



WBEA@Work

AN UPDATE ON WBEA'S LATEST WORK
VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2, FEBRUARY 2012



[HOME >>](#)

[NEXT >>](#)

[BACK >>](#)

Executive Director's Report

Dr. Kevin Percy

As 2012 begins, WBEA is moving forward with implementation of the science-based monitoring approved by Members at our General Members' meeting on September 14, 2011.

WBEA staff is actively finalizing scopes, budgets, deliverables, and reporting requirements so contracts are in place as soon as possible. At the same time, WBEA air monitoring supervisors and staff are building upon the 99% performance achieved within the network during the months of November and December. In 2012, analyses from the terrestrial monitoring program's intensive 2011 Forest Health Survey at 23 jack pine plots will be completed, and work on an integrated "State of Forest Health" report will commence. With advice from science advisors and program managers, all three WBEA member committees, Ambient Air Technical (AATC), Terrestrial Environmental Effects Monitoring (TEEM) and Human Exposure Monitoring (HEMP), are working to identify monitoring priorities and direction in order to prepare proposed plans for 2013, due in May.

AATC Network Assessment Report Workshop

The AATC has scheduled a special one and a half day workshop in Fort McMurray to discuss the 2011 Air Monitoring Network Assessment report submitted by two North American network design and operations experts. The AATC committee and other interested Members

Continued on next page...



Top: Air monitoring equipment at AMS 6 Patricia McInnes in Timberlea, Fort McMurray.

Bottom: WBEA-TEEM forest health tower in winter.

IN THIS ISSUE

[Executive Director's Report >>](#)

[Recent Air Quality Health Index Numbers for the RMWB >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts First Member's Open House >>](#)

[Wood Buffalo Environmental Association Membership >>](#)

[WBEA Air Monitoring Network >>](#)

[Environment Canada and Alberta Environment and Water Meet with WBEA >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts NESCAUM Representatives >>](#)

[Quick Updates >>](#)

[WBEA Staff Index >>](#)

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AN UPDATE ON WBEA'S LATEST WORK VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2, FEBRUARY 2012



[HOME >>](#)

[NEXT >>](#)

[BACK >>](#)



[Continued from previous page...](#)

Executive Director's Report

will work through the various recommendations on site locations, continuous and non-continuous measurements, meteorological and other considerations in order to devise a reasoned plan for network enhancement, while at the same time taking into account regional development and federal/provincial policy initiatives.

WBEA Scientific Publications in 2012

2012 will see a significant number of WBEA peer-reviewed original scientific papers and a peer-reviewed Elsevier book "Alberta Oil Sands: Industry, Energy and the Environment", comprising some 19 chapters, either published or in review. Authored by WBEA contracted scientists and staff, these manuscripts will be based upon work completed from 2009-2011 and accepted by AATC, TEEM, and HEMP, though submitted reports. Among the publications, will be those on the WBEA "real-world" characterization of emissions from stacks and mine heavy haulers as well as receptor modeling work linking air quality with the terrestrial environment. WBEA's monitoring work with stable isotopes of lead, sulphur and mercury will contribute new data for apportioning elemental (and polycyclic aromatic compounds) concentrations measured regionally in lichens to natural and anthropogenic sources. This novel, credible information will serve to reduce the degree of uncertainty about the fate of air emissions and their deposition to terrestrial systems.

This is indeed an exciting time for our now 28 Member organization. We thank our Members for their continued support as we anticipate our role in implementing the regional air monitoring plan expected to be rolled out jointly by the governments of Alberta and Canada.



IN THIS ISSUE

[Executive Director's Report >>](#)

[Recent Air Quality Health Index Numbers for the RMWB >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts First Member's Open House >>](#)

[Wood Buffalo Environmental Association Membership >>](#)

[WBEA Air Monitoring Network >>](#)

[Environment Canada and Alberta Environment and Water Meet with WBEA >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts NESCAUM Representatives >>](#)

[Quick Updates >>](#)

[WBEA Staff Index >>](#)

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AN UPDATE ON WBEA'S LATEST WORK
VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2, FEBRUARY 2012



HOME >>

NEXT >>

BACK >>

Recent Air Quality Health Index Numbers for the RMWB

Dr. Kevin Percy

Alberta Environment and Water (AEW) has adopted an Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) to report current and forecast upcoming air quality.

