

# Airshed Communications and Engagement Roadmap

## for the Cowichan Region



### Goals

#### Foster Behavioural Changes

- **Burn Less (or Not at All):** Adoption of alternatives to home heating with wood and open burning;
- **Burn Better:** If you must burn, follow best practices.

**Engage and Collaborate:** Support champions seeking to improve air quality.

**Our ultimate goal: better health for residents.**

These goals are consistent with the goals of Cowichan's Regional Airshed Protection Strategy.

### Approach

This Roadmap follows a community-based social marketing approach to bring about behaviour change.

#### Steps include:

- Selecting the behavior to be promoted;
- Identifying the barriers and benefits associated with the selected behavior;
- Designing actions that use behavior-change tools to address these barriers and benefits;
- Evaluating the impact of the program once it has been implemented broadly.

## The Air Quality Problem

Fine Particulate Matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) is a health concern. These particles are smaller than 2.5 microns—20 times smaller than the width of a human hair.

#### Fine particles can:

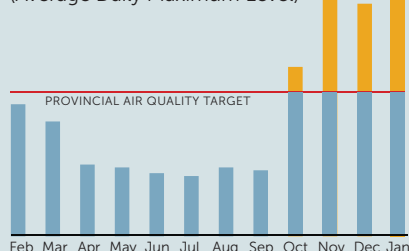
- travel deep into the lungs causing disease and contributing to earlier death
- make it harder for people to breathe
- make existing lung or heart related symptoms worse
- trigger heart attacks

#### Health Impacts in the Cowichan

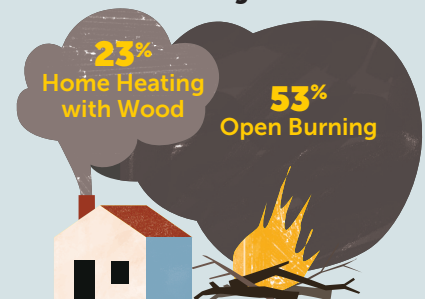
- Admission rates for children with respiratory illness: **70% higher than BC average**
- Chronic respiratory illness for folks 45 and over: **50% more common than in BC as a whole**

#### Month-by-Month Concentrations of PM<sub>2.5</sub> in the Cowichan

(Average Daily Maximum Level)



#### Sources of PM<sub>2.5</sub> in the Cowichan Region



**Targeted Groups and Behaviour Changes**

**Open Burners**

BEHAVIOUR GOALS  
Burn Less  
Burn Better



**Woodstove Operators**

BEHAVIOUR GOALS  
Burn Less  
Burn Better



**Community Champions**



**PHASE 1**  
**Build Capacity**

**BUILD RELATIONSHIPS**

**DEVELOP TOOLS**

**PHASE 2**  
**Launch Programs**

**PHASE 3**  
**Evaluate and Improve**

**Property Owners/Occupiers**

- Developers
- Agriculture
- Forestry

**New Members**

- Fire departments
- Farmers institutes
- Industry associations

**Regulators**

Make regulation more consistent.

**BURN LESS**  
**Alternatives to Open Burning**

- Identify alternatives (chipping, wood material transport).
- Establish tools to support alternatives.
- Coordinate efforts.

**BURN LESS & BURN BETTER**  
**Communication Tools**

Develop door hanger/one-pager to support enforcement.

**BURN LESS & BURN BETTER**  
**Support Enforcement**

Align and enhance bylaws, licensing requirements, enforcement, partnerships and training.

**BURN LESS & BURN BETTER**  
**Analyze Regional Open Burning**

Understand burning practices of major players in region.

**Explore Tracking Tool & Notification Network**

Advise on best practices for scheduled burns, and present alternatives.

**Identify and Address Gaps**

Review potential gaps including enforcement, community champions and large scale burn practices.

**Expand Notification Network**

- For open burning license holders to receive air quality advisories, burn bans, best practices/alternatives
- Notification to impacted neighbourhoods

**Heating System and Energy Retailers**

Understand context of retail sales and draft ways to promote woodstove replacement.

**Woodstove Exchange Program Participants**

Understand barriers to choosing alternative heat sources.

**Regulators**

Make regulation more consistent. Focus on higher-density areas.

**BURN LESS**  
**Transform Woodstove Exchange Program into a Woodstove Replacement Program**

Replace woodstoves with heat pumps, pellet stoves, or propane heaters.

**BURN BETTER**  
**Establish Master Burner Program**

Increase knowledge of efficient operation.

- Develop 3 best-practice videos.
- Develop posters and postcards.

**BURN LESS**  
**Launch Woodstove Replacement Program**

Provide additional incentives for the alternatives.

**BURN BETTER**  
**Launch Master Burner Program**

Foster behaviour changes through awareness programs, focussing on higher-density neighbourhoods with frequent power outages.

**Shift Woodstove Use to Backup instead of Primary Heating Source**

**Enhance Woodstove Replacement Program and Master Burner Program**

Evaluate past performance to support future growth of programs.

**Develop Network of Community Champions**

Engage, inform and empower:

- Students
- Clinicians
- Parents
- Teachers
- Others

**Neighbourhood Action Kit**

Create tools and incentives to empower community champions.

**Collaborative Web Portal**

Highlight air quality conditions, stewardship, and behaviour change.

**Work with Community Champions to Launch:**

- Web Portal
- Master Burner Program
- Notification Network

**Expand Neighbourhood Sensor Network**

Install PurpleAir sensors in additional communities.

**Expand Community Champions Network**

- Analyze the successes of the program and where gaps still exist.
- Explore options to expand the program to build resilience.

# The Cowichan Air Quality Partnership

A collaborative project led by local and provincial government, First Nations and local air quality stewards

For more information, please visit [www.cvrld.bc.ca/air](http://www.cvrld.bc.ca/air)

## Our Accomplishments to Date

Installing provincial air quality monitoring stations

Adopting bylaws for open burning

Launching a woodstove exchange program

Formation of an Airshed Protection Roundtable

Installing and promoting a neighbourhood air quality (PurpleAir) sensor network

Airshed presentations to community forums and stewardship groups

Development of Cowichan's Regional Airshed Protection Strategy

Communications and Engagement Roadmap

Phase 1 Build Capacity

Phase 2 Launch Programs

Phase 3 Evaluate & Improve

## Our Road Ahead



Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

