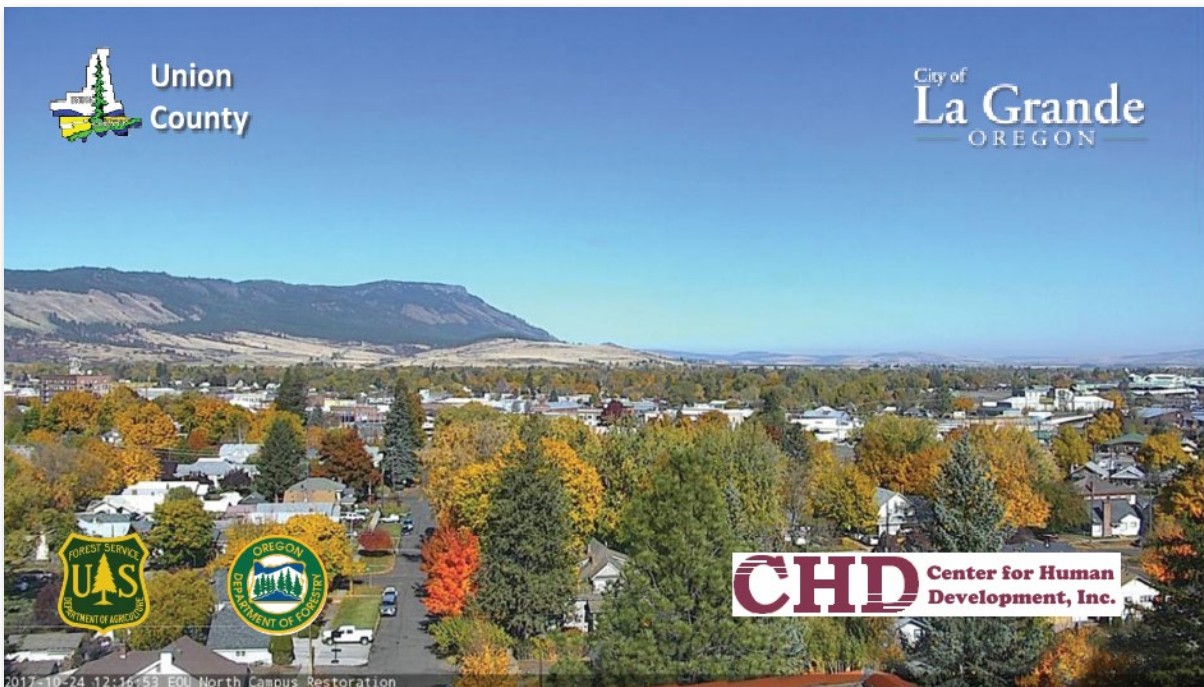


**Union County**  
**Community Response Plan**  
**La Grande Oregon-**  
**Smoke Sensitive Receptor Area**



**March 2023**



## Table of Contents

I.	Overview	1
A.	La Grande Oregon- Union County Community Response Plan	1
II.	Background:	2
A.	Area Overview	2
B.	Purpose and Need	2
C.	Smoke Management Guidelines	3
III.	Project Goals	4
A.	Goal 1 – Community Response Plan	4
B.	Goal 2 – Notification System	4
C.	Goal 3 – Website to provide information on smoke and health.	4
IV.	Partnerships	4
A.	Project Partners:	5
B.	Firewise Communities	6
V.	Smoke Vulnerable Populations	6
A.	Air Pollution and Wildfire Smoke Health Impacts	6
B.	What is PM, and how does it get into the air?	6
C.	Vulnerable populations within the Community of La Grande and in Union County.	7
D.	Protecting the health of vulnerable populations from short-term exposure to smoke	8
1.	Key Messages	9
2.	Recommendations	9
VI.	Fire, Smoke, and Air Quality Analysis	10
A.	Residential wood heat and debris burning	10
B.	Agricultural Burning	11
C.	Prescribed Fire in the La Grande SSRA Environment	11
1.	Need for Prescribed Fire	11
2.	History of Prescribed and Wildfire Smoke	12
3.	Guidance and instructions for daily prescribed burn activities	13
4.	Current Prescribed Burning Activities	14
5.	Future Prescribed Burns	14
VII.	Wildfire Mitigation Activities	15
1.	Risk of Communities to Wildland Fire	15
2.	The Union County Community Wildfire Protection Plan	16
VIII.	Communication Strategies	18
A.	Current Communication and Information Sources	18
B.	Plan for Coordination and Collaboration	19

C.	Notifications of Anticipated Smoke Impacts	19
D.	Proposed Communication Strategy	19
E.	Public Communication and Education	20
IX.	Conclusion	20

Appendix A – CRP Action Items

Appendix B - Public Messaging Framework

Appendix C - La Grande City Smoke Advisory Scripts

Appendix D - Union County Smoke Advisory Scripts

Appendix E = Example Nixle Advisory Scripts

Appendix F – Sample Letter to city council / county commissioners requesting 1 hour exemption.

Appendix G – Example MOU to use for Clean Air Space Use Agreement

Appendix H – Clean Air Space Checklist

Appendix I – La Grande Observer news article Feb 4, 2023

---

## I. Overview

### A. La Grande Oregon- Union County Community Response Plan

---

Union County, in coordination with the City of La Grande, has developed an integrated Community Response Plan (CRP) for the community of La Grande Oregon, and the surrounding communities within Union County, to plan for and respond to the health impacts of smoke from prescribed burning or wildfire. The purpose of this plan is to protect the health and safety of the communities within Union County from wildland and prescribed fire smoke, while providing opportunities to reduce wildfire risk by utilizing planned wildland fire as a resource management tool.

La Grande is identified as a Smoke Sensitive Receptor Area (hereafter referred to as the La Grande SSRA) consistent with [OAR 629.048-0180 \(2\)\(j\)](#). While La Grande is the designated SSRA, smoke that impacts the La Grande SSRA impacts all of communities within Union County. The Union County Community Response Plan provides for response to wildland fire smoke, and qualifies the City of La Grande to request from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) and the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) an exemption from the 1-hour smoke intrusion threshold defined within the [2019 Oregon Prescribed Fire Smoke Management Plan](#) (SMP).

The goals for the La Grande SSRA and the Union County CRP and exemption are twofold:

- To enhance coordination, communication, and notification of residents of La Grande and surrounding communities about planned prescribed fire, potential smoke, and air quality impacts, and recommendations to reduce exposure and mitigate the health impacts of fire smoke from all sources – both planned and unplanned fire on the landscape, especially to vulnerable populations defined within the Union County.
- To increase opportunities to accomplish critical prescribed fire treatments in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) to improve forest health, reduce the risk of extreme wildfires, and increase community and firefighter safety when wildfires do occur.



[La Grande Oregon from EOU Webcam](#) - This picture is from 10/24/2017 - the week after the last recorded smoke intrusion into the La Grande SSRA. Residual smoke is still visible on the horizon. This live camera is very useful for land management agencies to monitor smoke in the community of La Grande

---

## II. Background:

### A. Area Overview

The City of La Grande Oregon is located in the Grande Ronde Valley, and is nestled between the Northern Blue Mountains and the Wallowa Mountains in Northeast Oregon. Northeast Oregon is an environment defined by rivers, forests, valleys, and basins, and by wildfire. The Blue Mountains are supposedly named for the blue tint of the smoky haze over these mountain ranges by the Lewis and Clark expedition as they traveled through the area.

La Grande is in the heart of the Grand Ronde Valley, and is the seat of Union County. La Grande is located along the Interstate 84 corridor approximately 250 miles east of Portland, Oregon and 160 miles northwest of Boise, Idaho.

The Grande Ronde Valley and surrounding foothills support multiple communities. There are eight incorporated communities in the county, La Grande being the largest with an approximate population of 13,082 and Summerville the smallest at 135 people. Island City is contiguous to La Grande, and these surrounding communities share the airshed in Union County.



### B. Purpose and Need

Forested landscapes are integral to landscapes of Northeastern Oregon, and wildfire is a component of this landscape. Forests have grown into an unhealthy state of overcrowding and fuels buildup. Fuels and climate conditions are contributing to large, high-severity wildfires that are devastating large areas of forested areas, and are threatening homes, communities, and the safety of residents and emergency responders. In 2021, wildfires burned over 157,000 acres in the Blue Mountains of Northeastern Oregon and Southeastern Washington at the cost of over \$83 million dollars. In 2022, over 213,000 acres burned within the Blues at a cost of about \$60 million. Wildfire smoke impacted Union County throughout most of these summers. In 2020, Union County experienced several days of wildfire smoke that was in an extreme level of health risk.

Fuels treatments of thinning, timber harvesting and using prescribed fire to remove fuels can reduce the impact of severe wildfire on the landscape and on communities. In recent wildfire history in the Blue Mountains, the 2015 Cornet / Windy Fire, the 2016 Rail Fire, the 2021 Dry Creek Fire, and the 2022 Nebo Fire all had significant control lines established in areas that had fuels treatment. Prescribed fire, while restoring landscapes to healthier conditions and landscapes more resilient to wildfire and providing opportunities for containment of wildfires, can produce smoke that can impact our communities.

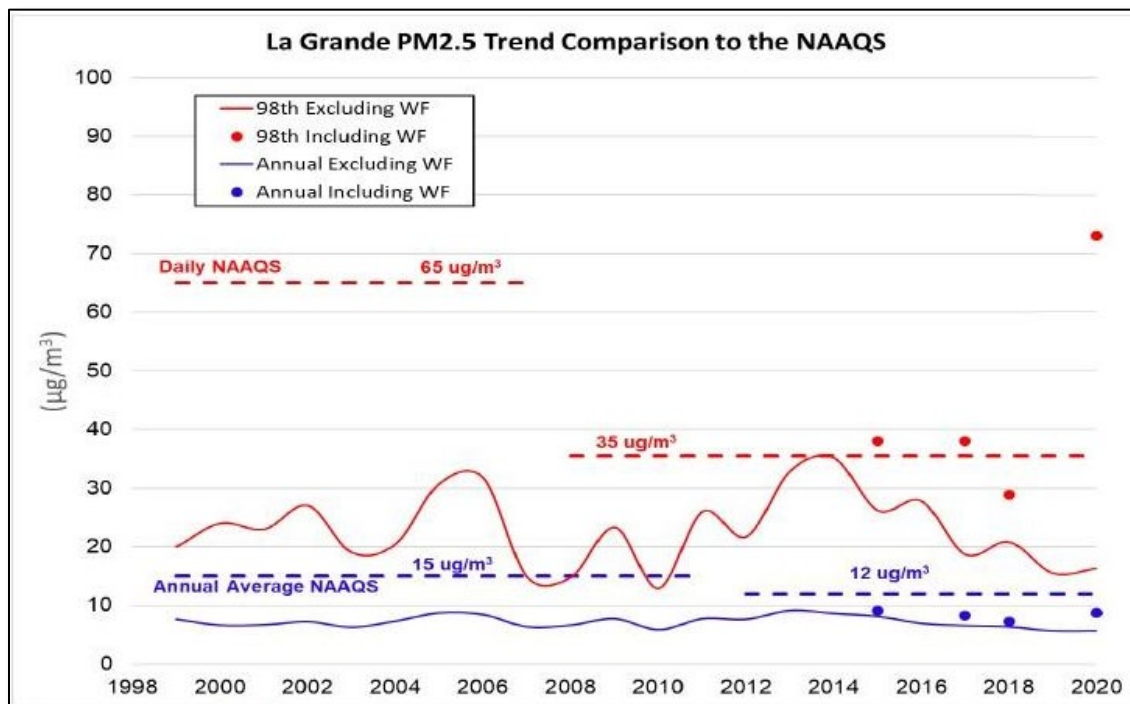
The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) has developed guidelines that allows for smoke from prescribed fire, while protecting the health of our communities. These guidelines define the impact of air quality allowed by prescribed fire. These also provide guidance to manage smoke, and to create a plan that protects the community from smoke, while providing the opportunity to treat more area to enhance landscape resilience to severe wildfire.

The history of smoke events and intrusions across the area, paired with the anticipated need for fuels reduction, and the resulting smoke that could pose a health and safety risk to vulnerable members of the community highlights the need to design and implement a plan for the community to respond to unhealthy air quality conditions that result from all sources of smoke.

### C. Smoke Management Guidelines

In 2019, ODEQ amended its guidelines to allow prescribed fire to exceed the current standards for limits from a one-hour exposure to smoke, while still maintaining these limits within a 24-hour period. This exemption will allow defined smoke levels from prescribed fire, while still providing for healthy smoke levels. This will allow conditions that allow more healthy controlled prescribed fire on the landscape, while potentially reducing the impact of large-severity wildfire.

