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Deception Creek wildfires producing smoke into Lane County

OAKRIDGE, OR - Smoke levels have elevated air quality warnings to the moderate range for several days now in the Oakridge area. Wildfires in the Deception Creek Complex about 2 miles west of Oakridge, have grown to a total of 851 acres. Changing winds may stir the smoke into the Cottage Grove and Creswell areas and other parts of Lane County.

The Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA) is closely monitoring the ground-level air quality in Lane County. LRAPA will notify the public if smoke levels worsen. "We would like to warn all residents in Lane County to be aware of smoke levels in their area," said Jo Niehaus, a spokesperson for LRAPA. "Seniors, children, and people who have heart or lung diseases are at greater risk to be affected by smoke. If you feel any health impacts that are smoke related, please consult with your doctors."

Wildfire smoke contains Particulate Matter (PM) pollutants that contain gases and fine particles from burning plant material. Right now, the wildfire smoke levels are at the yellow color on the air quality index, where it reads at the "moderate" level. At this level, air quality is considered acceptable. However, it can be a health concern for a small percentage of the population who are unusually sensitive to air pollution. If smoke levels worsen and increase to the "Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (USG)" level, the air quality index will appear orange. The general public is not likely to be affected but members of sensitive groups may experience health effects.

LRAPA will monitor the smoke situation and provide updates as needed. The public can track hourly particulate levels by logging onto the LRAPA website at www.LRAPA.org or on twitter @LaneRegionalAir.

For more information, please call Jo Niehaus, LRAPA's public affairs manager at 541-736-1056 ext 217.

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