



Bulkley Valley – Lakes District

Airshed Management Plan

www.bvldamp.ca

Current and Best Practices for Resource Management Burning

Workshop Proceedings

**July 22, 2003
Smithers BC**

Workshop sponsors:

***BVLD Airshed Planning Process
Ministry of Water, Land, and Air Protection – Skeena Region***

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1.0 Introduction

As part of the Bulkley Valley – Lakes District (BVLD) Airshed Planning Process, a Regional Working Group (RWG) is evolving to reflect concerns and strategies for protecting air quality on an airshed-wide level. Community Working Groups (CWGs) have been meeting since March 2003 and have identified Resource Management Burning as an issue that would best be addressed by forming a RWG subcommittee. As a result, a half-day workshop called “Best Practices for Resource Management Burning” was held on Tuesday, July 22, 2003 from 1:00 pm to 4:30 pm at the Ministry of Water, Land, and Air Protection (WLAP) Office in Smithers.

Notice of the workshop was posted to the BVLD Airshed Planning Website at www.bvldamp.ca, and direct invitations were issued to the following key stakeholders:

- ❑ Members of the four CWGs of BVLD Airshed Planning Process
- ❑ Forestry licensees from Kitwanga to Vanderhoof
- ❑ Woodlot owners
- ❑ Agriculturalists (dairy and cattle)
- ❑ Tourism operators
- ❑ Local government
- ❑ Timber Sales BC
- ❑ Ministry of Forests
- ❑ Ministry of Water, Land, and Air Protection
 - Environmental Protection Division, Skeena Region
 - Conservation Officer Service, Northern Region

A total of 18 individuals were in attendance, with all sectors above represented except for local government due to scheduling conflicts. A list of attendees is included as Appendix A. Background readings were distributed one week in advance of the workshop via the website consisting of the Bulkley and Nadina Smoke Management Plans, and information mailed out last year as part of WLAP Skeena Region’s Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation (OBSCR) Compliance and Education Promotion Program.

2.0 Workshop Goals

The two primary goals were to:

1. To share information on regulations and innovations related to resource management burning; and,
2. To develop an action plan consisting of short and long term strategies to reduce negative impacts of emissions from resource management burning through improved coordination and use of new innovations.

Quality of life and local economic development benefits to be derived from a coordinated approach to resource management burning were listed in the workshop invitation as follows:

- ❑ Reducing costs to the forest industry on crew deployment through improved coordination.
- ❑ Maintaining and improving positive community relations through public education on the true causes and effects of particulate matter.
- ❑ Reducing occurrence of burn bans through better coordination and use of recent innovations in resource management burning practises.
- ❑ Reducing occurrence of poor visibility days during peak tourism periods.

The Workshop Agenda is included in Appendix B.

3.0 Background

Laurie Gallant, facilitator, noted that this workshop is the first initiative of the BVLD Airshed Management Plan to happen at a regional level. The agreements and knowledge that result from this workshop will form a key component of the new Airshed Management Plan, which we hope to complete by March 2004. Ian Sharpe noted that the Ministry has collaborated with stakeholders before on this specific issue, and a good precedent exists for creating and implementing solutions that address concerns voiced by everyone at the table. As an example, burning by licensees and other individuals has been planned to respect charter plane flight paths and schedules.

A representative from each Community Working Group (CWG) made a short presentation on the work completed at the local level on the new Airshed Management Plan to date. Each CWG has been following approximately the same agenda, and for this reason, the Lakes report is reproduced in full and only highlights of special projects unique to each group are presented for the remaining three CWGs.