The AQHI provides a number from 1 to 10+ to indicate the level of health risk associated with local air quality. The AQHI is a guide to the relative risk presented by a mixture of air pollutants. Not all odour-causing compounds are included in the mixture used to calculate the AQHI.

The hourly AQHI values from four of the regional communities where WBEA operates air monitoring stations have been analyzed for the period January 1, 2011 through September 30, 2011. WBEA was involved in this AQHI pilot project prior to the rollout of the provincial program in September. Percentages shown have been rounded.

Data from the nine month pilot program show:

A low risk (AQHI numbers 1 to 3) to health was reported:

- 92.4% of the time at Fort McMurray (WBEA station 7)
- 91.6% at Fort McKay (WBEA station 1)
- 92.5% at Fort McKay South (WBEA station 13)
- 98.9% at Fort Chipewyan (WBEA station 8)



Air Analyzers

IN THIS ISSUE

[Executive Director's Report >>](#)

[Recent Air Quality Health Index Numbers for the RMWB >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts First Member's Open House >>](#)

[Wood Buffalo Environmental Association Membership >>](#)

[WBEA Air Monitoring Network >>](#)

[Environment Canada and Alberta Environment and Water Meet with WBEA >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts NESCAUM Representatives >>](#)

[Quick Updates >>](#)

[WBEA Staff Index >>](#)

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Website: www.wbea.org

Continued on next page...



AN UPDATE ON WBEA'S LATEST WORK VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2, FEBRUARY 2012



[HOME >>](#)

[NEXT >>](#)

[BACK >>](#)

Continued from previous page...

Recent Air Quality Health Index Numbers for the RMWB

A moderate risk (AQHI numbers 4 to 6) to health was reported:

- 4.4% of the time at Fort McMurray
- 4.3% at Fort McKay
- 4.3% at Fort McKay South
- 1.2% at Fort Chipewyan

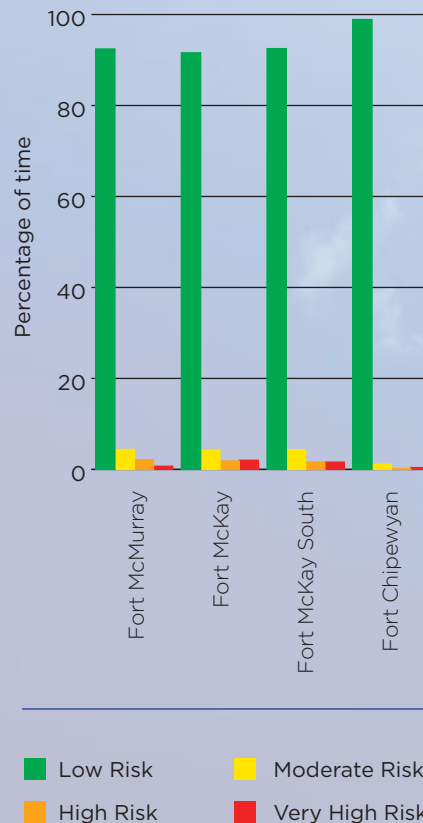
Almost all AQHI numbers indicating moderate (4 to 6) to high (7 to 10) risks from air quality were reported during the extended 2011 regional wildfire episode, which consumed some 700, 000 hectares.

A high risk (AQHI numbers 7 to 10) to health was reported:

- 2.2% of the time at Fort McMurray
- 1.9% at Fort McKay
- 1.6% at Fort McKay South
- less than 1% at Fort Chipewyan

According to AEW, occasionally, when the amount of air pollution is abnormally high, the AQHI number may exceed 10, such as air quality associated with wild fire smoke. Very high health risk AQHI numbers, above 10, from local air quality occurred between 0.7 and 2 % of the time at Fort McMurray, Fort McKay, and Fort McKay South. All hours with numbers above 10 occurred during the most intense portions of the regional fire smoke episode that lasted between mid May and end of June, 2011. Extremely high concentrations of fine particulate matter, causing reduced visibility, were measured by WBEA during this event, as well as occasional elevated levels of ground level ozone. Visit www.wbea.org to view current regional AQHI numbers. ■ ■ ■ ■

Summary of AQHI numbers at 4 WBEA Air Monitoring Stations from Jan. 1st to Sept. 30th, 2011.