“Smoke intrusion” is defined as the verified entrance of smoke from prescribed burning into an SSRA at ground level that averages at or above 70 micrograms per cubic meter of particulate matter of 2.5 microns or less (PM2.5) for any one-hour period and/or averages at or above 26 micrograms per cubic meter for a 24-hour period, measured from midnight to midnight. 629-048-0005(27). This definition aligns with definitions for Air Quality Index (AQI) by the Department of Environmental Quality.



Prior to 2019, smoke intrusions were determined by measurements from Nephelometers (an instrument that measures particulates in the air) of the backscattering of light (bscat). These measurements are not a direct measurement of particulate matter and are not used in the DEQ definitions of Air Quality Index. Many of the recorded smoke events would most not have been qualified as an intrusion under the current smoke management guidelines. Fire managers in Northeastern Oregon were significantly involved in initiating these changes to smoke management guidelines that better fit conditions in the area, providing a more accurate representation of air quality health impacts, while providing opportunity for prescribed burning.

This plan will also provide guidance to manage smoke, and to create a plan that protects our community from smoke while providing opportunity to enhance resilience to severe wildfire.

Partners recognize that to promote more resilient public and private forest lands, increased prescribed fire will be necessary. Therefore, the successful development of this CRP will also serve to facilitate opportunities for increased prescribed fire through the possible exemption from the current one-hour average smoke intrusion threshold.

A significant outcome of this plan will be an increase in the quality and frequency of community outreach, information dissemination, and education efforts; particularly toward those members of the community who are most at risk to health and safety due to smoke incidents regardless of the source of that smoke.

---

### III. Project Goals

#### A. Goal 1 – Community Response Plan

Union County Emergency Services has overseen the development of the La Grande Community Response plan for Prescribed Fire Smoke. Union County was the fiscal agent for the plan development. The county utilized an intergovernmental agreement to transfer funds to Oregon Department of Forestry to fund the coordination and completion of this CRP.

#### B. Goal 2 – Notification System

- Design modifications to the existing websites to provide information about prescribed fire smoke to the communities of Union County.
- Develop a plan to incorporate the Union County Nixle notification system to provide information about prescribed fires and associated smoke.
- Utilize existing procedures and create new processes that automate the messaging systems.
- Provide funding for personnel to provide updated information into these systems.

#### C. Goal 3 – Website to provide information on smoke and health.

Develop a new interagency website that provides information and consolidated information sources to community members in the Northern Blue Mountains about prescribed fire, smoke, health and smoke mitigation.

---

### IV. Partnerships

The **Union County Community Response Plan Committee (CRPC)** has established several key relationships and partnerships as a result of developing this plan. These partnerships will be key in gaining access to funding and capacity implementing the action items identified in the CRP.

The **Northern Blues Prescribed Fire Council (NBPFC)** is a chapter of the Oregon Prescribed Fire Council (OPFC), and has been a key partner in the development of the plan and in identifying opportunities for funding and implementation. Members include US Forest Service, Ore Dept of Forestry, OSU Extension, The Nature Conservancy, the Fire Learning Network, Union County, and the Cohesive Strategy Partnership. The NBPFC is also a resource group in the NBRP. One goal of the council is to establish a region-wide information system that includes Union, Wallowa, Baker and Umatilla Counties. This would build on and consolidate those county's Community Response Plans.

Another key goal of the Council is to take the lead to present, educate and promote to local governments within the Blue Mountains the need for and the process to request the one-hour exemptions to 2.5pm from Oregon DEQ.

The **Northern Blues Restoration Partnership (NBRP)** has been formed in the Northern Blue Mountains with the primary objective to collectively commit to promote and support restoration and maintenance of Blue Mountains (Northeastern Oregon and Southeastern Washington) forests to conditions more resilient to fire in the face of climate change, drought, wildfire, and insect and disease outbreaks. The mission is to cooperate under the auspices of the Northern Blues All Lands Partnership to plan and implement cross-boundary and cross jurisdictional collaboration focused on fire resiliency.

This partnership includes US Forest Service, Oregon Dept of Forestry, Washington DNR; Eastern Oregon Counties Association, representatives of timber industry, Wallowa Resources 501(c), Northern Blues Forest Collaborative; Blue Mt Chapter of Oregon Prescribe Fire Council; Western Environmental Law Center 501(c), Oregon State Extension, NRCS, and the Northern Blues Cohesive Strategy Partnership. Union County actively participates in this partnership both through the EO Counties and the NBCSP.

The **Northern Blues Cohesive Strategy Partnership, (NBCSP)** has been established in Northeast Oregon and Southeast Washington with the mission to foster implementation of the goals of the Cohesive Wildfire Strategy to *1- promote fire adapted communities; 2 – fire resilient landscapes; 3 – increase fire response capacity*. Union County is an active member of this partnership, and the Union County Emergency Services Coordinator is currently serving as the chair for this partnership.

Accomplishments of these partnerships includes receiving several funding mechanisms and developing large scale cross-boundary projects. These partnerships were key in receiving funding from the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) for achieving cross boundary fuels treatment. This award alone is for approximately \$3.5 million annually over 10 years. Other sources of funding include E-Board funding of \$300,00 and RCPP Funding of approximately \$4 million. Union County contains several of these projects, including the East Face Joint Chiefs project, the La Grande Valley West Joint Chief Proposal as well as several others.

The NB Restoration Partnership (NBRP) has assisted in submitting grant proposals for funds provided by Oregon Senate Bill 762. These and addition new grant opportunities could also result in significant funding source for fuels treatments and prescribed burning. The award of the La Grande Valley West Joints Chiefs Proposal would result in addition funding for fuels treatments. The approved appropriations in the Infrastructure Bill of 2021 will also be providing significant funding available for fuels treatment.

Prescribed burning within Union County will be a key component of many of these projects and funding sources. Public information and communications has been identified as a priority by all of these entities. New partnerships and relationships have been established while working on this CRP.

#### **A. Project Partners:**

The following partners and participation agencies have been participating or included in the development of the Union County Community Response Plan.

##### **Partners:**

- Union County Emergency Services.
- Union County Center for Human Development (CHD)
- US Forest Service, Wallowa Whitman National Forests
- Blue Mountain Interagency Dispatch Center
- Oregon Dept of Forestry – Northeast Oregon Unit,
- Northern Blues Prescribed Fire Council
- Northern Blues Restoration Partnership
- Northern Blues Cohesive Strategy Partnership

## Participating Agencies

- Washington DNR;
- Eastern Oregon Counties Association,
- Wallowa Resources 501(c),
- My Blue Mountains Woodlands 501(c)
- Northern Blues Forest Collaborative
- Western Environmental Law Center 501(c)
- Oregon State Extension,
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Northern Blues Cohesive Strategy Partnership (NBCSP).
- Municipalities of La Grande, Island City, Cove, Union, Imbler, Elgin, and Summerville
- La Grande City Council
- Union County Commissioners

### B. Firewise Communities

Northeast Oregon has been actively recruiting and developing [Firewise Communities](#). Several Firewise Communities have been established, and more are in the process. Firewise communities within Union County include a newly established Firewise Community at Morgan Lake above the City of La Grande. Several more opportunities within Union County have been identified. Wallowa Resources – a non-profit partner of our CRP has hired a Firewise Community Coordinator for Northeast Oregon, and that position has been actively recruiting opportunities for additional Firewise Communities.

---

## V. Smoke Vulnerable Populations

### A. Air Pollution and Wildfire Smoke Health Impacts

Poor air quality poses a health risk to all individuals. Many factors influence a person's sensitivity to smoke, including severity and duration of smoke exposure and a person's health. Smoke may worsen symptoms for people who have pre-existing health conditions and those who are particularly sensitive to air pollution. These smoke-vulnerable populations include children, adolescents, pregnant women, the elderly, the immunocompromised and those with pre-existing chronic diseases and lung conditions are especially vulnerable to the compounding detrimental health impacts of poor air quality events.

Wildfire smoke creates and often exacerbates poor air quality situations. Of the many harmful components that exist in wildfire smoke, one of the most dangerous is particulate matter (PM), specifically fine PM (PM2.5). The microscopic particles of PM2.5 are so fine that they are inhaled deep into the lungs and cross the blood-air barrier to enter the bloodstream. Short-term exposure over hours or days can lead to increased asthma attacks, acute bronchitis, increased susceptibility to respiratory infections and can lead to an increased risk of heart attack for individuals with lung disease.

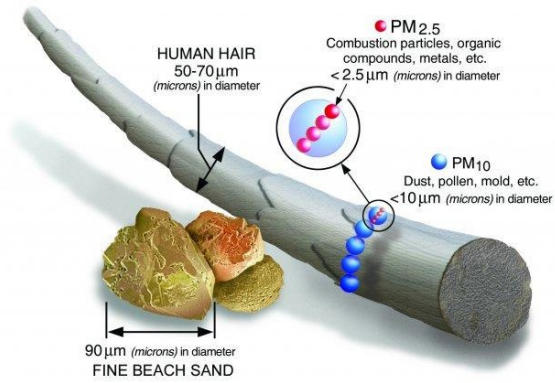
### B. What is PM, and how does it get into the air?

PM stands for particulate matter (also called particle pollution): the term for a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets found in the air. Some particles, such as dust, dirt, soot, or smoke, are large or dark enough to be seen with the naked eye. Others are so small they can only be detected using an electron microscope. Particulate matter is defined in the following illustration.

**PM<sub>10</sub>** : inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 10 micrometers and smaller; and

**PM<sub>2.5</sub>** : fine inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 2.5 micrometers and smaller.

The concentration and duration of smoke exposure can also increase the possibility of detrimental health effects. When smoke concentrations are at or above unhealthy levels, short-term health impacts like irritated eyes, scratchy throat, cough, shortness of breath, cardiac arrhythmias, respiratory infections and asthma attacks are more likely to develop. Multiple days of exposure to unhealthy air quality due to wildfire smoke increases the likeliness of more severe health effects and can exacerbate existing heart and respiratory conditions leading to increased numbers of heart attacks, exacerbated COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) and result in higher numbers of emergency room visits. Long-term health impacts from wildfire smoke are a bigger challenge to decipher, but ongoing research continues to try to answer this important question. Some early analysis points to a link between extended wildfire smoke exposure and a reduction in respiratory health in subsequent years.



### C. Vulnerable populations within the Community of La Grande and in Union County.

Total Populations of Communities in Union County

Population Incorporated City/Town	Certified Estimate July 1, 2020
La Grande	13,460
Elgin	1,730
Island City	1,140
Union	2,175
Cove	555
Imbler	305
<b>Total Union County</b>	<b>26,840</b>

[Portland State University Population Research Center](#)

[US Department of Health and Human Services emPOWER](#) site identifies individuals in communities that are Medicare beneficiaries, and of those beneficiaries those that are in high vulnerability health conditions requiring electrical equipment such as oxygen concentrators

HHS EmPOWER	Medicare Beneficiaries	Electricity-Dependent Beneficiaries
Cove	528	31
Elgin	817	70
Imber	133	11
La Grande	3,846	260
North Powder	226	11
Summerville	273	16
Union	732	50
<b>Total Union County</b>	<b>6,555</b>	<b>449</b>

In data provided by the [Oregon Health Authority](#) for vulnerable populations, estimates in Union County area as follows:

Union County Health Risk	Total of Adult Age Groups	Approx # of People
Asthma	13.3%	3,570
COPD	7.5%	2,013
Heart Attack	4.2% (65 and older 11%)	1,127
CHF/heart attack/stroke	7.3% (65 and older 16.8%)	1,960

The [Community Health Needs Assessment](#) was prepared by the Grande Ronde Hospital in La Grande to identify health needs within the hospital's community. This assessment compared mortality rates within the communities of Union County to those of the State of Oregon. These indicators are expressed in death rate per 100,000 people. The population tables above can be used to extrapolate approximate rates within Union County. Notable in this assessment is that the mortality rates for heart disease and for Chronic Lower respiratory disease are higher in Union County communities than the rates for the State of Oregon.