3.1 Lakes Community Working Group Update

Doug Bysouth read a report prepared by Mark LeRuez, current chair for the Lakes CWG. Accomplishments to date include:

- Developed an understanding of the present state of air quality within our airshed, with an emphasis on the Lakes District.
 - In general Burns Lake appears to have the worst air quality of the four communities within the BV/Lakes airshed
 - We have one PM₁₀ monitor in Burns Lake and no PM_{2.5} monitor; suspect that road dust may be influencing results during some periods throughout the year

- Addition of a PM_{2.5} monitor has been suggested, in addition to considering the utilization of a mobile monitoring station to compare air quality in other locations in the area.
- Developed an understanding of the issues.
- Identified key issues and actions to investigate further.
- Need for and feasibility of a woodstove changeout program
 - Lobby the Federal government to restrict the manufacturing of non-EPA approved stoves in Canada
 - type of carbon sink lost due to the beetle epidemic
 - quality of life indicators related to air quality.
- Recruited new members.
- We have increased our numbers from a low of two at the first meeting in March to a high of seven at June's meeting.
- Public awareness opportunities have been discussed such as:
- entering a display into the local trade fair
 - bringing the message to kids in schools
 - promoting the woodstove workshop by WETBC in the fall.

3.2 Bulkley Community Working Group Update

Dave Stevens and Paul Schwarz are the current co-chairs and scribes. Aside from the core activities outlined by the Lakes CWG, they added that the group is concerned about the smoke from open burning (including grass burning) and is identifying pollution issues related to road dust and wood stoves. They are also considering outside influences that can affect air quality in the valley and looking at strategies to manage these.

3.3 Kispiox Community Working Group Update

Sally Bardossi provided an update. The Kispiox CWG has joined the Bulkley CWG because they want more diversity than just their community can offer and saw it as a chance to eliminate double work.

There were significant seasonal peaks in levels of particulate matter typically during winter and spring, corresponding with the woodstove season. The CWG is concerned about bans on woodstoves and fears regulation, as other sources of heat are limited. Residential open burning is popular in the Kispiox region, and although grass and weed burning seems to have no significant effects on air quality in this region, it does result in complaints from immediate neighbours where burning is taking place. The Kispiox CWG is open to strategies that lead to solutions for the issues that concern them.

3.4 Morice Community Working Group Update

The Morice CWG had two representatives present that informed us of two very different air quality subjects. Harold Ludditt, shared his knowledge as a beekeeper and described some air quality triggers, specifically pollen that are outer respiratory tract irritants that can lead to serious asthma attacks. He described pollens that start flying from the end of March until October as

varying in size (3 to 15 microns) and is looking for a way to determine at which times of year pollens are likely significant contributors to local levels of particulate matter. Ian suggested that a microscopy for differentiating between pollen and non-pollen particles would be useful. Harold will be preparing a summary of his research for posting on the website.

Leroy Reitsma of Canfor-Houston assured us that they are close to making an announcement of a developer for the new Cogen project and that construction will be scheduled to begin next summer. He also suggested that the Morice CWG should develop an education program about keeping stove dampers open because keeping dampers down creates more smoke in the area.

4.0 Resource Management Burning in BC

4.1 Regulator's perspective

Christine Rigby, Air Quality Meteorologist for the Skeena Region of WLAP provided an overview of the current policies and practises in BC for open burning, including a summary of smoke management plans across the province. This PowerPoint presentation is posted as Appendix B at www.bvldamp.ca under Minutes for the Regional Working Group. Below is a summary table comparing the tools and compliance components used to manage smoke from open burning in the following 4 (four) plans:

- ❑ Bulkley Timber Supply Area Burn Plan for Smoke Management
- ❑ Nadina Forest District Burn Management Plan
- ❑ Quesnel Forest District Burn Plan for Smoke Management
- ❑ WLAP Kootenay Region, Nelson Forest Region and the Southeast Fire Centre Memorandum of Understanding

