

Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency Air Quality Report - August 2015

Wildfire smoke pushed the Air Quality Index (AQI) for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) well into the “unhealthy” (red) air quality range. The maximum Air Quality Index (AQI) value for August was 171 (Figure 1), recorded on the 21st. The 24-hour average PM_{2.5} concentration was 94.2 µg/m³. Wildfire smoke affected air quality in Spokane County early in the month and for much of the last half of the month. The maximum running 8-hour average ozone concentration for the month (0.073 ppm; AQI = 93, moderate) occurred on the 2nd. The Spokane-Augusta & Fiske monitoring station was off-line for the replacement of the roof of the SRCAA’s office building where the monitors are normally located. Because of the roof replacement and the PM₁₀ monitor at Turnbull being away for repair, there were no PM₁₀ monitors operating in Spokane County in August. See Appendix 1 of this report for information about federal air quality standards or Appendix 2 for a description of the AQI. Daily mass concentrations of PM_{2.5} monitored in August throughout the network are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 1: Air Quality Index (AQI) values for August 2015. The data represent the maximum AQI values across all monitoring stations within Spokane County.

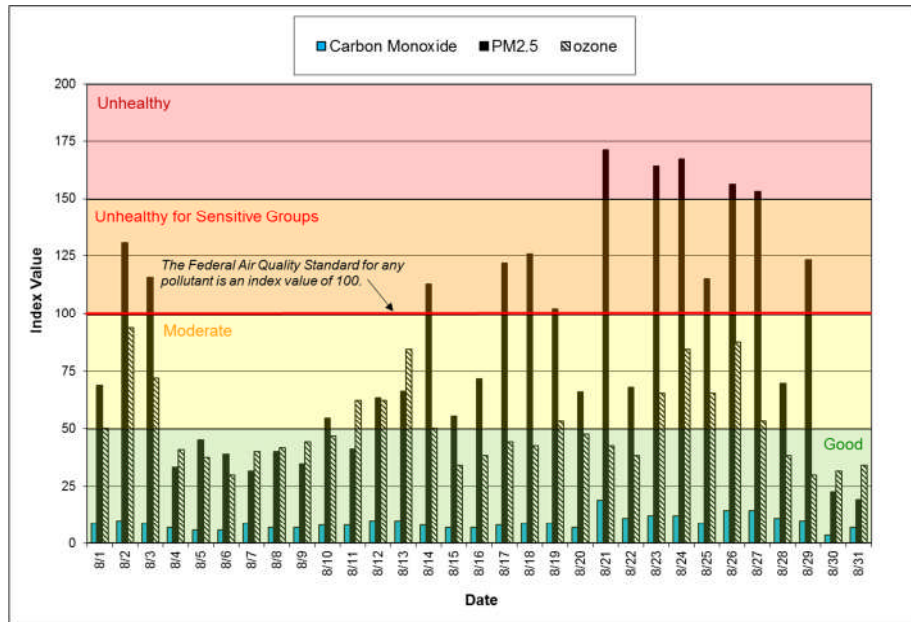
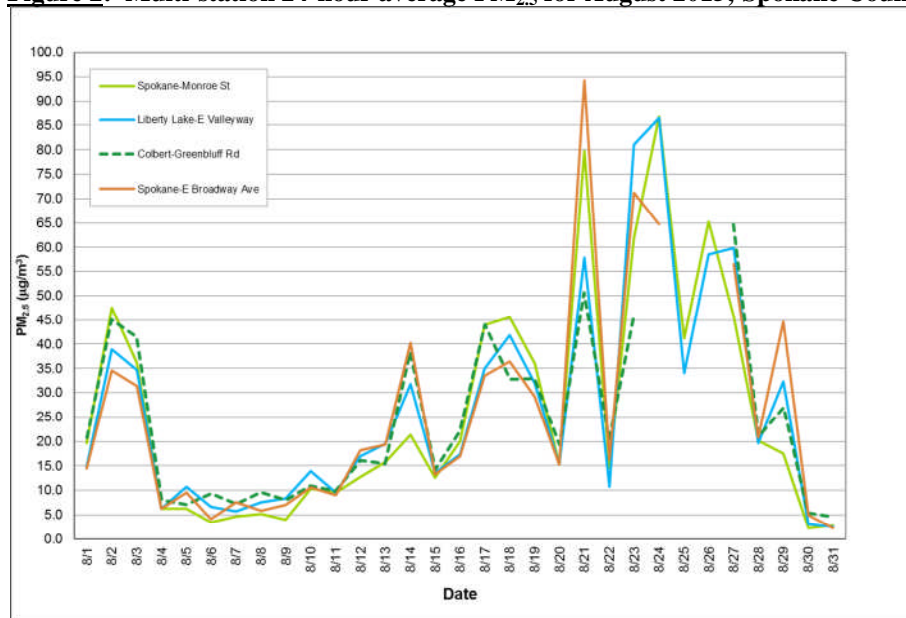


