

VISTAS Data Workgroup Meeting

Asheville, North Carolina

May 8, 2001

In attendance: Dotty Diltz (FL), Workgroup Chair
Errin Pichard (FL)
Tammy Eagan (FL)
Richard Guillot (EPA Region 4)
Tom Stecker (SC)
Larry Garrison (KY)
Bill Murphey (GA)
Wayne Cornelius (NC)
John Glass (SC)
Bruce Bayle (US Forest Service)
John Calcagni (EPA)
Bob Carson (National Park Service)
Mary Evelyn Barnes (MS)
Jim Renfro (National Park Service)
Pat Brewer (SAMI)

After Dotty welcomed everyone, each person introduced himself/herself and told the workgroup a little about what they do.

Organization and Operation of the Data Workgroup – Dotty Diltz

Dotty made some general comments about the purpose of the workgroup, how it will function, and current activities among this workgroup and the others. The Data workgroup will be working very closely with the Technical Analysis workgroup during this project. The workgroup is developing a scope of work to collect and analyze ambient air quality data related to regional haze. The VISTAS Coordinating Committee wants a data collection contractor ASAP. Contractor solicitation procedures are currently being developed by SESARM.

Development of the VISTAS web site is the top priority for the Planning workgroup (the address “sesarm.org” is already taken so they will have to come up with another). The web site will serve as a bulletin board for all SESARM and VISTAS activities.

Discussion of the Role of the Data Workgroup – John Calcagni

Next, John Calcagni led a discussion of the role of the Data workgroup. John noted that modeling is only good when there is data to back it up and we need to look at the region as a whole. He then outlined some of the questions that the workgroup needs to address –

- What is the nature of the problem, i.e., seasonal, episodic, regional, plume, etc.?
- What strategies should we be exploring?
- What is causing the violations?
- What are the regional impacts and influences?

What influence does ozone have?

If the workgroup can't answer these questions, what information do we need to answer them? We need to look at boundary conditions to determine what's leaving and what's entering the region. John predicted that in the near future there would be a focus on the metal in particulate matter, such as iron and vanadium, due to studies linking them with certain ailments.

The Data workgroup is responsible for telling people what the data means -- having data (numbers) is good is, in fact, required by the regional haze rule, but photographic evidence is also necessary to show people what the numbers mean.

Discussion of SAMI Data – Pat Brewer

Since some of the workgroup members are not familiar with SAMI's work, Pat Brewer gave a brief overview of the work they are doing. She showed overheads of particulate trends in many Class I areas and compared IMPROVE data with modeled results. Pat noted that assuming a ratio of ammonia to sulfate would affect light extinction values, so this is something the Data workgroup will have to keep in mind.

SAMI has already collected population, inventory and other data into ARC/INFO format so that the workgroup will only need to do this for areas not covered by SAMI. Pat talked about using the WINHAZE tool, which statistically generates (based on 24-hour averages) and superimposes haze on a photo of a clear day. This tool may be advantageous to real photographs of hazy conditions, which can be affected by cloudiness, sun angle, and other factors.

REMSAD Modeling Results – Tammy Eagan

Tammy Eagan presented modeled PM_{2.5} results for 1996. Of interest were the low values for coastal areas. The explanation for this is that sulfate readily absorbs moisture and quickly becomes too large to be considered PM_{2.5}. The modeled results also clearly showed a region of elevated PM along the I-85 corridor.

Tammy then presented an animation, developed by Mike Rizzo of EPA-Region 5 that simultaneously displayed daily average ozone and PM_{2.5} levels across the country.

Overview of PM_{2.5} Network in the VISTAS Planning Area – Richard Guillot

Richard Guillot showed a map of the current and planned PM_{2.5} speciation sites in the VISTAS region. There will be three continuous speciation sites in the region – Atlanta, Raleigh, and Charleston. There might be money available to install one more continuous speciation site. Richard notes that there is also money available for additional regional haze monitoring needs.

Discussion of Draft Contractor Scope of Work – Errin Pichard

Errin Pichard discussed the general makeup of the draft contractor scope of work for the collection and analysis of data. The scope of work is generally divided into two parts – (1) a short-term effort to collect and analyze existing data and answer questions regarding the nature

and scope of the regional haze problem and (2) the long-term task of collecting IMPROVE data for use in determining baselines and natural conditions in each Class I area.

There was an interest expressed in continuing to collect and analyze PM_{2.5} data outside the IMPROVE network in Class I areas. A subcommittee was formed (John Calcagni, Jim Renfro, John Glass, and Tammy Eagan) to draft a third element for the scope of work. When completed, this new language will be included in the draft and distributed for review and comment.

Workgroup members provided comments and suggested revisions to the scope of work. Doty asked all commenters to submit wording revisions to her to be incorporated into the next draft of the scope of work. New workgroup members from industry and other stakeholders groups will be solicited at the VISTAS meeting in Tampa May 14-16. Their comments will also be included.