

MT/ID Airshed Group PM_{2.5} Monitoring Memorandum of Agreement

Air monitoring sites in Garden Valley, McCall, and Idaho City were recently discontinued due to a reduction in federal funds used to operate the DEQ air quality network. These sites have historically been used for smoke management activities, especially during the fall and spring burning seasons. The Montana/Idaho Airshed Group has used the PM_{2.5} data from these sites to assist in planning burn operations and allocating acreage to avoid undesirable air quality impacts to residents in these areas. These monitoring sites were originally chosen due to complaints about smoke impacts, and while complaints numbers have declined since these sites were established for smoke management, they still represent the only communities that typically record smoke complaints associated with prescribed burning in southwest Idaho. According to the MT/ID Airshed Group's yearly reports, in 4 of the last 5 years, complaints have been received from at least one or more of these three areas.

All three areas present unique challenges to effective smoke management: they are rural yet experiencing population growth, in many cases from residents new to Idaho; the populations are concentrated in mountain valleys; and there is a large amount of competing open burning typically occurring in nearby areas. Having accurate air quality data to make burn decisions becomes critical in such circumstances.

The discontinued stations are still in place with PM_{2.5} TEOM monitoring equipment at each site. Essential utilities, such as electrical power and telephone lines, are available when needed. DEQ can contract with the department's Technical Services Group to operate these sites, but currently lacks operating funds to do so. The DEQ Monitoring Division has developed a cost projection to operate these sites, and the Boise Regional Office is willing to oversee and manage the operation of the activated sites. With funding from the MT/ID Airshed Group, DEQ will operate these sites to collect real-time PM_{2.5} data to support the smoke management program in southwestern Idaho consistent with the statewide program. The air quality data from these sites will help support good decision making within the smoke management program to meet the mutual objectives of protecting public health and the prescribed application of fire for natural resource benefit.

The MT/ID Airshed Group is a unique collection of federal, state, tribal and private organizations that manage forest and range lands in Idaho and Montana. The MT/ID Airshed Group has collected fees and dues from the members since its inception and uses these funds to pay for services and equipment to support the operation of this smoke management program. The MT/ID Airshed Group uses the administrative services of the Western Forestry and Conservation Association (WFCA) to manage the financial assets of the MT/ID Airshed Group. WFCA is located in Portland, Oregon and it offers training and other services to professional foresters in the Northwest. The chairman and the treasurer of the MT/ID Airshed Group will review all expenses and approve the disbursement of funds by the WFCA.

The members of the MT/ID Airshed Group acknowledge the issue of declining federal funding programs and recommend that DEQ explore local and state funding resources to solve this issue. DEQ will report annually to the MT/ID Airshed Group regarding the funding situation including the development of any funding strategies undertaken by DEQ to support this monitoring need.

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The Idaho members of MT/ID Airshed Group support DEQ's efforts to find a long-term funding solution that will sustain an air quality program and a monitoring network which are essential components of the statewide smoke management program. DEQ will contact the MT/ID Airshed Group on annual basis if future need still exists after 2006. The MT/ID Airshed Group will consider proposals for two more years with the understanding that DEQ will explore a long-term solution for this issue prior to SFY 10 (June 2009-July 2010).

Scope of Work

1. DEQ will conduct air quality monitoring for PM_{2.5} with a continuous method (TEOM) at existing monitoring sites in McCall, Garden City, and Idaho City to provide air quality data to the MT/ID Airshed Group for the statewide smoke management program.
2. DEQ will operate the PM_{2.5} equipment for a minimum of three months to provide air quality data during the fall burning season, from September 1 to November 30.
3. DEQ will operate the PM_{2.5} equipment at these sites consistent with the DEQ Quality Assurance Project Plan for the Idaho Air Quality Monitoring Network to ensure the data meets identified quality assurance parameters.
4. DEQ will provide remote access to the data via a telemetry system that provides near real-time PM_{2.5} data. The data from these three sites will be polled by the DEQ data acquisition system and made available to the public through the DEQ website.
5. DEQ will invoice the MT/ID Airshed Group annually at the end of the fall season based on actual costs, not to exceed \$10,500 for the operation of three sampling sites during the fall burn season (September 1 to November 30). See attachment B for billing information.
6. As part of the airshed management strategy, DEQ will contact the local communities affected by this reduction in air quality monitoring to determine their interest and support for a continued monitoring presence. This is particularly important in the Valley and Boise counties that are experiencing significant growth, both in population and revenue.

Budget Estimate

- a) DEQ Personnel
 - Site Maintenance – 140 hours @ \$37.00/hr
 - Data Management – 40 hours @ \$40.00/hr
- b) Standard Operating Costs – prorated travel, utilities and other operation expenses
- c) State Lab QC Audit - \$500

Total Not to Exceed \$10,500 for CY2006

Note: Personnel hourly rates are estimates based on fully loaded costs (fringe and indirect). Actual hourly rates will vary depending on the staff assigned to the task.