IN THIS ISSUE

[Executive Director's Report >>](#)

[Recent Air Quality Health Index Numbers for the RMWB >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts First Member's Open House >>](#)

[Wood Buffalo Environmental Association Membership >>](#)

[WBEA Air Monitoring Network >>](#)

[Environment Canada and Alberta Environment and Water Meet with WBEA >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts NESCAUM Representatives >>](#)

[Quick Updates >>](#)

[WBEA Staff Index >>](#)

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AN UPDATE ON WBEA'S LATEST WORK
VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2, FEBRUARY 2012



HOME >>

NEXT >>

BACK >>

WBEA Hosts First Member's Open House

Jane Percy

The first Open House for WBEA Members was held on October 18th and provided representatives of WBEA's multi-stakeholder membership with an opportunity to view the latest developments in our air, terrestrial and human exposure monitoring programs.

AMS 6 Patricia McInnes

Members met at WBEA headquarters for a brief introduction and then boarded a Diversified bus for the day long trip. While travelling through Timberlea, Members had the opportunity to view and learn about some new initiatives at AMS 6 Patricia McInnes. Recently installed equipment such as the automated sequential precipitation sampler, the joint mercury monitoring study with Environment Canada, and the pilot project comparing Sharp versus TEOM analyzers for PM_{2.5} monitoring were discussed.

AMS 1 Fort McKay

The next stop of the day was AMS 1 Fort McKay, located in the northwest corner of the community of Fort MacKay. Sanjay Prasad, AATC Program Manager, lead the group through an explanation of the integrated, passive, and specialized sampling underway at this station. SO₂, TRS, THC, O₃, NH₃, NO, NO₂, NOx, PM_{2.5}, global radiation, leaf wetness, humidity, wind speed and direction, and the temperature at a height of 2 meters (m) and 10 m are all measured continuously at AMS 1. A precipitation sampler measures rain and snow. Non-continuous measurements include PM₁₀, VOC's, chemical analysis of precipitation, semi-volatile organic compounds and several passives. WBEA's Human Environmental Monitoring Program (HEMP) pilot



Sanjay Prasad, AATC Program Manager, speaks to Members at AMS 1.

projects including an electronic nose and a Pneumatically Focused Gas Chromatograph (PFGC) are also operational at AMS 1.

Sanjay Prasad demonstrated WBEA's daily maintenance log, chain of custody forms, and computerized information systems including Sample-It, Doc-It, and Watch-It.

On the air monitoring station roof, Members were able to view analyzer ports, the annular denuder, and to discuss aspects of station placement.

Continued on next page...

IN THIS ISSUE

[Executive Director's Report >>](#)

[Recent Air Quality Health Index Numbers for the RMWB >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts First Member's Open House >>](#)

[Wood Buffalo Environmental Association Membership >>](#)

[WBEA Air Monitoring Network >>](#)

[Environment Canada and Alberta Environment and Water Meet with WBEA >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts NESCAUM Representatives >>](#)

[Quick Updates >>](#)

[WBEA Staff Index >>](#)

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AN UPDATE ON WBEA'S LATEST WORK VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2, FEBRUARY 2012



[HOME >>](#)

[NEXT >>](#)

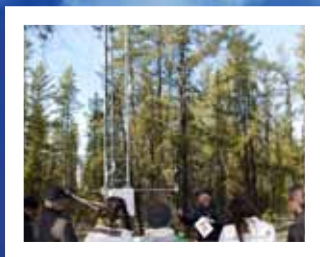
[BACK >>](#)

Continued from previous page...

WBEA Hosts First Member's Open House



Top: Members view equipment at AMS 1.



Bottom: Dr. Allan Legge, WBEA Science Advisor, speaks to members at forest health plot JP 104.

