

President's Report for 2016 AGM
BVL D Airshed Management Society
- Dave Stevens

First off I want to thank all the Directors and volunteers who have worked on our issues this year, and to tip the hat to Susan Brookes, our woodstove exchange program coordinator. Thanks also to Smithers Councillor Greg Brown who has arranged our AGM venue. Our meetings this past year have been more productive because Frits Goossen and John Siebenga hosted us in their homes.

The AMS has had a busy year and there have been developments throughout the plan area.

There has over the past few years been a shift toward less open burning of logging slash which has to some degree become a feedstock for pellet manufacturing and other value-added uses. Pinnacle Renewable Energy has a plant in Burns Lake. There's a provincial policy change in the works with respect to the Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation which regulates slash burning. The link is: http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/codes/open_burning/

Ben Weinstein's¹ take on it is,

"I think the most important one [Provincial policy change] is the proposed changes to the Open Burning Smoke Control Reg. Burning will become slightly more constrained near communities but largely unconstrained once you get out of town. ... Comments are due July 21.

There may be some negative effects for valley towns like Smithers where smoke can channel in from burning locations afar. Have a close read of the high, medium and low sensitivity zone requirements."

Thanks to the Province of BC and the BC Lung Ass'n we have again been able to offer the wood stove exchange rebate program with Susan Brookes as coordinator. Our thanks especially to Markus Kellerhals and Menn Biagtan for help with this.

Several years ago the Canadian Ambient Air Quality Standard for particulate matter (PM) was established. This national standard setting and evaluation process has BC as a participant. It relies on validated data from three consecutive years (in this case 2011-2013) and some statistical jiggery-pokery to determine whether the standard is being met.

BC has consequently divided the province into air zones and in 2015 the air zone reports were produced for the first time. The AMS Plan area is in the Central Interior zone and only Smithers is exceeding the standard, although it's a close thing for Houston. The air zone report for our area is here:

[http://www.bcairquality.ca/reports/pdfs/Central Interior Air Zone Report 2011-2013.pdf](http://www.bcairquality.ca/reports/pdfs/Central_Interior_Air_Zone_Report_2011-2013.pdf)

A note, here – the bcairquality site is full of current and archival data about air pollution (or "quality" as the industry spin-critters like to say) and will repay reading for those who want the details, data and background on a lot of related issues on a province-wide scope.

In the Fall of 2015 Natalie Suzuki and Glen O'Krainetz of BC Environment's Clean Air Section in Victoria came to Smithers to meet with me and Skeena Region staff and the Town of Smithers. They explained the situation and said they had some (modest) resources to bring to bear and awaited a

1 Former AQ Meteorologist with Skeena Region, MOE, now AQ Meteorologist for the Oil & Gas / LNG Operations team

response from the Town. It isn't clear to me what that response is. Maybe that's what the wood stove survey is intended to address.

Also, the term and timing of the next air zone reports is unclear, it might well be annual, so we might have another set of reports covering 2012-2014. As of this writing I've asked about this and am waiting to hear back. Some of the uncertainty around a path forward comes from the fact that all of this is new territory and is being to some degree invented as we go along. A great opportunity to make your voice heard.

Northern Engineered Wood Products (NewPro) ceased operations in Smithers at the end of 2013, citing poor market conditions. An application was subsequently made for a major amendment to their emissions permit to allow operating the facility as a pellet plant. This permit amendment has not been made as I write and it isn't clear when this will happen. NewPro has resumed panelboard production recently, apparently as an interim measure.

The permit amendment process has been controversial and AMS members Dr. Elizabeth Bastian, GP Oncologist with Northern Health and Gina LaHaye, BSc.F, MA, presented on the subject to Smithers Council. Dr. Bastian pointed out that if NewPro re-opened this would constitute a health hazard. Smithers Council subsequently voted to support the permit amendment. There are, of course, a lot of details not addressed in this sketchy report.

I referred above to the wood stove survey. The Town of Smithers, with support from BC Environment, have let a contract to go to the door of every private residence in Smithers in an effort to better understand how many wood stoves of what kind are actually in use. This inventory information can then serve as a basis for estimating emissions and otherwise shaping emissions policy in the Town going forward. The agenda for the AGM has Jesse Hiemstra as a speaker, he's the contractor for the survey. The link to the Town's posting for the survey is: <http://www.smithers.ca/news/detail/smithers-wood-burning-appliance-survey-2016>. The AMS has supported this effort and will be following up on the results. Thanks to Markus Kellerhals of BC Environment we've been able to donate swag to encourage responses.

Federally, I've been a corresponding member of the Working Group on Substances in the National Pollutant Release Inventory (NPRI) for several years. I anticipate becoming more active (going to meetings) since the feds are apparently willing now to inventory releases of radionuclides, something in which I have a strong interest. Takes forever to get results but the outlook is better than it has been for some years – regime change no doubt.

We have an outstanding 2012 Clean Air Plan science goal to update the 2005 Micro Emissions Inventory. We recently signed a MOU with the BV Research Centre to collaborate in funding and administering this MEI compilation. It's early days yet but we'll keep everyone updated as this develops.

Laurie Gallant has undertaken to perform education and outreach in the Hazeltons. The AMS is supporting this work both with cash and in-kind donations. It will include developing and delivering a workshop featuring an alternative wood burning device called 'the rocket stove'. There will also be burn it smart education and workshops on other locally relevant issues.

We've lost a productive director as Lorne Davies has accepted a new position in Abbotsford and stood down. Our thanks to Lorne for his diligent work. Changes in conflict of interest regulation for municipalities has led to greater clarity about municipal councillors being board members, easing participation.

An unexpected challenge was finding a bookkeeper, which took an amazingly long time. Finally though we have secured the services of Brenda Zantingh of Smithers, now retired from her career as an accountant and bringing that training and breadth of experience to our financial reporting.

Last but not least, our diligent Directors for this past year:

Dave Duncan
Barry Watson
Lorne Davies (ret.)
Frits Goossen
Doug Bysouth
Susan Schienbein
Rob Newell
John Siebenga
Brad Layton
Garth Ehalt

and yours truly,

Dave Stevens