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NW Clean Air celebrates 50 years of air quality work

MOUNT VERNON – The [Northwest Clean Air Agency](#) is turning 50 this year.

The agency – first known as the Northwest Air Pollution Authority – was founded in 1967 by Island, Skagit, Whatcom, and San Juan counties. (San Juan County later withdrew.) The agency enforces federal, state and local air quality regulations in the current three member counties.

The agency's formation followed the passage in 1967 of the [Washington Clean Air Act](#), which states: "It is declared to be the public policy to preserve, protect, and enhance the air quality for current and future generations. Air is an essential resource that must be protected from harmful levels of pollution. Improving air quality is a matter of statewide concern and is in the public interest."

The state's Clean Air Act gave counties the ability to create their own air pollution control authorities or form multi-county authorities. Currently, [seven local clean air agencies](#) are active in the state.

Throughout 2017, the local air agencies and the [Washington Department of Ecology](#) will celebrate 50 years of working to improve, maintain and protect the state's air quality.

Northwest Clean Air works with more than 400 registered sources of industrial air emissions, plus individuals on a variety of air quality issues.

A [seven-member Board of Directors](#) oversees the Northwest Clean Air Agency. The board includes representatives of local governments and an at-large member.

The agency also has an Advisory Council made up of local experts in public health, air pollution control, chemistry, meteorology, and other related disciplines, as well as representatives of industry and the environmental community.

The Northwest Clean Air staff is led by new executive director Mark Buford, who took over the position Jan. 1. He was preceded by Mark Asmundson (2006-2016), Jamie Randles (2000-2006), Terry Nyman (1984-2000), and Glen Hallman (1971-1984).

See www.nwcleanairwa.gov for more information on air quality issues, regulations and Northwest Clean Air activities.

The Northwest Clean Air Agency is responsible for enforcing federal, state and local air quality regulations in Island, Skagit, and Whatcom counties. In addition to permitting and regulating industrial sources of air pollution, the agency provides services and information related to asbestos, indoor air quality, outdoor burning, woodstoves and fireplaces. More information about the agency is available at www.nwcleanairwa.gov.