Forest Health Plot JP 104

Next on the tour was a stop at WBEA's forest health plot JP 104, located southeast of Shell Albian Sands, just off the Firebag road. The JP 104 site (JP indicates a predominately jack pine ecosystem) is one of WBEA's most heavily instrumented forest health plots. Protected by solar powered bear fencing, JP 104 has two towers. A 28 m tall tower holds meteorological instruments and passive air monitors and a 15 m tall tower holds solar panels to power the instruments and keep batteries charged. Kevin Percy and Allan Legge each spoke about the development of the forest health monitoring project. Mike Solohub, BioSync Consulting Inc., described features of the towers and WBEA's tower network. Towers located outside the Athabasca River valley allow measurements of air pollutants and meteorology at locations without electricity, therefore expanding WBEA's surveillance of the ecosystem in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.

Equipment located at JP104 measures:

- Continuous temperature, relative humidity and wind speed/wind direction
- Solar radiation
- Precipitation from rain and snow
- Soil moisture and temperature
- Soil ion concentrations
- SO₂, O₃, NO₂, NH₃, HNO₃ by passive filters
- O₃ and CO₂ continuously

Data collected at the remote site is transmitted daily to the WBEA database.

Members also observed the "early warning" edge plot, located in a fen on the perimeter of JP 104. Monitoring edge effects determines early indications of forest change, at the outer boundary of a tree stand, before the stand itself is affected.

Dr. Ken Foster, Terrestrial Environmental Effects Monitoring (TEEM) Program Manager, assisted by Sarah Eaton, TEEM Field Technologist described the extensive forest health survey which was completed over a six week period from mid-August through September, 2011. JP 104 was one of the 23 plots surveyed, and Members were able to view the staked vegetation and soil plots and tagged trees, and learn about the rigorous scientific protocols employed during the survey.

Continued on next page...

IN THIS ISSUE

[Executive Director's Report >>](#)

[Recent Air Quality Health Index Numbers for the RMWB >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts First Member's Open House >>](#)

[Wood Buffalo Environmental Association Membership >>](#)

[WBEA Air Monitoring Network >>](#)

[Environment Canada and Alberta Environment and Water Meet with WBEA >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts NESCAUM Representatives >>](#)

[Quick Updates >>](#)

[WBEA Staff Index >>](#)

WBEA @Work is a publication of the Wood Buffalo Environmental Association, #100-330 Thickwood Blvd., Fort McMurray, AB.

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AN UPDATE ON WBEA'S LATEST WORK VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2, FEBRUARY 2012



[HOME >>](#)

[NEXT >>](#)

[BACK >>](#)

[Continued from previous page...](#)

[WBEA Hosts First Member's Open House](#)




[WBEA's New Field Operations Centre \(FOC\)](#)

After leaving JP 104, the group travelled south on Highway 63 to the new WBEA Field Operations Centre, located in the TaigaNova Eco-Industrial Park. This eco-friendly development uses green infrastructure coupled with innovative sustainable design to minimize environmental impacts. WBEA leased space at TaigaNova after assuming responsibility for the operations and maintenance of our air quality monitoring network. Two large bays have since been extensively renovated to accommodate WBEA air and terrestrial staff and their equipment.

During the tour of the FOC, Members viewed staff office space, the analyzer repair and storage room, the Ambient Ion Monitor's clean lab, garage bays for the Mobile Monitoring Unit and the portable monitoring unit, a room designed for freezers to hold TEEM samples, and additional space for expansion.

Sanjay Prasad gave a comprehensive presentation explaining WBEA Data Management including data capture, documentation, daily systems operations, and data validation including WBEA's extensive QA/QC procedures.

Heavy late afternoon traffic on Highway 63 precluded a visit to AMS 7 Athabasca Valley, which has recently been moved to a new compound and housed in a new building.

WBEA plans to make the Members' Open House an annual event. Stay tuned for an upcoming 2012 Open House date!   



Left: Ken Foster, TEEM Program Manager, talks about the 2011 Forest Health Monitoring Project.