	Union County	Oregon	La Grande	Union	Elgin
Total Mortality (Death Rate per 100,000)	983	815	1,007	926	916
Cancer Mortality (Death Rate per 100,000)	227	191	226	221	245
Heart Disease Mortality (Death Rate per 100,000)	202	169	203	212	174
Chronic Lower Resp Disease Mortality (Death Rate per 100,000)	73	49	73	68	79
Cerebrovascular Disease Mortality (Death Rate per 100,000)	61	51	58	89	32
Unintended Injuries Mortality (Death Rate per 100,000)	47	41	45	43	63
Alzheimer's Mortality (Death Rate per 100,000)	26	32	31	13	16
Flu and Pneumonia Mortality (Death Rate per 100,000)	25	14	24	26	24
Diabetes Mortality (Death Rate per 100,000)	23	28	23	13	40
Suicide Mortality (Death Rate per 100,000)	22	15	20	30	24
Motor vehicle crash death rate	15	14			
Alcohol Induced Mortality (Death Rate per 100,000)	11	14	10	9	24
Age-adjusted Death Rate, (Avg per year 07-09)	897	821	941	825	695

Oregon Office of Rural Health, 2009

#### D. Protecting the health of vulnerable populations from short-term exposure to smoke

An element of the communications strategy will be to provide information to the community on how to minimize the health impacts from smoke.

Provisions for funding to protect populations from smoke impact have been identified in OR SB 762. These provisions include:

- Creation of a wildfire emergency shelter program, including clean air shelters and evacuation services.
- Funds for a grant program for filtrations systems to mitigate wildfire smoke in homes and businesses

An element of the proposed communication strategy is to provide information about these programs, and how to apply to these funding opportunities. The following are key messages and recommendations to include in communications to our vulnerable resources.

## 1. Key Messages

Smoke is made up primarily of small particles, gases, and water vapor. These particles can be inhaled deeply into the lungs, damaging lung tissue and causing respiratory and cardiovascular problems. Regardless of the source, smoke is a form of air pollution that can pose a health risk. Symptoms of short-term smoke exposure can include:

- Watery or dry eyes
- Persistent cough, phlegm, wheeze, scratchy throat, or irritated sinuses
- Headaches
- Shortness of breath, asthma attack, or lung irritation
- Irregular heartbeat, chest pain, or fatigue

## 2. Recommendations

The following guidelines are things members of the public and vulnerable populations can do to minimize short-duration smoke impacts from prescribed fire or wildfire:

- Limit your exposure to smoke.
- Reduce time spent outdoors when smoke is present. This can usually provide some protection, especially in a tightly closed, air-conditioned house. Set your A/C or heating unit to recycle or recirculate when at home or in your car, to limit your exposure.
- Reduce the time you engage in vigorous outdoor activity. This can be an important, effective way to lower the amount of smoke you are breathing in. It can minimize health risks during a smoke event.
- Stay hydrated. Drink plenty of water.
- Reduce other sources of indoor smoke and dust. These can be burning cigarettes, candles, gas or propane ranges, wood-burning stoves and furnaces, and vacuuming.
- If you have heart or lung disease or respiratory illnesses such as asthma, follow your healthcare provider's advice about prevention and treatment of symptoms.
- More vulnerable or smoke-sensitive persons may consider using an indoor high-efficiency air filter (HEPA) or electrostatic precipitator for your home or to help create one or more rooms with cleaner air to breathe.
- Before you go to bed at night, close doors and windows to prevent outside smoke from getting inside and keep indoor air clean.
- If you feel like smoke is already impacting your health, avoid outdoor physical exertion and remain indoors. Contact your medical provider if you experience serious health problems caused by smoke.

---

## VI. Fire, Smoke, and Air Quality Analysis

### A. Residential wood heat and debris burning

The City of La Grande established [an Air Quality Program](#) in 1991 in response to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) findings that within the City's Urban Growth Boundary, the air exceeded the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS). Air sampling conducted in 1988 had determined that particulate matter less than 10 microns (PM10) concentration exceeded the 24-hr NAAQS. The primary sources were determined to be smoke from wood-burning stoves and outside debris burning.

The DEQ directed that a State Implementation Plan (SIP) describing strategies to restore healthful air quality was necessary. That plan established recommendations to the public for use of wood-burning stoves and outside burning based on predicted AQS levels. It also established awareness programs and educational programs for schools.

As AQI levels met defined levels for GREEN/GOOD; YELLOW/MODERATE and RED/UNHEALTHY, residents were asked to curtail the use of wood-burning stoves and outside burning. Daily recommendations were provided on a pre-recorded phone message called "[The Wood Burn Call](#)". Provisions were made for use of DEQ or EPA-certified stoves and wood pellet stoves.

A series of Air Quality Advisory Scripts take weather parameter information including wind speed, mixing height, current and predicted particulate measurements to guide the smoke management instructions. (Appendix XXXX)

Wood has always been a primary source of heat in La Grande. As awareness increased of air quality through this program, residents began to change to certified wood stoves and pellet stoves. Natural Gas has also become much more available. Existing homes have been converted over to certified stoves, pellet stoves, and natural gas as primary heat. Building codes for new construction required DEQ-approved heating sources. Air quality has increased to the point that the daily recommendation system is no longer necessary. Current air quality monitoring shows that AQI impacts from heating and outside burning have significantly decreased. Currently, through funding from the Oregon DEQ, a county-wide monitoring station network (Purple-Air) is being established to enhance monitoring and awareness of air quality.

Air Quality Rating	Air Quality Index (AQI)	
GOOD	0-50	<b>GREEN/GOOD:</b> wood burning allowed in stoves and fireplaces. Outside burns allowed during October, November, April and May. Please build small, hot fires; do not damper down your stove, and burn dry, well-seasoned wood.
MODERATE	51-100	<b>YELLOW/MODERATE:</b> air pollution levels are expected to approach the health standards. No outside burning is allowed for the next 24 hours. Residents are asked to stop burning between the hours of 5 pm and 6 am, except those with DEQ or EPA-certified stoves, wood pellet stoves, and those using wood as a sole source of heat. Those continuing to burn are asked to build small, hot fires. Please do not damper down your stove, and burn dry, well-seasoned wood.
UNHEALTHY for Sensitive Groups (UFSG)	101-150	
UNHEALTHY	151-200	<b>RED/ UNHEALTHY:</b> air pollution levels are expected to exceed the health standards. No outside burning is allowed for the next 24 hours. All residents are asked to stop burning between the hours of 5 pm and 6 am, except those using wood as a sole source of heat and those using wood pellet stoves. Those continuing to burn are asked to build small, hot fires. Please do not damper down your stove, and burn dry, well-seasoned wood.
VERY UNHEALTHY	201-300	
HAZARDOUS	>300	

## B. Agricultural Burning

Union County has an Agricultural Smoke Management Program. The [Union County Smoke Management Plan](#) is intended to minimize health and lifestyle impacts by managing air quality while providing opportunities for optimal crop production. The objective of smoke management is to match burn levels to the airshed's dispersion capabilities while minimizing smoke impacts.

Agricultural crops including wheat and other grains and grass seed are an important part of the economy in Union County. The burning of residue in grass seed and cereal crop fields for sanitizing fields due to fungus diseases and weed contaminants, and for residue management is a key part of the success of these crops.

The opportunity to periodically burn agricultural residue is a vital part of this industry. As a tool, it effectively controls many diseases, sanitizes fields, stimulates growth, helps produce higher quality seed, and destroys "second generation" seeds that ensure seed purity. Field burning also helps to control weed, seed, and insect problems, which reduces the use of chemicals.; However, the impact on our communities and those sensitive to the smoke is a concern for all residents

The county is responsible for overseeing open field burning and propane flaming of all grass seed residue and cereal grain residue within Union County. Burn season begins June 15th and lasts until September 30th. To have optimum burn conditions with the least impact on others, growers try to burn when the weather conditions, field conditions, and dispersion forecast are all optimum. Thru a permit system and registration, the Smoke Management Office specifies the times, places, and amount of burning to be allowed.

The smoke management center gathers weather data and forecast each weekday during the burning season. Through an automated series of scripts and algorithms, a pre-recorded advisory message is put out. This is continually re-evaluated and adjusted throughout the burn day by tracking smoke drift, plume rise, and indications of shifting winds. Air quality has increased substantially since this program was initiated. This direction is for both agricultural burning guidance, and guidance for debris burning throughout Union County outside of the City of La Grande.

## C. Prescribed Fire in the La Grande SSRA Environment

### 1. Need for Prescribed Fire

[Oregon Rule 629-048-0020](#) discusses the "Necessity of Prescribed Burning" within the state of Oregon. The public policy of the State of Oregon is to preserve forests "through the prevention and suppression of forest fires." Prescribed burning is an important tool used to reduce forest fuels, re-introduce fire on the landscape, and has been demonstrated to reduce the potential for a fire to start or reduce its severity. It has also been demonstrated that fire suppression actions are more effective and lower in cost in areas with a recent history of burning.

Prescribed burning is an important forest management technique in all of Oregon's forests to reduce forest fuels for the purposes of both short term and long-term fire prevention and to aid in fire suppression. Because wildfires typically burn during hotter, drier conditions than those usually planned for prescribed fires, forest fuels are more completely consumed, producing more emissions. Also, wildfires often occur during periods of atmospheric stability, trapping smoke close to the ground where it's more likely to impact communities and health.

The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, the Umatilla National Forest and the Northeast Oregon Unit of the Oregon Department of Forestry all have proactive prescribed burn programs in place to respond to

these issues and goals. While achieving these goals, these programs have the potential to impact the La Grande SSRA with smoke from these activities.

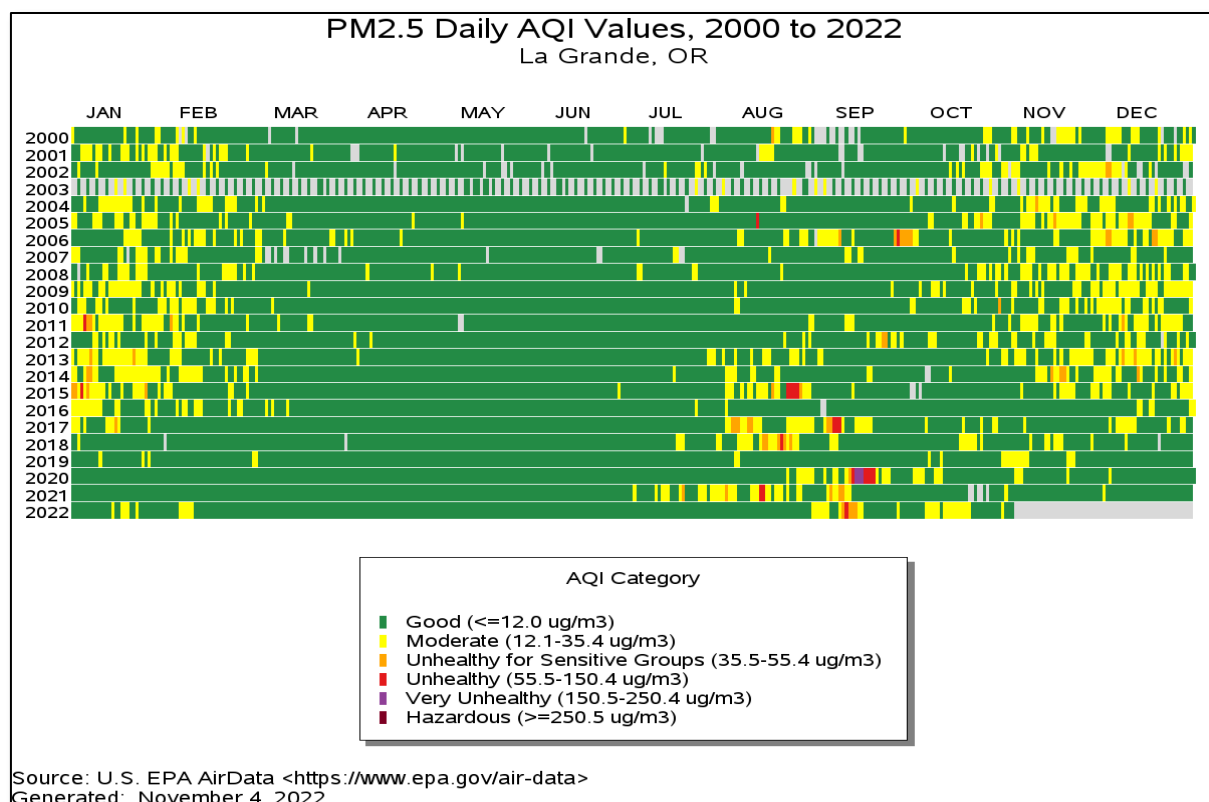
## 2. History of Prescribed and Wildfire Smoke

Prior to 2009, La Grande had been identified as a Protected Area – Non-Restricted Area by Oregon Department of Forestry Smoke Management. In 2009, the Eastern Oregon Non-Restricted areas were reclassified as Smoke Sensitive Receptor Areas (SSRA), which included the community of La Grande.