Table 1: Comparison of Smoke Management Plans across BC

Component	Bulkley	Nadina	Quesnel	Nelson
Sensitivity zones	√	√	√	√
Sensitive time periods	√	√	√	√
Adjacent areas	√	√	√	√
Maximum number/size of burns at one time	√	√	√	√
Maximum number/size of burns at one location	√	√	√	√
Local Weather Conditions	√	√	√	√
Increase number of days available to open burn (Venting Index (VI) requirements)	√	√	√	√
Spot VI forecast	√		√	
Custom VI forecast	√		√	√
Data collection	√			
Definition of ignition time of day	√			
Cooperation with local tourism operators	√	√		
Identification of smoke sources under Forest Service Mandate	√			
Consideration for visibility	√	√		
Notification to Dept. of Transportation and Highways and RCMP for highway safety issues		√		
Encourage alternatives to open burning of logging debris		√		
Ensure natural fires remain small		√		
Work with Dept. of Agriculture to develop guidelines for their land clearing		√		
Define mop up of prescribed burns and windrows		√		
Work with local governments to buy-in to plan and incorporate into own permit system		√		
Define allowable burn distance to residences			√	
Fire Centre to screen reference # applicants for proximity to structures				√
Fire Centre to ensure reference # applicants directed to obtain VI on day of burn ignition				√
Fire Centre to share custom VI forecasts with WLAP				√
Plan to incorporate air quality data where possible				√
Monitoring (air quality and visibility) to be developed jointly by WLAP, Fire Service and Forest Region				√
Forest Service (and Forest Region) to contact reference # holders with WLAP burn restriction messages (ie. no new material, no new burns)				√
Consultation (agreed on matrix) between WLAP, Forest Service and Forest Region where needed (# burns, where etc.)				√

4.2 Open Discussion

- The discussion started off with highlighting the charter flight operator's perspective. A problem exists with the non-universal application of visibility considerations (i.e. Area A and Area B) since flight paths cross both areas.
- Nadina and Bulkley plans include consideration for visibility whereas the Kootenay Plan recommends monitoring for air quality and visibility be developed by all partnering agencies (Ministry of Forests and WLAP). Although the Kootenay plan and guidelines are vague, situations are dealt with on a case by case basis versus the more specific requirements of the Bulkley plan that apply across the board.
- One of the major reasons for non-compliance is varying level of awareness of regulations, specifically for individuals who do not burn regularly. Industry has developed strategies to minimize non-compliance due to awareness such as defining it through the pre-work. Doug Bysouth showed us an example of Babine Forest Product's pre-work sheet that includes a list of conditions that must be met before lighting a pile.
- It seems that some individuals are not clear on the requirements for adequate burning conditions. Some people believe that a good VI is the only requirement and begin burning without confirming other conditions are being met. When all potential burns are activated on a good VI day, air quality can quickly turn from good to fair or worse.
- Although there are a number of ways to obtain regulatory information, lack of knowledge that a number of requirements exist and difficulty locating all required information is a common barrier. WLAP Skeena Region attempted to address this issue with the OBSCR Compliance and Education Promotion Program in Fall/Winter 2002-3. This project included sending out burning information and requirements to anyone with an active burn reference number in the two previous years. Illiteracy can be a sensitive barrier in some cases.
- Discussion about emission allocations (limiting the amount of open burning by ie. company/sector) focussed in part on challenges due to jurisdictional boundaries; more coordination is needed between districts; may need to revisit the idea of issuing bans versus restrictions.

For further consideration:

1. More education is needed – mediums and locations for getting information out needs to be very strategic i.e. matchbooks? Gas stations? Agriculture supply stores? Fridge magnets? Bear in mind that we can reach individuals who burn where they work and where they live.
2. If WLAP did another mailout, it could include only WLAP contact information for VI (only WLAP offers “one-stop-shop” for all requirements-ie. Environment Canada offers

only VI info). Environment Canada spot forecast info would be included, but more strongly specify the need to contact WLAP phone number for other regulatory information.

3. Could investigate 3 day VI option (as done in March 2001) –cost could be covered by pooling \$ from users to obtain the required \$20,000 funding for burn season
4. Review visibility needs of charter flight operators and high/moderate/low smoke sensitivity zone requirements.
5. How to improve on messaging from Ministry of Forests and WLAP to ensure people are aware that both agencies have requirements for open burning-can we use burn reference number system for this?
6. Evaluate features of Quesnel and Nelson plans to determine if aspects could be beneficial to incorporate into BVLD-area plans
7. If an additional mailout occurs, continue to ensure major licensee burn coordinators pass information on to burn contractors
8. Rules for exempting certain areas from burning need to be reassessed – rules do not need to be universal because ecosystems are not universal; consider species and moisture content (climate) since these factors affect fire and beetle infestation risk.

