

MONITORING AIR QUALITY

Is anyone testing air quality in Southern Alabama? The answer is a resounding Yes! The following agencies are actively testing the air to find out exactly what is in it every day. Many of these efforts are new so the data hasn't been compiled yet, be patient, we will have the information soon.

The primary monitoring agency for air quality is the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM). ADEM regulates sources of air emissions and routinely monitors ambient air quality statewide. In Mobile and Baldwin Counties, there are currently 2 mercury and nutrient rainwater deposition monitors, 3 ozone monitors, 1 sulfur dioxide and 11 particulate monitors, and 1 continuous mercury analyzer. The resulting data is used to determine compliance with national and state air quality standards and to produce things like the ozone forecast (ozone, by the way, does not effect water quality).

The Mobile Bay NEP initiated and currently supports sampling of ADEM's four rainwater deposition monitors. This program measures how much mercury and nutrient deposition occurs from rainfall. Our sites were coordinated through the National Atmospheric Deposition Program. Samples are collected weekly and analyzed. To see the data log onto nadp.sws.uiuc.edu/

The Mobile Air Quality Study initiated 5 monitors in Mobile County to sample and analyze toxins deposited from dry air. Particles deposited on the ground during dry weather can wash into the Bay during rainstorms. While ADEM controls the day-to-day operations of the monitors, this project is a partnership comprised of Mobile County, Mobile Bay Watch Inc. /Mobile BayKeeper, The Forum, the Mobile Chamber of Commerce and the City of Mobile. According to study partners, the condition of area air quality is unknown.

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THERE'S STILL MORE

It is impossible to note all the contributions being made on a daily basis by so many people. It is also important to know that we all contribute to the integrity of our environment. We would like you to know of projects ongoing in our area.

A Scenic Causeway Coalition consisting of many diverse interests is working to have the Causeway designated a Federal Scenic Byway. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Alabama Department of Transportation have studies underway to examine the feasibility of openings under sections of the roadway. This would help restore the interchange of fresh and saltwater as well as improve biodiversity.

The Cities of Mobile and Fairhope are investigating smart growth concepts and actively promoting the use of permeable paving, rain gardens, and other environmentally friendly development practices. In addition, the Mobile Bay NEP, MASGC, and AUMERC are supporting a Healthy Coastal Communities Initiative to educate local leaders about smart growth concepts.

Household Hazardous Waste Disposal activities sponsored by local business interests, supported by the Alabama Coastal Foundation and Keep Mobile Beautiful, as well as

local governments are becoming frequent events in our area and help reduce nonpoint source pollution.

Public access to our water resources is being enhanced as seen in Mobile County with the recent purchase and planned upgrades for Dead Lake Marina. The Village Point Foundation in Daphne has worked steadily to develop Bayfront Park. The Alabama Marine Resources Division has several area boat launches, their most recent project is located on Dauphin Island at Billy Goat Hole.

Area environmental groups support a variety of activities that include recycling, field trips, speakers, and activities that affect our quality of life. Area businesses work with the community to respond to community concerns.

Today, 53% of the population nation wide lives within 50 miles of a coast. This figure is expected to rise to 75% by 2025, placing immense stress on our coastal areas. We must find ways to balance human use of our coastlines and the preservation of their environmental quality and ecosystem integrity. To learn more about the information provided throughout this document and find ways you can help, log onto one of the many websites provided on the back page.

FAST FACTS

- 100 AD – Occupational disease is well known in ancient Rome. Workers in lead and mercury mines and smelters are known to suffer from the metals
- 1886 – First Audubon Society
- 1892 – Sierra Club founded
- 1936 – National Wildlife Federation
- 1951 – The Nature Conservancy
- 1963 – U.S. Congress passed first Clean Air Act
- 1967 – Alabama Environmental Council (formerly Alabama Conservancy) founded
- 1970 – April 22 First Earth Day
- 1972 – First bottle recycling bill passed in Oregon
- 1972– Toxic Substances Control Act required testing for health and environmental effects prior to a chemical's manufacture or distribution

You too can make a difference.

Randy Sims

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