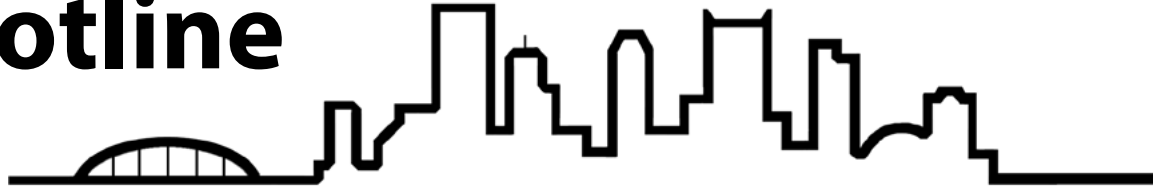




Group Against Smog and Pollution, Inc. Hotline



Fall 2015/Winter 2016

www.gasp-pgh.org

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GASP Reaches Settlement Agreement with DEP & Tenaska

by Joe Osborne, Legal Director

Back in May, GASP appealed the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) issuance of an air quality permit for Tenaska Pennsylvania Partners, LLC's Westmoreland Generating Station. We're pleased to announce that last month GASP reached an agreement with DEP and Tenaska to resolve the issues we raised in our appeal.

The Westmoreland Generating Station is a proposed ~1,000 megawatt natural gas-fired power plant to be located in South Huntingdon Township, Westmoreland County. The facility would be classified as a major source of air pollution under the federal Clean Air Act. According to

Tenaska's estimates, the station would have the potential to emit 2,310 tons per year (TPY) of carbon monoxide, 1,251 TPY of volatile organic compounds, 376 TPY of nitrogen dioxide, 193 TPY of ammonia, 96 TPY of particulate matter, 23 TPY of sulfur dioxide, 15 TPY of sulfuric acid mist, and 8 TPY of formaldehyde.

GASP appealed the Westmoreland Generating Station permit because Tenaska's permit application did not include technical specifications for much of the equipment to be installed at the facility, and much of the equipment emissions data that Tenaska had

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Helping Local Schools Reduce Diesel Emissions

by Rachel Filippini, GASP Executive Director

Over the last six months, GASP has provided and delivered nearly 120 "No Idling" signs to twelve school districts in the region for free. Funding

for this effort was provided by the Heinz Endowments. We were pleased to be able to offer the signs which act as a daily reminder to drivers to turn off their engines.



Schools must post this "no idling" sign where school buses operate.

In 2009 the Pennsylvania legislature passed anti-idling legislation. In general, the law says that drivers of commercial diesel powered vehicles, like school buses and delivery trucks, can only idle 5 minutes in an hour. If there are passengers aboard, buses can idle for up to 15 minutes during an hour. The law also mandates that schools where these vehicles operate post signs reminding drivers about the law. Many districts were unaware of the law and the requirement to post signage.

Diesel exhaust from idling contains significant levels of small particles, known as fine

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Group Against Smog and Pollution, Inc. (GASP) is a nonprofit citizens group in southwestern Pennsylvania working for a healthy, sustainable environment. Founded in 1969, GASP has been a diligent watchdog, educator, litigator, and policy maker on many environmental issues, with a focus on air quality in the Pittsburgh region.

Educating the Community About Air Pollution

GASP staff has been very busy over the last several months conducting a variety of educational programming. Here's a snapshot of our activities:

Making the Connection

This year, GASP hosted three of our own *Making the Connection* events to help people understand the relationship between air pollution and various health problems. While medical professionals were a target audience to attract to the events, all three were free and open to the public. Our events explored:

The connection between air pollution and heart health

For this event GASP brought in Dr. Wayne Cascio, the Director of EPA's Environmental Public Health Division. He discussed the links between exposures to air pollution and maintaining a healthy heart. We were also joined by James Fabisiak, PhD, an Associate Professor in Environmental & Occupational Health and part of the Center for Healthy Environments and Communities at the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public Health. He discussed findings from the Pittsburgh Regional Environmental Threats Analysis Report that he helped write.