Table 4 – Phone numbers for venting and burn ban info

<p>Skeena Region Air Quality Information Line 1-888-281-2992 (free) -Environment Canada VI Forecast (publicly available locations) -Air Quality Conditions -Regulatory Requirements</p> <p>Environment Canada Voice Recording 1-866-640-6369 (\$0.95 per minute) -VI Forecast (publicly available locations)</p> <p>Environment Canada Spot Forecast 1-900-565-2255 (\$25 per forecast) -call 1-250-491-1544 to set up an account -site specific (lat/long, elevation and aspect) VI Forecast</p>
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Barriers:

- Environment Canada does not offer burn ban information (however WLAP does); note that each WLAP region has a different phone number

Feedback:

- Encourage people to call WLAP for all information including burn bans and VI.
- WLAP Skeena Region phone line has VI updated everyday at 7am and runs 24 hours a day; by 9am Monday-Friday, air quality information is updated. No cost for this call.
- To lessen confusion maybe minimize options for getting VI
- Promotion of free number that gives more information versus costly number that gives not as much, a fridge magnet?
- Would have to summarize numbers from each WLAP region to make the magnet?

Major licensees versus small operators face different barriers to issues of non-compliance. Barriers involve project magnitude (resource management burning). The challenge is planning and co-ordinating burns to meet both Ministry of Forest requirements to burn, while meeting WLAP requirements around smoke impacts.

Barriers:

- Some crews say they can't phone in for VI and burn ban info because of remote location
- Lack of funding within WLAP to employ a qualified person that could stretch the VI to a 3-day forecast; that extra day to play with can make a big difference. (note: in the past, burn operators faxed a map of their work area to a Ministry staffer who could then phone them back with clearance to light up when burning criteria was met.

Feedback:

- confirmed that crews can call in by phone/radio-not unreasonable to expect them to reach phone/radio accessible area at start of each day)
- A test burn is an alternative solution for the criteria of VI but must still check to see if a burn ban is in place
- Could someone be hired (like 3 day VI forecast idea above) to answer: Here are the areas that we need to burn in, and where can I burn today?

5.0 OBSCR: Compliance and Amendments

5.1 Summary of 2002-3 Skeena Region Compliance and Education Promotion Program

Three (3) main components

- ❑ Information package distribution by mail and site visit (contents are posted at www.bvldamp.ca) and included tips for open burning, a true/false checklist of conditions to meet before lighting the fire, and the Skeena Region Guide to the OBSCR.
- ❑ Complaint response and follow-up
- ❑ Burn ban helicopter surveys

The full PowerPoint presentation given by Christine is posted at www.bvldamp.ca.

5.2 Provincial Audit 2003-04 Summary

- ❑ coordinated by Environmental Protection Division of WLAP and Conservation Officer Service Staff
- ❑ three objectives:
 1. Assess the current state of compliance with the regulation
 2. Assess how to improve compliance with the regulation in future
 3. Assess the effectiveness of the regulation as being protective of the environment

6.0 Collaborating on Solutions

Ian Sharpe opened this part of the workshop by clarifying the responsibilities of his job with WLAP. Essentially, he spends a lot of time doing things to create cleaner air, including addressing resource management burning issues. He would like to gain insight from people in room into how to get open burning done without compromising human health issues and safety. Ian also thanked everyone for being here, and noted that it is unlikely that we will have this many people together again in the same room to focus on this topic.

6.1 Barriers and Opportunities

During the open discussion for the previous two topics, many strategies, barriers and opportunities were identified. For the next hour, an effort was made to review these ideas and bring in new ones so that there could be agreement at the end of the day on some common approaches. We started off by identifying strategies for episode management as follows:

- ❑ Analyze what must burn (reduce variety and quantity of fuel – be selective)
- ❑ Reduce pile size (landing versus roadside)
- ❑ Optimize pile configuration (affects machine type eg. Excavator vs bulldozer)
- ❑ Stay out of wet areas
- ❑ Classify available burn days to include “best” burn days for landclearing

It was noted that the major show-stoppers are clearly the size of the cut and the need to manage infestations (i.e. beetles).

