

Air Quality Summary Report – Wildfires in Western NC

Monday November 28, 2016

Joint Information Center: 828.575.2840, <http://ncjic.blogspot.com/>



Monitoring: Portable PM2.5 monitors are currently placed in Robbinsville, Andrews, Franklin, Brevard, Burnsville, Hendersonville, and Marion. Permanent monitors are located in Bryson City, Spruce Pine and Asheville.

Yesterday: Franklin has recorded smoke levels in the Hazardous (AQI –Code Maroon) range since late yesterday afternoon, and these levels have decreased through the evening and early this morning but are still in the Very Hazardous (AQI- Code Purple) range. Because of wildfire burnout operations, many other communities in Western NC saw increased levels of smoke yesterday. Robbinsville, Burnsville and Asheville saw levels in the USG (AQI-Code Orange) range. Andrews, Bryson City, Hendersonville and Spruce Pine saw levels in the Moderate range (AQI-Code Yellow).

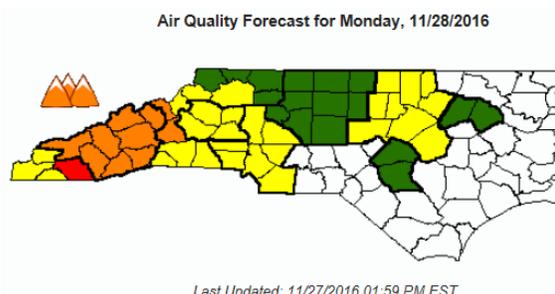
Today: As of early this morning, the Franklin area is still seeing high smoke concentrations, and has moved into the Very hazardous level (AQI-Code Purple). Marion is in the USG (AQI-Code Orange) range this morning and is expected to decrease soon. Most of the other Western NC communities are in the Moderate (AQI-Code Yellow) levels as of early this morning. With the expected fire behavior, increase in winds (which would dissipate the smoke), and anticipated rains later today, areas of WNC are expected to see a gradual improvement in air quality today through tonight.

Tomorrow: With the existing cold front, expected wind speeds and scattered rain, all communities in Western NC are expected to see improved air quality in the Good range tomorrow. Some areas could see some drifting smoke and residual smoldering may occur, affecting areas immediately downwind of ongoing fires.

North Carolina Division of Air Quality (DAQ) Air Quality Forecast:

NC DAQ issues an air quality forecast for the entire state each day. Their forecast is for broad geographical areas and is complementary to our more community-specific

focus which looks at localized short-term impacts due to the wildfires. To the upper right is the NC DAQ forecast map for today. Note that DAQ may update its forecast throughout the day at <https://xapps.ncdenr.org/aq/ForecastCenter>.



Last Updated: 11/27/2016 01:59 PM EST

Site	AQI Nov 28th Monday	AQI Nov 29th Tuesday	Comments
Murphy/Andrews	Mod	Good	Due to several area wildfire burnout activities, a range of Good to Unhealthy (AQI-Code Red) air quality conditions are expected to continue throughout the day and evening in several communities across WNC. Franklin may continue to see hourly AQI levels in the Unhealthy range today through tonight from the Rock Mountain fire. Marion is still seeing smoke impacts this morning from the Clear Creek fire and could continue to see levels in the USG range until this evening. Tomorrow, with the existing cold front, forecasted wind speeds and anticipated scattered showers, all of these Western NC communities are expected to see improved air quality in the Good AQI range.
Robbinsville/Topton	Mod	Good	
Franklin	Unhealthy	Good	
Sylva/Waynesville	Mod	Good	
Asheville	Mod	Good	
Spruce Pine	Good	Good	
Hendersonville	Good	Good	
Marion	USG	Good	
Burnsville	Mod	Good	
Brevard	Good	Good	

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Disclaimer: Conditions may change quickly; these predictions are based on anticipated weather and fire activity. AQI estimates for sites do not represent a full 24 hour time period but, rather, reflect a period of time within the day where smoke impacts would be greatest.

Air Quality Index (AQI) Levels of Health Concern	What the Index means for your health with regards to particulates from smoke
Good	None
Moderate (Mod)	Air quality is acceptable; however, for some pollutants there may be a moderate health concern for a very small number of people.
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (USG)	Although general public is not likely to be affected at this AQI range, older adults and children are at greater risk from the presence of particles in the air.
Unhealthy	Everyone may begin to experience some adverse health effects, and members of the sensitive groups may experience more serious effects.
Very Unhealthy	Health warnings of emergency conditions. The entire population is more likely to be affected.
Hazardous	Health alert: everyone may experience more serious health effects.

For more information about North Carolina air quality updates:

<https://xapps.ncdenr.org/aq/ForecastCenter>

For more information about National Forests in North Carolina:

<https://www.facebook.com/nfsnc/>