

On the Air

Thomas Fire Causes Weeks of Unhealthy Air

Our communities experienced unhealthy – and even at times hazardous – air quality during the weeks-long Thomas Fire in December 2017. The extensive time with poor air quality and the volume of ash deposited were unprecedented, and the District worked with our County Public Health Department partners as well as other local, regional, state, and national resources to provide guidance. People were strongly advised to minimize their exposure to wildfire smoke by staying indoors, wearing protective N95 masks whenever they had to be outdoors, using air cleaners to keep indoor air clean, and leaving the area if possible. People were also strongly advised to wait to clean up ash until the fire’s containment had grown and the air quality conditions improved to safe levels. We also worked with the neighboring air districts in Ventura and San Luis Obispo counties to share regional air quality concerns.

Starting on December 5, 2017 and into the weeks that followed, the District issued a dozen advisories to the media and Santa Barbara County residents, regarding the Air Quality Warning in effect (later downgraded to a Watch) and the tools available on our website to monitor air quality conditions, including smoke forecasts from a U.S. Forest Service Air Resource

Advisor, forecast maps, and current conditions as shown via our Air Quality Index (AQI) chart and monitoring station data. Advisories, forecasts, and forecast maps were also provided in Spanish.

The Air Quality Watch was cancelled on December 29, 2017 with a reminder that winds can stir up ash even after a wildfire is put out. County residents are encouraged to be good neighbors and not use leaf blowers – which stir up ash – during the cleanup period.

Smoke primarily consists of particles and gases like nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, and hydrocarbons that may be toxic. The PM 2.5 particles in wildfire smoke can lodge deep into the lungs and cause serious health effects, including aggravated asthma, nose and throat irritation, and lung damage. Some particles can affect the cardiovascular system. Visible dust and larger particles (known as PM 10) pose less of a threat to the lungs and heart than fine particles, but the larger particles can break down into the smaller particles over time.

During the first week of the Thomas Fire, we saw “Hazardous” fine particle (PM 2.5) conditions recorded at our Santa Barbara monitoring station. We also saw levels reach “Very Unhealthy”

and “Unhealthy” at other monitoring stations in the county during that time. We have PM 2.5 monitors in Santa Barbara, Goleta, Santa Maria, and Lompoc; we installed temporary PM 2.5 monitors in Carpinteria, Santa Ynez, and Los Alamos during the fire.

Exposure to several days of elevated PM 2.5 levels can make existing health conditions worse. People experiencing continued symptoms – including coughing, difficulty breathing, wheezing, chest tightness or pain, palpitations, nausea, or fatigue – should talk to their doctors.

The District also advises that people consider buying an air-filtering device and placing it in a designated area of the home to create a “clean air room” to spend time in during a wildfire. When purchasing an air filter, it is important to choose one with a High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filter, which will remove harmful particles from the indoor air.

The District and County Public Health also issued advisories for the following incidents in the summer and fall:

- ☉ Alamo Fire near Santa Maria (July)
- ☉ Whittier Fire near Santa Ynez Valley (July)

- ☉ Vegetation fires near Lompoc (September)
- ☉ Smoke impacts from other California wildfires (October)

Sign up on our District website to receive air quality advisories by email: www.OurAir.org/subscribe/. View current air quality conditions on our website: www.OurAir.org/todays-air-quality/.

Follow us on Twitter at [@OurAirAdvisory](https://twitter.com/OurAirAdvisory) and [@OurAirSBC](https://twitter.com/OurAirSBC) for the latest advisories and news on air quality conditions.

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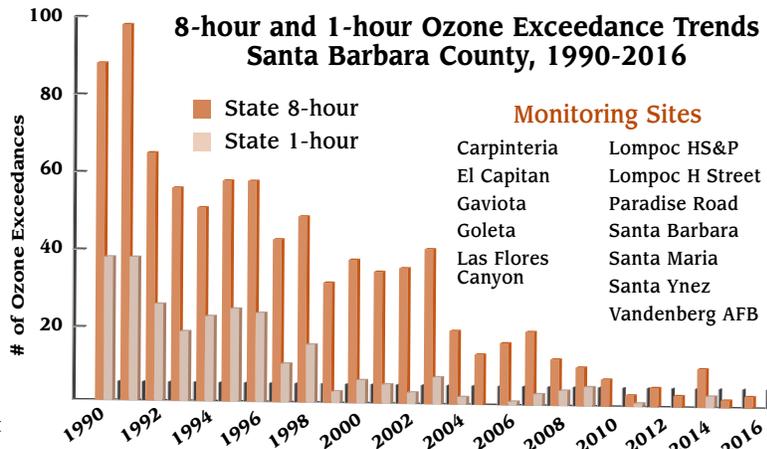
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The District will be transitioning to an electronic-only On the Air newsletter in 2018. If you would like to receive the e-newsletter, please contact Public Information Officer, Lyz Hoffman, at HoffmanL@sbcapcd.org.