Figure 2: Multi-station 24-hour average PM_{2.5} for August 2015; Spokane County.



The August daily air quality data for all monitoring stations in the Spokane region are provided in Appendix 3. Current and historical air quality data can be obtained electronically from Ecology's air monitoring data website, <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/enviwa/Default.htm>.

Tables 1 and 2 contain the maximum AQI values for each pollutant for the month and for the year to date. Table 3 summarizes the year to date daily AQIs by category and compares them to last year's AQIs.

Table 1: Maximum AQI values and pollutant concentrations for this reporting period

Pollutant	AQI/Concentration	Location	Date
CO	19/1.7 ppm (8 hour)	Spokane, 3 rd & Washington	8/21
O ₃	93/0.073 ppm (8 hour)	Spokane, Greenbluff	8/2
PM ₁₀	NA	NA	NA
PM _{2.5}	171/94.2 µg/m ³	Spokane Valley, E. Broadway Ave	8/21

Table 2: Maximum AQI values and pollutant concentrations to date this year

Pollutant	AQI/Concentration	Location	Date
CO	21/1.9 ppm (8 hour)	Spokane, 3rd & Washington	1/5
O ₃	93/0.073 ppm (8 hour)	Spokane, Greenbluff	8/2
PM ₁₀	65/84 µg/m ³	Spokane, Augusta & Fiske	6/29
PM _{2.5}	171/94.2 µg/m ³	Spokane Valley, E. Broadway Ave	8/21

