



Photo: Martin Neptune

# Pəskehtək<sup>w</sup>ok

## *Joining of the Branches*

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



### Wecowsin means "Air."

By Bill Thompson

#### Phone Extensions

David Almenas, <i>Forest Technician</i>	7335
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
Jason Sockbeson, <i>Water Resources Trainee</i>	7381
Dennis Stevens, <i>Forester</i>	7337
Bill Thompson, <i>Air Quality Program</i>	7340
Binke Wang, <i>GIS Specialist</i>	7341

Well, chummy, we made it around the bend and now you can smell spring in the air. Why, folks are out and about in their jogging shoes already, even though some still got their snowshoes and gum rubbers on. This is the year we are finally gonna get active, ain't it? This is when we are going to shed those pounds of stubborn winter weight, get out in the sunshine and finally achieve those six pack abs.

Such as all that may be, keep in mind the new ozone standard out from EPA just a couple weeks ago. The new level is lower than before, meaning that EPA has decided to act upon the advice of its scientists, as well as the voices of tribes and communities throughout the land who have been pushing for a more stringent standard for years now. Good job listening, EPA!

So what does this mean for you, when you go outside? Well, the air hasn't suddenly gotten more dangerous, if that's what you were thinking. Instead, it means that when the conditions are right for a large amount of ozone to be produced in the ambient air, you will be getting warnings sooner, at lower levels of the stuff, than before.

Your tribe's Department of Natural Resources' Air Quality Program is putting in place a web-based warning system, to go along with the e-mail generated warnings as from the past couple of summers. When the levels reach a certain point, first those with compromised lung capacity will be warned. If the ozone level gets higher, then those with slightly diminished lung capacity will be warned.

High enough levels will call for everyone to run inside and hide under the bed. Just kidding. But we will be putting up a sign outside the DNR with daily ozone forecasts on it.

The new levels were fought against by those in the business world, because it means that they will be held even more responsible for the pollution and emissions they generate in going about their activities. But we are all responsible, in our own little ways, for contributing to hazardous ozone formulation.

For those of you who enjoy breathing clean air, or at least appreciate being able to breathe, this little column will begin to branch back out into outdoor ambient air quality, in the coming months, after concentrating solely on indoor air quality during the winter.

It'll be good to get outside more, ain't that right, chummy? I knew you'd say, "Tahoo."