Ignition Expected for Boulder Burn — Information for Smoke Sensitive Persons

The Problem
Last year, the Sierra Nevada Region experienced several large wildfires, most notably the Rim Fire, in which portions of the fire burned at high severity and produced copious amounts of smoke that impacted communities near and far. In an effort to change the current dynamic of unwanted wildfires, the Forest Service is focusing on restoring fire resilience of our National Forests. The Boulder Creek Watershed is steep and inaccessible, thus the only realistic option is to treat this landscape with controlled fire – a fire that is ignited under prescriptive parameters with the intention of avoiding a costly and uncontrollable wildfire and the associated smoke impacts.

The Project
The Boulder Burn is located on the Hume Lake Ranger District of the Sequoia National Forest. This is a 5-year project that aims to treat 6,000 – 9,000 acres with controlled fire to restore fire resilience to the landscape and to protect old growth habitat. This portion of the project will treat approximately 444 acres. Ultimately, the end result aims to create a healthy, fire resilient forest conditions.

When will the burn start?
Ignition for the Boulder Burn is expected on May 17th, 2014 because the weather and fuel conditions are predicted as favorable, meaning fuels are dry enough to ignite and carry fire, and smoke is predicted to travel upward into the atmosphere minimizing impacts from the burn.

How long will you expect smoke?
The controlled burn will likely occur over a 4-day period. During these 4 days, the communities of Hume Lake, and Mammoth Lakes are likely to experience smoke. Once the burn begins, the ignition operations are complete, the interior portions of the controlled burn will continue to smolder for several days. The surrounding communities can expect smoke to be visible and it is likely that smoke will settle into the valley overnight and in the morning hours, and the smoke will lift upward again during the day.

How can I protect myself?
Precautions to take if you have respiratory illness, allergies, or are sensitive to smoke include closing your windows and doors and remaining indoors if it is smoky outside. As a general rule, if you can smell and see smoke you should not be outside. These measures will help reduce your exposure to particulate matter that may aggravate a respiratory illness or allergies. For additional information visit www.valleyair.org.

Our contact effort
The Forest Service makes every attempt to notify the public in advance of controlled burn operations; sometimes this can be a very short notice for the public to prepare in advance. This early contact notification system is intended to provide enhanced outreach to persons that may experience negative health impacts from smoke due to respiratory illness, cardiac disease, allergies, or for other smoke sensitive persons.

Contacts
1) Karina Silvas-Bellantca, Sierra Forest Legacy, Phone: (530) 878-2795
2) Paul Leusch, Battalion 32, Sequoia NF, Phone: (559) 338-2251 ext. 324

This early contact network was developed in Partnership with the U.S. Forest Service