County's Status for State Ozone Standard Changes

The District Board of Directors voted at their August 2017 meeting to revise the 2016 Ozone Plan Rule Implementation Schedule following the state's change of Santa Barbara County's attainment designation from non-attainment to nonattainment-transitional. Nonattainment-transitional means that the county is getting close to meeting the ozone standard and the District must evaluate whether all of the planned measures are still necessary to meet the standard. The state finalized the change in designation in April 2017.

The changes to the plan involve implementing three measures that reduce nitrogen oxides (NOx) emissions from boilers, water heaters, and process heaters (revisions to Rules 342, 360, and 361) in 2018 instead of 2017, and moving to contingency three measures that reduce reactive organic compounds (ROC)



Santa Barbara County has seen a decrease in the number of ozone exceedances over time.

emissions from solvent cleaning, surface coating of wood products, and graphic arts products (revisions to Rules 321, 351, and 354). The District sent the updated 2016 Ozone Plan to the California Air Resources Board in August 2017. (The District's Community Advisory Council also discussed the revised schedule at a meeting earlier this year.)

High up in the atmosphere, the ozone layer occurs naturally and

guards against harmful ultraviolet rays. At ground level, ozone is produced when NOx and ROC react in the sunlight and heat; ground-level ozone harms crops, buildings, and human health. Studies have shown that exposure to ground-level ozone, even at very low levels, can lead to many respiratory health problems, particularly over time.

Every three years, the District prepares an Ozone Plan that

includes stationary source control measures to meet the California 8-hour standard for ozone, which is 70 parts per billion (ppb). The most recent version is the 2016 Ozone Plan. Per state law, if an air district not in attainment experiences three or fewer exceedances of the ozone standard, that district is designated as nonattainment-transitional. Nonattainment-transitional air districts are then required by the state to reevaluate their Plan's scheduled control measures.

Nonattainment-transitional districts shift back to non-attainment if any one monitoring station records four or more exceedances. In 2017, the county has so far experienced only one day that exceeded the state ozone standard. Since 1990, the District has seen a downward trend in ozone levels throughout the county.

For more information, visit <https://www.ourair.org/planning-clean-air/>.

Mike Willis Retires

Before he brought his IT expertise to the District, Mike Willis worked on a submarine in the Navy for five years and taught at a submarine training facility in San Diego. His 10-year Navy career – which began when he entered the Navy's advanced electronics program after high school – also included studying the repair and maintenance of electronic warfare, inertial navigation, and radar systems.

The New Mexico native then worked in technical support, programming, and software development positions before and after he moved to Santa Barbara in 1998. He earned his



Mike Willis and his son, Curt, in Greece.

A.S. in Network Engineering from Santa Barbara City College while working full-time.

In 2001, he started what would be a nearly 16-year career at the District. Willis retired earlier

this year from his position as Electronic Data Processing and Programming Analyst III (although he continues to help the District with special projects).

Looking back on his time at the District, Willis said it was hard to pick one favorite project he worked on, as "there are so many after 15 years." On the list, he said, are an automation feature for inspections reports, the District's distributed file system, and the Permitted Facilities Map, for which he took the lead in researching and developing the programming. He also worked on the District's timesheet and budget programs, and helped maintain the day-to-day computer systems.

Since retiring, Willis said he's enjoying his new chapter – living in Greece with his wife, son, and their extended family, he said, adding that he's been enjoying watching his son learn how to fish and snorkel. What he misses about living in Santa Barbara County and working at the District, he said, are the donuts in the Santa Maria office, bike rides in Santa Barbara, and his co-workers, who he called "by far the most dedicated and balanced people I've ever worked with."