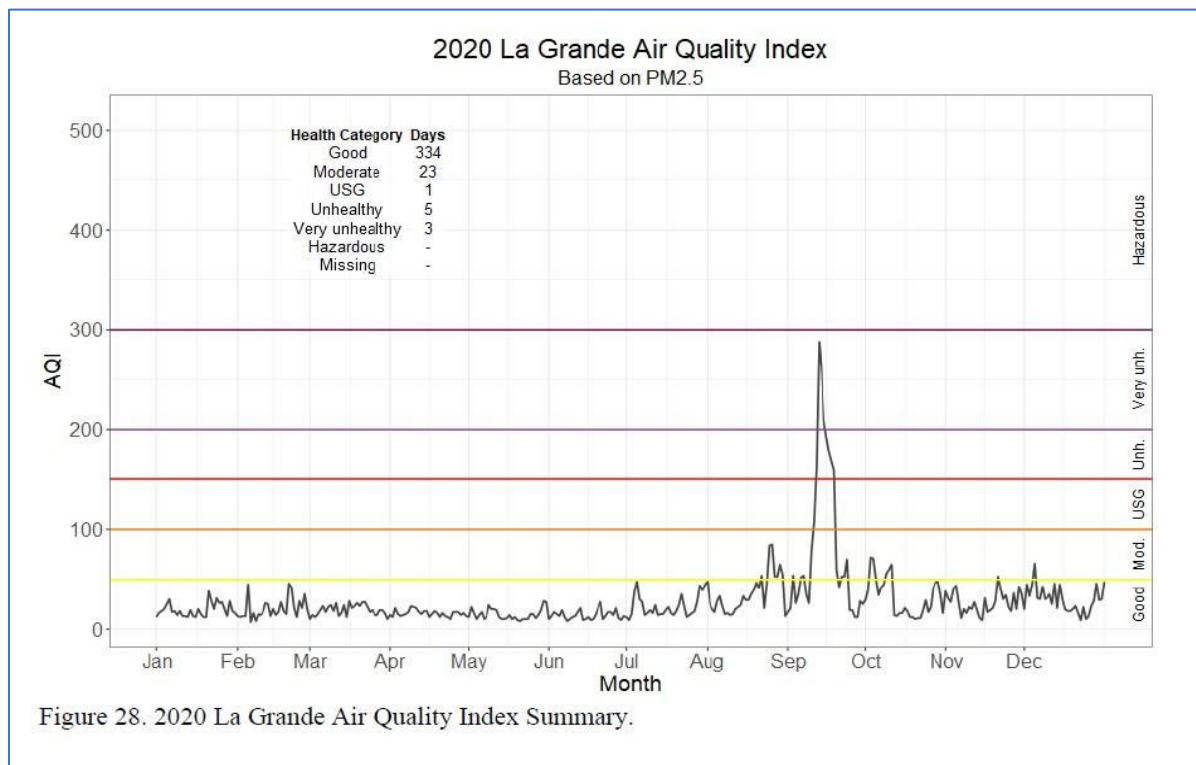
Prescribed burning adjacent to the Grande Ronde Valley is challenging because of the topography and wind patterns that can bring smoke into the valley and result in poor dispersion of smoke out of the valley. Weather conditions can be very challenging to predict in the Grande Ronde Valley, and local topographical features such as the Grande Ronde River drainage and the Blue Mts and Wallowa Mts can greatly influence weather and winds that would disperse smoke. While La Grande is the designated SSRA, smoke generally impacts all of the communities within the Grande Ronde Valley.

La Grande has a history of smoke intrusions from prescribed burning. In the past 25 years (1996-2021) there have been 14 Smoke Intrusion events in Union County (now the La Grande SSRA) Five of these events occurred in the fall of 1997 over a period of 16 days. The last recorded smoke intrusion occurred in 2017. The most significant smoke intrusion occurred in 2006, which resulted in 33 hours of smoke intrusion, 19 of those hours were at the unhealthy level of Air Quality Index Level as defined by the Clean Air Act – US DEQ. An after-action review of this event determined that a series of unpredicted weather events and miscommunications resulted in this heavy intrusion of prescribed smoke into the Grande Ronde Valley. Several recommendations and changes occurred following this event.

In an analysis of the 2017 smoke event, smoke levels incurred during that event would not have been categorized as a smoke intrusion under the new 2019 DEQ definitions. Data for prior events was not available for complete hourly analysis of each smoke event. Daily measurements during these events



initially indicate that other than the 2006 event and possibly some of the 1997 events, these would not have been intrusions under the 2019 guidelines.



The previous two graphs show the wildfire smoke event in the Fall of September 2020 that reached unhealthy levels in Union County.

The first graph also shows the prescribed Fire Smoke event in September 2006, and the wildfire smoke events in 2015 resulting from fires in Baker County, Oregon, and 2017 smoke event which resulted from smoke transported in from Northern California and British Columbia.

### 3. Guidance and instructions for daily prescribed burn activities

The following sources provide guidance on daily burning operations.

#### **Oregon Dept of Environment Quality (ODEQ) “Can I Burn Map”**

ODEQ has created an interactive map that depicts the statewide rules for burning restrictions based on type of burning. This interactive map shows graphically where burning restrictions exist. This would be a link on the proposed Smoke Information Website

[Can I Burn? Mapping Tool](#)

#### **Blue Mountain Interagency Dispatch Center Webpage**

##### [BMIDC Burn Regulations Map](#)

<http://bmidc.org/pur-map.shtml>

The Blue Mt Interagency Dispatch Center has an interactive map that will show users the current burn restrictions in their area. Clicking an area on this map will bring up the current fire restriction order. The action items would not only include linking to this site on the BMPFC website, but to include updating this map in the funding for information updating proposed in this plan.

## Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

### [Oregon Smoke Management Daily Instructions](#)

Oregon Dept of Environment Quality has a website with general information and specific burn instructions by area for burn managers to turn to for guidance:

#### **Burning and Smoke Management:**

<https://www.oregon.gov/ODF/Fire/Pages/Burn.aspx>

#### **Northeast Oregon Smoke Instructions:**

[http://www.odf.state.or.us/DIVISIONS/protection/fire\\_protection/Daily/neo.htm](http://www.odf.state.or.us/DIVISIONS/protection/fire_protection/Daily/neo.htm)

#### **Standard Guidance Matrix:**

<https://www.oregon.gov/odf/Documents/fire/standardguidance.pdf>

### **Federal Guidance for Prescribed Burning**

Interagency Prescribed Fire Management Handbook

[https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5238479.pdf](https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5238479.pdf)

Currently on the National Forest Lands within Union County, the Go/No-go decision process is now a daily process that includes Forest level agency administrator approval. Also currently burning is limited to Monday thru Thursday as to not impact weekend activities.

## 4. Current Prescribed Burning Activities

Many of the current prescribed burning project areas will be discussed in the partnerships description later in this proposal. Existing Forest Service Prescribed Fire burning projects proximate to the La Grande SSRA include East Face, Angel, Spring Creek, Main Eagle, Moss Springs and Bird Track.

- Details of these projects can be found at the [Wallowa Whitman web site Projects Page](#).
- Current burning activities can be found on the [BMIDC Prescribed Fire Burning Page](#).
- Historical information and locations of current and planned prescribed fire activities can be found on the [Northern Blues Interactive Prescribed Fire Map](#)

Because of restrictions put in place for covid 19 mitigation, prescribed burning was restricted in 2019-2020. In 2021, the La Grande Ranger district burned 3,056 acres in 12 projects in the area proximate to the La Grande SSRA. In the fall of 2021, approximately 1,200 additional acres of private and county owned property have had pile burning following fuels treatments. Across the Northern Blue Mountains in 2021 landscape, 10,200 acres were treated on federal lands, and a total of 24,800 ac. were treated by prescribed fire across the landscape. 2022 however was a more challenging year to accomplish burning. Burning on Forest Service lands was placed on a moratorium in May 2022 following escaped prescribed burns on the Southwest earlier that spring. Fall weather conditions were also very challenging. Still, in 2022, approximately 4,200 acres were treated by prescribed burning.

## 5. Future Prescribed Burns

The need for ***“increased pace and scale”*** of prescribed burning in Northeastern Oregon, as well as the opportunities to allow natural fire to occur where it is beneficial, has been identified by land management agencies to reduce the impact of the ever-increasing occurrence of high severity wildfire in the Northern Blue Mountains. Many of these projects such as East Face and La Grande Valley West

have already been discussed. There is currently a backlog of prescribed burning on existing projects proximate to the La Grande SSRA due to several factors, which has included inadequate funding, weather conditions, extreme fire seasons, covid mitigation and smoke management limitations. As discussed, funding mechanisms are becoming available, and the goals of Union County CRP is to foster responsible smoke management practices that increase opportunities for prescribed burning while providing for the health and safety of the community.

Detailed information for these projects are available from sources identified in this plan. There is currently a publicly available [Interactive Prescribed Fire Map](#) that displays where existing and planned fuels treatments areas are located proximate to the La Grande SSRA. This map can be found on the Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests web sites.

---

## VII. Wildfire Mitigation Activities

Union County has completed a [Community Wildfire Protection Plan](#) with the latest revision in 2016. [The Union County CWPP](#) provides a framework for assessing current wildland-urban interface wildfire risks and identifies mitigation measures to reduce large fire potential and wildfire risks through the implementation of the three Cohesive Wildfire Strategy elements of: **creating fire-adapted communities, restoring resilient landscapes, and improving wildfire response**. The CWPP identifies and prioritizes several Mitigation Action Items.

Three of the action items identified with the Union County CWPP are:

- Increase speed of project planning and implementation and scale of projects while emphasizing cross-boundary all hands-all lands approaches.
- Develop landscape treatment opportunities that reduce mortality and increase retention of overstory structure post-wildfire.
- Design projects that provide defensible space for suppression resources while retaining ecosystem integrity in fire-prone environments.

### 1. Risk of Communities to Wildland Fire

Northern Union County has been identified by the state of Oregon as “high risk” as identified in [Senate Bill 762](#). On June 26, 2021 the Oregon State Senate signed SB 762. This bill provides for a comprehensive statewide response to plan to mitigate wildfires with a focus on community preparedness and public health, and provides for a program to reduce wildfire risk through the restoration of landscape resiliency and the reduction of hazardous fuels. Senate Bill 762 will provide funding for Oregon modernize and improve wildfire preparedness through three key strategies: creating fire-adapted communities, developing safe and effective response, and increasing the resiliency of Oregon's landscapes.

This bill defines priority for treatment and funding in SECTION 18. (1)(a) (A) On lands in the four highest eNVC (Expected Net Value Change) risk classes identified in the US Forest Service report titled “Pacific Northwest Quantitative Wildfire Risk Assessment: Methods and Results” (PNQWRA).

1

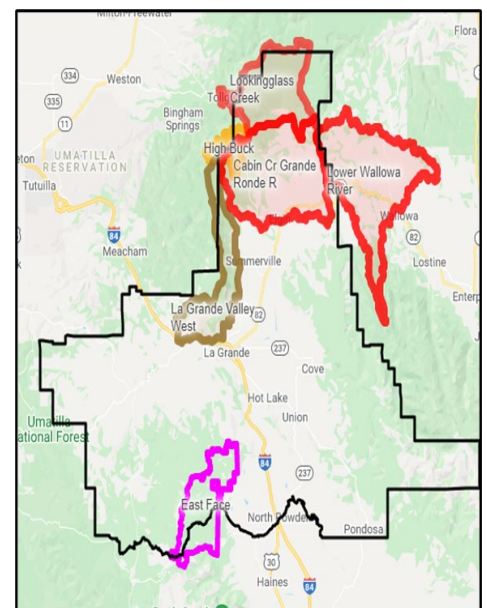


Figure 1 – High Risk Class 4 Subwatersheds in Union County

---

<sup>1</sup> Currently the Oregon Quantitate Risk Map assessment has been put on pause while land managers and representatives of property owners discuss the application and rational of the risk assessment process. The material referenced within this Community Response Plan will undoubtedly be modified.

