Air Quality

FY2027 Budget Presentation

Ashley Featherstone and Hannah Rhodes

Agenda

A. High-Level Summary
   - Recent trends

B. What's New?
   - Personnel
     - Budget for Temporary/Professional Services (File Digitation Project)
   - Operating
     - Add new ozone monitoring site
     - Increase in travel/training costs
     - Increase in monitoring equipment maintenance costs
     - Added funds for Code Enforcement Team
   - Revenues
     - Decrease in grant funds (reduced amount of one-time funds)
   - Fee Changes
     - Title V fees CPI increase

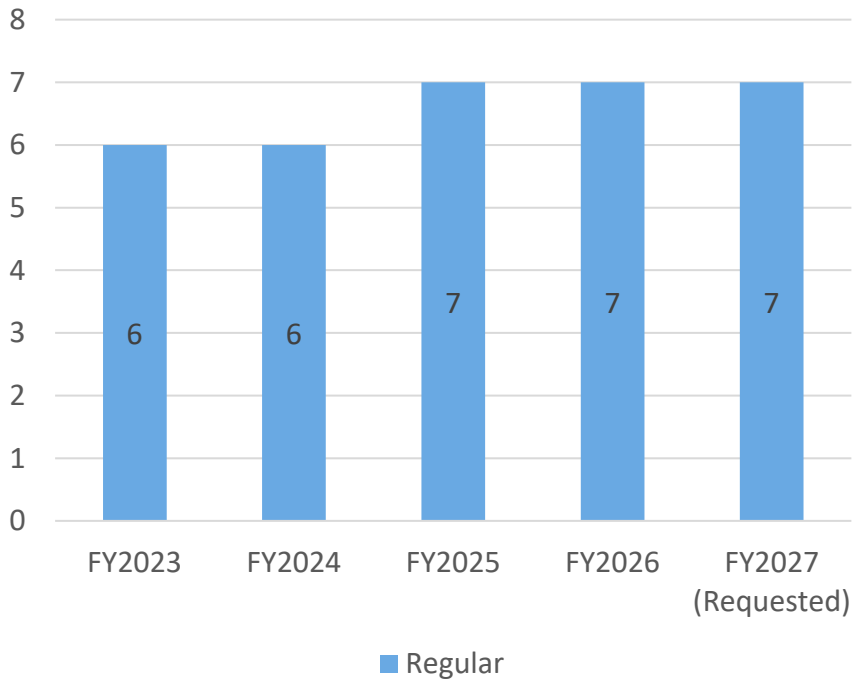
C. Strategic Alignment, Goals, & Accomplishments

High-Level Summary

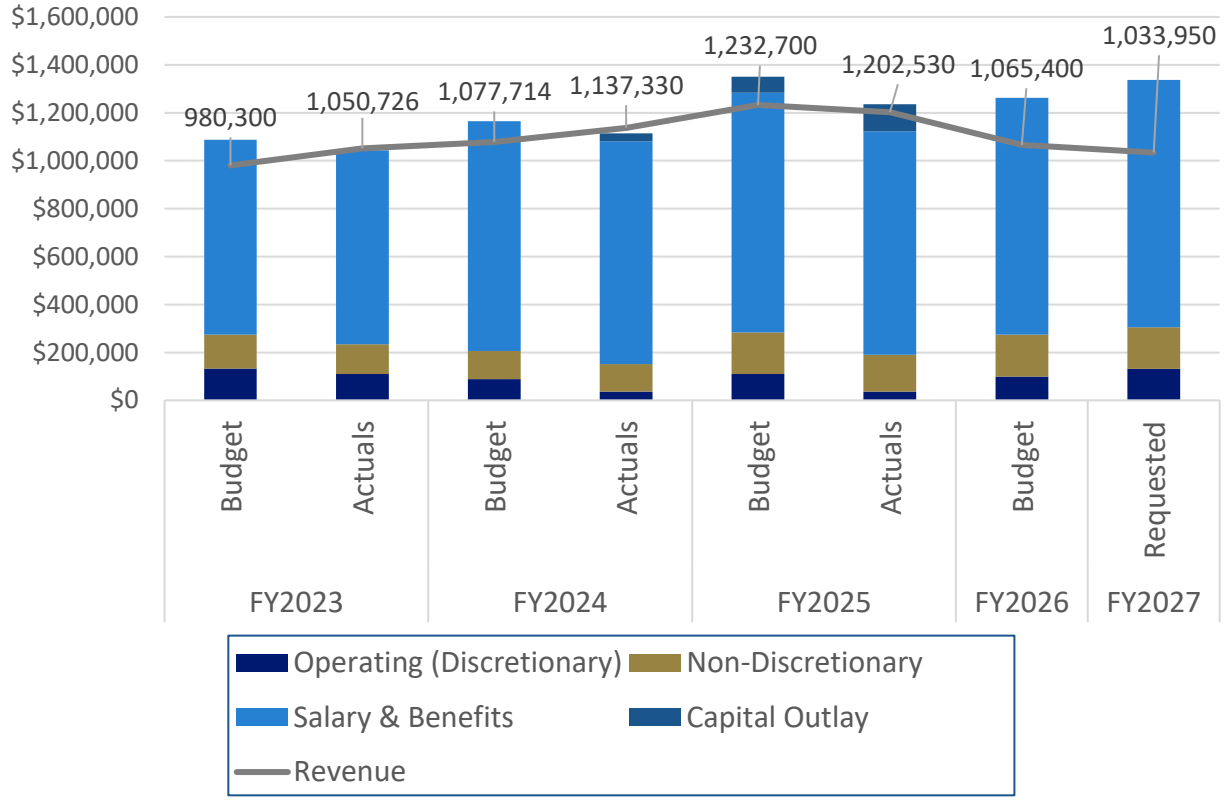
- Current FY26 Budget is about $1,263,000
- Proposed FY27 Budget is $1,335,000 (Increase of $72.4k)
- Federal funding landscape - increasingly uncertain
- Multiple FY26 Projects Pushed Forward to FY27
  - File Digitization - $11k budgeted in FY26-reduced to $5k for FY27
  - New Ozone Site - $35k budgeted for in FY26 as part of a 2-year plan to spread costs out (Total cost in FY27 now $67k)
- Increase in training needs with recent staff retirement - $2k
- Ending of One-Time EPA Funds in June 2026