To view one of Willis's projects, the Permitted Facilities Map, visit <https://map.ourair.org/>.

Air Heroes at Annual Camp Wheez

Kids having fun goofing around outside at a summer camp is nothing new. Kids who have asthma having fun goofing around outside at a summer camp while wearing red capes that say “Air Hero” is nothing new either.

Since 1978, Camp Wheez in Santa Barbara has been a free weeklong summer camp for kids in grades 1-6 who have asthma; kids from anywhere in Santa Barbara County attend. The camp was founded by Dr. Myron Liebhaber — first in collaboration with the American Lung Association and subsequently sponsored by Sansum Clinic. Run with the help of numerous volunteers, Camp Wheez provides the kids with tips and tricks to manage their asthma, classes with respiratory therapists and doctors, and fun indoor and

outdoor activities, including arts, crafts, and games. On the last day of camp, parents can attend a brief workshop and speak with an asthma specialist.

“Part of the purpose of having the camp is that these kids have asthma. It often doesn’t occur to them that there are other kids in the world with asthma,” said Dr. Liebhaber.



“They see other kids and they see how they’re handling it. They can meet each other and be prepared for the future.”

The campers also get inspiration from their 12-to-18-year-old camp counselors, most of whom once attended the camp themselves. The kids, Dr. Liebhaber said, see that “they can integrate themselves into anything” and “there are no limitations.”



Kids enjoyed their time at Camp Wheez in August 2017

Approximately 10 percent of school-aged children have asthma, according to the

Centers for Disease Control. Numerous studies have shown that air pollution can harm lung development in children and can contribute to early childhood asthma, and ozone (or what is known as smog) can make asthma symptoms worse. Kids, seniors, and people with asthma or other lung and heart conditions are most vulnerable to the effects of air pollution.

Camp Wheez is always held during the second week of August. The camp is limited to 50 kids. Applications are accepted all year long; campers don’t need to be patients of Sansum Clinic and don’t need to be referred by a doctor.

For more information, visit: <https://www.sansumclinic.org/medical-services/allergy-immunology/camp-wheez>.

District Board Roundup

Following are the highlights of the recent 2017 Board meetings:

May

- ☞ Authorized the Chair to execute a Memorandum of Agreement with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation for the District to contribute funds to the 2017 Vessel Speed Reduction (VSR) Program, to make it possible for the collaborative incentive Program to start in June or July.
- ☞ Viewed Protecting Blue Whales & Blue Skies, a seven-minute film by Earth Media Lab for the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation: <https://www.ourair.org/air-pollution-marine-shiping/>.
- ☞ Received a presentation on the Tri-Counties Hydrogen Readiness Plan and statewide hydrogen vehicle programs.

June

- ☞ Approved the Fiscal Year 2017-18 Budget.
- ☞ Approved recommendations of the District Hearing Board Nominating Committee to appoint Mr. Terence Dressler as a public member on the District Hearing Board for a 3-year term; and to appoint Mr. Francis Peters, Jr. as a public member on the District Hearing Board for a 3-year term.
- ☞ Received a presentation on greenhouse gas mitigation opportunities in Santa Barbara County.
- ☞ Received a presentation on the status of the District’s clean air funding programs.

August & September

- ☞ Authorized the Chair to sign an agreement with San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District to collaborate on Central Coast Go-Zero: Zero Emission Vehicle Readiness Implementation in the Tri-Counties using a California Energy Commission Zero Emission Vehicle Grant.
- ☞ Received presentation on the 2016 Annual Ambient Air Quality Report for Santa Barbara County.
- ☞ Approved changes to the 2016 Ozone Plan Control Measure Implementation Schedule.
- ☞ Reappointed Aeron Arlin Genet as Control Officer through and including January 21, 2021.

October

- ☞ Approved recommendation of the District Hearing Board Nominating Committee to reappoint Robert J. Saperstein to the Legal position on the District Hearing Board for a three-year term.
- ☞ Authorized the Chair to sign a letter of support for H.R. 3682, the Blue Whales and Blue Skies Act, which would establish a national recognition program for shipping companies that voluntarily slow speeds in the Santa Barbara Channel region.
- ☞ Received a presentation on the Santa Barbara County’s emission inventory.
- ☞ Received a presentation from District staff on the District compliance program.

