



# Clean Air News

Winter 2000

"...to preserve, enhance and protect  
the quality of our region's air resource..."

## Air Quality & Environmental Information

There are several ways in which residents of southwest Washington can get information on air quality not only for our region, but also across the United States. Data from a number of air monitoring stations operated by local air authorities across Washington State is available on the internet. Air contaminants which are monitored include carbon monoxide, fine particulate (PM10 & PM2.5) and ozone (summertime only). The data is updated every hour. The data presented on this site is real time, which means that it has not been validated for accuracy. The internet address for the Air Quality Telemetry Network is <http://airr.ecy.wa.gov/Public/aqn.html>, or you can link to it by going through the SWAPCA website.

## Other sites... for air quality and environmental information:

SWAPCA: [www.swapca.org](http://www.swapca.org)  
Web site maintained by SWAPCA. Links to other sites, local and state air pollution regulations, Notice of Construction forms (under development), and other information.

AIRSDATA: [www.epa.gov/airsdata/](http://www.epa.gov/airsdata/)  
Access to air pollution data for the entire United States.

National Allergy Bureau:  
[www.aaaai.org/nab/pollen.stm](http://www.aaaai.org/nab/pollen.stm)  
Current information on pollen and spore counts throughout the United States.

Global Change Master Directory:  
<http://gcmd.gsfc.nasa.gov>  
Directory of earth science and global change data.

National Service Center for  
Environmental Publications:  
[www.epa.gov/ncepihom/](http://www.epa.gov/ncepihom/)  
National EPA Publications  
Catalog.



## Did You Know?

If you live in a clean environment and take good care of your lungs, you should have roughly 80% of your lung capacity left by the time you

reach the age of 80. However, when air pollution, smoking and other risk factors lower your lung function below 65% of normal, you may start to feel the symptoms of lung disease.

## News from the

### Board of Directors

There is currently a vacancy on the SWAPCA Board of Directors. The Board of Directors, the governing body of SWAPCA, is comprised of one county commissioner from each of SWAPCA's 5 counties, one representative from the largest city in each county and one additional member, the member-at-large. The make-up of the Board of Directors is set forth in the Washington Clean Air Act, Chapter 70.94 Revised Code of Washington.

The vacancy is the Member-at-Large position which constitutes the 11th member of the board. The Board of Directors will select the replacement from a pool of applicants. Board members are paid \$25.00 for each monthly board meeting attended.

The current members of the Board of Directors are Edward McLarney - Skamania County; Craig Pridemore - Clark County; Dennis Hadaller - Lewis County; Ron Ozment - Wahkiakum County; Bill Lehning - Cowlitz County; Ron St. Jean - City of Longview; Linda Elliott - City of Cathlamet; John VerValen - City of Centralia; Mary Ann Duncan-Cole - City of Stevenson and Jack Burkman - City of Vancouver.

### News from the Staff

A new engineer has joined the SWAPCA staff. Wade Strange was hired to replace an engineering position which had been held by Jennifer Brown. Jennifer left SWAPCA last November to work for the Port of Longview. Wade graduated from Southern Methodist University with a B. S. in Mechanical Engineering and a M.S. in Environmental Engineering from the University of Texas at Austin. Prior to joining SWAPCA, Wade worked in environmental consulting in Texas. Scott Hill, who also worked in engineering, resigned in the fall of 1999. That vacancy has not been filled.

### Our Air Quality

#### Regionwide Issues

SWAPCA handles your public funds with the highest regard. In our most recent financial audit, SWAPCA was given a third consecutive report with no findings of needed improvements. The State Auditor concluded, "SWAPCA management has demonstrated a genuine concern for the safeguarding of public resources, which has resulted in an exemplary audit history".

Future air quality issues may include changing SWAPCA's name to better convey the message of being a clean air agency rather than a control authority, encouraging the use of electric/gasoline hybrid low emission vehicles in the region, deciding whether to focus on global climate change issues, and utilizing a proposed regional technical center to gain access to atmospheric models that will help with long-term air quality planning.

The Washington State Legislature is currently considering a number of air pollution issues that will have an effect on our region's citizens. These issues include clean fuel vehicles, prohibiting the use of MTBE in gasoline, and outdoor burning.

