

CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE

*ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT
AIR QUALITY DIVISION*

Mary Lou Leonard, Director



A photograph of a wildfire with a cabin in the foreground. The wildfire is the central focus, with bright orange and red flames rising from a forest of green trees. The sky is dark and filled with thick, black smoke. In the foreground, a wooden cabin with a green roof is visible on the right side. The cabin has large windows and a chimney. The overall scene is dramatic and highlights the impact of wildfires on residential areas.

Air Quality Management During Wildfires

Jeff Stonesifer

Senior Environmental Health Scientist

- Multiple government agencies have a role
- US Forest Service
- Bureau of Land Management
- National Weather Service
- NM Environment Department
- Air Quality Division
- NM Department of Health



Conference calls

Purpose is to create a unified message.

Topics include:

- Status of fires
- Weather & smoke: models and forecasts
- How to best inform public



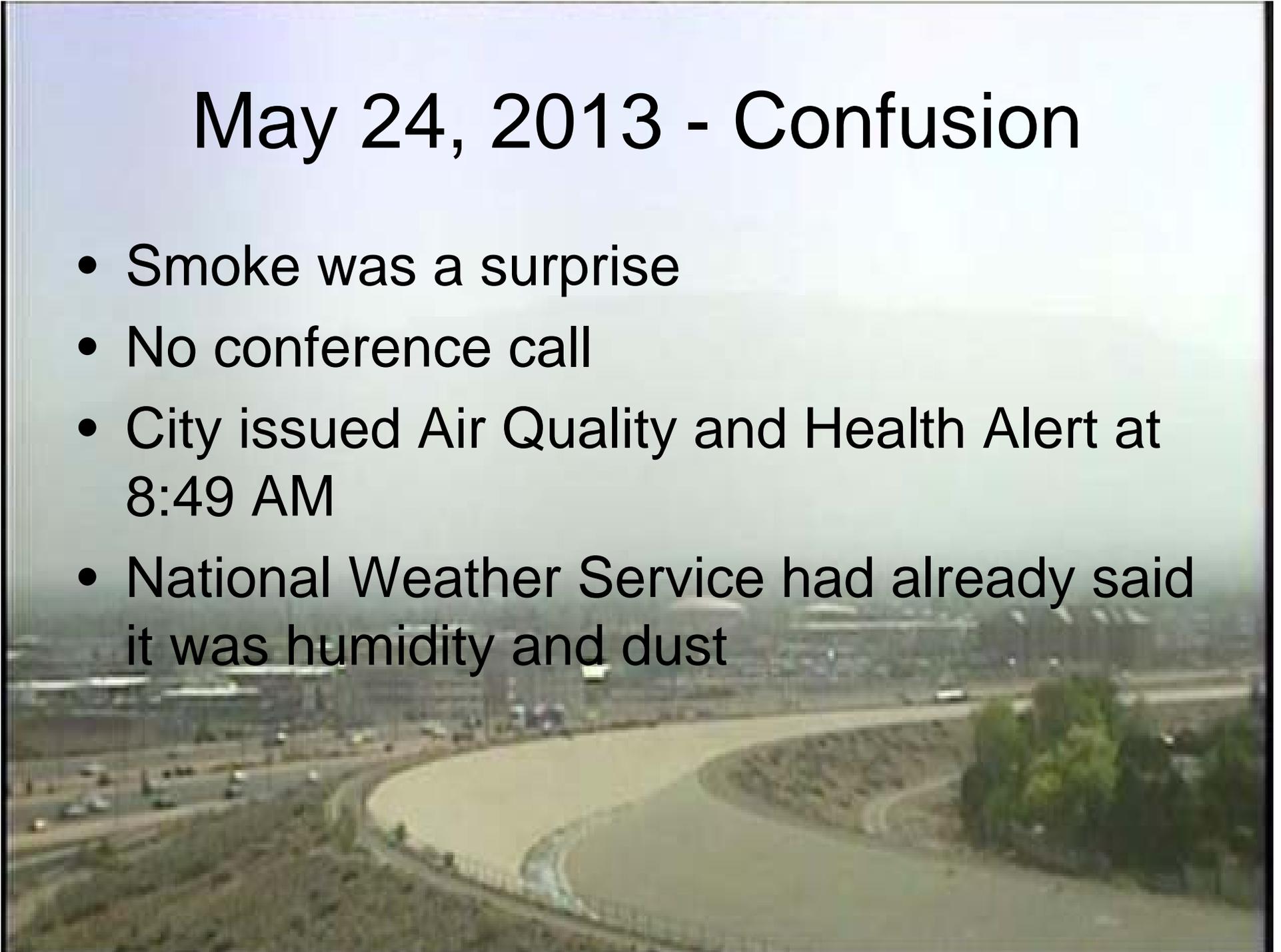
Natural Events Action Plan

- Duststorms can violate PM10 standard
- Wildfires, PM2.5 standard (Wallow)
- Stratospheric intrusion, ozone standard
- EPA forgives these events if AQD follows Natural Events Action Plan