Table 3: AQI summary as of August 31, 2015

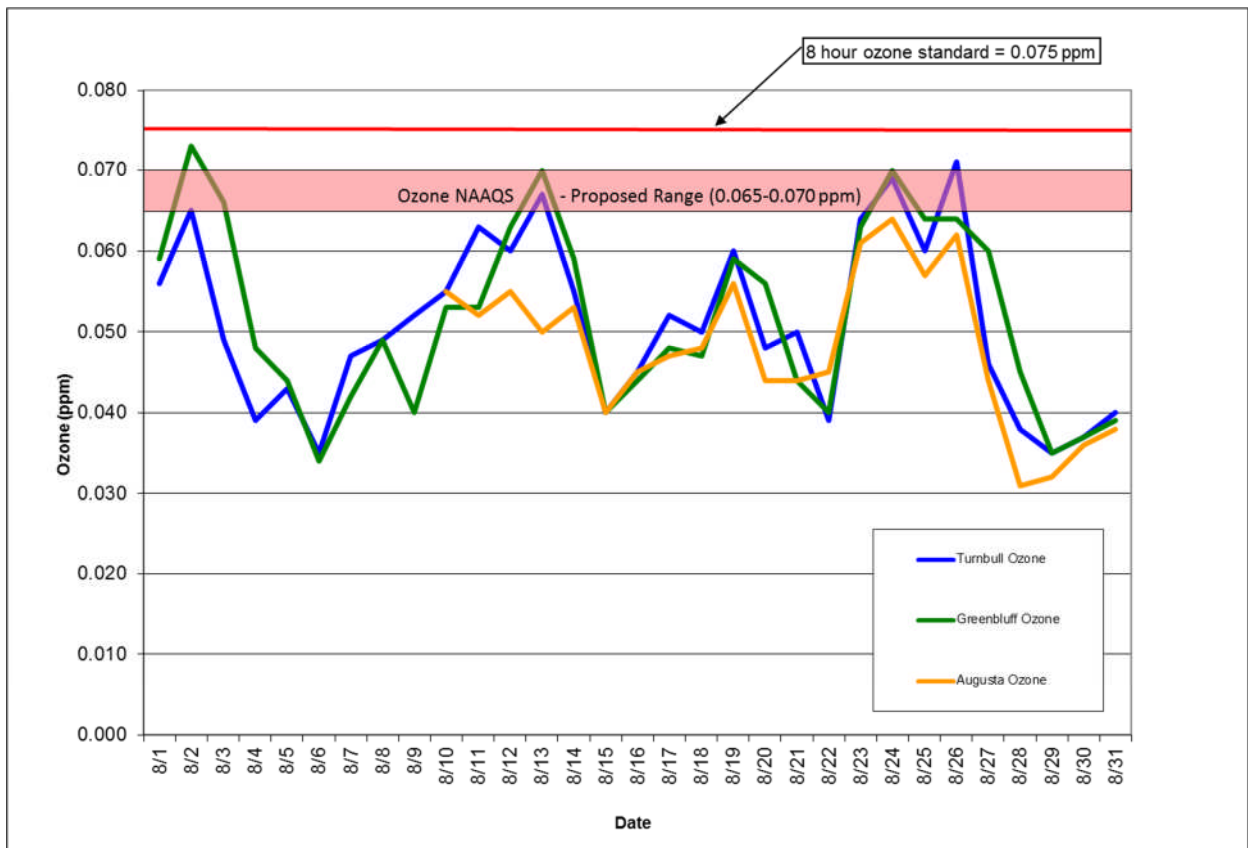
Category	Number of Days This Year*	Last Year to Date
Good (0-50)	172	196
Moderate (51-100)	57	46
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (101-150)	8	1
Unhealthy (151-200)	5	0
Very Unhealthy (201-300)	0	0
Hazardous (>300)	0	0

*One day missing because of a problem with the central server at Department of Ecology.

Ground-level ozone, a component of smog, is formed when nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds chemically react in the presence of sunlight. It is measured in units of parts per million (ppm) in ambient air. Ozone is a strong oxidizer and can damage lung tissue, thereby impairing respiratory function. The main sources of ozone precursors are motor vehicle emissions and refueling, gasoline storage and transport, paints, solvents and industry.

The maximum 8-hour running average ozone concentration for the month was 0.073 ppm measured at Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge on the 2nd (Figure 5). Eight hour average ozone concentrations in the range 0.060 to 0.075 ppm are considered “moderate” air quality by the AQI. When concentrations are below that level, air quality is “good” with respect to ground-level ozone.

Figure 5: Eight hour maximum ozone concentrations for the Spokane region in August. The threshold for the moderate category of the AQI for ozone is 0.06 ppm averaged over eight hours. An ozone measurement above 0.075 ppm, averaged over eight hours, is the level of the federal ozone standard. It is not a violation of the standard to exceed this level on a given day because determination of attainment status is based on averaging data over a period of years. See Appendix 1 for more detailed information about attainment of federal air quality standards.



Appendix 1 – National Ambient Air Quality Standards

The Clean Air Act requires EPA to set National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for six common air pollutants, carbon monoxide (CO), lead (Pb), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}), ground-level ozone (O₃) and sulfur dioxide (SO₂; Table A-1). These are known as “criteria” pollutants because the US EPA established regulatory limits to concentrations in ambient air using human health or environmentally based criteria. Carbon monoxide, particulate matter and ozone are monitored in Spokane County by the Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency (SRCAA) and the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology).