Sources of air pollution in our region who are registered with SWAPCA include autobody shops, cabinet manufacturers, rock crushers, asphalt plants, chemical manufacturing, wood products manufacturing, dry cleaners, gasoline distribution, natural gas and diesel-fired boilers, electric power plants, concrete batch plants and many other areas except automobiles, pulp and paper mills and aluminum plants. There are currently 639 air pollution sources registered with SWAPCA. Clark County has 346 registered sources, Cowlitz County has 146, Lewis County has 132, Skamania County has 10 and Wahkiakum County has 5 sources.

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Southwest Air Pollution Control Authority

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# County Issues

## Clark County

In the summer of 1999, higher than expected levels of ground level ozone were recorded when temperatures were only in the 80° F range. High ozone levels typically occur at summer temperatures of greater than 90° F. The Vancouver/Portland area has shown the potential for experiencing ground level ozone levels which exceed the health standard. Three exceedances of the 1-hour ozone standard occurred during the summer of 1998. The national health standard allows no more than 3 exceedances in any 3-year period. During the summer of 1998, a total of 8 Clean Air Action Days were declared. These declarations are issued to inform the public of a potential unhealthy air quality episode and to encourage the increased use of mass transit and curtailment of activities, such as using gasoline powered lawnmowers, which contribute to ozone formation.

In 1999, SWAPCA began a program to document changes in visibility in the Vancouver area that may be caused by an increase in atmospheric levels of fine particulate. A 35-mm camera was installed on the roof of Smith Tower in downtown Vancouver to photographically record vistas in the direction of Mt. Hood. A nephelometer is also being used in this study to quantitatively measure any reduction in visibility caused by fine particulate in the air. A future project may involve using urban visibility modeling to identify specific sources or source categories that contribute to decreasing visibility.

Carbon monoxide levels in Clark County continue to remain within acceptable levels. This achievement is because of proactive programs that are in place. Wide spread air quality monitoring has shown that the highest carbon monoxide levels continue to be measured at the Fourth Plain and Ft. Vancouver Way site near Clark College.

## Lewis County

The largest source of air pollution in Lewis County is the coal-fired Centralia Power Plant. This plant is installing \$225 million in air pollution control equipment to reduce emissions of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides. The equipment will be fully operational by December 31, 2002. New industrial sources that are coming to Lewis County include a Boise Cascade wood/plastic fiber product plant and a 460-Megawatt electric power generation facility to be operated by Chehalis Power. SWAPCA believes that Lewis County has good air quality. Installation of air quality monitors in Chehalis will document the air quality. Equipment being

installed consists of a nephelometer and a PM2.5 monitor. PM2.5 is fine particulate matter that is smaller than 2.5 microns in diameter. These particles are invisible to the human eye. Lewis County is growing in population, which will impact the air quality in the county.

## Cowlitz County

Although the Longview/Kelso area has a higher density of heavy industry than any other area in southwest Washington, the air quality of Cowlitz County is considered to be good. Cowlitz County is also growing in population and steps are being taken to ensure that the air quality does not degrade. SWAPCA works with the building departments in Cowlitz County, and the other counties as well, to make construction applicants aware of the need to work with SWAPCA in controlling and reducing any air contaminants generated by their facilities. SWAPCA currently operates a PM10 monitor at the Longview City Shop. A PM2.5 monitor is planned to confirm a good status for this pollutant.

## Skamania County

Skamania County, while having a small number of registered sources of air pollution, has an especially unique air quality issue. The Columbia River Gorge Commission is clarifying in its Management Plan the level of air quality and visibility that should exist and be maintained in the Gorge Scenic Area. Establishing a long-term visibility goal is an issue the Gorge Commission will be working on and SWAPCA will implement. Future issues may involve air quality monitoring near the City of Stevenson, located in the center of the Scenic Area, to compare with monitoring data currently being collected at the west and east ends of the Scenic Area. Cutbacks in slash burning by the U.S. Forest Service have been helpful in improving visibility in the Gorge.

## Wahkiakum County

Wahkiakum County's popularity as a retirement area means that these citizens would like to maintain their excellent air quality status. A future Wahkiakum County project may involve air quality monitoring to document the levels of air quality that should be preserved for future generations. The challenge facing SWAPCA will be in finding adequate funds to implement this monitoring project as well as the other mentioned monitoring projects in a timely manner.



Bob Elliott, Executive Director  
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Asbestos Information... ext 24

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