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Smoke from Central Oregon Wildfires and Intense Heat Will Impact the southern Willamette Valley

Smoke from the Shadow Lake fire near the Mt. Washington Wilderness and other fires is expected to enter the Willamette Valley today. Fire managers at the Willamette National Forest say there is a high probability of fires spreading given weather conditions. High temperatures, low humidities, and east winds will influence the fire behavior. The smoke, combined with forecasted hot temperatures, will make conditions uncomfortable for residents in the southern Willamette Valley. Smoke intrusions are likely for the rest of this week.

“Stifling heat at this time of year is rare. East winds will bring the smoke into the valley, which will make the heat even more unbearable,” says Sally Markos, spokesperson for the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA). Residents are advised to take extreme caution when participating in outdoor activities. Individuals with asthma, respiratory problems, or heart disease are advised to stay indoors if air quality deteriorates. The fine particles in the smoke are especially harmful because they are inhaled deep into the lungs and can enter the bloodstream. Residents experiencing health problems associated with the smoke and heat are encouraged to consult with their doctors.

LRAPA has received a report of high smoke levels this morning in the McKenzie Bridge area. Air quality in Eugene/Springfield is currently in the moderate range. LRAPA will be monitoring conditions throughout the week and will provide updates as warranted. The public can track hourly particulate levels and the Air Quality Index by logging onto the LRAPA website at www.LRAPA.org.

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