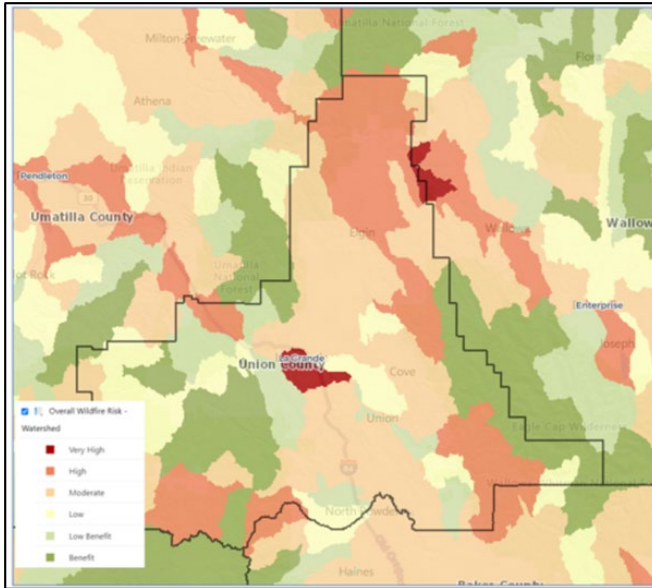


Figure 2 - Oregon Fire Risk as shown in the Oregon Risk Explorer

Three subwatersheds in northern Union County are designated as High Risk Class 4 in the PNQWRA (See Figure 1). These areas, which can be found in the Oregon Risk Explorer, define areas of Class 4 risk in three subwatersheds located in north Union County. This will be priority for funding for treatment by SB 762, and the N Blues All Lands Partnership is currently preparing a grant proposal for this area. Oregon Dept of Forestry in partnership with Oregon State University and US Forest Service has developed the on-line wildfire risk planning tool [Oregon Wildfire Risk Explorer](#). Figure 2 and Figure 3 are from this site.

## 2. The Union County Community Wildfire Protection Plan

The [Union County Community Wildfire Protection Plan](#) (CWPP) also defines high risk areas within Union County. The Union County CWPP provides a framework for assessing the current wildland urban interface wildfire risks, multiagency firefighting resource response shortfalls, and community preparedness. The CWPP also defines several Mitigation Action Items to reduce risk and impact of wildland fire. Some of those mitigations are included in this proposal.

The CWPP contains a thorough evaluation of wildfire risk throughout the county. It contains maps of fire risk as well as identifying, evaluating, and ranking the risk to communities within Union County. The community of La Grande / Island City is among the highest risk as rated within the CWPP

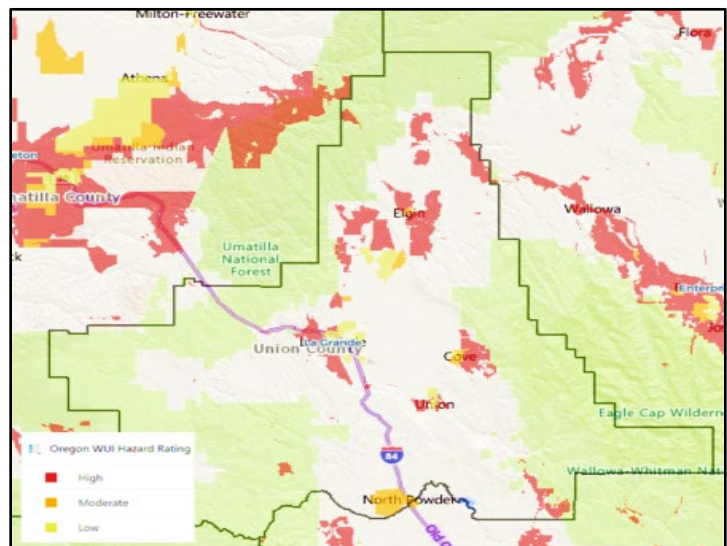


Figure 3 – WUI Fire Risk as shown in the Oregon Risk Explorer

This figure shows a map of Fire Threat Index as defined in the Union County CWPP. The communities identified in the CRP proposal are indicated as high risk in this map.

Updating this CWPP has been identified as a priority in Union County. In partnership with the NBRP, the county has put in grant applications for this update. Smoke information, public education and other smoke mitigation action items have been identified as priority to be included in the new CWPP. Many of these partners will be participating in the development of the CWPP revision.

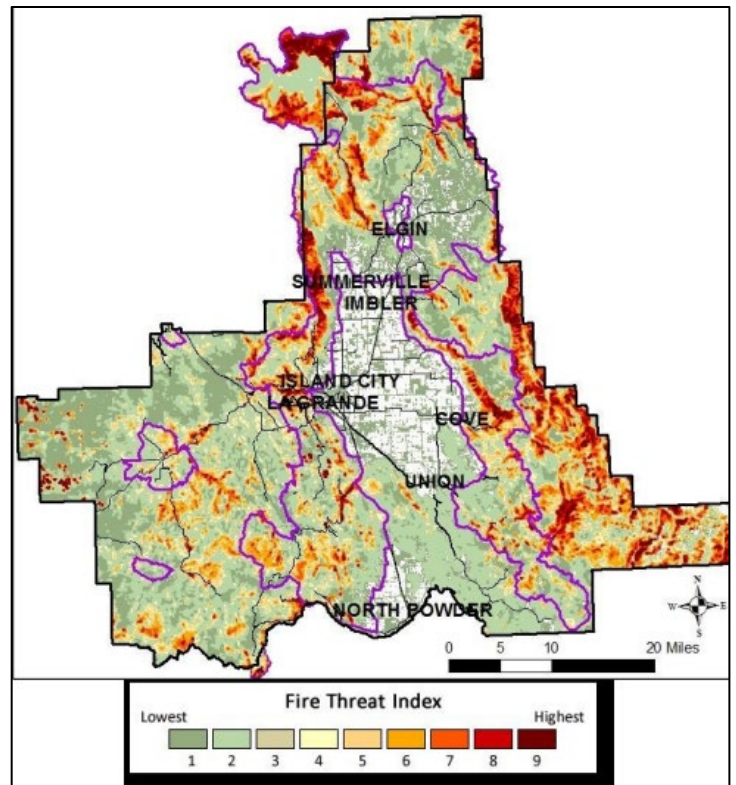


Figure 4 - Overall Wildfire Risk by watershed as shown in the Union County Community Wildfire Protection Plan

---

## VIII. Communication Strategies

### A. Current Communication and Information Sources

It is critical to ensure that the most smoke-vulnerable individuals in the community are included in the development of communication materials and outreach plans. To do this, staff from the Center for Human Development (CHD) consulted with organizations serving vulnerable populations, as well as individuals that are smoke-vulnerable, to get feedback on draft messaging and identify communication strategies that would reach those most likely to experience health impacts from smoke.

A survey was distributed to the community, and discussions of these surveys were held with key medical professionals.

Key findings from the survey were:

- Almost half of the respondents live outside of La Grande City Limits
- Over 80% of the respondents had knowledge of air quality measurements, and they knew what AQI was.
- Almost 3 out of 4 respondents were at least moderately concerned about smoke and impacts to health
- Over 66% of respondents were interested in ways to disseminate information in this community and that text alerts were highly valued.
- 30% did not know what the Union County emergency notifications system was, but of the 70% that did – 90 % would like to opt-in for smoke information.

These findings were incorporated into the plan and ongoing feedback will be incorporated to evaluate and improve the efficiency of the CRP communications strategy.

Current information systems for prescribed burning include information provided by the Blue Mountain Interagency Dispatch Center (BMIDC) in La Grande. As well as providing current information on the BMIDC Home Page – [www.BMIDC.org](http://www.BMIDC.org) and a [Prescribed Fire Page](#) about on-going prescribed burning, BMIDC also hosts or links to the following sources of information:

#### [Blue Mountain Fire Information Blog](#)

Information regarding current wildfire activity in the Blue Mountain area of Northeast Oregon and Southeast Washington and Oregon Department of Forestry, Umatilla National Forest, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

#### [Blue Mountain Prescribed Fire Council](#)

Information regarding prescribed burning activity in the Blue Mountain. ,This is hosted by ODF, Umatilla National Forest, and the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

#### [Blue Mountain Interactive Prescribed Fire Projects Map](#)

This interactive map shows active, planned and recently completed prescribed fire units for the Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests.

[Nixel / Everbridge](#) Union County Emergency Services hosts a text / email notification system that is used to provide reverse 911, and it is also used to provide information about wildfires and other developing emergencies, and has the capacity to provide alerts about Prescribed Fire activity and smoke conditions. Union County also provides information about their Agricultural Smoke Management Plan on their web site, and the Union County Emergency Services office has a Facebook page that has capacity to alert the public of developing incidents.

The [Wallowa-Whitman National Forest](#) and the [Umatilla National Forest](#) proximate to the La Grande SSRA provide information about Prescribed Fire burning on both their web pages and their Facebook pages, and the Oregon Department of Forestry also has a Facebook page that has the capacity to share information about wildfires and Prescribed burning. The Blue Mt Interagency Dispatch Center currently utilizes the Union County Everbridge system to provide fire activity updates to fire managers.

[Elkhorn Media Group](#) hosts a very active Facebook page that provides news and current information to communities in Eastern Oregon. There are 57,000 followers to this page, and they have provided information in the past about emerging wildfires and prescribed burning. They also host radio stations, and on request have provided public service announcements regarding planned prescribed burns. Our local land management agencies also provide Elkhorn Media with press releases regarding prescribed burning.

## B. Plan for Coordination and Collaboration

The **Union County Community Response Plan Committee (CRPC)** partners identified in this plan have been working together on the development and implementation options for the proposed communication strategy. This committee has included representation from the Center for Human Development, Union County Public Health (CHD), Grande Ronde Hospital, Union County, ODF, BMIDC, and the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. This committee has also presented to and solicited participation from the N Blues Restoration Partnership Communications Team, the N Blues Cohesive Strategy Partnership, OSU Extension Service, and the local Firewise Communities coordinator.

## C. Notifications of Anticipated Smoke Impacts

Communication protocols would be standardized across all principal partners. This would be implemented through the CRP Committee and other partners and communities. The recommended actions are to develop information available via internet and Facebook, and to develop and adapt existing notification systems to provide information about smoke and prescribed fire through the Everbridge / Nixle notification system that the county currently has in place. Action Items include: incorporating existing smoke monitoring stations to help provide automated warning of developing smoke conditions, establishing new smoke monitoring stations, and use of new and existing web cameras to visually monitor smoke conditions. This will also include sharing information about information available on-line such as [AirNow.gov](#) and the [OregonAir](#) app available for smart devices.

Processes for automated notification of predefined air quality metrics are being developed between the Oregon DEQ and Union County. This process will be further refined to be incorporated into the Nixle opt-in notification system.

## D. Proposed Communication Strategy

Many of these individual entities currently have established independent communications platforms and strategies. The emphasis of the CRP development has been coordinating them all to interface with one another as to provide uniformity and compatibility when needed, and to develop a comprehensive system that would provide information across the footprint of the Northern Blues that includes Union County. This footprint also includes the Enterprise SSRA and the Baker City SSRA, and there is an opportunity to incorporate these SSRA's into a larger, comprehensive communication plan.

This has been presented to the Northern Blues Prescribed Fire Council, and they have identified it as a top priority project and priority for exploring funding opportunities including grant applications.

## E. Public Communication and Education

The NBPFC has prioritized developing a public communication and education strategy for communications between the entities that conduct prescribed fire, the local public health authority, and the community's public and vulnerable populations who may be impacted by smoke

In partnership with the NBRP Communications Team, and the NPCSP, they are pursuing opportunities to develop similar information programs. Requests from local website design providers for estimates to establish a comparable system have been approximately \$24,000 to start a comparable system. Union County would be an active participant and recipient of this communications system.

The NBPFC is proposing to go in with the other two SSRA's in Northeast Oregon – Enterprise SSRA and Baker County SSRA, as well as members of the All-Lands Partnership to contribute funding to the development of this information system. Additional funding opportunities could be provided by grant opportunities supporting landscape level restoration utilizing prescribed fire.

Union County has explored opportunities to provide to develop a Prescribed Fire burning notification system and to provide up to date information on prescribed burning and smoke and health safety information into the Everbridge / Nixle Notification Systems. BMICD does currently have access to the County Everbridge system to provide information about emerging wildfire incidents.

---

## IX. Conclusion

An opportunity provided by Union County CRP is to request an exemption to the one-hour smoke level as defined above, and to have a response plan in place in the event that air quality was to reach an unhealthy level as defined over a 24-hour period. This could allow more opportunities for burning to achieve landscape resiliency goals, which could in return result in more area being treated. This could also reduce pressure to burn during marginal dispersal conditions.

This information has been formally presented to the La Grande City Council and the Union County Commissioner Council, and members of the public in Union County for consideration and review. Further discussions are planned with the Northern Blues Prescribed Fire Council.

This also puts a plan in place to respond in the event that smoke from prescribed burning or from wildfire smoke that exceeds levels that are considered unhealthy. Included in this document are action plans on accomplishing these goals.

The goal of this Union County Community Response Plan is to protect communities from smoke produced by wildfire and prescribed fires, while providing for opportunities to increase landscape resilience which in turn reduces risk to people, communities, infrastructure, local economies, and the risk to first responders.

