

2021 IN REVIEW

Diligent: hard working, industrious, conscientious, [members of CCA] - Websters

Despite these pandemic times, we've been diligently pursuing our mission to research and reduce air pollution and promote improvement of air quality in Mesa County and the Western Slope...

Here's what we've been up to:

STATE OF THE AIR ANNUAL PUBLIC FORUM: Last February's webinar featured an introduction to the world of bio-char, along with the 30 minute film, *Unbreathable: The Fight for Healthy Air*, a look at 50 years of the Clean Air Act.

NEWS OF WHISTLEBLOWERS from the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment drew our attention. After a review of their complaints, we determined that a letter to the Colorado Attorney General Phil Weiser was in order in which we supported a full investigation into the whistleblower claims: a failure by the department to implement state and federal air pollution regulations on short term air pollution modeling requirements for sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and particulates, resulting in alleged, illegal permitting of industrial facilities since 2010. An independent investigation was completed in October, with air pollution regulators poised to tighten oversight for these smaller sources of pollution. New rules should be drafted by this January. The complaint was also filed with the EPA's Inspector General and is still pending in that office.

WE CONTINUE TO SERVICE & REPAIR the 50+ PurpleAir monitors throughout the Grand Valley and beyond, including a new installation at the Ute Indian Museum in Montrose. Deploying these devices is one thing, keeping them in good running shape requires persistence and regular map checks. CCA's Tom Phillips, with assistance from Charlie Post, have risen to the job, even during COVID, which complicates everything.

We also have seven ozone monitors throughout the Grand Valley, and those, too, require service, repair, and annual calibration. Until this year we had to ship the units to the manufacturer annually and pay to have them brought up to speed. Enter James Ayers, CMU Professor of Chemistry, and



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CO 81502**

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his students, who, as part of their curriculum, have learned to calibrate the ozone monitors, bringing them as close as possible to the state's certified monitoring equipment readings. The students will be presenting their work for the American Chemical Society Spring 2022 Meeting in San Diego this March!



Ozone "hotdog" monitor
inside protective dish

ANOTHER SUMMER OF WILDFIRE SMOKE in the Grand Valley and throughout the west shined the spotlight once again on indoor air quality. If the air outside is terrible, common sense and the authorities often recommend going inside, right? But if the air inside is just as bad or worse, then what? CCA members continue to explore methods of clearing the indoors of unhealthy particles making their way inside our homes, buildings, and schools. We've accumulated some effective, affordable ideas, which you can find on our website.

OUR CITIZEN SCIENCE BIOCHAR PROJECT last summer was successful. Now we're working on next steps. We will have another go at it next summer with better methods and more opportunities for the public to see. We have a detailed draft final report available on our website, with more post-harvest results coming soon. We owe our thanks to the farmers and on-the-ground volunteers who made this work possible!



We thank the Western Colorado Community Foundation, Dave and Mary Wood Fund, for funding the effort.

Questions about biochar? Listen to *Crossing the Divide's* "Biocharity" podcast! Just click on this [link](#).

CCA IS SOMETIMES A RESOURCE for Mesa County residents who *can't get no satisfaction* from local authorities when turning in complaints about their neighbors burning trash, grass, leaves, pine needles and other illegal stuff, creating smoke in the surrounding neighborhoods. Enforcement of existing burning regulations is still lacking, and CCA will continue to push for a solution with MCPH and elected officials. In the absence of an agricultural burning ban, one option is to initiate alternative methods for getting rid of unwanted vegetation (see biochar). Another may be to offer residents a composting facility for organic waste located closer to the city.

WE CO-SPONSORED a virtual Grand Junction City Council Candidate Public Forum and also interviewed candidates on air quality issues, publishing their responses in our March newsletter.