Table 2: Barriers and Opportunities for Coordinating Resource Management Burning

Barriers	Opportunities	Comments
Provincial legislation does not match forest type and local conditions	Analyse what must burn and the impacts of coarse woody debris.	Find flexibility to deal with diverse piles and forests, especially in coastal conditions where the beetles are less of a risk - and on deactivated roads (less public throughway)
Roadside vs. landing logging	Analyse optimum pile size for smoke reduction	What is the smoke release period for various pile types and sizes?
MOF rules	Alternatives to burning ie. leaving debris as habitat	Risk of not burning, mandated to burn harvest within 12 months, due to legislation for liability
Lack of knowledge about sensitivity of riparian zone and implications of burning wet piles.	Collaborate with the watershed committee and agricultural associations to get the farmers on board	Watershed improvement people are trying to get the farmers to stay away from riparian zones
Machine type: bulldozer makes a dirty pile; better to use an excavator - has to do with landscape especially windrows with the riparian zone,	What are the costs? How do we get the proper equipment in the hands of the hobby farmer (need to make costs manageable)	Operator can make a clean pile with a CAT, has to do with time of year that you pile and how much time you take to pile, could there be a good CAT operator workshop? Consensus is that it is not something that you can learn in the office or from a presentation
Not all operators have same knowledge and experience regarding resource burning.	Do the small operators (forestry, agriculture) need a "hands on" program and/or presentation?	More complaints arise from small operators (forestry, agriculture) than large licensees (forestry)
Distribution of information	Work harder to involve small operators (forestry, agriculture) in programs to increase awareness of requirements around open burning	Can we get all appropriate associations (ie. Cattlemen's and Dairymen's) together for this?
Willingness among major licensees to collaborate efforts to burn and reduce overlap	A classification system for the number of piles allowed to burn each day based on factors such as pile type, weather etc.	Attempt to limit amount of burning each day and in various areas so we don't overload airshed even on good VI days.

6.2 Indicators for effective collaboration

Although we didn't come up with specific indicators for effective collaboration it was emphasized that there is a need for less responsibility placed upon the government and more control in the hands of burn operators . The provincial government needs outside involvement in making a more robust airshed plan for the future.

7.0 Building the Action Plan: Short and Long Term Strategies

Ian Sharpe addressed the group by making the following points:

- All CWG members are now working on overall goals and indicators for the BVLD Airshed Management Plan; in general, we are looking to lower PM 10 and PM 2.5 concentrations in ambient air quality.
- The planning process officially goes to March 31 but we won't have all the modelling done by that time
- There will never be a final solution but March 31 is an interim goal post; we want to have 70% of the issues defined with actions and for the other 30% a road map of issues.
- Resource Management Burning will be a key issue in the overall Plan so working backwards, let's take small groups of people to massage these lists and come up with steps
- Let's have sub-committee type of work, when that issue is exhausted then they can report back to whole group; all agreed that this seems like a good approach.

Laurie outlined the elements of an Action Plan, stating that it should be easy to understand and implement, and fully consider barriers; the following table is an example only and is not an endorsement of a specific Action Plan.

Table 3: Sample Action Plan

Objective:	To eliminate burning when a burn ban is in effect.
Barriers:	Unaware that burn ban is in effect Believe that good VI means it's good to burn regardless.
Methods:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include both burn ban status and VI in communications (i.e. burning hotlines, radio PSAs). 2. Explain why good VI isn't the only condition needed on message (include in PSAs). 3. Broadcast message on truck radios. 4. Forestry and Agriculture sectors recommended to attend "burn it right" course to guarantee workers have current information before lighting a fire.
Agency responsible:	WLAP
Timeline:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By September 15, 2003 2. By September 15, 2003 3. By September 15, 2003 4. By August 31, 2004
Budget:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. in-kind 2. in-kind 3. \$5000 4. \$20,000
Indicators of success:	Reduced number of complaints Reduced number of investigations during audits Attendance at "burn it right" course
Monitoring strategy:	Annual report for OBSCR compliance

8.0 Conclusions and Next Steps

The right attitude, technical knowledge, and resources are available on this subcommittee to reduce unwanted smoke-related impacts from open burning and to explore alternatives to burning.