The connection between childhood autism and air toxics

The second event featured another Pitt professor, Dr. Evelyn Talbott. She discussed her research on the association between childhood autism and air toxics. This event was held in concert with GASP board member Maren Cooke's 43rd Sustainability Salon on air quality.



Dr. Evelyn Talbott spoke to Sustainability Salon guests during GASP's second *Making the Connection* event this year. Photo by Maren Cooke.



Commander Tegan Boehmer, PhD, spoke at GASP's third *Making the Connection* event this year. Photo by Maren Cooke.

The connection between outdoor physical activity and air pollution exposure

The third and last *Making the Connection* event in 2015 focused on the relationship between outdoor physical activity and air pollution exposure. For this event we were fortunate to bring in Commander Tegan Boehmer, PhD, who is an epidemiologist with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. She discussed the state of science regarding the intersection between air pollution and physical activity. Dr. Albert Presto from Carnegie Mellon University also spoke on recent air data that he has collected and showed pollutant maps that illustrate our best estimate of the annual average concentrations of different pollutants in Allegheny County.

The **Hotline** is the semiannual newsletter of the Group Against Smog and Pollution.

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GASP Mission Statement

The Group Against Smog and Pollution works to improve air quality to ensure human, environmental, and economic health.

Methods of Achieving Mission

GASP is a citizens' group based in Southwestern PA which focuses on environmental issues in the surrounding region. When pertinent to these concerns, we participate in state and national environmental decisions.

We believe in the public's right to receive accurate and thorough information on these issues and to actively participate in the decision making process.

To achieve our environmental goals on behalf of our membership, GASP will advocate, educate, serve as an environmental watchdog, mobilize action, and litigate when necessary.

We will work both independently and in cooperation with like-minded individuals and groups as determined by the Board of Directors.

We will uphold GASP's reputation for scientific integrity, honesty, and responsible involvement.

You can find the power point presentations from these talks on the GASP website. More *Making the Connection* presentations are being planned for 2016 so be on the lookout for your invitation to these enlightening events.

We also partnered with several other institutions to support their educational efforts:

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

GASP staff taught a course on regional air quality for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Pittsburgh. The five week course explored the sources of our air pollution, the health and environmental effects of this pollution, various projects that are working to combat air pollution, and what participants could do to get more involved. In addition to GASP staff, guest lecturers included Joel Tarr, Albert Presto, and Beatrice Dias from Carnegie Mellon University, and Phillip Johnson from the Heinz Endowments.



Winchester Thurston students learned about air quality at the Carrie Furnace. Photo by Jessica Tedrow.

Green Workplace Challenge Air Quality Workshop

Rachel Filippini (GASP Director) spoke during the "Latest Developments: Regional Air Quality Initiatives" session.

Community College of Allegheny County

John Baillie (GASP attorney) and Jamin Bogi (GASP Policy

and Outreach Director) spoke to an Honors Biology class at CCAC North on the topic of air quality in our region and how citizens can work for positive change in their communities.

University of Pittsburgh

GASP staff spoke to Pitt students on "Air Issues and Policy."

Heinz Summer Youth Philanthropy

GASP staff informed young grant-makers on air issues and helped them identify potential areas that could use grant support.

Wilkinsburg School District

GASP participated in the Sense of Place Learning After School Program with middle school students from Wilkinsburg School District. Students learned about lichens, regional air quality issues, and experimented with air monitors.

Winchester Thurston

Jessica Tedrow (GASP Education and Events Coordinator) educated students at Winchester Thurston School about air quality. The program included a field trip to the Carrie Furnace. This partnership continues throughout the school year as the students choose an air related topic to study/research.



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particulate matter. Fine particles pose a significant health risk because they can pass through the nose and throat and lodge themselves in the lungs or pass into the bloodstream. These particles are linked to asthma attacks, heart attacks, cancer, stroke, diabetes, and reduced brain function. Children are especially vulnerable, as their bodies, including their respiratory systems and brains, are still developing and because they breathe at a faster rate than adults.

