



Summer 2011

# Clean Air News

"To preserve and enhance air quality in southwest Washington"

## School Air Toxics Study Final Report Now Available

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued the final report concluding its study of outdoor toxic air pollution at St. Helens Elementary School in Longview. The study confirmed the presence of air toxics, but measurements showed concentrations are below the levels of concern associated with health problems from both short-term and long-term exposure.

In March 2011, experts from EPA, the Washington Department of Ecology, the Cowlitz County Health Department and the Southwest Clean Air Agency convened at a public meeting at St. Helens Elementary School to discuss the results from the study and answer questions.

To see the presentations and to learn more about the study, visit our website at [www.swcleanair.org/toxics.html](http://www.swcleanair.org/toxics.html). Results of the study are available online at [www.epa.gov/schoolair](http://www.epa.gov/schoolair).

### What Burn Ban?

If you heat your home with wood or have plans for outdoor burning, this is for you. During the winter months when inversions can trap air pollution at ground level, the Southwest Clean Air Agency may call either a Stage 1 or Stage 2 burn ban. These burn bans prohibit all outdoor burning and impose restrictions on the use of wood stoves, pellet stoves and fireplaces unless wood burning is your sole source of heat. During a Stage 1 burn ban, the use of all fireplaces and uncertified wood stoves and inserts is prohibited. During a Stage 2 burn ban, all wood heating is prohibited, including certified units and pellet stoves. Again, homes with no other source of adequate heat are exempt from these burn bans.

If you would like to be notified of when we call these burn bans, sign up for our e-mail list at [www.swcleanair.org/email.html](http://www.swcleanair.org/email.html).

## GO3 Project Comes to Vancouver

The Southwest Clean Air Agency is sponsoring Jason Lee Middle School's participation in the Global Ozone Project, also called the GO3 Project. Students at the Vancouver, Washington school will be monitoring ground-level ozone pollution and learning about air pollution and the ozone layer. The Southwest Clean Air Agency is providing the funding for the monitoring equipment and the Global Ozone Project is providing the technical assistance and framework to connect this program worldwide. Students collect data and upload it to Google Earth where they can compare results with students around the world.



The Southwest Clean Air Agency will use this program for public outreach, teaching students, parents and faculty about ground-level ozone pollution. Currently there are more than 70 schools participating in the GO3 Project and more than 300 schools are on the waiting list. Monitoring equipment and a computer are provided to schools and pre-loaded software automatically uploads data to Google Earth. The GO3 Project also provides teachers with curriculum, videos and other learning tools. For more information about the program, visit [go3project.com](http://go3project.com).

## EPA Updates National Air Toxics Assessment

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released an update of a computer tool that helps federal, state, local governments and other stakeholders better understand the potential health risks from exposure to air toxics. The National Air Toxics Assessment (NATA) contains 2005 emissions data submitted primarily from the states for 178 toxic air pollutants. Models are used to make broad estimates of health risks for areas of the United States. The tool is not designed to determine actual health risks to individuals living in these areas.

Because the data quality submitted varies from state to state, it is also not possible to use the data to compare risks between different areas of the United States.

The assessment shows that EPA, the states, and industry are continuing to make progress to reduce air toxic emissions. Between 1990 and 2005, air toxic emissions were reduced by about 42 percent from industrial and mobile sources.

NATA is used to identify which geographic areas, pollutants and types of emission sources might need closer investigation to more fully characterize potential risks and determine if actions may need to be taken to protect public health. EPA can also use the assessment to work with communities to design their own local assessment, improve the agency's emissions inventories and identify priorities for expanding the air toxics monitoring network. Once risks are fully characterized, state air agencies can decide if steps should be taken to reduce air toxics emissions.

Under the Clean Air Act, EPA issues standards for industrial and mobile sources of air toxic emissions. These sources emit millions of tons of toxic air emissions that can cause cancer or other serious health effects, such as reproductive or birth defects, or adverse environmental and ecological impacts.

More information on NATA and instructions on using the tool, visit [www.epa.gov/nata2005](http://www.epa.gov/nata2005).

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Southwest Clean Air Agency

## Is Your Firewood Ready?

One of the simplest ways to achieve a hot fire and cleaner wood burning is to burn properly seasoned firewood. Now is the time to acquire your firewood to let it season for six months before you need it next fall. Using only dry, seasoned firewood will help you get the most heat you can from your firewood, saving you money. If you have a moisture meter, insert the meter tip into the long side of a split piece of wood and test it. Firewood with 20% or less moisture is ready to burn.

IS YOUR WOOD  
**READY**  
TO BURN 

For more information about properly seasoning and stacking your firewood, visit [burndryfirewood.com](http://burndryfirewood.com). For tips on cleaner burning in general, visit [www.swcleanair.org/burnclean.html](http://www.swcleanair.org/burnclean.html).

## Fuel Costs Getting You Down?



Saving money at the gas pump is as easy as riding a bike. With warming weather and more daylight hours, consider leaving the car at home now and then and biking to work or errands instead. Plus biking more may help you lose weight.

For ideas on what gear to use, planning your best route or how to make a commute by bike easier, visit [www.clarkcommute.org/s2\\_2\\_bicycling.aspx](http://www.clarkcommute.org/s2_2_bicycling.aspx). For safety information, maps and videos, including instructions on how to cross the I-5 bridge, visit <http://www.oregonmetro.gov/index.cfm/go/by.web/id=10799>.

## Southwest Clean Air Agency

### SOUTHWEST CLEAN AIR AGENCY

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### BOARD MEETINGS

When: First Thursday of every month  
Where: SWCAA offices  
Contact: 360-574-3058

### CLARK COUNTY OUTDOOR BURN INFORMATION

Contact: 360-574-3058, ext. 6

### BURN INFORMATION - OTHER COUNTIES

Contact: 1-800-633-0709

### NEWSLETTER

Kathy Finkle, Editor

For questions or comments regarding this newsletter, call 360-574-3058, ext. 111 or e-mail [traci@swcleanair.org](mailto:traci@swcleanair.org)



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## Clean Air & Yard Care



Many people associate air pollution with cars, airplanes, large industry, power plants and other large fuel consumers. The small engines used in lawn mowers, hedge trimmers, chain saws and leaf blowers, however, represent a significant source of air pollution.

These smaller engines lack pollution control equipment which means that using a gasoline-powered lawn mower for one hour emits as much pollution as driving a new car for 140 miles.

Most small engines emit high levels of carbon monoxide (CO), a colorless, odorless, poisonous gas. In addition to CO, small engines emit ozone-forming hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides. Ground-level ozone impairs lung function and contributes to smog formation. There are ways to help clean the air while maintaining your yard. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

### Avoid Spills and Overfilling

- Spilling gas and overfilling the tank allow for gasoline to evaporate
- With evaporation, hydrocarbons are released into the atmosphere

### Maintain Equipment

- Change oil and clean or replace air filters regularly
- Use the proper fuel/oil mixture in two-stroke equipment
- Keep blades sharp to improve fuel efficiency

### Use Manual Tools

- No fuel required, which means no emissions produced
- An easy way to get exercise and have fun, without any pollution

### Reduce Mowing Time

- The less time the mower is running, the less fuel is used
- Decrease lawn area with trees or shrubs or use low-maintenance turf grasses that grow slowly

Happy gardening!