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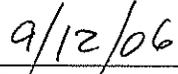
This agreement is effective September 1, 2006 through December 31, 2006.

Signatures:

For the MT/ID Airshed Group:



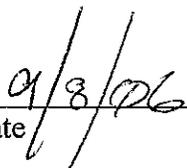
Robert Rebarchik, MT/ID Airshed Group Chairman
Zone Fire Management Officer
US Fish and Wildlife Service, Missoula, MT



Date



Brian Shiplett, Fire Management Bureau Chief
Idaho Department of Lands



Date



Paul Wagner, MT/ID Airshed Group Treasurer
Inland Empire Paper Company

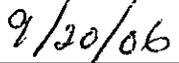


Date

For the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality:



Toni Hardesty, Director
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality



Date

Attachment A.

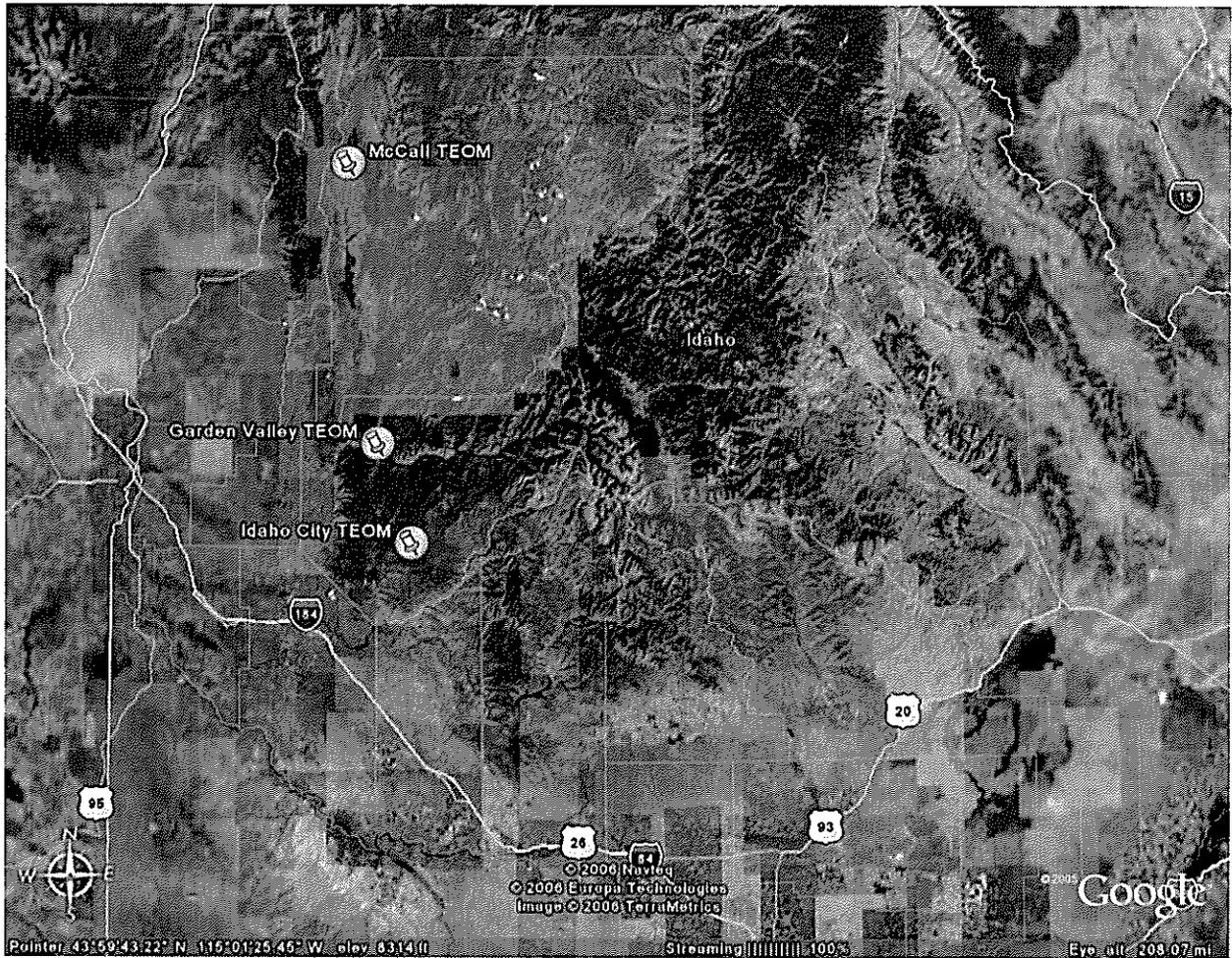


Figure 1. Location of SMP PM_{2.5} TEOM monitoring sites in southwest Idaho.

Attachment B.

Billing Information for the MT/ID Airshed Group. Mr. Wagner is the treasurer for the Airshed Group and a signatory to the agreement.

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