Table A-1: National Ambient Air Quality Standards

Pollutant	Primary Standards		Secondary Standards	
	Level	Averaging Time	Level	Averaging Time
Carbon Monoxide	9 ppm (10 mg/m ³)	8-hour ⁽¹⁾	None	
	35 ppm (40 mg/m ³)	1-hour ⁽¹⁾		
Lead	0.15 µg/m ³ ⁽²⁾	Rolling 3-Month Average	Same as Primary	
	1.5 µg/m ³	Quarterly Average	Same as Primary	
Nitrogen Dioxide	53 ppb ⁽³⁾	Annual (Arithmetic Average)	Same as Primary	
	100 ppb	1-hour ⁽⁴⁾	None	
Particulate Matter (PM ₁₀)	150 µg/m ³	24-hour ⁽⁵⁾	Same as Primary	
Particulate Matter (PM _{2.5})	12.0 µg/m ³	Annual ⁽⁶⁾ (Arithmetic Average)	Same as Primary	
	35 µg/m ³	24-hour ⁽⁷⁾	Same as Primary	
Ozone	0.075 ppm (2008 std)	8-hour ⁽⁸⁾	Same as Primary	
	0.08 ppm (1997 std)	8-hour ⁽⁹⁾	Same as Primary	
	0.12 ppm	1-hour ⁽¹⁰⁾	Same as Primary	
Sulfur Dioxide	0.03 ppm	Annual (Arithmetic Average)	0.5 ppm	3-hour ⁽¹⁾
	0.14 ppm	24-hour ⁽¹⁾		
	75 ppb ⁽¹¹⁾	1-hour	None	

⁽¹⁾ Not to be exceeded more than once per year.

⁽²⁾ Final rule signed October 15, 2008.

⁽³⁾ The official level of the annual NO₂ standard is 0.053 ppm, equal to 53 ppb, which is shown here for the purpose of clearer comparison to the 1-hour standard

⁽⁴⁾ To attain this standard, the 3-year average of the 98th percentile of the daily maximum 1-hour average at each monitor within an area must not exceed 100 ppb (effective January 22, 2010).

⁽⁵⁾ Not to be exceeded more than once per year on average over 3 years.

⁽⁶⁾ On March 18, 2013, EPA strengthened the annual fine particle standard by revising the level from 15.0 micrograms per cubic meter (µg/m³) to 12.0 µg/m³. An area will meet the standard if the three-year average of its annual average PM_{2.5} concentration (at each monitoring site in the area) is less than or equal to 12.0 µg/m³.

⁽⁷⁾ To attain this standard, the 3-year average of the 98th percentile of 24-hour concentrations at each population-oriented monitor within an area must not exceed 35 µg/m³ (effective December 17, 2006).

⁽⁸⁾ To attain this standard, the 3-year average of the fourth-highest daily maximum 8-hour average ozone concentrations measured at each monitor within an area over each year must not exceed 0.075 ppm. (effective May 27, 2008)

⁽⁹⁾ (a) To attain this standard, the 3-year average of the fourth-highest daily maximum 8-hour average ozone concentrations measured at each monitor within an area over each year must not exceed 0.08 ppm.

(b) The 1997 standard—and the implementation rules for that standard—will remain in place for implementation purposes as EPA undertakes rulemaking to address the transition from the 1997 ozone standard to the 2008 ozone standard.

(c) EPA is in the process of reconsidering these standards (set in March 2008).

⁽¹⁰⁾ (a) EPA revoked the [1-hour ozone standard](#) in all areas, although some areas have continuing obligations under that standard ("anti-backsliding").

(b) The standard is attained when the expected number of days per calendar year with maximum hourly average concentrations above 0.12 ppm is ≤ 1.

