



Prevention of Significant Deterioration

The Clean Air Act is the federal law that allows the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to establish national air quality standards to protect public health and welfare. Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) is the section of the Clean Air Act that offers protection for Class I areas, which includes designated wilderness areas, national parks and refuges. PSD prevents new sources of emissions from adversely impacting the Class I areas. If a source is close enough to a Class I area, its air permit application will include an assessment of the impacts of these air emissions on the Class I areas.

Trent Wickman is a Forest Service Air Quality Specialist who has worked in the agency for 15



Figure 1-Trent Wickman monitoring water quality in a boat

years and worked on PSD permits for 20 years.

Wickman mentioned that during a regular day, he works with different agencies, political leaders, and representatives from the sources, providing scientific advice about the potential impacts of industrial air emissions.

“I work a lot with the State of Minnesota, where I try to provide the best recommendation based on the

science and the standards and regulations set by the government.” However, one of the greatest challenges during his work, Wickman mentioned, is to provide

clear communication. “When I have to write a letter to the State, and the decision-maker does not have a background in this field, I have to use a vocabulary that is simple and yet precise to avoid any misunderstanding or controversy. The environmental data we gather allow us not only to protect air but also vegetation and the whole ecosystem, so we are constantly communicating with people from other programs, agencies, and areas of expertise.”

Wickman mentioned that to protect air quality, “Everyone can play a part, by conserving energy at home and work. Having energy-efficient light bulbs, having a smaller car, or even choosing renewable energy whenever it is possible” are all ways in which people can help efforts to improve air quality. Outreach programs by the different environmental protection agencies that help the broader community become aware of the PSD processes and regulations are of great importance

Wickman mentioned. “We have to emphasize sustainable conservation in which everyone plays a role.”

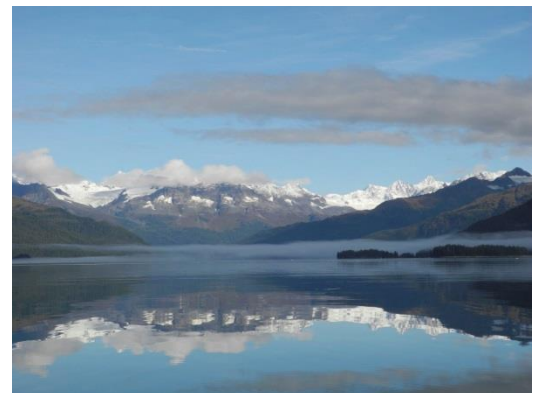


Figure 2-Landscape of a lake with mountains in the back