

Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency Air Quality Report – September 2021

Wildfire smoke continued to affect air quality in early September, pushing the Air Quality Index (AQI) to 108 (Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups, PM_{2.5} at Colbert air monitoring station) on the 9th (Figures 1 and 2). A building fire near the Spokane-Augusta air monitoring station caused high PM_{2.5} readings there on the morning of the 27th, resulting in an AQI of 117 – the highest for the month. Ozone pollution reached AQI-Moderate levels on the 6th, 7th, and 8th, probably a result of wildfire smoke (Figure 3).

See Appendix 1 of this report for information about federal air quality standards and Appendix 2 for a description of the AQI. The daily air quality data for September for all monitoring stations in the Spokane region are provided in Appendix 3. Current and historical air quality data can be obtained electronically from the Washington State Department of Ecology's air monitoring data website, <https://enviwa.ecology.wa.gov/home/map>.

Figure 1: Air Quality Index (AQI) values for September 2021. The data represent the maximum AQI values across all monitoring stations within Spokane County.

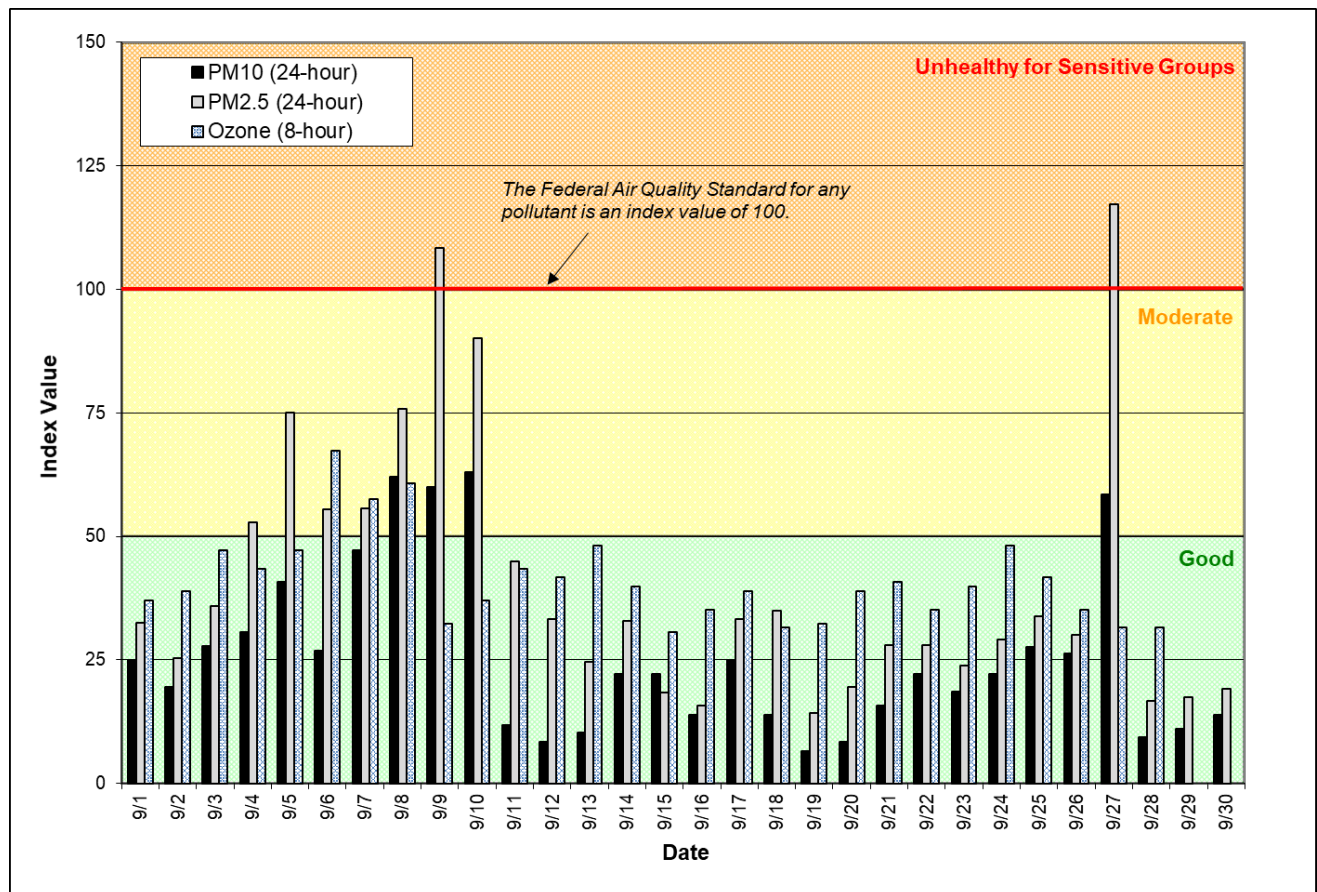


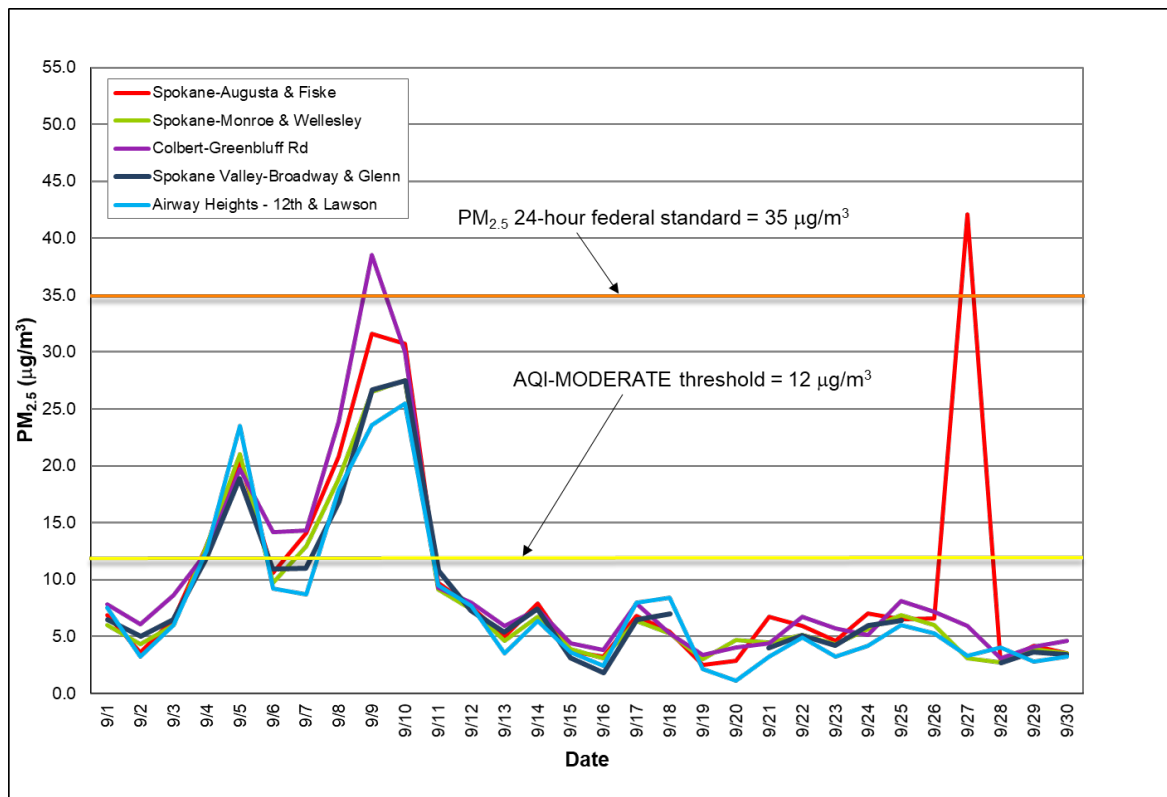
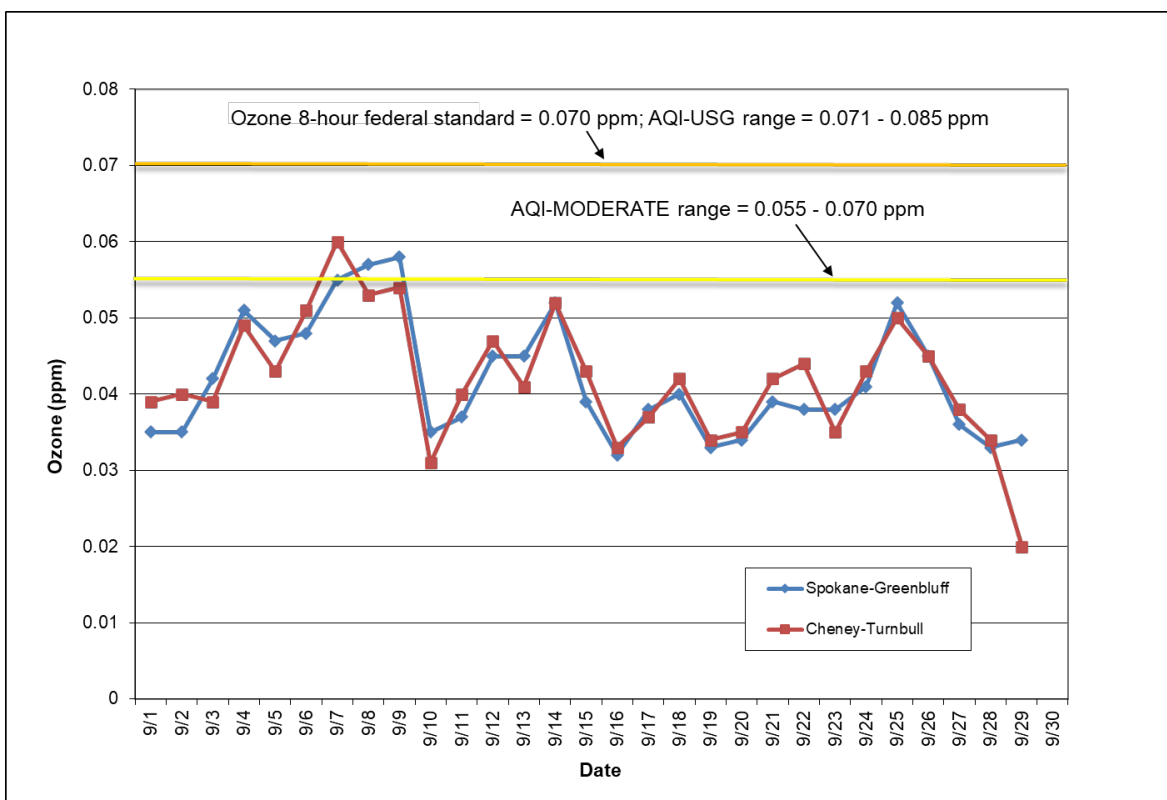
Figure 2: Multi-station 24-hour average PM_{2.5} for September 2021; Spokane County.**Figure 3: Eight-hour maximum ozone concentrations for the Spokane region in September. The threshold for the moderate category of the AQI for ozone is 0.055 ppm averaged over eight hours. An ozone measurement above 0.070 ppm, averaged over eight hours, is the level of the federal ozone standard.**