Above: WBEA Members and Staff at the New Field Operations Centre (front row l to r) Melissa Pennell, WBEA; Yu Mei Hsu, WBEA; Rachel So, Suncor Energy Inc.; Prabal Roy, Alberta Environment and Water; Allan Legge, WBEA; Jessica Wong, Suncor Energy Inc.; Jane Percy, WBEA; (second row l to r) Sarah Eaton, WBEA; Shannon Makinson, Cenovus Energy Inc.; Mike Solohub, BioSync Consulting Inc.; Brooke Bennett, Syncrude Canada Ltd.; Rachel Mintz, Environment Canada; Clementina Okoro, Nexen Inc.; Charles Bower, Nexen Inc.; Martin Zhekov, Canadian Natural Resources Ltd.; (third row l to r) Ken Foster, WBEA; Kevin Percy, WBEA; Sanjay Prasad, WBEA; Lori Adamache, Fort McKay First Nation; Anne Simpson, Syncrude Canada Ltd.

IN THIS ISSUE

[Executive Director's Report >>](#)

[Recent Air Quality Health Index Numbers for the RMWB >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts First Member's Open House >>](#)

[Wood Buffalo Environmental Association Membership >>](#)

[WBEA Air Monitoring Network >>](#)

[Environment Canada and Alberta Environment and Water Meet with WBEA >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts NESCAUM Representatives >>](#)

[Quick Updates >>](#)

[WBEA Staff Index >>](#)

WBEA @Work is a publication of the Wood Buffalo Environmental Association, #100-330 Thickwood Blvd., Fort McMurray, AB.

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Website: www.wbea.org



AN UPDATE ON WBEA'S LATEST WORK
VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2, FEBRUARY 2012



[HOME >>](#)

[NEXT >>](#)

[BACK >>](#)

Wood Buffalo Environmental Association Membership

The Wood Buffalo Environmental Association (WBEA) is an independent, not-for-profit, consensus-based organization located in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo with 28 members.

WBEA's multi-stakeholder membership includes:

Alberta Environment and Water

Alberta Health Services

Alberta Sustainable Resource Development

Canadian Natural Resources Ltd

Cenovus Energy Inc.

Conoco Phillips Canada

Devon Canada

Energy Resources Conservation Board

Environment Canada

Finning Canada Ltd.

Fort McKay First Nation

Fort McKay Métis Local #63

Fort McMurray Environmental Association

Hammerstone Corporation

Health Canada

Husky Energy Inc.

Imperial Oil

MEG Energy

Nexen Inc.

Pembina Institute for Appropriate Development

Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo

Saskatchewan Environment

Shell Canada Ltd.

Statoil

Suncor Energy Inc.

Syncrude Canada Ltd

Total E&P Canada Ltd.

Williams Energy



IN THIS ISSUE

[Executive Director's Report >>](#)

[Recent Air Quality Health Index Numbers for the RMWB >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts First Member's Open House >>](#)

[Wood Buffalo Environmental Association Membership >>](#)

[WBEA Air Monitoring Network >>](#)

[Environment Canada and Alberta Environment and Water Meet with WBEA >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts NESCAUM Representatives >>](#)

[Quick Updates >>](#)

[WBEA Staff Index >>](#)

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Website: www.wbea.org



AN UPDATE ON WBEA'S LATEST WORK VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2, FEBRUARY 2012



[HOME >>](#)

[NEXT >>](#)

[BACK >>](#)

WBEA Air Monitoring Network

Jane Percy

WBEA assumed responsibility for our air quality monitoring network operations and maintenance in 2011. Under this initiative, all activities required to support the network and several pilot projects are now being carried out by WBEA staff.

Sanjay Prasad, Ambient Air Technical Committee (AATC) Program Manager, along with retired Executive Director Carna MacEachern, was responsible for the planning and implementation of this very complex and significant undertaking.

To facilitate this undertaking, WBEA hired Gary Cross, Kelly Baragar, and Dean MacLanders, senior ambient air quality specialists who have many years experience in ambient air quality monitoring. Also hired and trained were three locally based Ambient Air Field technicians Zach Eastman, Melissa LeMay, and Emilie Rainville.

WBEA operates 15 monitoring stations in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, from Fort Chipewyan in the north, to Anzac in the south. Some 84 analyzers continuously measure and report concentrations of the region's major air pollutants, meteorology, and time-integrated concentrations of other ambient air constituents of concern to human health or the environment.



Above: WBEA staff is now responsible for operation and maintenance of the ambient air monitoring network.