---

## Appendix A – Community Response Plan Action Items

<b>Action Items – Year Round</b>			
These educational activities can be conducted at any time during the year and are targeted to all residents of Union County. Many of these activities are already occurring as independent actions. The responsible party is identified with examples of partners that currently participate in landowner and contractor outreach.			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Target Audience</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Host a radio public service announcement about the upcoming burning season, prior to the start of season, which is determined by the local ODF and US Forest Service. These announcements can be utilized to inform the public about the upcoming season, landowners and contractors about any requirements involved with burning, and precautions to the vulnerable population.	NBPFC; USFS	Residents of Union County	Approx May 1; Sept 25
Submit press release to local media outlets (La Grande Observer, Elkhorn Media Group, KCMB; KVBL; KWRL; KHKF) in partnership with the NB Prescribed Fire Council, ODF, USFS, and health care providers about prescribed fire. Including where to find information about prescribed burns in the area and what to do if there is a smoke intrusion.	NBPFC UCSAC; USFS	Residents of Union County	Approx May 1; Sept 25
Develop messaging for electronic billboard in La Grande on Island Ave / Adams (Meadow Outdoors). Two messages will be prepared – one for preceding RF burn seasons and one for heavy wildfire smoke events. These both will share a link to the NEO Prescribed Fire Council information website	NBPFC, CHD, Grande Ronde Hospital	Residents of La Grande	Fall 2023
Educate contractors and landowners on the pros and cons of burning (broadcast and pile) and non-burning alternatives (mastication, lop and scatter, biofuels).	NBPFC, NBRP; OSU Extension	Northeast Oregon	On-going
Inform contractors on rules and regulations, how to identify good burn days, and where to obtain air quality data. Add a link to this document.	USU Extension	Northeast Oregon	
Communicate where controlled burn information will be made available to the public.	NBPFC BMIDC	Northeast Oregon	
Educate the public on the importance of utilizing prescribed burns. This is another opportunity for a field trip, workshop, or online webinar and could be in collaboration with many of the partner entities that host similar events.	NBRP, TNC; OSU Extension	Northeast Oregon	

## Appendix A – Community Response Plan Action Items

Action Items – Burn Season			
<p>There are different levels of regulations on controlled burns within Union County. For the private sector burn season is year-round, but during declared fire season (June to mid-October) burn permits for debris burning on private residents inside of La Grande Fire Protection Boundary and LaGrande Rural FPD Boundaries are required and obtained from Union County.</p> <p>Debris burning on ODF Protected lands require Burn Permits from ODF. Agricultural burning requires a permit from Union County. On federal lands, burn plan have a specific prescription based on weather, fuel moistures, and fire behavior, and regulated under advisory for Oregon DEQ. These burns can be conducted anytime the prescription is met, but in most circumstances the conditions align during limited times in the fall and spring months. No controlled burning is allowed when a burn ban is in effect.</p>			
Activity	Responsible Party	Target Audience	Time line
Daily update on planned burning activities on social media	BMIDC		
Direct contact of media / neighboring agencies and entities	BMIDC; NBPFC Union Co		
If significant smoke event – direct contact to media source for immediate messaging on radio and social media.	Union Co		
Continue Burn Permit Systems, and explore options to automate messaging systems and to combine programs and reduce redundancy	ODF; Union Co LaGrande RFPF City of La Grande		

Action Items – Public Notification Systems			
<p>Union County currently utilizes Nixle to contact residents in event of an emergency event such as wildfire, flooding, other natural disasters, toxic substance and other emergencies. The County also has a voluntary Opt-In system for residents to receive more targeted – non emergency information. Blue Mt Interagency Dispatch Center posts information about prescribed burning and wildfires. BMIDC also faxes burn information daily to several different entities including media sources.</p>			
Activity	Responsible Party	Target Audience	Timeline
Research and decide what levels of notifications are needed and who is able and responsible to send them	Union Co La Grande BMPFC	All interested residents	
Advertise & recruit the vulnerable population and public to sign up for new notification system		Vulnerable Populations	
Develop agreements between ODF, BMIDC and Union CO to fund personnel to keep messaging current and to push it out as needed.			
Define and refine the algorithms to be used to define notifications, establish decision treed	Union Co,		
Continue to maintain existing air quality monitoring sites and establishing new ones	City of La Grande		
Link Oregon DEQ monitors to automated messaging system. Establish parameters for automated notifications.	Ore DEQ; Union Co City of LaGrande		

## Appendix A – Community Response Plan Action Items

Action Items – Social Media outlets			
There are currently several independent sources of information about prescribed burning, wildfires, smoke and air quality. Developing a consolidated website that provides this information and links to these other sources of information has been identified as a priority by the CPR committee and the NE Ore Prescribed Fire Council.			
Activity	Responsible Party	Target Audience	Timeline
Develop a Request For Proposal for web page design and put it out to contractors	Union Co BMPFC	All interested residents	
Pursue avenues of funding for web page development	BMPFC	Vulnerable Populations	
Develop agreements between ODF, BMIDC and Union CO to fund personnel or contractor to keep web site information and links current.			
Work with agencies with existing social media sites to update them and to link to the main site.			

Future Opportunities			
In addition to the action items already identified, Several ideas were discussed by the CPR committee and the NE Ore Prescribed Fire Council on ways to further protect the general public and vulnerable populations. Here are some of those recommendations.			
Activity	Responsible Party	Target Audience	Timeline
Air Purifier Distribution Grant Programs – determine available grants, eligible applicants, and assist with the grants	CHD	Vulnerable Populations	
Establish and Maintain an annual calendar of events including webinars, community events, national days of note	BMPFC	Vulnerable Populations	
Develop agreements between ODF, BMIDC and Union CO to fund personnel or contractor to keep web site information and links current.	BMPFC; BMIDC; Union Co		
Work with agencies with existing social media sites to update them and to link to the main site.			
Develop Agreements / MOU with entities and agencies that have potential clean air space shelter facilities. See Appendix			

## APPENDIX B. Public Messaging Framework

---

The Northern Blues Restoration Partnership has developed a draft communications framework to share information in a consistent messaging including information about the benefits and impacts of prescribed burning, and a design of how to reach out to the public in a consistent manner. This communication plan is available to all members of the partnership, which includes the NB Cohesive Strategy Partnership and the NB Prescribed Fire Council.

Excerpts from this communication plan are provided in this appendix. (this is not hosted on a publicly available source)

### Excerpt #1:

#### **COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK GOALS/PURPOSE:**

This document is designed to provide

- a shared strategy for communications and outreach
- an articulation of a common set of messages

### Excerpt #2

#### **Impacts of smoke and “what good smoke” is:**

- Wildfires can release millions of metric tons of carbon dioxide, black carbon, brown carbon, ozone, and toxic compounds into the atmosphere. These emissions affect the regional and global climate, pollute water and soil, and can endanger the health of our communities. See <https://nyti.ms/3hXnVPp>
- Prescribed burns are carefully planned and include objectives to burn at lower intensity under favorable weather conditions.
- Thus, prescribed fire smoke usually has less impact on air quality (and the impacts are shorter lived) than does wildfire smoke.
- Wildfire smoke, on the other hand, may last for days or weeks at much higher concentrations and with more severe air quality impacts for people.
- Prescribed fires typically expose people to fewer negative health effects than large wildfires.
- All prescribed burns on federal, industrial, and private forestland must comply with the Washington and Oregon Smoke Management Plans, depending on which state the prescribed fire is lit in. These plans incorporate weather forecasting and a wide range of best practices for prescribed fire use intended to minimize smoke impacts to communities and people.

### Excerpt #3

#### **Communication goals include:**

1. Provide timely and cohesive information to the general public (landowners, partners, forest workers) highlighting each partner’s work and how it contributes to the collective impact of the Northern Blues All Lands Partnership.
2. Increase internal coordination regarding each entity’s work moving forward to avoid redundancy and/or contradictory messaging and for partnership opportunities.
3. Provide consistent messaging and tools to ensure responsiveness to questions our members (e.g. landowners, agencies, industry, conservation groups etc.) are facing. Outreach to the general public (community members, conservation interests, landowners, forest workers etc.) with inspiring stories.
4. Amplify messaging about opportunities for financial, technical & educational services for private landowners who might be interested in participating (e.g. see prescribed burn in process).
5. Identify existing resources/tools for communication within partnership & seek opportunities to explore new communication tools.

## APPENDIX B. Public Messaging Framework

---

### Excerpt #4:

#### Opportunities and Gaps in Communication Tools to provide information supporting landscape restoration.

- Continue to support the RX Council and BMIDC Fire Blogs – look for opportunities to update
- Opinion pieces in local papers
- Collectively provide content through partner’s existing blogs/website
- Podcast/radio/audio content (could be incorporated into Story Map; landowner testimonial)
- Video content (e.g. what is forest restoration? Fire risk? Landowner testimonial? To address key questions that could be incorporated into the Story Map)
- Instagram
- Infographics
- Photo content
- Events: pub talks, films, panels, etc?
- Media / stakeholder day field trip - visit to see sites and success in person?
- 1 pager/Brochure that explains the All Lands Partnership and our work (could easily be informed by the video)
- Short videos explaining different aspects of the work (e.g. why is this smoke in the air? “Terminology of the day”); low production pieces
  - Example: <http://deschutescollaborativeforest.org/>
- Partnership website where the Story Map could live? Event calendar? Blog posts? Links to resources/other partner websites? Helpful for partners/general public to orient themselves; separate platform not linked to any one agency/organization. Ensure we have someone who can maintain/process for maintaining.

# APPENDIX C. La Grande City Smoke Advisory Scripts

## City of La Grande Smoke Notification / Wood Stove and Burning Regulations Phone Messages

Air Quality Rating	Air Quality Index (AQI)	
GOOD	0-50	<b>GREEN/GOOD:</b> wood burning allowed in stoves and fireplaces. Outside burns allowed during October, November, April and May. Please build small, hot fires; do not damper down your stove, and burn dry, well-seasoned wood.
MODERATE	51-100	<b>YELLOW/MODERATE:</b> air pollution levels are expected to approach the health standards. No outside burning is allowed for the next 24 hours. Residents are asked to stop burning between the hours of 5 pm and 6 am, except those with DEQ or EPA-certified stoves, wood pellet stoves, and those using wood as a sole source of heat. Those continuing to burn are asked to build small, hot fires. Please do not damper down your stove, and burn dry, well-seasoned wood.
UNHEALTHY for Sensitive Groups (UFGS)	101-150	
UNHEALTHY	151-200	<b>RED/ UNHEALTHY:</b> air pollution levels are expected to exceed the health standards. No outside burning is allowed for the next 24 hours. All residents are asked to stop burning between the hours of 5 pm and 6 am, except those using wood as a sole source of heat and those using wood pellet stoves. Those continuing to burn are asked to build small, hot fires. Please do not damper down your stove, and burn dry, well-seasoned wood.
VERY UNHEALTHY	201-300	
HAZARDOUS	>300	

### Algorithm for determining smoke day call

Data Used: Ash St Nephelometer; La Grande Airport; Oregon DEQ Daily Smoke Management Forecast

1	If Barometric Pressure average is predicted to be less than 25.5 in mercury then <b>Green</b> - Stop else continue to 2
2	If Temperature averages predicted greater than 4.8 C or 40.6 F then <b>Green</b> - Stop else continue to 3
3	If wind speed average is predicted 6.3 mph or greater than <b>green</b> - Stop else continue to 4
4	If inversion is over 2000 feet then <b>green</b> - Stop else continue to 5
5	Run Predicted PM2.5 algorithm - look at predicted PM2.5 and continue - thresholds 13 and 30 µg/m3. Call <b>green</b> or <b>yellow</b> if model identifies that color look at remaining values - stop else continue to 6
6	If wind speed average is predicted 3.1 mph or greater than <b>yellow</b> - stop else continue to 7
7	If continue to this point says red, and doesn't fall below WS values = Red - then <b>Red</b> ,

### Parameters to determine color for algorithm

Day 1	Decision Tree
1	BP =IF(H12<25.5,"Green","Next")
2	Temp F =IF(H13>40.6,"Green","Next")
3	Wind S =IF(H14>6.3,"Green","Next")
4	Inversion =IF(Summary!B10>2000,"Green","Next")
5	Pred PM2.5 =IF(H16<13,"green",(IF(H16<30,"yellow","red")))
6	Wind S =IF(H17>3.1,"Yellow","Red")

## APPENDIX C. La Grande City Smoke Advisory Scripts

---

Messaging:

### City of La Grande Phone system AIR QUALITY ADVISORY SCRIPTS

#### GOOD

Good Morning! This is the 8:15 am La Grande Wood Burning Advisory. Today's Forecast Advisory is GOOD, allowing for wood burning in stoves and fireplaces. Please build small, hot fires; do not damper down your stove, and burn dry, well seasoned wood. Yard waste may be taken to the Materials Recovery Facility located at 3412 Highway 30.

