

Columbia Valley wood smoke reduction focus group

Meeting summary

Meeting date:	May 15, 2013	Meeting time:	4:30-6:30 pm
Location:	East Whatcom Regional Resource Center		
Attendees:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community - Kurt Thompson, Davie Moe, Lou Piotrowski, Rebecca Boonstra, Jerry Debruin, Viktor Vetkov, Phil Cloward • Whatcom County - Wain Harrison, Fire Marshal • Opportunity Council – Mark Schofield • NWCAA staff – Laura Curley, Rebecca Brown, Katie Skipper, Julie O’Shaughnessy 		
Purpose:	<p>Address community’s concerns from previous meeting - listen to understand</p> <p>Identify areas of agreement</p> <p>Clarify Agency’s obligations and resources</p> <p>Identify next steps</p>		
Action:	<p>Rebecca Boonstra stated that the subcommittee was going chair the meeting and give NWCAA staff an opportunity to speak. She said that they formed the group as a subcommittee of the EWRRRC and that they want this group to continue as a part of the EWRRRC.</p>		

“Areas of Agreement” presented

Topic	Agreement?	Comments
<i>Columbia Valley has a serious air quality problem</i>	Questionable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efforts should be regionally inclusive to bring in Foothills area, not just Columbia Valley • Not convinced that present air quality needs improvement or that it’s a serious problem (worse when shake mills were running) • Find ways in which to address broader issues, multiple emission sources (outdoor burning, woodstoves, garbage burning, etc.) • Sounds exaggerated, problem intermittent
<i>We all deserve to breathe clean air</i>	Questionable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “In a perfect world” • Not all community members deserving
<i>We need to be able to keep our families warm</i>	Questionable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wood burning is a way of life, provides income and is a free and accessible resource • Should be a goal or objective (e.g. wood bank managed by community members) • Much discussion around this topic
<i>Chimney smoke contributes to local air pollution</i>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement reached after community emphasized existence of other sources. This is just one contributor • Need more monitors to compare air quality to other areas with similar topography and meteorological conditions, not Bellingham or other areas that have marine influences. Rockport and Marblemount suggested.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What level of reduction is necessary to meet federal standards? Need incremental targets with specific target dates
Topic	Agreement?	Comment
<i>Community input is essential to success</i>	Questionable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Input” triggered strong negative response as it implies NWCAA plan • Change “community input” to “community involvement” • Want joint plan; joint effort=joint plan • Community involvement is a MUST • Group should be called “Clean Air Committee” not “wood smoke”
<i>Plan development should be open and transparent</i>	Yes	
<i>Residents need to understand the problem</i>		
<i>Residents need to take action to solve the problem</i>		
<i>We want success without having to pursue enforcement</i>		

Dry wood program – Phil proposed developing a permitted, community-based dry wood program. Through community members’ existing relationships with state and private land owners, wood could be harvested and staged so it had time to dry before being distributed by the community and for the community.

Agency Obligation and Resources:

- Government agency
- Duty to the public to address air quality issues
- Governed by and report to a Board of Directors
- Duty to enforce air quality laws
- Expertise, funding and capacity
- Resource to evaluate solutions

Next Steps:

- Identify stakeholders facilitator to run meetings
- Identify person to organize meetings, develop agenda and disseminate information
- Identify areas of interest to be represented by a task force that would be formed to develop a JOINT PLAN between the East Whatcom Community Council subcommittee on clean air and NWCAA.

Approval of May 15th, 2013 meeting minutes: On motion by Jerry, seconded by Wain, the minutes of May 15th, 2013 meeting notes were approved at June 19th, 2013 meeting.