Table 1 summarizes the daily AQIs by category for the month and year-to-date and Tables 2 and 3 contain the maximum AQI values for each pollutant for the month and for the year-to-date, respectively.

Table 1: AQI summary as of September 30, 2021

Category	Number of days in September	Number of days this year to date
Good (0-50)	22	201
Moderate (51-100)	6	61
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (101-150)	2	5
Unhealthy (151-200)	0	6
Very Unhealthy (201-300)	0	0
Hazardous (>300)	0	0

Table 2: Maximum AQI values and pollutant concentrations for this reporting period.

Pollutant	AQI		Location	Date
O ₃	67 (conc. = 0.051 ppm)	Moderate	Turnbull	9/6
PM ₁₀	63 (conc. = 80 µg/m ³)	Moderate	Spokane - Augusta	9/10
PM _{2.5}	117 (conc. = 42.1 µg/m ³)	USG	Spokane - Augusta	9/27

Table 3: Maximum AQI values and pollutant concentrations for this year to date.

Pollutant	AQI		Location	Date
O ₃	119 (conc. = 0.076 ppm)	USG	Greenbluff	7/13
PM ₁₀	98 (conc. = 150 µg/m ³)	Moderate	Turnbull	8/13
PM _{2.5}	183 (conc. = 117.7 µg/m ³)	Unhealthy	Spokane Valley – Broadway & Glenn	8/13

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 [links to historical tables of NAAQS reviews]		Primary/ Secondary	Averaging Time	Level	Form
Carbon Monoxide (CO)		primary	8 hours	9 ppm	Not to be exceeded more than once per year
			1 hour	35 ppm	
Lead (Pb)		primary and secondary	Rolling 3 month period	0.15 µg/m ³ ⁽¹⁾	Not to be exceeded
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂)		primary	1 hour	100 ppb	98th percentile of 1-hour daily maximum concentrations, averaged over 3 years
		primary and secondary	1 year	53 ppb ⁽²⁾	Annual Mean
Ozone (O₃)		primary and secondary	8 hours	0.070 ppm ⁽³⁾	Annual fourth-highest daily maximum 8-hour concentration, averaged over 3 years
Particle Pollution (PM)	PM _{2.5}	primary	1 year	12.0 µg/m ³	annual mean, averaged over 3 years
		secondary	1 year	15.0 µg/m ³	annual mean, averaged over 3 years
		primary and secondary	24 hours	35 µg/m ³	98th percentile, averaged over 3 years
	PM ₁₀	primary and secondary	24 hours	150 µg/m ³	Not to be exceeded more than once per year on average over 3 years
Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂)		primary	1 hour	75 ppb ⁽⁴⁾	99th percentile of 1-hour daily maximum concentrations, averaged over 3 years
		secondary	3 hours	0.5 ppm	Not to be exceeded more than once per year

(1) In areas designated nonattainment for the Pb standards prior to the promulgation of the current (2008) standards, and for which implementation plans to attain or maintain the current (2008) standards have not been submitted and approved, the previous standards (1.5 µg/m³ as a calendar quarter average) also remain in effect.

(2) The level of the annual NO₂ standard is 0.053 ppm. It is shown here in terms of ppb for the purposes of clearer comparison to the 1-hour standard level.

(3) Final rule signed October 1, 2015, and effective December 28, 2015. The previous (2008) O₃ standards additionally remain in effect in some areas. Revocation of the previous (2008) O₃ standards and transitioning to the current (2015) standards will be addressed in the implementation rule for the current standards.

(4) The previous SO₂ standards (0.14 ppm 24-hour and 0.03 ppm annual) will additionally remain in effect in certain areas: (1) any area for which it is not yet 1 year since the effective date of designation under the current (2010) standards, and (2) any area for which implementation plans providing for attainment of the current (2010) standard have not been submitted and approved and which is designated nonattainment under the previous SO₂ standards or is not meeting the requirements of a SIP call under the previous SO₂ standards (40 CFR 50.4(3)). A SIP call is an EPA action requiring a state to resubmit all or part of its State Implementation Plan to demonstrate attainment of the require NAAQS.

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” (USG; orange, 101-150), “Unhealthy” (red, 151-200), “Very Unhealthy” (purple, 201-300) and “Hazardous” (maroon, 301-500; Table A-2).

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	PM _{2.5} (µg/m ³) 24-hour	PM ₁₀ (µg/m ³) 24-hour	CO (ppm) 8-hour	
Good	Green	0-50	0.000-0.054	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	0.055-0.070	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	0.071-0.085	35.5-55.4	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	0.086-0.105	55.5-150.4	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	0.106-0.200	150.5-250.4	355-424	15.5-30.4	Health alert: everyone may experience more serious health effects.
Hazardous	Maroon	>300	0.201 to the Significant Harm Level* (0.600 ppm, 2 hour average)	250.5+	425+	30.5+	Health warnings of emergency conditions. The entire population is more likely to be affected.

*The significant harm level (SHL) is set at a level that represents imminent and substantial endangerment to public health.

Appendix 3

Table A-3: Summary air quality data for September for air monitoring stations in Spokane County. Particulate matter mass concentration is reported as 24-hour averages in micrograms per cubic meter of air ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) and daily 8-hour maximum ozone concentrations are reported in parts per million (ppm). Broadway $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ and PM_{10} were not reported on the 19th and 20th because of a power outage at the site or on the 26th and 27th because the cellular connection was interrupted. The PM_{10} monitor at Turnbull was shut down for moving on the 21st and 22nd. The PM_{10} monitor was not running on the 10th through the 13th because of lost power. See Appendix 2 for an explanation of AQI color codes.