School bus idling contributes to our region's poor air quality and puts kids', drivers', and communities' health at

risk. The solution to the problem is so easy--simply turn off the engine. By ensuring regional school districts have the mandated signage up, it helps them to communicate clearly to school bus drivers that unnecessary idling isn't allowed and helps provide a healthier learning environment.

We still have more signs, so if your local school doesn't appear to have the proper signage up please let them know that free signs exist. They can email us at idling@gasp-pgh.org and let us know how many signs they would like to have.

The 2015 Clean Air Dash Was Scary Fun

GASP's 3rd annual Clean Air Dash 5K was held on October 31 this year. Thanks to all of our Dashers, sponsors, and volunteers! Several hundred people—many in costume—from ages 8 to 72 (and lots of dogs too!) enjoyed the beautiful weather and scenic South Side Riverfront Trail on Halloween morning to run and walk for clean air.

Congrats to all finishers, and big applause to the top three:

1. Pierre Meunier, 17:38
2. Megan Tramaglino, 18:07
3. Mac Howison, 18:11

See all of the race times and more pictures on the GASP website at www.gasp-pgh.org.



Photo by Native Tree Studios



Photo by Native Tree Studios



Photo by Jonathan Nadle



Photo by Native Tree Studios



Photo by Jonathan Nadle



Photo by Jonathan Nadle

THANKS to our Clean Air Dash Sponsors!

North Wind (\$2500)



Jet Stream (\$1000)



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Healthy Air Fan (\$100)



Breath of Fresh Air (\$50)

- The Andy Warhol Museum
- BYS Yoga
- Carnegie Museum of Art and Natural History
- Carnegie Science Center
- City Theatre Company
- Eat'n Park
- Giant Eagle Market District: Shadyside
- Mattress Factory
- Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, Inc
- Pittsburgh Steak Company
- Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
- Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium
- The Library
- Trader Joe's

If you are interesting in sponsoring the Clean Air Dash next year, please contact Jessica at jessica@gasp-pgh.org.



After spending several years on Penn Ave. in Garfield, GASP has recently moved to a new office in the Regent Square part of town. Our phone number is the same. Here is our new address:

Group Against Smog and Pollution
1133 S. Braddock Ave., Suite 1A
Pittsburgh, PA 15218

Spotlight on a GASP Board Member

For GASP's newest board member, Abby Resnick, joining GASP felt like a family affair. She and husband Roger Day both joined via their friendship with (board member) Maren Cooke.

Abby is a retired biostatistician with over 35 years of experience in that field, as well as in project management. She has a BA from Brown University with honors in Applied Mathematics, as well as a MA in Mathematics (Statistics) from Boston University. She also did some course work at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Over the years, Abby has worked on public health issues including programs in tobacco cessation and education, substance abuse prevention and treatment, mental and behavioral health services, quality of life for the elderly, and organ donation education and promotion.

Abby says that public health issues have always interested her and, since her retirement, "I felt like I could continue to work in this area with GASP to help fulfill its mission of 'improving air quality to ensure human, environmental, and economic health.'" To that end, she testified last May at the regional EPA citizen's meeting in favor of their new rules to reduce carbon emissions from power plants. She shared her family's story and experience with the harmful and painful effects of living in an environment where air quality is often poor.

Most recently, Abby has pursued her interest in the connection between air quality and health by participating in GASP's event series "Making the Connection" (see page 2). She and Roger worked at the GASP booth at the annual Clean Air Dash, and they participate in GASP's membership committee.

Outside of GASP, Abby enjoys making music with the Tuesday Musical Club. Founded in 1889, this small nonprofit arts organization provides free daytime public concerts of classical and contemporary music, scholarships for music students and performance opportunities for members. Abby plays flute and piano; Roger is a tuba player. Abby also belongs to the Pittsburgh Flute Club and City Flutes, a flute choir that performed at Heinz Hall and Washington's Smithsonian Zoo within the past year.