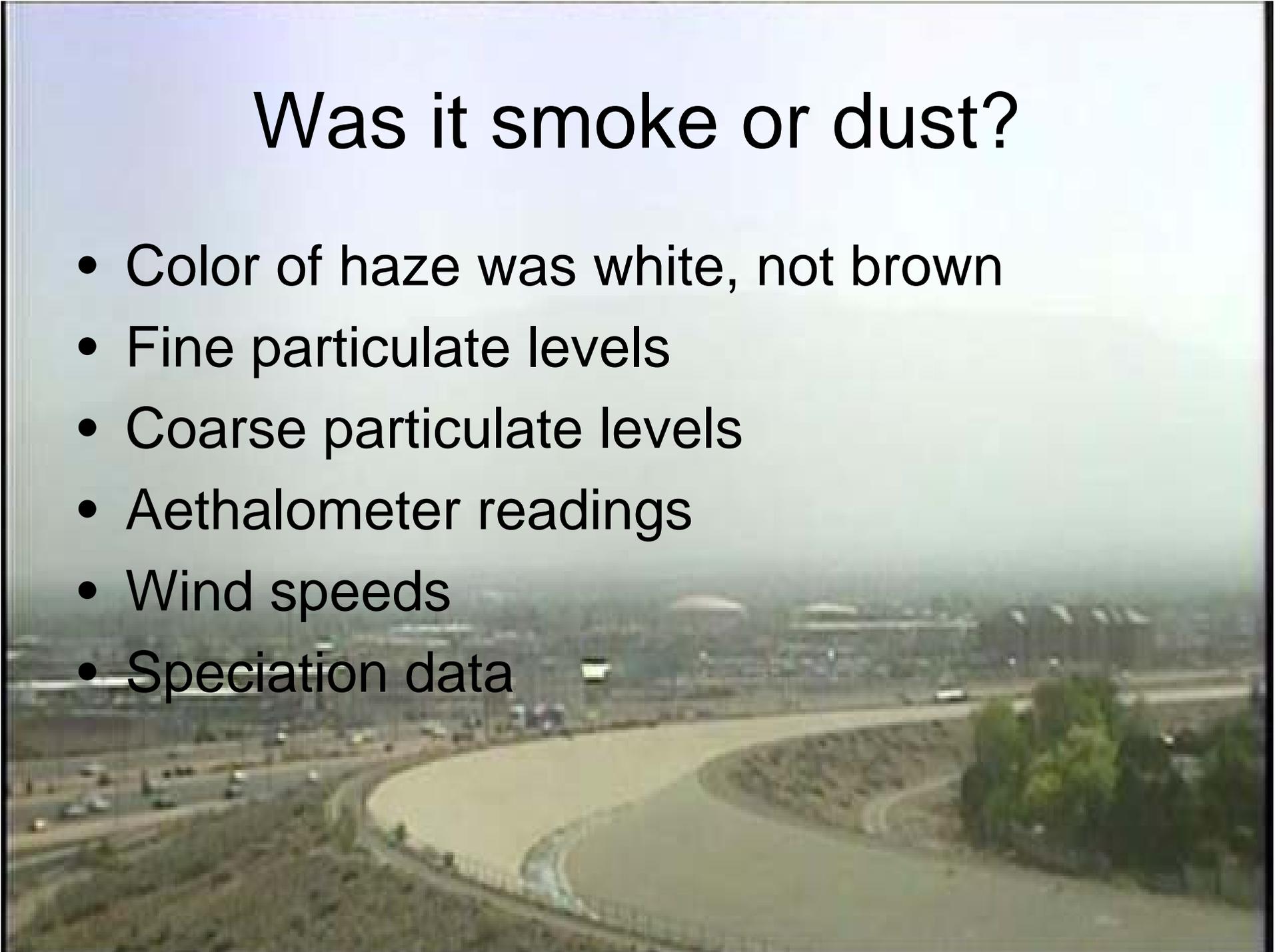
May 24, 2013 - Confusion

- Smoke was a surprise
- No conference call
- City issued Air Quality and Health Alert at 8:49 AM
- National Weather Service had already said it was humidity and dust