Pollutant Concentration											Air Quality Index (AQI)										
Date	Ozone - Turnbull NWR	Ozone - Greenbluff	PM _{2.5} - Airway Heights (24 hour avg, µg/m ³)		PM _{2.5} - Colbert (24 hour avg, µg/m ³)		PM _{2.5} - Spokane, Augusta & Fiske (24 hour avg, µg/m ³)		PM _{2.5} - Spokane Valley, Broadway & Glenn (24 hour avg, µg/m ³)		PM _{2.5} - Spokane, Monroe & Wellesley (24 hour avg, µg/m ³)		PM ₁₀ - Turnbull NWR BAM (24 hour avg, µg/m ³)		PM ₁₀ - Spokane, Augusta & Fiske (24 hour avg, µg/m ³)		PM ₁₀ - Spokane Valley, Broadway & Glenn (24 hour avg, µg/m ³)				
9/1	0.039	0.035	7.5	7.8	6.9	6.5	6.0	27	22	20.4											
9/2	0.040	0.035	3.2	6.1	3.6	5.0	4.3	17	21	16.8											
9/3	0.039	0.042	6.0	8.6	6.5	6.5	6.0	23	30	22.8											
9/4	0.049	0.051	12.6	12.4	13.0	11.9	13.0	31	33	28.3											
9/5	0.043	0.047	23.5	19.7	20.5	18.9	21.0	38	44	37.5											
9/6	0.051	0.048	9.2	14.2	10.6	10.9	9.7	23	29	25.3											
9/7	0.060	0.055	8.7	14.3	14.1	11.0	12.9	50	46	33.9											
9/8	0.053	0.057	17.9	23.9	20.8	16.8	18.8	60	78	54.2											
9/9	0.054	0.058	23.6	38.5	31.6	26.7	26.5	58	74	60.9											
9/10	0.031	0.035	25.5	30.0	30.7	27.5	27.5	57	80	56.8											
9/11	0.040	0.037	9.5	9.3	9.7	10.8	9.1	12		14.7											
9/12	0.047	0.045	7.7	8.0	7.6	7.3	7.4	9		12.2											
9/13	0.041	0.045	3.5	5.9	5.0	5.4	4.6	11		13.2											
9/14	0.052	0.052	6.4	7.4	7.9	7.4	6.7	16	24	18.3											
9/15	0.043	0.039	3.6	4.4	3.7	3.1	3.9	17	24	17.9											
9/16	0.033	0.032	2.4	3.8	3.2	1.8	3.1	9	15	10.8											
9/17	0.037	0.038	8.0	7.9	6.8	6.5	6.4	24	27	19.7											
9/18	0.042	0.040	8.4	5.3	5.4	7.0	5.3	15	10	10.8											
9/19	0.034	0.033	2.1	3.4	2.5		3.0	7	6												
9/20	0.035	0.034	1.1	4.0	2.9		4.7	5	9												
9/21	0.042	0.039	3.2	4.4	6.7	4.0	4.5		17	10.7											
9/22	0.044	0.038	4.9	6.7	5.9	5.1	5.1		24	19.4											
9/23	0.035	0.038	3.2	5.7	4.6	4.2	4.3	12	20	14.4											
9/24	0.043	0.041	4.2	5.1	7.0	6.0	5.6	18	24	16											
9/25	0.050	0.052	6.0	8.1	6.5	6.4	6.9	29	26	21											
9/26	0.045	0.045	5.3	7.2	6.6		6.0	28	27												
9/27	0.038	0.036	3.3	5.9	42.1		3.1	9	71												
9/28	0.034	0.033	4.0	3.1	2.7	2.7	2.7	5	10	4.5											
9/29			2.8	4.1	4.2	3.6	3.9	4	12	6.4											
9/30			3.2	4.6	3.5	3.4	3.5	5	15	8.3											
AVG	0.043	0.042	7.7	9.7	10.1	8.7	9.7	22	30	22											
MAX	0.060	0.058	25.5	38.5	42.1	27.5	38.5	60	80	61											