

IMPROVE Steering Committee Meeting Summary December 1, 1988

An IMPROVE Steering Committee was held December 1, 1988 at the EPA Region VIII offices in Denver, CO.

John Molenaar attended in order to brief the participants on the deployment and operations of the IMPROVE visibility monitoring. Jim Price from the State of Texas and Mike Silverstein from the EPA Region VIII office attended as observers.

The primary objectives of the meeting were to up-date the participants on the status of the long-term visibility monitoring program and on the WHITEX data analysis, and to discuss the future of the IMPROVE Program. Several miscellaneous items were also discussed.

Long-Term Visibility Monitoring Network Status

Transmissometers are operational at 12 of the IMPROVE network sites at present. Two additional sites will have transmissometers in February of 1989. Two of the IMPROVE sites are scheduled to receive nephelometers instead of transmissometers. Deployment of the transmissometers has been the first priority of ARS. The result has been that maintenance of fully calibrated and operational instruments in the field has not been a primary concern. The priorities are scheduled to change shortly when all of the instrumentation is deployed. The seasonal summary for the spring of 1989, the first full season of high quality data, is expected to be available by the end of summer. Previously collected transmissometer data will be reviewed to assess its quality.

Photography continues at all but one of the IMPROVE sites. The briefing on the optical status included the non-IMPROVE NPS sites. More information on the optical monitoring is available in the ARS status report that was distributed at the meeting or by contacting John Molenaar.

Particle sampling is proceeding at all of the 20 IMPROVE network sites. Overall 97% of the possible samples collected are usable. Except for carbon analysis, the data from the network through summer of 1988 will be available by the first of the year. The carbon analysis was held up by the steering group pending further assessment of the differences noted between the IMPROVE and the SCENES carbon values during the WHITEX study. Recently the "go ahead" has been given to DRI to proceed with the carbon analysis of the IMPROVE samples using a slightly modified procedure. It will require about one year to eliminate the back-logged carbon analysis while staying current with the newly collected samples. So that the rest of the data is not held up, seasonal carbon data summaries will be separately distributed.

WHITEX Data Analysis

EPA is interested in the results of the WHITEX study as a possible source of information to justify the initiation of a Best Available Retrofit Technology (BART) analysis of the Navajo power plant for visibility impacts in nearby Class I areas. Such analysis should be conducted by August to meet a court ordered schedule.

WHITEX data analysis is at a lull at this time. Early results were reported at the last APCA Annual Conference. These plus the results of the subsequent analysis will be brought together in an interim report being prepared by William Malm and scheduled for completion by end of January. Renewed intensive data analysis will begin when additional CD₄ tracer sample analysis data from Los Alamos are available. These are expected by the end of the year. NPS offered to conduct a WHITEX workshop in late February or March to display and discuss results available at that point in time.

Though not a part of either the WHITEX study or IMPROVE, the NPS is currently operating additional sampling in the Grand Canyon that could provide greater insight into the sources of winter haze in the Canyon. Among other things particle samples will receive high sensitivity elemental analysis and an analysis for cenospheres (a tracer for high temperature coal combustion).

Future of IMPROVE and Miscellaneous Items

The steering group discussed approaches to provide states with IMPROVE collected data for sites within each state. The consensus was that data summaries should be routinely distributed and a set of photographs representing a wide variety of visibility conditions for each monitoring location within the state should be sent to each state. More detailed data could be sent upon specific request.

The steering committee is interested in not losing the funds that presently come from EPA's state air grant program. Next fiscal year these funds are due to be dispersed by EPA to the states, in place of IMPROVE. There is apparently an interest by representatives of some of the states to see the program continue intact and at the present level of activity. The Steering Committee endorsed the idea of inviting representatives of several state air quality organizations to the next meeting in order to present the program to them and seek their support to pool the necessary resources to maintain the program. The next meeting will be early next spring at a date and location yet to be selected.

It was pointed out during the discussions that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between all of the IMPROVE participating agencies had never been arranged. An effort to establish such an MOU was initiated out of the first meeting of the Steering Committee. That attempt failed in the bureaucratic red tape of EPA. Though IMPROVE has apparently not suffered thus far for the lack of a MOU, the possible involvement of state government agencies might be facilitated by such an agreement. Scott Archer offered to reinstate the development and distribution for signature of a MOU.

There was a discussion of the need for EPA to provide additional visibility monitoring guidance to the states and others required to monitor. The last official guidance of this type was the 1980 interim visibility monitoring guidance document. EPA will likely set up a working group to establish the guidance. The soon to be completed IMPROVE Progress Report and the Visibility Monitoring Performance Standards (a joint EPA/NPS effort performed under contract to Aerovironment, Inc.), would be important inputs to the process of setting up standard guidance.

David Joseph distributed copies of draft reports titled "A Brief Overview of Mathematical Models and Tools for Analyzing Visibility Impacts" for Steering Committee review. Marc Pitchford distributed copies of the draft "IMPROVE Progress Report" for similar consideration by the Committee. Comments on these should be completed as soon as possible.

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**IMPROVE Steering Committee Meeting Participants
December 1, 1988**

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