

2006 Airshed Management Society AGM

President's Message – “From Where I Sit”

This is a chronological account of how the Airshed Management Society and the current status of efforts to improve air quality evolved. It is written from the perspective of a forester who is now the president of our Society and an employee of Pacific Inland Resources/West Fraser Mills.

- 1996 -new WF Mills employee – lit and fought fires as needed
- 1999 -broadcast burn protégé
- 2000 -still broadcast burning as well as debris pile disposal
-last Bulkley resource burn – up north
- 2001 -with Gary Quanstrom as supervisor, we met with Ian Sharpe (*MOE*) to discuss other burn options (*September 21*)
-industry efforts were made to follow MOE direction in reducing impact of smoke on the airshed (Christine Rigby was MOE representative)
-incorporated notifying air operators into burn operations
-industry agreed to setting a piles/day burn limitation (*both notifications and burn limitations were pushed as significant & made it into the Ministry of Forests “Bulkley District Smoke Management Burn Plan”*)
- 2002 -Environment Canada made spot forecasts available to industry at a cost
-Ian also entertaining idea of spot forecaster (*now called Custom Venting Index forecasting*) with more ‘local’ knowledge (*introduction of Ben Weinstein one year later – now Arnel Castellan*)
-Ian recognized industries’ willingness to cooperate and hires facilitator (*Laurie Gallant*) to help develop a Plan (*now the Community Action Plan for Clean Air*)
-the Plan was to have a bigger scope than the previous 1999 Doug Johnson Plan
-the Plan was to have industry and community input and buy-in
-the Plan was to incorporate ‘other’ plans and be a one stop information source (*unfortunately legislation limits this ability as a district MOF Burn Plan is still required to deviate from the norm i.e. option to burn under local ‘expert’ opinion*)
- 2003 -February-Laurie and Christine were busy forming CWG’s (*community working groups*) and the Plan construction was underway
- 2004 -June 12 – New Plan Adopted
-Airshed Management Society (*non-profit*) formed
- 2005 -AMSociety AGM approved updates to the Plan
- 2006 -June - we now have our updated Plan
-issues tackled to date: resource burning, beehive burners, woodstoves, road dust, community awareness, transfer station burning, backyard burning, bylaws
- Future -continuing issues: stack emissions, some beehive burners, continually looking for ways to reduce resource burning impacts (*which is unfortunately limited by fire legislation*), road dust, woodstoves, regulation of external heating devices, small sawmill solutions, bylaw refinement, Canfor’s energy plant

-new issues: local mining developments (*Blue Pearl and Coal bed Methane*), announcement by CN to purchase 50 high-horsepower locomotives by end of 2007 to handle new freight at the container terminal in Prince Rupert plus the increased highway traffic the Prince Rupert shipping will bring

Strategies-improve understanding of influences (*weather, topography, sunrise/set*), communicate to emitters & public, support local attempts to improve (*beehive burner phase-outs, woodstove upgrades, promote alternate heating sources*), coordinate emission timing to minimize impacts, seek ways to reduce the amount of material burned, develop Best management Practices, institute bylaws

The Point- my scope of focus went from getting a job done, then done well, to coordinating my efforts with others' safety and direction (*toward improved air quality*) to being involved enough to look beyond my own impact towards what will make the biggest difference to everyone – I broadened my scope, just as the Community Action Plan for Clean Air intends to do over existing process and plans.