Board of Directors

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Councilmember James Mosby
City of Lompoc

Mayor Cathy Murillo
City of Santa Barbara

Mayor Alice Patino
City of Santa Maria

Mayor Jim Richardson
City of Solvang

District Board Calendar

All meetings start at 1 p.m. For meeting agendas, call Sara Hunt at 961-8853 or visit www.ourair.org.

Check the website for updated information, as meetings can be changed or cancelled.

March 15, 2018

Board of Supervisors' Hearing Room
511 East Lakeside Parkway
Santa Maria, California
93455

May 17, 2018

Board of Supervisors' Hearing Room
511 East Lakeside Parkway
Santa Maria, California
93455

June 21, 2018

Board of Supervisors' Hearing Room
105 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, California
93101

Community Advisory Council

The District Community Advisory Council meets, as needed, in Buellton. The public is welcome. For more information, call Sara Hunt at 961-8853 or visit www.ourair.org.

Get Cash for Your Fireplace

Homeowners are encouraged to voluntarily remove or replace their woodstoves or wood-burning fireplaces this season in exchange for \$500-\$1,000 from the District's Wood Smoke Reduction Program. Approved by the District's Board in March 2017, the program is similar to other successful voluntary programs throughout California in its goal to reduce levels of harmful particulate matter and black carbon, a short-lived climate pollutant emitted when wood burns.



Wood smoke from fireplaces and woodstoves makes up nearly a third of wintertime fine particle pollution in the county, according to state data. When temperatures drop, the District hears from residents concerned about the health effects from wood smoke in their neighborhoods. Breathing in wood smoke – which contains gases in addition to particulate matter – harms the lungs and heart.

Under the program, the District provides qualified applicants a \$1,000 check to help cover the costs of replacing a wood-burning stove or fireplace, or a \$500 check to help cover the costs of removing it; actual replacement or removal costs will be greater than the incentive offered.

For more information on the program's requirements and process, visit www.OurAir.org/heatclean/.



Blue Whales & Blue Skies Act

The Blue Whales and Blue Skies Act— introduced in September by Congressman Alan Lowenthal and co-sponsored by Representatives Salud Carbajal, Julia Brownley, and Rohit Khanna — would create a recognition program through NOAA’s Office of National Marine Sanctuaries for shipping companies that voluntarily reduce vessel speeds in the Santa Barbara Channel region. Slowing ship speeds reduces air pollution, the risk of fatal ship strikes on whales, and harmful underwater acoustic impacts.

The recognition program would be modeled after the voluntary vessel speed reduction (VSR) incentive program implemented in 2014 by the District and



partners Ventura County Air Pollution Control District, Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, Environmental Defense Center, and National Marine Sanctuary Foundation.

The program established through the Act, also known as H.R. 3682, would initially apply to shipping companies slowing down

in the Channel area. Within the next few years, the feasibility of extending the recognition program to all shipping channels along the U.S. Pacific Coast between Canada and Mexico would be assessed.

“Studies show that ship speed is directly correlated to whale mortality in these tragic strike

incidents. Along the Atlantic coast, speed reductions have boosted the population counts of endangered right whales. And closer to home a voluntary program at the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles have protected blue and humpback whale feeding areas,” Congressman Lowenthal said.

Aeron Arlin Genet, Director of Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District noted, “We want to thank our Congressional representatives for taking this effort forward to help build our partnership with the shipping industry. Cleaner air for everyone and safer conditions for whales — that’s what all of us are working together to create.”

(Continued on page two)

District Helps Develop Local GHG Mitigation Options

The District held two workshops in September to discuss and gather input on strategies for greenhouse gas mitigation in Santa Barbara County. In this context, greenhouse gas “mitigation” means reducing greenhouse gases (GHGs) to address increases from specific land-use projects or as part of local climate action plans. Because GHGs are a global pollutant, mitigation can potentially occur anywhere in the world to offset locally generated GHG emissions. However, local mitigation efforts could achieve additional local benefits.

District staff are currently summarizing the comments received during the workshops

and revising the strategies as appropriate. Staff will post the information on the District’s website as a resource for lead agencies under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), project applicants, and government agencies preparing or updating climate action plans.