The main tasks carried out by WBEA's air quality team include:

- Daily calibration and systems checks on all analyzers
- Monthly multipoint calibrations as required by government
- Filter and sample change out
- Daily data capture and processing
- Daily primary data quality control
- Monthly secondary quality control

Continued on next page...

IN THIS ISSUE

[Executive Director's Report >>](#)

[Recent Air Quality Health Index Numbers for the RMWB >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts First Member's Open House >>](#)

[Wood Buffalo Environmental Association Membership >>](#)

[WBEA Air Monitoring Network >>](#)

[Environment Canada and Alberta Environment and Water Meet with WBEA >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts NESCAUM Representatives >>](#)

[Quick Updates >>](#)

[WBEA Staff Index >>](#)

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Website: www.wbea.org



AN UPDATE ON WBEA'S LATEST WORK VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2, FEBRUARY 2012



[HOME >>](#)

[NEXT >>](#)

[BACK >>](#)

Continued from previous page...
WBEA Air Monitoring Network



- Delivery of quality assured data to the provincial data repository, the Clean Air Strategic Alliance (CASA)
- Delivery of data to the WBEA database
- Ensuring hourly transfer of data to government for AQHI calculation
- Remote hourly maintenance and troubleshooting
- Cooperation on annual network audits conducted by Alberta Environment and Water.

In support of this transition, WBEA leased and finished two large bays at the TaigaNova Industrial Park, Fort McMurray, to house both air and terrestrial technical staff and their equipment.

AATC's objective is to collect air quality data related to human and ecosystem health and report it to the public. WBEA strives to maintain high quality measurements and datasets in support of user needs and this was evident during Alberta Environment and Water's recent audit of the air quality analyzers in the WBEA air monitoring network.

Training of new staff was provided by Ray Brassard, a former AEW auditor, and by Campbell Scientific. The senior WBEA air monitoring staff now has a combined 75 years of experience. ■ ■ ■

IN THIS ISSUE

[Executive Director's Report >>](#)

[Recent Air Quality Health Index Numbers for the RMWB >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts First Member's Open House >>](#)

[Wood Buffalo Environmental Association Membership >>](#)

[WBEA Air Monitoring Network >>](#)

[Environment Canada and Alberta Environment and Water Meet with WBEA >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts NESCAUM Representatives >>](#)

[Quick Updates >>](#)

[WBEA Staff Index >>](#)

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Website: www.wbea.org



AN UPDATE ON WBEA'S LATEST WORK VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2, FEBRUARY 2012



HOME >>

NEXT >>

BACK >>

Environment Canada and Alberta Environment and Water Meet with WBEA

Jane Percy

On December 6th, Environment Canada (EC) scientists and Alberta Environment and Water (AEW) representatives met with WBEA at our Fort McMurray headquarters to discuss collaborative work to date and to plan for upcoming scientific monitoring in the future.



Top: From left to right (front row) Dr. Shao-Meng Li, EC; Dr. Cris Mihele, EC; Dr. Jeff Brook, EC; Katherine Hayden, EC; Yayne Akliu, AEW; (middle row l to r) Prabal Roy, AEW; Dr. Ralf Staebler, EC; Bob Myrick, AEW; Dr. Allan Legge, WBEA; Kathleen Furlong, WBEA; (back row l to r) Dr. Luc White, EC; Sanjay Prasad, WBEA; Dr. Kevin Percy, WBEA.

Bottom: Dr. Cris Mihele prepares for the joint EC/WBEA PAC sampling pilot project in November 2010.

IN THIS ISSUE

[Executive Director's Report >>](#)

[Recent Air Quality Health Index Numbers for the RMWB >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts First Member's Open House >>](#)

[Wood Buffalo Environmental Association Membership >>](#)

[WBEA Air Monitoring Network >>](#)

[Environment Canada and Alberta Environment and Water Meet with WBEA >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts NESCAUM Representatives >>](#)

[Quick Updates >>](#)

[WBEA Staff Index >>](#)

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Website: www.wbea.org



AN UPDATE ON WBEA'S LATEST WORK
VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2, FEBRUARY 2012



HOME >>

NEXT >>

BACK >>

WBEA Hosts NESCAUM Representatives

Jane Percy



NESCAUM staff met with WBEA and toured AMS 6, from left to right, Kevin Percy, WBEA, Paul Miller, Andrew Dick and Arthur Marin, NESCAUM, and Kelly Baragar, WBEA.