If you would like additional information please call the La Grande Air Quality Committee at 962-1325. Office hours are 8 am to 12 noon and 1 pm to 5 pm Monday thru Friday.

Thank you for using the La Grande Air Quality advisory. The next advisory will be issued at 8:15 am tomorrow morning.

#### MODERATE

Good Morning! This is the 8:15 am La Grande Wood Burning Advisory. Today's Forecast Advisory is MODERATE, with air pollution levels expected to approach the health standards. No outside burning is allowed for the next 24 hours. All residents are asked to stop burning between the hours of 5 pm and 6 am, except those with DEQ or EPA certified stoves, wood pellet stoves and those using wood as a sole source of heat. Those continuing to burn are asked to build small, hot fires. Please do not damper down your stove, and burn dry, well seasoned wood. Yard waste may be taken to the Materials Recovery Facility located at 3412 Highway 30. If you would like additional information please call the La Grande Air Quality Committee at 962-1325. Office hours are 8 am to 12 noon and 1 pm to 5 pm Monday thru Friday. Thank you for using the La Grande Air Quality advisory. The next advisory will be issued at 8:15 am tomorrow morning.

#### UNHEALTHY

Good Morning! This is the 8:15 am La Grande Wood Burning Advisory. Today's Forecast Advisory is UNHEALTHY, with air pollution levels expected to exceed the health standards. No outside burning is allowed for the next 24 hours. All residents are asked to stop burning between the hours of 5 pm and 6 am, except those using wood as a sole source of heat and those using wood pellet stoves. Those continuing to burn are asked to build small, hot fires. Please do not damper down your stove, and burn dry, well seasoned wood. Yard waste may be taken to the Materials Recovery Facility located at 3412 Highway 30. If you would like additional information please call the La Grande Air Quality Committee at 962-1325. Office hours are 8 am to 12 noon and 1 pm to 5 pm Monday thru Friday. Thank you for using the La Grande Air Quality advisory. The next advisory will be issued at 8:15 am tomorrow morning.

#### IT'S BROKE

Good morning! You have reached the La Grande Air Quality Advisory line. Due to an equipment breakdown, no current air quality advisory is available. Repairs are scheduled, and we will resume issuing advisories again as soon as possible. In the meantime, please continue to build small, hot fires, using dry, well seasoned wood and do not damper down you stoves. Yard waste may be taken to the Materials Recovery Facility located at 3412 Highway 30. If you would like additional information please call the La Grande Air Quality Committee at 962-1325. Office hours are 8 am to 12 noon and 1 pm to 5 pm Monday thru Friday. Thank you for calling the La Grande Advisory line.

#### SUMMER

Good Morning. You have reached the La Grande Air Quality Advisory line. Wood Stove burning advisories are issued daily from October 1st through March 31st of each year. In the City of La Grande, open burning is allowed only during the months of April & May, and October & November. Burning in a burn barrel is not allowed at any time. Before open burning you must get a permit from the La Grande Fire Department located at 1806 Cove Ave. You must also check the Union County Smoke Management Burn call for the morning or afternoon by calling 963-4040. Outside the La Grande city limits, Union County Ordinances prohibit open burning during the annual fire season, which runs from July 1st through September 30th of each year. Incinerators and burn barrels may be used for burning trash between the hours of 6 am and 10 am; burning at any other time is prohibited. Agricultural field burning and the use of charcoal barbecues at residences are not affected by this regulation. If you would like additional information please call Union County Smoke Management at 963-4040.

## APPENDIX D. Union County Smoke Advisory Scripts

---

### Union County Smoke Advisory Script

Union County has an automated phone line system to advise residents if they are allowed to burn on a given day. This automated system is achieved through a series of scripts that determine which recorded message is available on a given day.

The script queries the Department of Environmental quality webpage for Oregon to determine if the air quality index is low enough to constitute a burn day, and if it is, the script queries the NOAA website for the average wind speed expected for the current date in the Grand Ronde Valley in both the morning and the afternoon, and the mixing height in the valley for the morning and the afternoon, then writes a pair of booleans to an htm: one for whether or not a farmer in the Grand Ronde Valley can burn in the morning, and one for the afternoon.

It then programs which of the following messages are played on the Union County Burn Information Phone line:

**Message 0** : No Data Available

**Message 1** (October 1 –June 30 Primary): “You have reached the Union County Smoke Management Center. If you have an emergency, please hang up and dial 9-1-1. For weather and burn permit information, please dial 2 (this action takes the user to the secondary message). For field burning information please dial 3 (this action forwards the user to the Imbler Fire Department). If you would like information regarding wood stove burning, dial 4 (Forwards to 962-1325, the LG Air Quality Line). For information regarding slash pile burning, dial 5 (Blue Mountain inter-agency dispatch). If you have a concern or complaint regarding smoke, please press 1 (This option is last because it reduces complaints). To hear this menu again, dial star.”

**Message 2** (July 1-September 30 Primary): “You have reached the Union County Smoke Management Center. If you have an emergency, please hang up and dial 9-1-1. There is a ban on open burning, except regulated field burning, from July 1 through September 30. For field burning program information from July 15<sup>th</sup> through September 30<sup>th</sup>, please dial 3 (Still sends them to the Imbler FD). If you would like information regarding wood stove burning, dial 4. For information regarding slash pile burning, dial 5. If you have a concern or complaint regarding smoke, please press 1 (Because it’s Summer, this reroutes to the same place as option 3). To hear this menu again, dial star.”

**Message 3** (December 1-February 28 Secondary): “There are no general burning restrictions in effect during the months of December, January, or February. To obtain a burning permit, for Cove, dial 1. For Elgin, dial 2, for Imbler, dial 3, for the La Grande Rural Area and Island City, dial 5, for North Powder, dial 6, and for Union, please dial 7. Within the city limits of La Grande, please go to the Fire Department at 1806 Cove Avenue. To hear this message again, dial star.”

**Message 4** (March 1-June 30 or October 1 to November 30 Secondary): “This message was recorded at (TIME). Today’s burning conditions are no burn.”

**Message 5** (March 1-June 30 or October 1 to November 30 Secondary): “This message was recorded at (TIME). Today’s burning conditions dictate that you may not burn in the morning, but you may burn after 12 noon. To obtain a permit to burn, for Cove, dial 1. For Elgin, dial 2. For Imbler, dial 3. For the La Grande Rural Area and Island City, dial 5. For North Powder, dial 6. For Union, dial 7. Within the city limits of La Grande, go to the Fire Department at 1806 Cove Avenue. To hear this message again, dial star.”

## APPENDIX D. Union County Smoke Advisory Scripts

---

**Message 6 (March 1-June 30 or October 1 to November 30 Secondary):** “This message was recorded at (TIME). Today’s burning conditions dictate that you may burn in the morning, but you may not burn in the afternoon. To obtain a permit to burn, for Cove, dial 1. For Elgin, dial 2. For Imbler, dial 3. For the La Grande Rural Area and Island City, dial 5. For North Powder, dial 6. For Union, dial 7. Within the city limits of La Grande, go to the Fire Department at 1806 Cove Avenue. To hear this message again, dial star.”

**Message 7 (March 1-June 30 or October 1 to November 30 Secondary):** “This message was recorded at (TIME). Today’s burning conditions dictate that it is a burn day. You may burn in the morning, and the afternoon. To obtain a permit to burn, for Cove, dial 1. For Elgin, dial 2. For Imbler, dial 3. For the La Grande Rural Area and Island City, dial 5. For North Powder, dial 6. For Union, dial 7. Within the city limits of La Grande, go to the Fire Department at 1806 Cove Avenue. To hear this message again, dial star.”

**Message 8 (March 1-June 30 or October 1 to November 30 Secondary):** “This message was recorded at (TIME). Today’s burning conditions dictate that you may not burn in the morning, but you may after 12 noon. It is currently the Oregon Department of Forestry burn season. If your property is protected by the Oregon Department of Forestry, you will need to obtain a written permit from them prior to burning. To obtain a permit to burn, for Cove, dial 1. For Elgin, dial 2. For Imbler, dial 3. For the La Grande Rural Area and Island City, dial 5. For North Powder, dial 6. For Union, dial 7. Within the city limits of La Grande, go to the Fire Department at 1806 Cove Avenue. To hear this message again, dial star.”

**Message 9 (March 1-June 30 or October 1 to November 30 Secondary):** “This message was recorded at (TIME). Today’s burning conditions dictate that you may burn in the morning, but you may not burn in the afternoon. It is currently the ODF burn season. If your property is protected by the Oregon Department of Forestry, you will need to obtain a written permit from them prior to burning. To obtain a permit to burn, for Cove, dial 1. For Elgin, dial 2. For Imbler, dial 3. For the La Grande Rural Area and Island City, dial 5. For North Powder, dial 6. For Union, dial 7. Within the city limits of La Grande, go to the Fire Department at 1806 Cove Avenue. To hear this message again, dial star.”

**Message 10 (March 1-June 30 or October 1 to November 30 Secondary):** “This message was recorded at (TIME). Today’s burning conditions dictate that it is a burn day. You may burn in the morning, or the afternoon. It is currently the Oregon Department of Forestry burn season. If your property is protected by the Oregon Department of Forestry, you will need to obtain a written permit from them prior to burning. To obtain a permit to burn, for Cove, dial 1. For Elgin, dial 2. For Imbler, dial 3. For the La Grande Rural Area/Island City, dial 5. For North Powder, dial 6. For Union, dial 7. Within the city limits of La Grande, go to the Fire Department at 1806 Cove Avenue. To hear this message again, dial star.”

## APPENDIX E. Example Nixle Smoke Advisory Scripts

---

Lake County Fire Safe Council

Fire Safe Lake - LakeCoAlerts

<https://firesafelake.org/alerts-warnings/>

The following are scripts from the Lake County, Oregon Nixle Notification system. This alert system is an opt-in notification system available to residents of Lake County, Oregon. These are the email notifications. Shorter, more condensed messages have also been created for sending via text only.

### Wintertime Advisory/Woodsmoke:

A {Yellow/Red Wood Burning Advisory} wood burning advisory is in effect for {Date/Date Range Smoke Advisory Is In Effect}.

#### A Yellow Advisory Means:

Air quality is deteriorating which can create health issues for you, your family, and your neighbors. While it is still legal to use your woodstove or fireplace, we strongly encourage people to use other forms of heat like electric, propane, or natural gas. Opacity standards for wood burning still apply. Visit

{Resource for More Info}

to learn more about ways that smoke can impact your health.

#### A Red Advisory Means:

Smoke from wood burning is banned. Air quality is poor and may cause major adverse health effects. Visit

{Resource for More Info}

to learn more about ways that smoke can impact your health.

### Prescribed Burn:

{Agency}: Prescribed fire occurring in{Area Under Advisory}may produce excessive smoke. Efforts have been made to reduce smoke impacts to populated areas, however, weather conditions may change rapidly causing smoke to enter your area. Learn more about smoke impacts at{Resource for More Info} and be prepared to take measures to protect your health. Visit [Oregon.gov/OHA](http://Oregon.gov/OHA) to learn more about ways to protect your health.

### Wildfire Smoke:

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Lane Regional Air Protection Agency/Washington Southwest Clean Air Agency issued an air quality advisory {Smoke advisory issuance date} for {Area Under Advisory} due to smoke from {Fire name and/or area resulting in smoke advisory}. DEQ expects the air quality advisory to last until at least {Smoke Advisory Date- "Air Quality Advisory to will last until at least" [date]}

## APPENDIX E. Example Nixle Smoke Advisory Scripts

---

DEQ and partner agencies will continue to monitor smoke in the area. Smoke levels can change rapidly depending on weather. Check current conditions on the Oregon Smoke Information Blog, DEQ's Air Quality Index, or by downloading the free OregonAIR app on your smartphone.

Smoke can irritate the eyes and lungs and worsen some medical conditions. People most at risk include infants and young children, people with heart or lung disease, older adults and pregnant women.

Protect yourself and your family when smoke levels are high:

- Stay inside if possible. Keep windows and doors closed. If it's too hot, run air conditioning on recirculate or consider moving to a cooler location.
- Avoid strenuous outdoor activity.
- Use high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters in indoor ventilation systems or portable air purifiers.
- Be aware of smoke in your area and avoid places with the highest levels.
- When air quality improves to moderate or healthy (yellow or green on the Air Quality Index), open windows and doors to air out homes and businesses.
- If you have a breathing plan for a medical condition, be sure to follow it and keep any needed medications refilled. Cloth, dust and surgical masks don't protect from the harmful particles in smoke. N95 or P100 respirators approved by NIOSH may offer protection, but they must be properly selected and worn. Select a NIOSH-approved respirator with a N, R, or P alongside the number 95, 99 or 100. Learn how to put on and use a respirator. Respirators won't work for children as they don't come in children's sizes. People with heart or lung conditions should consult their health care provider before wearing a respirator.