For land-use projects, the District’s role under CEQA is to review projects to be approved by lead agencies (usually, the city governments or County government) and assess whether air quality impacts have been adequately evaluated and mitigated. The District recommends that lead agencies prioritize GHG mitigations to occur first on site, then near the

site, then within California, and, only if other options have been exhausted, outside of California.

Ultimately, any decision about whether to implement a particular mitigation measure as part of the CEQA process would rest with lead agencies. CEQA mitigation measures must be quantifiable and enforceable, and they must go beyond regulatory requirements.

Prior to the workshops, the District identified several ideas for GHG mitigation strategies to be discussed at the workshops. Strategies discussed included:

- Rebates for zero-emission vehicles

- Expanded use of zero-emission school or transit buses
- Expanding battery-electric and fuel-cell electric vehicle infrastructure
- Planting urban forests
- Conservation projects on working agricultural land
- Retrofitting buildings for energy efficiency and renewable energy, and battery storage
- Expanding the vessel speed reduction incentive program

For more information, visit www.OurAir.org/ghgmitigation-sbc/.



Business Focus

Don Ward Retires from Hearing Board



Don Ward described his time on the Hearing Board while receiving a Resolution of Appreciation from the Board of Directors in June.

His work on water issues in Orcutt has earned him the nickname “Mr. Water” and his resume of community volunteer work runs the gamut, but it was his 30 years of service working on air quality issues on the District’s Hearing Board that prompted the Board of Directors to give Donald Ward a standing ovation.

Ward, a member of the Hearing Board since 1987, retired from the position earlier this year and was presented with a resolution of appreciation at the June 2017 Board of Directors meeting. David Schmarje, who served for 22 years on the Hearing Board, was also given a resolution of appreciation upon his recent retirement. Schmarje and Ward hold the

record for the longest-serving Hearing Board members in Santa Barbara County.

During his three decades on the Hearing Board, Ward served as Chair and Vice-Chair several times, participated in major proceedings affecting permitted businesses, and heard hundreds of variance petitions. “Be fair and objective,” he said, when asked what advice he’d give to incoming Hearing Board members. “My dad always taught me that the majority rules but the minority has to be heard.”

Ward was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and served in the Air Force before starting his 34-year career for Boeing, a job that he said allowed him to travel all over the world and see all 50 states. It wasn’t until he turned 80 that he stopped flying, he said, adding with a laugh that he

planned to go skydiving – and not for the first time – for his 85th birthday this year. When he’s not spending time with his grandkids, he’s volunteered his time for the last 25 years a member of the Board of Friends of Waller Park, a group that has paid for the Orcutt park’s play structures and disc golf course and covered the cost of planting trees. Ward also visits local assisted living facilities with his acapella group.

In speaking to the Board of Directors before receiving his resolution of appreciation, Ward reflected on his time on the Hearing Board. “It’s been a real privilege to serve on the Board – it really has,” he said. “We all know that clean air is vital for our existence here in Santa Barbara County, and the [Hearing] Board serves one little facet of making that happen for us.”

Whales (cont’d)

At the District’s October 2017 Board of Directors meeting, the Board voted to have the Chair sign a support letter. Other support letters for the Act include those from the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA), the Ventura and Bay Area air districts, Visit Santa Barbara, The Chamber of Commerce of the Santa Barbara Region, Port Hueneme, the Environmental Defense Center, and multiple other non-profit organizations.

Find more information at www.OurAir.org/air-pollution-marine-shipment/.

Amtrak Pacific Surfliner® Transit Transfer Program

If you’re hopping off the Amtrak Pacific Surfliner® in Guadalupe or Santa Barbara, hop right on over to the Guadalupe Flyer or Santa Barbara MTD bus – for free. Under the train’s Transit Transfer Program, rail riders who show their ticket receive free bus and shuttle connections from certain Pacific Surfliner® stations. In Santa Barbara County, those stations are the ones in Guadalupe and Santa Barbara.

*Find more information:
<http://www.pacificsurfliner.com/temp/PacificSurfliner-TransitTransferProgram.aspx>*

Make sure to book your train trips to and from the Santa Barbara area at least three days ahead of time to take advantage of the 20 percent discount available through Santa Barbara Car Free, a cooperative partnership led by the District. You can show your ticket to participating Santa Barbara businesses to receive additional discounts and deals. Current deals run through 2017. Visit www.SantaBarbaraCarFree.org in early 2018 to see next year’s special offers.