Percy, WBEA Communications, for a tour of AMS 6 and later a discussion at WBEA headquarters. The NESCAUM visitors were particularly interested in the analyzers employed and pollutants measured in WBEA's airshed, as well as special pilot projects, including the "real world" heavy hauler emissions characterization work and Environment Canada's mercury study.

For more information about NESCAUM please visit [their website](#). ■ ■ ■ ■

Representatives of the North East States for Coordination of Air Use Management (NESCAUM) visited WBEA, in late fall 2011.

NESCAUM is a nonprofit association of air quality agencies representing eight Northeast US states including Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont. NESCAUM provides scientific, technical, analytical, and policy support to the air quality and climate programs of the eight Northeast states. A fundamental component of NESCAUM's efforts is to assist member states in implementing national environmental programs required under the Clean Air Act and other federal legislation.

NESCAUM's Arthur Marin, Executive Director, Paul Miller, Deputy Executive Director, and Andrew Dick, Environmental Analyst, joined WBEA Executive Director Kevin Percy, Ambient Air Quality Specialist Kelly Baragar, and Jane

IN THIS ISSUE

[Executive Director's Report >>](#)

[Recent Air Quality Health Index Numbers for the RMWB >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts First Member's Open House >>](#)

[Wood Buffalo Environmental Association Membership >>](#)

[WBEA Air Monitoring Network >>](#)

[Environment Canada and Alberta Environment and Water Meet with WBEA >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts NESCAUM Representatives >>](#)

[Quick Updates >>](#)

[WBEA Staff Index >>](#)

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Website: www.wbea.org



AN UPDATE ON WBEA'S LATEST WORK VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2, FEBRUARY 2012

[HOME >>](#)[NEXT >>](#)[BACK >>](#)

Quick Updates

- WBEA held the 1st Annual Member's Open House on Oct. 18th. See story page 5



Above: Monique Lapalme (l) and Rachel Mintz (r), Environment Canada, at AMS 1 with BTEX monitor for installation.

- Environment Canada scientist Rachel Mintz and technician Monique Lapalme, assisted by Gary Cross and Dean MacLanders, of WBEA, installed a BTEX monitor to measure benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylenes continuously at AMS 1 Fort McKay, on Oct. 18th.

- Kevin Percy represented WBEA at the launch of the online information portal for environmental information and data related to Alberta's oil sands, on Nov. 10th, in Edmonton. Kevin (l) spoke at the press conference along with the Honourable Diana McQueen (centre), Alberta Minister of Environment and Water and Dr. Andrew Leach (r), University of Alberta. WBEA's air monitoring data may be accessed via the portal at <http://environment.alberta.ca/apps/osip>



WBEA's air monitoring data may be accessed via the portal at <http://environment.alberta.ca/apps/osip>

- On Oct. 25th, WBEA hosted representatives of the North East States for Coordination of Air Use Management (NESCAUM). Story on page 12.
- On Oct. 31st, WBEA attended a meeting of the Alberta Airsheds Council in Canmore, AB.
- On Nov. 9th, a meeting was held with the Berry Focus group of community members of Fort McKay.
- On Nov. 9th, the MP for Etobicoke North, Kirsty Duncan, and Legislative Assistant, Ryan Murphy visited WBEA.
- Environment Canada and Alberta Environment and Water met with WBEA to discuss future scientific monitoring collaboration on Dec. 6th. See story page 11.
- WBEA technicians Amanda Horning, Sarah Eaton, Emilie Rainville, and Zach Eastman attended Alberta Oil Sands: Environmental Challenges and Solutions, the 2011 Fall Technical Conference of the Canadian Prairie and Northern Section (CPANS), Air and Waste Management Association, Nov. 30th- Dec. 1st, in Edmonton.
- On Nov. 2nd, Kevin Percy and Allan Legge presented to Alberta Environment and Water in Edmonton, on WBEA's science-based monitoring.

Continued on next page...