Additional Resources: {Resource for more info}

Find a cleaner air space in your area: Call 211 or visit [211info.org](http://211info.org) and search for "Wildfire Related Clean Air Shelters."

Visit OHA Wildfire FAQs to learn more about protecting your health during wildfires.

# APPENDIX F. Sample Letter to City or County to request exemption

---

Example letter to request one hour exemption:

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS STATE OF OREGON,  
COUNTY OF XXXX

IN THE MATTER OF COORDINATING WITH ) THE CITY OF XXXX REQUEST FOR AN ) EXEMPTION FOR THE ONE-HOUR AVERAGE ) SMOKE INTRUSION THRESHOLD AND ) AUTHORIZING A DECLARATION OF ) COORDINATION WITH THE CITY OF ) XXXX	ORDER NO. _____ XXXX _____
--	----------------------------

WHEREAS, Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) 629-048-0180(2) authorizes a community in a smoke sensitive receptor area (SSRA) to develop a community plan and response to smoke incidents and/or intrusions; and

WHEREAS, the City of XXXX, Oregon () is a community in an SSRA and has adopted the XXXX Community Response Plan for Smoke (Plan), a community plan and response to smoke incidents and/or intrusions; and

WHEREAS, OAR 629-048-0180(3) authorizes a community that has adopted a community plan and response to smoke incidents and/or intrusions to request an exemption from the one-hour average smoke intrusion threshold; and

WHEREAS, XXXX desires to request an exemption from the one-hour average smoke intrusion threshold; and

WHEREAS, OAR 629-048-0180(3)(a) requires that the governing body of a community requesting an exemption from the one-hour average smoke intrusion threshold coordinate with their County Board of Commissioners; and

WHEREAS, XXXX notified the XXXX County Board of Commissioners that it desires coordination to request an exemption from the one-hour average smoke intrusion threshold; and

WHEREAS, on DATE, XXXX provided a presentation to the Board about the Plan and the benefits of increased prescribed burning to reduce the risk of severe wildfires by having an exemption from the one-hour average smoke intrusion threshold; and

WHEREAS, on DATE, the Board conducted a Work Session to review the Plan with XXXX and to deliberate on XXXX's desire to coordinate on the request for an exemption from the one-hour average smoke intrusion threshold; and WHEREAS, as part of the Work Session, XXXX described that the topography and weather patterns of the Rogue Valley and the locations of any prescribed burns should not cause any smoke to intrude into the communities of XXXX at any time and should not impact the County's obligation to meet the requirements of the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA); and

WHEREAS, the Board has reviewed the information provided by XXXX and has some comments regarding the Plan as part of XXXX's coordination with the Board on the request for an exemption from the one-hour average smoke intrusion threshold.

Now, therefore,

## APPENDIX F. Sample Letter to City or County to request exemption

---

The Board of County Commissioners of XXXX County ORDERS:

A finding that XXXX coordinated with the Board of County Commissioners for XXXX County in its request for an exemption from the one-hour average smoke intrusion threshold.

1. A finding that the Board of County Commissioners has the following comments and concerns with the Plan:
  - (a) While the Board understands that prescribed burning is, at times, a necessary means of fuels reduction, the amount of prescribed burning which necessitates the request for an exemption from the one-hour average smoke intrusion threshold would be reduced if XXXX were to focus its fuels reduction efforts on mechanical thinning and commercial harvest.
  - (b) While OAR 629-048-0180(3)(d) authorizes up to three smoke intrusions in a five-year period under an exemption from the one-hour average smoke intrusion threshold, the Board recommends that the State of Oregon, Department of Forestry, and the State of Oregon, Department of Environmental Quality, should consider revoking the exemption if, even once, smoke intrudes into the other communities in XXXX and impacts the County's ability to satisfy the requirements of the AQMA.

2. The County Administrator is hereby authorized to execute, amend, and terminate a Declaration of Coordination with the City of XXXX.

DATED this DATE , at County Seat COUNTY BOARD

OF COMMISSIONERS

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_ Commissioner

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_ Commissioner

# APPENDIX G - Example MOU for Clean Air Space Use

---

Emergency Shelter and Operations Center

Memorandum of Understanding

between the

City of [Name] (City) and [Name of partner entity]

## Background

[Context such as funding, need, description of shelter]:

## Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum of understanding (MOU) is to provide the City of [Name] access to the [space(s) such as room name] for an emergency shelter or emergency operations center in the event of an emergency or disaster.

This memorandum of understanding provides a framework for when the [space(s)] can be used for the public. A Red Cross Emergency Shelter will be activated when the City or County must formally declare an emergency. Outside of a declared emergency event, the City may request that the [designated entity official] approve emergency shelter activation or emergency operations center (EOC) for lesser events including: severe smoke events, power outages, significant cold or heat events or any other natural or human caused disaster that is significantly impacting District residents or the City's capability to respond to emergency situations.

The [designated entity official] and [primary city official] serve as the primary points of contact for matters relevant to this MOU.

## The City and [Entity] Agree to Following Terms of Use

1. A facilities use request must be completed by the City and signed by the [entity official] that includes a plan that includes: how the space will be used, who may use the site, how security will be managed, who will be provided keys, any specific equipment and technology requests.
2. Site monitoring, supervision and oversight of public spaces will be provided by the City or its designee.
  - a. Background checks are necessary for all volunteers unless coordinated through [Community] Police Department or otherwise approved by the [entity official].
3. A check in/ check out and badging system will be used to identify all staff, volunteers and the public.
4. Prior to opening to the public, the City and [entity] will agree upon emergency shelter rules that will be clearly posted and adhered to by all users.
5. Parking will be provided on site if the emergency use does not conflict with [operations (e.g., "school hours" if at a school)]. If [operational constraints], on site handicap access will be provided and any other parking availability will be at the discretion of the superintendent.
6. The City and [entity] will work together to track expenses associated with an emergency response in order to seek any available reimbursement under the Stafford Act or other authorities.

## APPENDIX G - Example MOU for Clean Air Space Use

---

7. To the extent that immunity does not apply, each party shall bear the risk of its own actions, as it does with day to day operations and determine for itself what kinds of insurance and in what amounts it should carry.
8. This MOU becomes effective on the date of execution and shall remain in effect unless terminated by written notification by either jurisdiction to the other.
9. This MOU may be amended by written mutual agreement.

---

City of [Name]

---

Date

---

[Partner Entity]

---

Date

## APPENDIX G - Example MOU for Clean Air Space Use

---

### ***Reference Documents for Activating a Shelter***

1. FEMA/ Red Cross [Shelter Field Guide](#)
  - a. Emergency Shelter Rules (page 11)
  - b. Sample organization chart (page 16)
  - c. Registration (page 27)
2. Oregon Health Authority guidance for Cleaner Air spaces for protection from wildfire smoke  
<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/PREPAREDNESS/PREPARE/Documents/IdentificationOfCleanAirShelters.pdf>
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance for Cleaner Air Shelters during Covid <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/cleaner-air-shelters.html>

### ***Resources referenced for this MOU:***

1. FEMA Disaster-Specific Memorandum of Understanding  
[https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-06/Disaster-Specific\\_MOU.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-06/Disaster-Specific_MOU.pdf)
2. Lessons learned from School Crises and Emergencies  
[https://rems.ed.gov/docs/LL\\_Vol3Issue2.pdf](https://rems.ed.gov/docs/LL_Vol3Issue2.pdf)



# Appendix H - La Grande Observer February 4, 2023



## FRESH AIR

### Union County working on providing air quality shelters during times of poor air quality due to smoke

#### BY DICK MASON

The Observer

LA GRANDE — Local libraries are places many people go to check out books filled with breathless tension, like Stephen King’s “The Shining” or “The President Is Missing” by James Patterson and Bill Clinton.

Soon local libraries may also be buildings people visit to catch their breath.

Some local libraries could be among the sites where air quality shelters are established under the guidelines of a draft of a Community Response Plan for smoke generated by prescribed burns and wildfires.

The air quality shelters would be places people could go to breathe better air. Union County Emergency Service Manager Nick Vora said facilities such as community centers and health care buildings also could be air quality shelters.

“They would be at public places already in place that already have operating hours,” Vora said.

The shelters are intended to meet the needs of people who have health conditions that make them sensitive to poor air quality.

“We want to help smoke-sensitive populations,” Vora said.

He said a survey conducted by Union County of people with breathing issues indicated many would welcome air quality shelters.

Carrie Bushman, director of Cook Memorial Library in La Grande, said she would be glad to have the city’s library serve as an air quality shelter.

“We would be on board with it,” she said. “It is a good idea, definitely. We always welcome people at the library.”

She noted that the library has served as a heat shelter of sorts in the summer, providing bottled water and air conditioning. In addition, its community room has been made available during operating hours to escape the heat. Bushman said it would be best if the library could receive air filtration equipment before it served as an air quality shelter. She explained that because the

See **Air** / A3

*“ We always welcome people at the library.”*

— **Carrie Bushman, director of Cook Memorial Library**



The Observer, File

**Cook Memorial Library, La Grande, could be established as an air quality shelter under the guidelines of a Union County Community Response Plan for smoke generated by prescribed burns and wildfires. The Community Response Plan will be completed in the spring of 2023.**

**Air**

**Continued from A1**

library’s ventilation system draws in air from the outside, the air quality in the library is not better than it is in most city buildings during the summer.

Local air quality shelters could be established as early as this summer. Air filtration equipment would likely be added later. This equipment, Vora said, would be purchased with grant funding Union County and the city of La Grande would be eligible to apply for after a Community Response Plan is finalized. Vora said the Community Response Plan is needed in part because Union County has a large number of people who are sensitive to smoke

“Many people in the Grande Ronde Valley need in-home oxygen systems,” he said.

Statistics in a draft of the proposed Community Response Plan from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services emPOWER Program website make this clear. According to the draft, 449 of the 6,555 people in Union County who are Medicare beneficiaries have health conditions that put them at risk and make them dependent on electrical equipment to help with breathing. La Grande, for example, has 3,846 people who are on Medicare, 260 of whom depend on electrical equipment.

“A high percentage of the equipment is oxygen related,” Vora said.

The Oregon Health Authority, according to the draft plan, estimates that 3,570 adults in Union County have asthma, 2,013 have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and 1,127 have had heart attacks.

The draft plan also contains a Community Health Needs Assessment prepared by Grande Ronde Hospital. The assessment compares mortality rates within Union County to those throughout Oregon. The assessment, according to the plan, indicates that death rates for heart disease and chronic lower respiratory disease are higher than average in Union County communities than in the state of Oregon.

The Community Response Plan will be completed in about two months, Vora said. Union County is developing the plan with help from La Grande’s public works department, the U.S. Forest Service and the Center for Development.

The plan, in addition to establishing air quality shelters, identifies the Grande Ronde Valley population vulnerable to poor air quality and would establish a structure for public air quality notifications when air quality is low. The notifications would provide information, such as available air shelters.

Should the plan become official, it will provide the community with greater flexibility when regulating prescribed burning and other necessary smoke-generating activities, according to the draft plan. One reason is that it would make it possible for Union County to apply for waivers that would allow for more local controlled burning.

Additional controlled burning would ultimately improve air quality in the Grande Ronde Valley because controlled burning reduces the buildup of forest fuels that feed wildfires, said Union County Commissioner Paul Anderes.

The commissioner also said prescribed burns produce significantly less smoke than wildfires.

**[AIR from page A1 to A3](#)**



The reason is wildfires burn when conditions are hotter and drier than when prescribed burns are planned. This means forest fuels are more completely consumed, which produces more emissions.

*“Many people in the Grande Ronde Valley need in-home oxygen systems.”*

— **Nick Vora, Union County emergency manager**

**Nick Vora, right, and Carrie Brogoitti talk at a Cascadia earthquake response exercise on Monday, June 27, 2022, at Union County’s law enforcement building in La Grande. Vora is the emergency manager for Union County and Brogoitti is the public health administrator for the Center for Human Development. Vora is helping develop a Community Response Plan that would assist people with health issues when air quality is poor due to smoke.**

Dick Mason/The Observer, File



Smoke from Western Oregon wildfires erases the view of Mount Emily on Monday, Sept. 14, 2020, in La Grande. Union County in 2023 is working on providing air quality shelters during times of poor air quality due to smoke.