A second workshop will be held on Monday, August 18, 2003 in the large boardroom of the WLAP office (same location) from 1 pm to 3 pm. Confirmation will be sent via e-mail, fax and phone as preferred.

Agenda Items

- ❑ Detailed look at barriers and opportunities
- ❑ Comparison of existing practises in the BVLD airshed
- ❑ Alternatives to burning
- ❑ Evaluation of suggestions to date
- ❑ Completion of the Action Plan.

The workshop ended at 4:15 pm.

Post-workshop note: A meeting for licensees was held Thursday, July 31, 2003 to prepare for the next subcommittee meeting.

Appendix A – Workshop Participants

	Last Name	First Name	Affiliation	Role in BVL D Airshed Planning Process
1	Bardossy	Sally	Kitwanga Community Association	Kispiox CWG
2	Brady	James	Nadina Forest District	Workshop participant
3	Bysouth	Doug	Welwood	Lakes CWG
4	Ehalt	Garth	Houston Forest Products	Morice CWG
5	Gallant	Laurie	Footprint Environmental	Facilitator
6	Imhof	Wendel	Alpine Lakes Air	Workshop participant
7	Ludditt	Harold	Retired (forester, paramedic)	Morice CWG
8	Nixon	Kevin	Conservation Officer Service, WLAP	Workshop participant
9	Reistma	Leroy	Canfor - Houston	Morice CWG, Coordinating Committee
40	Rigby	Christine	WLAP – Air Quality Meteorologist	Technical support
11	Schwarz	Paul	PIR	Bulkley CWG
12	Sharpe	Ian	WLAP – Environmental Quality Section Head	Technical support
13	Stevens	Dave	CHOKED	Bulkley CWG Coordinating Committee
14	Stewart	Craig	WLAP – Acting Regional Waste Manager	Advisory Committee alternate
15	White	Ken	MoF	Workshop participant
16	Wittwer	Eugen	Cattlemen's Association	Bulkley CWG
17	Wright	Kimberley	Footprint Environmental	Scribe
18	Zimmer	Darwin	woodlot licensee (BFP)	Workshop participant

Appendix B – Workshop Agenda

Time	Agenda Item	Objective	Resources/Tasks
12:45 pm	Arrivals Refreshments available	Informal gathering	Room set up, A/V equipment, last minute issues.
1:00 pm	Welcome and Introductions Announcements Review of Agenda	Review and refine agenda and objectives.	Copy of Agenda. News items relevant to planning process.
1:15 pm	Introductory Remarks: Status of the BVL D Airshed Planning Process 5 min. overview by Laurie and Ian 2 minute report from representative(s) for each CWG	Put Resource Management Burning Workshop into context of new Airshed Plan. Hear from each CWG on their confidence levels of the planning process and expected outcomes.	Representative from each CWG to prepare a statement on their work.
1:30 pm	What's new with Resource Management Burning in BC: An overview of policy, procedures, and innovations. Presentation by Christine Rigby.	Overview of current rules for open burning, insight into potential changes in OBSCR. Overview of smoke management plans across the province. Highlighting of innovations such as emission allocations, custom VI forecasting, and improved sensitive area designation procedures.	PowerPoint presentation and handout. Advance reading: Nadina and Bulkley Valley Smoke Management Plan.
2:15	Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation: How sharp are the teeth? Presentation by Christine Rigby	Review of 2002 OBSCR audit and open dialogue of compliance promotion for 2002. Comment on OBSCR audit for 2003/04.	PowerPoint presentation and handout. Advance Reading: Results of OBSCR audit.
3:00 pm	BREAK		
3:15 pm	Collaborating on Solutions Opening Remarks by Ian Sharpe. What would it take to better coordinate across the region?	Open the floor for brainstorming on barriers and opportunities. Identify indicators for effective	

	What would it take to use new innovations?	indicators for effective collaboration. May need to break into smaller groups.	
3:45 pm	Building the Action Plan: Short and Long Term Strategies Opening remarks by Ian Sharpe.	Open discussion – may need to break into smaller groups. Identify strategies for improving business opportunities and operations affected by open burning.	
4:25pm	Next meeting and agenda	Review New Action Items; Build next agenda.	