

News Release

June 2, 2006

Community forum to evaluate effectiveness of BVLD Airshed Management Plan, consider new ideas

(Smithers, Houston, and Burns Lake) A forum this month will further efforts to improve air quality in the Bulkley Valley-Lakes District.

The BVLD Clean Air Plan Review and Community Forum will showcase a collection of stories and strategies that complement the goals of the BVLD Community Action Plan for Clean Air. It will also provide an opportunity to evaluate the plan's effectiveness, refine its strategies, and elect a board of directors to oversee the five-year plan to reduce emissions from all sources of smoke and road dust.

Air quality has long been a concern in the Bulkley Valley-Lakes District. Last year, the region had air quality advisories and burn bans in effect for 21 days. So far this year there have been 15 days in the same category.

Laurie Gallant, who is steering the plan's implementation and evaluation, says the forum, the third of a series, will produce ideas that guide the annual workplan for the Airshed Management Society. "For example, as part of last year's evaluation, participants identified that more information was needed on emissions coming from a local panelboard manufacturing plant, and that more resources should be directed to assisting local governments to improve neighbourhood air quality, including alternatives to burning wood waste at transfer stations." Gallant said.

Anyone interested in becoming a director is asked to attend the AGM portion of the event, beginning at 2:30 pm. All current directors have indicated they will run again for office and welcome potential new members to join the Society and be an active part of designing and implementing the Clean Air Plan.

Clear priorities of stepping up our education efforts, building a strong organization, working more closely with burn operators and assisting municipalities formed the basis of a workplan for the Airshed Management Society in 2005. "We've made good progress on all of these fronts and will likely have similar priorities for 2006 – but we'll have to wait and see what happens on June 15th before we know for sure. Based on a recent wood burning appliance bylaw workshop in Smithers, I expect to see education programs to support new bylaws high on our list."

This year's forum is built on the theme of Ideas into Action. The speakers, participants and displays will cover issues such as woodstove exchange programs, CANFOR's plans for shutting down their beehive burner, energy efficiency, recycling, and partnerships between sectors. Four speakers will describe what their sector is currently doing and what more they will do to improve air quality in the region. The final session of the evening will be in open mike format and local residents are invited to comment on the Clean Air Plan (posted at cleanairplan.ca) and suggest amendments to that will help reach our goals more effectively.

The event takes place Thursday, June 15, at the Seniors' Recreation Centre in Houston (3250 14th Avenue). The AGM for the Society is from 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm, followed by the Community Forum from 5:30 pm to 9:30 p.m.

Admission is free of charge and open to all.

For more information and to view the Action Plan for Clean Air, visit www.cleanairplan.ca or phone Gallant at 847-1672 or 1-877-847-4701.



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For further information:

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