Abby loves cooking, mostly vegetarian dishes. She runs about 40 miles a week, mostly indoors, but also in low pollution areas outdoors, and she does other exercises to stay healthy and happy. She and Roger enjoy extensive traveling now that they are retired and have the time to do so. Last year they visited New York City to take part in the 2014 People's Climate March.

Concern for matters environmental is a family affair for Abby. Her daughter is an environmental organizer, who recently took six months off to walk the entire Appalachian Trail. Her youngest son also works in defense of the environment. Her other son is an historian finishing his PhD and thesis in the early history of relationships with Native Americans.

When asked if she has any stories to share, Abby said that she and Roger met in the student photo ID line at Harvard: "However, the conversation we had was not about statistics, but about the love of music. A year later, for our first date we played flute and tuba duets and piano and tuba duets. Now in retirement, we are once again playing music together!"



On This Date in Pittsburgh Pollution History

Notable events in Pittsburgh's air pollution history between October and December:

67 years ago

October 1948: Donora, PA was the site of the first recorded air pollution disaster in the United States (and it remains the single worst air pollution event in U.S. history). Twenty-two people died and thousands more were sickened after sulfur dioxide emissions descended in the form of smog, made worse by a temperature inversion that trapped the sulfuric poison in the valley of the town.

52 years ago

December 1963: The original Clear Air Act passed, which established funding for the study and the cleanup of air pollution. But there was no comprehensive federal response to address air pollution until Congress passed a much stronger Clean Air Act in 1970.

50 years ago

October 20, 1965: The Motor Vehicle Air Pollution Control Act set the first federal automobile emission standards.

46 years ago

October 1969: GASP was founded by Michelle Madoff.

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provided to DEP was improperly treated as confidential and excluded from the public record. These omissions were not mere procedural errors: the omitted information is necessary to determine whether the facility emissions calculations are accurate and thus whether the facility would satisfy the requirements of the federal Clean Air Act and the Pennsylvania Air Pollution Control Act. Further, failure to include this information in the publicly available permit record deprives the public of its right to participate meaningfully in the permitting process.

Over the summer, GASP, Tenaska, and DEP discussed the issues we raised in our appeal, and Tenaska and DEP agreed to place additional information in the public record to address the omissions. Our hope is that as a result of our efforts, DEP will do more to ensure that application completeness and public participation requirements are satisfied in future permitting actions.

Visit www.gasp-pgh.org to read GASP's comments and notice of appeal on Tenaska Westmoreland Generating Station Air Quality Plan Approval.



45 years ago

December 2, 1970: The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was established.

40 years ago

November 1975: Clairton, PA was the site of the worst smog episode in Allegheny County, when high levels of airborne particles and pollutants from U.S. Steel's Clairton Coke Works and other industrial sites were trapped by an atmospheric inversion.

November 1975: The world's first use of a mobile air monitor began when five EPA scientists used a spirometer to measure the air capacity of the lungs of 200 school children during the pollution inversion.



Join GASP Today!

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- \$250 Clean Air Defenders
- \$500 Clean Air Protectors
- \$_____ Other

Call GASP at (412) 924-0604 to learn about automatic monthly giving, deducted directly from your checking account or charged to your credit card. An easy, hassle-free way to support GASP all year round!

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All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Group Against Smog and Pollution, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The official registration and financial information of GASP may be obtained from the Department of State by calling 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Join GASP on

Wednesday, December 9th from 6 to 8 PM

at the Pittsburgh Filmmakers' current exhibit

In the Air: Visualizing What We Breathe

.....

- Hear from the photographers, curators, and GASP.
- Enjoy light appetizers, drinks, and great music!
- The event is open to the public. Registration is free for current GASP members. Non-members are encouraged to make a donation and join GASP. Suggested donation is \$20.

.....

**Pittsburgh Filmmakers Gallery
477 Melwood Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213**

**Registration requested at
www.gasp-pgh.org**

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED



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