⁽¹¹⁾ (a) Final rule signed June 2, 2010. To attain this standard, the 3-year average of the 99th percentile of the daily maximum 1-hour average at each monitor within an area must not exceed 75 ppb.

Appendix 2 – Air Quality Index

The Air Quality Index (AQI) is EPA’s color-coded tool for communicating daily air quality to the public and can be calculated for any of the criteria pollutants except lead, provided monitoring data are available. An index value above 100 indicates that the concentration of a criteria pollutant exceeded the limit established in the NAAQS. Categories of the AQI are “good” (green, 0-50), “moderate” (yellow, 51-100), “unhealthy for sensitive groups” (orange, 101-150), “unhealthy” (red, 151-200), “very unhealthy” (purple, 201-300) and “hazardous” (maroon, 301-500; Table A-2). On March 18, 2013, EPA reduced the good to moderate breakpoint for PM_{2.5} from 15.0 to 12.0 micrograms per cubic meter of air (µg/m³).

Table A-2: Air pollutant breakpoints for the Air Quality Index.

Air Quality Index Levels of Health Concern	Color Code	Index Numerical Value	Breakpoints					Health Effects
			O ₃ (ppm) 8-hour	O ₃ (ppm) 1-hour ⁽¹⁾	PM _{2.5} (µg/m ³) 24-hour	PM ₁₀ (µg/m ³) 24-hour	CO (ppm) 8-hour	
Good	Green	0-50	0.000-0.059	⁽³⁾	0.0-12.0	0-54	0.0-4.4	Air quality is considered satisfactory and air pollution poses little or no risk.
Moderate	Yellow	51-100	0.060-0.075	⁽³⁾	12.1-35.4	55-154	4.5-9.4	Air quality is acceptable; however, for some pollutants there may be a moderate health concern for a very small number of people who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Orange	101-150	0.076-0.095	0.125-0.164	35.5-65.4	155-254	9.5-12.4	People especially sensitive to air pollution may experience health effects. The general public is not likely to be affected. An AQI in this category or above indicates that air pollution exceeds levels acceptable under federal air quality standards.
Unhealthy	Red	151-200	0.096-0.115	0.165-0.204	65.5-150.4	255-354	12.5-15.4	Everyone may begin to experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.
Very Unhealthy	Purple	201-300	0.116-0.374	0.205-0.404	150.5-250.4	355-424	15.5-30.4	Health alert: everyone may experience more serious health effects.
Hazardous	Maroon	>300	⁽²⁾	0.405+	250.5+	425+	30.5+	Health warnings of emergency conditions. The entire population is more likely to be affected.

¹Areas are generally required to report the AQI based on 8-hour ozone values. However, there are a small number of areas where an AQI based on 1-hour ozone values would be more precautionary. In these cases, in addition to calculating the 8-hour ozone index value, the 1-hour ozone index value may be calculated, and the maximum of the two values reported.

²8-hour O₃ values do not define higher AQI values (≥ 301). AQI values of 301 or greater are calculated with 1-hour O₃ concentrations.

³There is no AQI for 1-hour O₃ concentrations below the Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups level.

Appendix 3

Table A-3: Summary air quality data for August for air monitoring stations in Spokane County. The carbon monoxide and ozone data are maximum 8-hour running averages in parts per million (ppm) and the PM data are 24-hour averages in micrograms per cubic meter of air ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$). The Airway Heights TEOM was out of service because of a malfunction and pending repair. The Turnbull $\text{PM}_{2.5}/\text{PM}_{10}$ TEOM was malfunctioning and was sent to the manufacturer for repair. The Augusta & Fiske monitoring station was out of service for replacement of the SRCAA's office roof on which the monitoring equipment is normally located. The ozone monitor is not on the roof and could be restarted once the use of adhesives and cleaning chemicals was finished. The rest of the station remained down while the SRCAA dealt with roof safety issues. The Broadway and Colbert $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ TEOMs were out of service on the 24th, 25th and 26th for equipment maintenance and troubleshooting of the data communications.

