



Focus

Wallula Nonattainment Area for Particulate Matter

Ecology's Plan of Action

Background information

The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) declared Wallula, Washington a "nonattainment" area for particulate matter air pollution in August 1987 because it has experienced ongoing problems with particulate matter. As required by the 1990 Amendments to the federal Clean Air Act, the state submitted a plan in 1991 to bring the area into attainment with federal standards. This plan required the area to attain the standard by 1994. Due to continuing exceedances of the standard, the state requested and received a waiver of the attainment date from 1994 to 1997. This waiver allowed the state to work with Washington State University, the Agricultural Research Service, and the agricultural community on controlling agricultural dust in the Columbia Basin.

Wallula continues to experience exceedances of the standard. The state has been able to characterize some of these as natural events caused by high winds. EPA does not count exceedances caused by natural events when it evaluates an area for attainment of the standard.

EPA has reclassified Wallula from a moderate to a serious nonattainment area because of an exceedance that is not considered a natural event. Reclassification requires the state to submit a new plan to EPA by September 2002 to bring the area into attainment. The new plan must also define how Best Available Control Measures (BACM) and Best Available Control Technology (BACT) apply to sources in the area.

Next steps

The steps below reflect Ecology's approach to meeting plan requirements for bringing the Wallula area into attainment with the particulate matter standard. After the attainment plan is completed, Ecology will develop a maintenance plan and redesignation request to allow EPA to redesignate Wallula from nonattainment to attainment for particulate matter smaller than 10 microns in size (PM₁₀).

Since January 2001, Ecology has been taking steps to:

- **Carry out monitoring studies:** Additional studies are needed to gain an understanding of the relationship between sources and activities in the nonattainment area and monitored particulate matter values. (June 2001-June 2002)

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- **Establish a second particulate matter monitoring site:** A second site will be established because of concerns about the present monitoring site. (June 2002)
- **Develop a demonstration of attainment:** This is a plan requirement. The state must determine the amount of emission reductions needed to attain the federal particulate matter standard. The requirement also determines the application of BACM and BACT. (November 2001-March 2002)
- **Work with identified sources to define possible emission reductions:** This is a plan requirement. (May 2001-May 2002)
- **Submit the plan to EPA for approval after public notice and hearing:** (September 2002)

Public involvement actions

Ecology is working directly with each affected industry to determine potential emission reductions and address BACT and BACM requirements that may directly affect them.

Ecology will also hold quarterly informational meetings in Wallula months to inform and update local officials, citizens, and other interested parties about Ecology's progress in developing the attainment plan. Meetings will be advertised in local newspapers. Ecology is also sending notices of the meetings to a mailing list. Please contact Ecology to be placed on the mailing list.

For more information

For more information on Ecology's actions, please contact:

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