Public Health Partnerships during the 2015 Northern U.S. Wildfire Smoke Intrusion

Tanja Fransen, NOAA/NWS Glasgow, MT
AMS Annual Meeting 2015 - Poster 491

Special Thanks go to Andrew Giles, Environment Canada Kelowna, BC and David Bernhardt, NOAA/NWS Great Falls, MT

Partnerships in Place
- Rural area allows for greater interaction
- Public Health and NWS are part of Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPC’s)
- Tribal Health reached out to us
- NWS had the best communication path/tools as the largest audience
- Develop the message and use it throughout the event for consistency

Considerations
- COPD/Asthma/Allergy sufferers greatest risk
- Set NWS Directive criteria of ¼ mile had never been used here
- Quick adaptability based on partner feedback
- Long Term Event: avoid crying wolf
- Long Term Exposure: impacts healthy people too

Coordinated Messages
- Seek medical assistance if you need it.
- Stay indoors, especially when visibility is greatly reduced
- Use circulate AC button when driving
- Use AC in your home, do not leave windows open
- Close dampers on HVAC systems
- Clean Air machine, especially in bedrooms
- N95 masks for serious health issues /outdoor work

Smoke Moving South into the Region
- Fires are located in Northern Territories and Northern AB/SK
- Should move across border around noon today
- Health issues with Smoke:
  - Stay inside
  - Keep AC on, windows closed
  - Seek medical attention if necessary

Hours of Visibility (miles) due to smoke by year at Glasgow (May-Sep)

Weather Forecast Office Glasgow, MT
6/29/2015 8:08 am MDT

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Coordinated Messages
- Montana vs North Dakota State College football game
- ESPN Game of the Week
- Football games postponed, others did not
- High School Football/Cross Country events canceled
- Some schools postponed games, others did not
- More work to do with DEQ
- Collaborate our Advisories with their Air Quality Alerts
- Automate the process

2016?

412 Shares

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