Date	CO 3rd & Washington (8 hour max, ppm)	Ozone Augusta & Fiske (ppm)	Ozone Greenbluff (ppm)	Ozone Turnbull NWR (ppm)	$\text{PM}_{2.5}$ Augusta & Fiske TEOM ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	$\text{PM}_{2.5}$ E. Broadway TEOM ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	$\text{PM}_{2.5}$ Colbert TEOM ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	$\text{PM}_{2.5}$ Airway Heights TEOM ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	$\text{PM}_{2.5}$ Turnbull NWR TEOM ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	$\text{PM}_{2.5}$ Monroe & Wellesley nephelometer ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	$\text{PM}_{2.5}$ Liberty Lake TEOM ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	PM_{10} Augusta & Fiske TEOM ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	PM_{10} Turnbull NWR TEOM ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)
8/1	0.8		0.059	0.056		14.4	20.7			19.6	14.9		
8/2	0.9		0.073	0.065		34.5	45.1			47.5	39.0		
8/3	0.8		0.066	0.049		31.4	41.5			36.1	34.7		
8/4	0.6		0.048	0.039		6.3	8.0			6.3	6.2		
8/5	0.5		0.044	0.043		9.5	7.1			6.2	10.8		
8/6	0.5		0.034	0.035		4.1	9.3			3.5	6.7		
8/7	0.8		0.042	0.047		7.6	7.2			4.6	5.7		
8/8	0.6		0.049	0.049		5.8	9.6			5.2	7.6		
8/9	0.6		0.040	0.052		7.0	8.0			4.0	8.3		
8/10	0.7	0.055	0.053	0.055		10.6	10.9			10.3	13.9		
8/11	0.7	0.052	0.053	0.063		9.0	9.9			9.6	9.5		
8/12	0.9	0.055	0.063	0.06		18.1	16.1			12.7	17.0		
8/13	0.9	0.05	0.070	0.067		19.3	15.5			15.8	19.5		
8/14	0.7	0.053	0.059	0.055		40.3	38.4			21.3	31.8		
8/15	0.6	0.04	0.040	0.04		13.3	14.3			12.6	13.5		
8/16	0.6	0.045	0.044	0.045		17.0	22.0			20.0	17.4		
8/17	0.7	0.047	0.048	0.052		33.5	44.0			43.9	34.9		
8/18	0.8	0.048	0.047	0.05		36.4	32.8			45.6	41.8		
8/19	0.8	0.056	0.059	0.06		29.2	32.9			36.0	31.9		
8/20	0.6	0.044	0.056	0.048		15.3	19.3			15.3	15.2		
8/21	1.7	0.044	0.044	0.05		94.2	50.7			79.7	57.8		
8/22	1.0	0.045	0.040	0.039		16.3	20.3			14.6	10.7		
8/23	1.1	0.061	0.063	0.064		71.2	46.3			61.9	81.0		
8/24	1.1	0.064	0.070	0.069						86.7	86.5		
8/25	0.8	0.057	0.064	0.06						41.2	34.0		
8/26	1.3	0.062	0.064	0.071						65.3	58.5		
8/27	1.3	0.044	0.060	0.048		56.6	64.7			45.7	59.8		
8/28	1.0	0.031	0.045	0.038		20.8	21.0			20.2	19.6		
8/29	0.9	0.032	0.035	0.035		44.6	27.0			17.5	32.3		
8/30	0.3	0.036	0.037	0.037		4.9	5.4			2.3	3.0		
8/31	0.6	0.038	0.039	0.04		2.3	4.6			2.8	2.5		
AVG	0.8	0.048	0.052	0.051	NA	24.1	23.3	NA	NA	26.3	26.6	NA	NA
MAX	1.7	0.064	0.073	0.071	NA	94.2	64.7	NA	NA	86.7	86.5	NA	NA