

LRAPA Board Report: Oakridge Air Program

October 2022

Coordination, Outreach & Project Management

- **Staffing updates:**
 - New Residential Upgrades Coordinator: In September, Oakridge Air hired Thaddeus Carter as the new RUC. Thaddeus was raised in Oakridge and brings 17 years of experience from the automotive industry to the team.
 - Guen DiGioia, former RUC, will continue to serve as a part time smoke outreach coordinator through the remainder of a grant from Oregon Department of Environmental Quality to do this work.
 - New Oakridge Air Outreach Coordinator: In September, Oakridge Air hired Mariah Hull as the new outreach coordinator. Mariah brings a background in public health education and previously worked at the Oakridge Elementary School. Vanessa Tharp, hired in July as half-time outreach coordinator, will continue to work as a part time outreach coordinator for the Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative.
- **EPA Targeted Airshed Grant program:** EPA has not yet released the Request for Applications for the next round of TAG grants. In the meantime, internal discussions are underway between LRAPA and the Oakridge Air team in preparation for submitting a TAG 3.0 proposal.
- **Cedar Creek wildfire response**
 - **Residential air purifiers:** In response to the wildfire, the Oregon Health Authority offered to supply a large quantity of air purifiers to Oakridge community members on Medicare or Medicaid with a qualifying health concern. *The Oakridge Air team quickly responded to this opportunity and has already distributed over 200 purifiers into the community, with another 170 at the office to be distributed.* Meanwhile, the Oakridge Air team continues to distribute replacement filters to residents who received Winix purifiers from the initial Oakridge Air distribution.
 - The SWS/Oakridge Air team has provided critical support to the Cedar Creek Wildfire response and evacuation efforts including:
 - Standing up Cleaner Air spaces that were also used for evacuation sites
 - Sharing real-time, accurate information on air quality, smoke, fire, evacuation levels, and logistics (Facebook, EZ Text, printed materials, City of Oakridge website, etc.)
 - Coordinating with the Department of Human Services to get the Oakridge School District industrial air scrubbers and smaller purifiers to allow school to remain in session despite poor air quality
 - KEZI story: [Local agencies send air purifiers to Oakridge School District](#)
 - Working with Oregon Health Authority to rapidly distribute air purifiers to 200+ residents Medicaid and Medicare qualifying residents

- See blog post: "[The Impacts of South Willamette Solutions During the Cedar Creek Fire East Wind Event](#)"
- **Airshed Attainment**
 - Register Guard article: "[Oakridge-Westfir's community efforts to reduce wood stove smoke recognized by EPA](#)"

Home Heating Upgrades

- **Program statistics**
 - Qualifications Questionnaires completed– 263
 - Homes in progress– 64
 - Homes with initial audits complete– 45
 - Complete– 8
 - After Action Reviews complete– 8
 - Homes where progress has stopped– 7
 - Homes with stopped progress that received pre-audit– 4
- **Change outs & upgrades completed to date:**
 - Wood stove– 10
 - Wood stove opt outs– 3
 - Electrical Heat– 24
 - Weatherization– 20
- **Chimney sweep vouchers and vendors:** Oakridge Air had a planned event for distribution of chimney sweep vouchers in partnership with the Oakridge Fire Department. That event had to be postponed due to the Cedar Creek Fire, but the chimney sweep voucher program is in the works and will begin shortly.

Community Firewood Program

- **Source stock for 2022-2023:** Inbound is managing the transportation and delivery of two sources of dried firewood that will bring over 100 cords to be processed at the CFP facility at the Oakridge Industrial Park.

Code Enforcement

- In the last quarter, the Oakridge Police Department reported the following activities beyond routine code enforcement:
 - Jul: 1 report of illegal burn, fire extinguished
 - Aug: 2 reports of illegal burns, unfound
 - Sept: Three staff trained/recertified, 1 reports of illegal burn (unfound)
- We are scheduling a meeting for late October/early November to meet with OPD to decide on potential changes to the diversion program and materials.
- The City of Oakridge is kicking off management of the Home Heating Exemption program for the 2022-2023 Wood Home Heating season and OPD will continue verifying sole source wood stoves that apply for exemptions.

Education and Outreach

- **Woodshed program with Oakridge High School CTE:** The Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council is supporting the Oakridge Air team with coordination of the woodshed program. Logistical details are being ironed out in hopes of starting construction with the High School CTE program in November, working on up to 8 woodshed at a time.

- **University of Oregon pilot interview project complete:** The report summarizing the findings from the 22 community leader interviews conducted earlier this year by Grace Kaplowitz and the UO research team is complete, and can be found in the following documents:
 - Fact Sheet: "[Oakridge Air Community Interviews on Air Quality and Smoke](#)"
 - Summary Report: "[Perceptions of Air Quality and Smoke in Oakridge, Oregon](#)"
- **Meetings and Events:**
 - Wildfire Safety Night was a big success. Over 100 community members attended, asked important questions, and shared their experiences. With presentations from Lane County's emergency manager, firefighters, and Sasquatch, we hope this event helped people feel more prepared for the level 3 evacuation that occurred in September.
 - In August, Oakridge Air staff tabled at the annual Keg & Cask festival and the Oakridge School District Resource Fair to answer questions, distribute air filters, and engage with the community.
- **Firewise and Fuels Reductions**
 - Laurel Butte Landscape Resiliency Project Phase II: Roadside Shaded Fuel Breaks Completed. Most of the understory thinning fuels reduction for Laurel Butte is complete.
 - Dunning Road Small Forestlands Grant: These projects will treat dozens of acres in the Dunning Road area, identified as the highest risk area in the Oakridge Firewise Assessment.
 - Oakridge Westfir Area Fire Safe Council: SWFC hosts monthly Fire Safe Council meetings to talk about Firewise planning, work progress, and future projects.
 - Firewise Funding: SWFC was awarded \$75,000 to contract Firewise fuels reduction on private property in the La Duke Road area. The goal is to provide 20 Firewise assessments and treat the highest risks properties.
 - The Yard Debris program continues on the first Saturday of each month at the Oakridge Industrial Park, managed by SWS/Oakridge Air and community volunteers.