staff work with the DC PIO to ensure messaging was disseminated in conjunction with smoke advisories on social media. PH staff also delivered educational

presentations about how to protect health during smoke to clinical health partners in the community. An in-person presentation was offered at the Bend office of the Latino Community Association with Spanish translation. Topics covered included how to stay safe during smoke events and how to be prepared for evacuations. These are just two examples of the multiple various means of outreach that are taking place during smoke and wildfire season in our region.

A series of meetings to discuss the DEQ's 50 acre burn size limit also took place in 2022. Greg Svelund with Governor Brown's office/DEQ convened the discussions on August 12th, November 3rd, and December 1st. Invited guests and attendees at these meetings included DC County Commissioner Phil Chang, along with staff/members/representatives from DNF, Oregon DEQ, ODF, DCFP, The Nature Conservancy, DCHS, and the US EPA. These meetings are being convened to inform a consensus and direction for forest treatments and prescribed burns both planned and underway in the West Bend tracts. Currently the consensus is to proceed with implementing up to 1,500 acres for prescribed burns in this high priority area in 2023. However, further dialogue will need to take place as plans are in development.