



Photo: Martin Neptune

# Pəskehtək<sup>w</sup>ok

## *Joining of the Branches*

Fall 2008 ~ Issue 2

Penobscot Indian Nation  
 Department of Natural Resources  
[www.penobscotnation.org/DNR/DNR1.htm](http://www.penobscotnation.org/DNR/DNR1.htm)

# Wecowsin

Wecowsin means "Air."

By Bill Thompson



### Phone Extensions

David Almenas, <i>Forest Technician</i>	7335
Michelle Attean, <i>Water Resources Trainee</i>	7381
Ron Bear, <i>Forest Technician</i>	7335
John Banks, <i>DNR Director</i>	7330
Rhonda Daigle, <i>Water Quality Monitoring Program Coordinator</i>	7326
Kristin Dilworth, <i>Big Game Biologist</i>	7363
Yvonne "Cookie" Francis, <i>Administrative Assistant</i>	7331
Tim Gould, <i>Game Warden Supervisor</i>	7395
Dan Kusnierz, <i>Water Resources Program Manager</i>	7361
Jason Mitchell, <i>Water Resources Field Coordinator</i>	7381
Ed Paul, <i>Game Warden</i>	7392
Jan Paul, <i>Water Resources Field and Lab Technician</i>	7382
Angie Reed, <i>Water Resources Planner</i>	7360
Russ Roy, <i>Forest Manager</i>	7339
Dennis Stevens, <i>Forester</i>	7337
Bill Thompson, <i>Air Quality Program</i>	7340
Binke Wang, <i>GIS Specialist</i>	7341

November is here, and doubtless you have been putting plastic up on your windows, placing banking around the bottom outside wall of the house, and letting the dog sleep on the bed again. It looks to be a cold winter coming our way. If you live in an old house like I do, you need all the help you can get to keep it warm. But warm in a smart way.

To stave off the feeling of isolation, instead of wrapping up your windows with that stuff you can't see through, try the newer "crystal clear" poly. I'm not talking about that plastic that you stick to the inside and use a hairdryer on it; that stuff is wicked expensive. No, I'm talking about the plastic that comes in a big roll, and it only costs a little more than the old fashioned stuff. You use this outside and you won't feel so secluded, or end up with cabin fever like that fellow in "The Shining." Instead, you can still keep track of what the neighbors are up to.

In the old days, houses were more drafty than they make them now. A small draft in the cellar at the right place can freeze and burst your water pipes, which always seemed to happen in the middle of the night. Wouldn't you know it, since houses have become air-tight, indoor air quality has suffered. Turns out that those drafts actually provided a source of fresh air that modern houses lack. Prudent housekeeping dictates that you should crank open all the windows every couple days to change the air in the house, if you don't have the drafts to do it for you..

The best invention ever created to remedy the stale indoor air situation is called an air/heat exchange system. It keeps the indoor air fresh and reduces your energy expenses from opening all the windows periodically throughout the winter. Indoor air is exhausted to the outside, and as it goes out, it heats up fresh air coming in from outside. That's pretty smart. These systems are installed in new construction as a matter of course.

They do tend to cost a bit, so if it's not an option for you, stick to the windows thing.

(Continued on next page)

*(Continued from previous page)*



Recently, our tribe’s air quality program manager was invited to speak in front of the National Association of Clean Air Agencies (NACAA). These folks are state and big city air program managers, and they were looking to build a bridge with the Native Community. I told them that I can’t speak for all tribes, because each tribe is as different as our languages are, but that I would be happy to represent my own tribe in this manner, and speak from my perspective as a single-person air program.



*Installing a new ozone inlet.*

While I was out there in Phoenix last Tuesday, our Chief asked me to co-chair a committee session for the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) with former Chief Jerry Pardilla. That was an honor to do. Turns out that our tribe has a lot of clout and credibility in the environmental field, and our Natural Resources Department and its programs are held in high regard on a National level.

We do a lot with what little we get, and that was the point I made in the NACAA presentation. You see, I had an opportunity to chat with some of those big city big wigs before my presentation, and one of them asked why tribes were taking money out of the mouths of the state air programs. I told him, “We don’t. Our program money comes from a separate pot of money that EPA sets aside for tribes. Your programs and Native programs do not compete against each other for their program money. Thank you, you’ve given me something to address in my presentation.”

Another person wondered if the money given to tribes wouldn’t be better spent letting the nearby towns take over air programs for Natives. I responded with, “tribes have a right to be treated as states, not municipalities of states. It’s written into the Clean Air Act.” I addressed this in my presentation, and included more slides showing the amount of work it takes to run an air program when you are the only one doing it, instead of like these guys, who have a person for each separate part. “How’s that for cost effectiveness?” I asked them. They could only smile and nod.

There is something to be said for folks who work in the environmental field. They tend to do it because they like the outdoors and want to protect it. When you combine that with the fact that you get to work for your tribe doing stuff that helps it, it’s a no-brainer. Do you go to work with your tail wagging? Here’s hoping that you do.

**Questions and comments may be sent to  
John Banks, DNR Director, and  
Bill Thompson, Air Quality Program Manager.**



*At five stories up, the tower sways a bit.*