

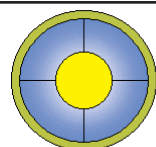
If you can breathe, you can make a difference

Contributed by
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Even people without asthma or respiratory problems noticed the poor air quality in the valley a few weeks ago. The layer of smoke and haze did not go unnoticed by the members of the Bulkley Valley Lakes District Airshed Management Plan (BVLAMP).

The BVLAMP Airshed Management Plan is a community-based process to improve air quality in the corridor that stretches approximately from Kispiox to Endako. The goals are to develop better methods of managing all sources of particulate air pollution and to reduce both baseline emissions and the number of poor air quality episodes in the BVLAMP.

The BVLAMP is working on an airshed plan because not only does bad air quality affect our health, but it also affects our quality of life and the economic well being of our communities. From stories of people with respiratory conditions having to move away, to pilots who lose money when visibil-



Bulkley Valley – Lakes District
Airshed Management Plan
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BVLAMP Airshed Management Plan
Working to Protect Health,
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diverse membership ensures that concerns from many different perspectives are incorporated into the plan. Local citizens with a variety of different backgrounds participate; including, farmers and ranchers, health professionals, clean air advocates, representatives from local government, managers from the local mills and air quality scientists from the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection. Each Community Working Group focuses on air quality issues in their community, as well as those issues that have implications for the regional airshed.

The Regional Working Group is made up of members from the CWGs and is charged with taking the recommendations and findings from the CWGs and working them into the plan. The

sources of particulate pollution for inclusion in the final plan. The major emission sources that have been identified include beehive burners, residential wood heating, forest harvesting, agriculture debris burning, land development, small sawmill burning, backyard burning and road dust. Most of these emission sources are seasonal, which will help the BVLAMP target the emission sources when they are contributing the most particulate pollution into the atmosphere. Detailed articles on each of these sources will appear in the Interior News over the next three months.

THE SCIENCE

The BVLAMP is also a process that uses science-based decision making combined with the local knowledge of community and regional working group members to address air quality.

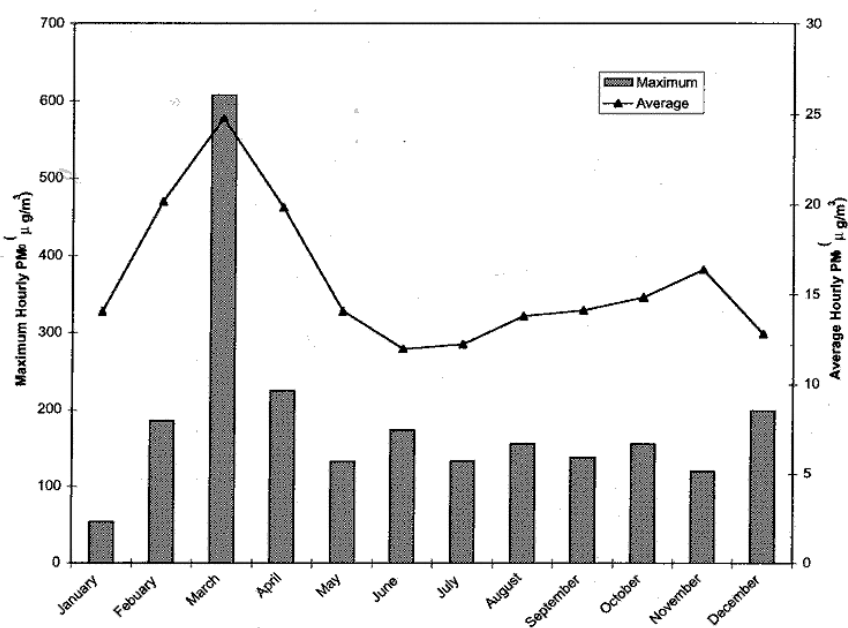
this year by Levelton Engineering. Modelling air quality in this approximately 35,000 km² airshed is a large endeavour but one that is well in hand. As the modelling progresses and becomes more representative of what's actually happening outside our windows, the results will be presented to community and regional working group members for their consideration, discussion and evaluation.

The BVLAMP is made possible by the financial contributions of a broad range of partners. The Ministry of Water Land and Air Protection and the North American Fund for Environmental Cooperation each contributed \$40,000. Together, Pacific Inland Resources, Canfor, Houston Forest Products, Decker Lake Forest Products, Babine Forest Products, NewPro and Cheslatta Forest Products contributed \$25,000. The BC Lung Associated contributed \$3000 to the budget as well. All together, the total budget for the planning process is 108,000 for 2003-2004.

The time, ideas, energy and expertise provided by the 50+ members of the working groups is all on a volunteer basis, and has been the backbone of building the plan. As with most community initiatives, it is the non-monetary contributions that really hold the process together.

While there are very large problems that will take time to solve, there are also smaller problems, which the members of the BVLAMP have been working very hard to resolve right now. Some of the recommendations by the CWGs have already been implemented. These initiatives include the development of a woodstove change-out program, the delivery of 'Burn it Smart' workshops for wood heating appliances, and public education on the causes and effects of particulate pollution.

The plan is scheduled to be finished by March 31, 2004. Anyone who is interested in becoming involved is encouraged to contact the facilitators at Footprint Environmental Consultants, at 847-1672 or drop by the office located on Fulton Avenue in Smithers. Please visit website at www.bvlamp.ca or contribute to the Wisdom Circle at your local Community Working Group meeting. "If you can breathe, you can make a difference". We look forward to hearing from you.



Relationship between Smithers hourly PM₁₀ (g m⁻³) and month for 1997-2001 (Levelton Engineering, 2002)

ity is too poor to fly, to realtors being asked where the cleanest air neighbourhoods are, it is clear that air quality impacts more than just the view.

THE PROCESS

The Community Working Groups, which have been meeting since March of 2003, in Burns Lake, Houston and Smithers, help identify and investigate the barriers and opportunities to cleaner air in the region. The Community Working Groups (CWG) meet once a month to work on the plan and bring forward concerns from their own communities. The

Regional Working Group also works on specific issues, like resource management and agricultural burning, which take place in all the communities and require regional coordination.

EMISSION SOURCES

Though the Beehive Burners have been in the media the most often as emission sources for particulate pollution, they are not the only contributors to the problem.

One of the milestones that the group recently met was to come up with a set of goals, indicators and strategies for each of the major emission

Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection Air Quality Meteorologist, Christine Rigby is tasked with coordinating and carrying out numerous modelling scenarios to get the working groups the background they need to make informed decisions. Ben Weinstein, Air Resources Technician also with the Ministry is developing airshed-specific emission data for the numerous sources of fine particulates identified by working groups as contributing to local air quality. His findings will be used in the modelling along with meteorological data prepared earlier