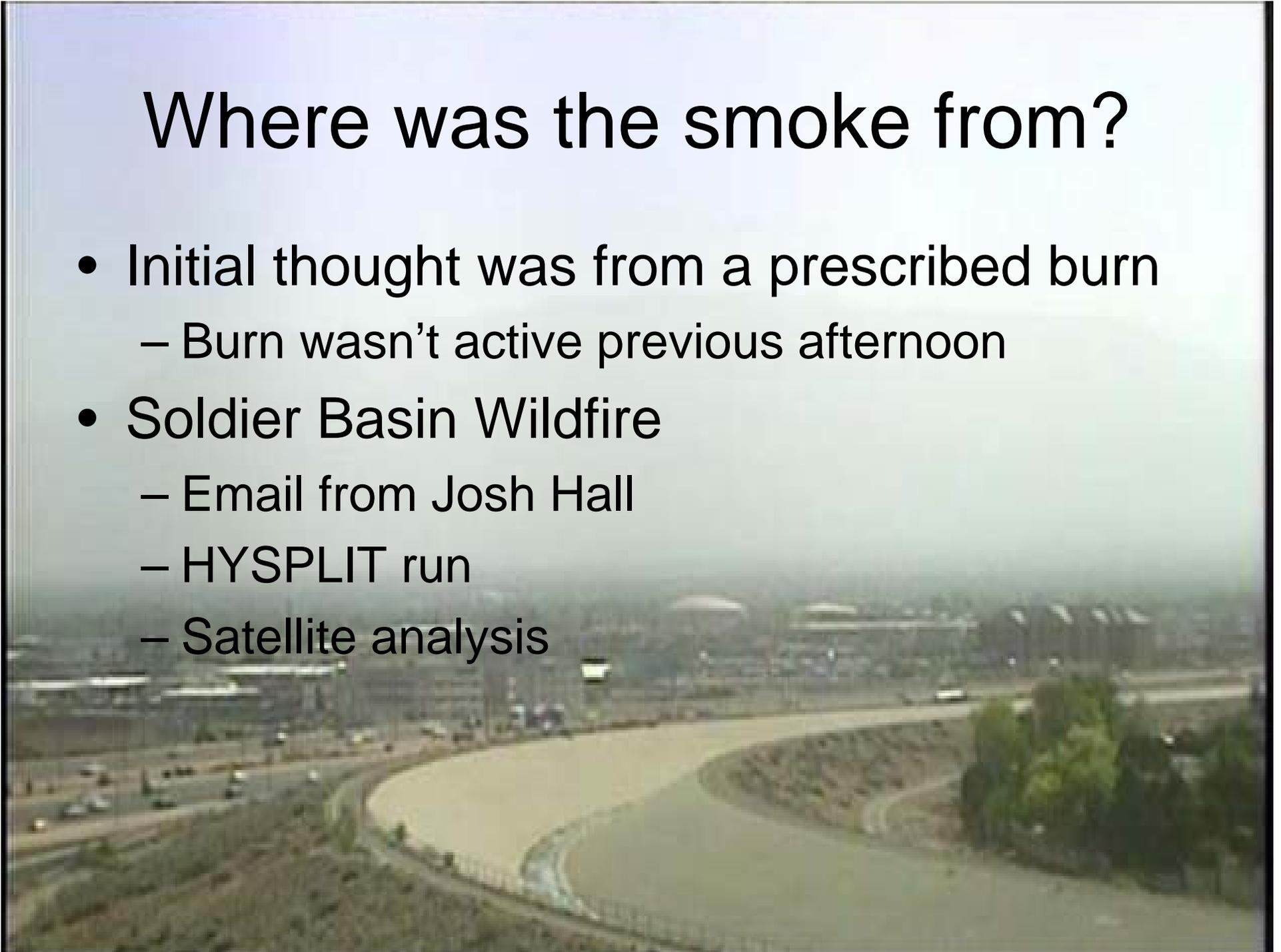
Was it smoke or dust?

- Color of haze was white, not brown
- Fine particulate levels
- Coarse particulate levels
- Aethalometer readings
- Wind speeds
- Speciation data



Where was the smoke from?

- Initial thought was from a prescribed burn
 - Burn wasn't active previous afternoon
- Soldier Basin Wildfire
 - Email from Josh Hall
 - HYSPLIT run
 - Satellite analysis



Recommendation

- Continue using sound science & reasoning
- AQD should continue to focus on air quality management role.
- Public health alerts
- Flagging data from natural events