IN THIS ISSUE

[Executive Director's Report >>](#)

[Recent Air Quality Health Index Numbers for the RMWB >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts First Member's Open House >>](#)

[Wood Buffalo Environmental Association Membership >>](#)

[WBEA Air Monitoring Network >>](#)

[Environment Canada and Alberta Environment and Water Meet with WBEA >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts NESCAUM Representatives >>](#)

[Quick Updates >>](#)

[WBEA Staff Index >>](#)

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Please contact Jane Percy, WBEA Communications, with questions, comments, or suggestions. jpercy@wbea.org 780-799-4420

Website: www.wbea.org



AN UPDATE ON WBEA'S LATEST WORK
VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2, FEBRUARY 2012



HOME >>

NEXT >>

BACK >>

Continued from previous page...

Quick Updates



- WBEA's 4th Quarter General Member's Meeting was held on Dec. 14th. Lance Miller, Devon Canada, was elected by the membership as a WBEA Director and member of the Governance Committee at the meeting.



- WBEA staff and contractors once again contributed donations to the Fort McMurray SPCA as a Christmas outreach project.

- Kevin Percy and WBEA Governance Committee Member Kevin Scoble met with Dr. Kevin Nagel President of Keyano College on Dec. 16th.
- Kevin Percy met with Dr. Greg Taylor the Dean of Science at the University of Alberta on Nov. 15th.
- Kevin Percy met with Rachel Mintz and Curtis Mooney of Environment Canada in Edmonton on Nov. 15th.
- Peter Fortna, Manager of Sustainable Development, Fort McKay Métis Community, visited WBEA and met with Kevin Percy on Jan. 12th.    

IN THIS ISSUE

[Executive Director's Report >>](#)

[Recent Air Quality Health Index Numbers for the RMWB >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts First Member's Open House >>](#)

[Wood Buffalo Environmental Association Membership >>](#)

[WBEA Air Monitoring Network >>](#)

[Environment Canada and Alberta Environment and Water Meet with WBEA >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts NESCAUM Representatives >>](#)

[Quick Updates >>](#)

[WBEA Staff Index >>](#)

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AN UPDATE ON WBEA'S LATEST WORK
 VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2, FEBRUARY 2012

-
-
-
-
- HOME >>**
- NEXT >>**
- BACK >>**

WBEA Personnel At A Glance

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Continued on next page...

IN THIS ISSUE

[Executive Director's Report >>](#)

[Recent Air Quality Health Index Numbers for the RMWB >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts First Member's Open House >>](#)

[Wood Buffalo Environmental Association Membership >>](#)

[WBEA Air Monitoring Network >>](#)

[Environment Canada and Alberta Environment and Water Meet with WBEA >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts NESCAUM Representatives >>](#)

[Quick Updates >>](#)

[WBEA Staff Index >>](#)

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AN UPDATE ON WBEA'S LATEST WORK
VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2, FEBRUARY 2012

-
-
-
-
- HOME >>**
- NEXT >>**
- BACK >>**

Continued from previous page...
WBEA Personnel at a Glance

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Amanda Horning	TEEM Field Technologist	ahorning@wbea.org
Sarah Eaton	TEEM Field Technologist	seaton@wbea.org



WBEA Personnel. Front row (l to r) Emilie Rainville, Kim Carnochan, Jane Percy, Cynthia Hagan, Lisa Kirby. Middle row (l to r) Sarah Eaton, Eric Nosal, Melissa LeMay, Zach Eastman, Melissa Pennell. Back row (l to r) Allan Legge, Sanjay Prasad, Kathleen Furlong, Kevin Percy, Gary Cross, Dean MacLanders, Kendra Thomas. Missing from the photo are Kelly Baragar, Yu Mei Hsu, Martin Hansen, Ken Foster and Amanda Horning.

IN THIS ISSUE

[Executive Director's Report >>](#)

[Recent Air Quality Health Index Numbers for the RMWB >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts First Member's Open House >>](#)

[Wood Buffalo Environmental Association Membership >>](#)

[WBEA Air Monitoring Network >>](#)

[Environment Canada and Alberta Environment and Water Meet with WBEA >>](#)

[WBEA Hosts NESCAUM Representatives >>](#)

[Quick Updates >>](#)

[WBEA Staff Index >>](#)

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