Why Now? Recent Trends

Headcount



Operating Expenses



What's New? Personnel

Personnel

- Temporary/Professional Services for File Digitization Project

- **Cost:** $5,000 (reduced from $11,000 in FY26)

- **Why?**
- Need to implement modern data management system for files and data. Digitize older files. Electronic permitting for industrial facilities.
- Postponed project from FY26

How does this advance your strategic plan or business plan?

- Improve customer service – operational excellence
- Increase transparency, access to files related to emissions and environmental outcomes

Risks of not approving:

- Unable to comply with new NC rules that allow electronic submittal of permits, reports
- Unable to start digitalization project

Alternatives:

- What could you do without to get this expansion? N/A
- Is there an existing position that could be altered to support this need? No

What's New? Operating

Operating

- New Ground Level Ozone Monitoring Site at AB Tech
- **Cost:** $64,800
  - $16,000 – Concrete Pad & Electrical
  - $46,000 – one Calibrator, one Zero Air Pak, and one Analyzer*
  - $2,800 – IT Software
  - Building-Provided by NC DAQ with MOU**
- **Why?**
- Required by Federal Regulations (40 CFR Part 58 Appendix D)-due to Haywood Co. removal from MSA by OMB in 2023
- Operation required in 2026 (Spring per approved network plan).
- Postponed project from FY26

How does this advance your strategic plan or business plan?

- Environment and Energy Stewardship-Mission

Risks of not approving:

- Failure to meet EPA program requirements

Alternatives:

- What could you do without to get this expansion? N/A

*May potentially need to purchase a second $7,500 Zero Air Pak

** Cost of building that is being saved by partnering with DAQ – $90k

What's New? Operating (Cont.)

Other Noteworthy Operating Items

- **Increase in Travel/Training Costs**
  - **Cost:** $17,991
  - Compare to FY2026 (Budget): $12,996
  - **Why?**
    - Asbestos Certification for 3 staff
    - Airfare for Required EPA Meeting
    - Small increases in other training costs
- **Added Funds for Code Enforcement Team**
  - **Cost:** $3,040
    - Legal Fees: $1,560
    - Postage: $100
    - Permits Fees: $1,200
    - Sheriff Dept Fee: $180
- **Increase in monitoring equipment maintenance costs**
  - **Cost:** $4,170
  - **Why?**
    - Increase in general maintenance costs
    - $2,500 budgeted for unexpected maintenance
    - Shifting funds from "Monitoring Supplies"

Revenue(s)

Grants

EPA 105 Grant

- *Local Air Quality Program*
- FY2023: $214,517
- FY2024: $280,000
- FY2025: $222,974*
- FY2026: $196,213*
- ***FY2027 (Budget): $230,000***

EPA 103 PM 2.5 Grant

- *PM2.5 Monitoring Program*
- FY2024: $84,000
- FY2025: $63,053
- FY2026: $65,000
- ***FY2027 (Budget): $65,000***

EPA 103 One-Time Grants

- FY2023 ARP: $75,700
- FY2024 CAA: $42,214
- FY2025-26 IRA: $233,000

*Supposed to be level 105 funding

Other Revenues

Gas tax reimbursement

- FY2024: $155,494
- FY2025: $155,565
- FY2026 (Budget): $160,000
- ***FY2027 (Budget): $160,000***

Permitting Fees

- FY2024: $538,718
- FY2025: $553,756
- FY2026 (Budget): $539,900
- ***FY2027 (Budget): $573,950***

Total Revenues:

- FY2024: $1,137,330
- FY2025: $1,202,530
- FY2026 (Budget): $1,065,400
- ***FY2027 (Budget): $1,033,950***

Actual Net Impact to Fund Balance (cash and investments)

BCFY	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Revenue	994,734	906,678	1,017,227	1,097,849	888,876	883,227	859,666	943,873	924,593	1,050,726	1,137,330	1,202,530
Expenses	955,695	1,110,699	945,445	1,165,436	915,656	872,797	763,772	824,228	925,285	1,042,689	1,114,216	1,235,892
Difference	39,040	(204,021)	71,782	(67,588)	(26,780)	10,430	95,894	119,645	(692)	8,037	23,114	(33,362)

(Debit to Fund Balance)

Fee Changes

Fee	Description	Existing Rate	Proposed rate	Why?	Estimated Impact
Title V permit fees	This annual CPI increase was adopted into our rules with our fee increases in September 2021.	See final slides for details	Increase of 2.65312%	The Title V fees are required to be sufficient to fully support the program.	Increase in annual revenues by ~$3,120 for TV permitting fees.
Title V tonnage fee	The tonnage fee increase for Title V (TV) facilities may be considered as part of the Agency's budget process each year and requires Air Quality Board approval.		Increase of $1.69 per ton of emissions		Increase in annual revenues by ~$1,048 if the TV tonnage fee increase is approved.

Total increase ~$4,168 in FY26 Title V Revenue

(Tonnage fee increase pending board approval)

Strategic Alignment, Goals, & Accomplishments

Accomplishments in FY26

- Continued increased air monitoring efforts Post Hurricane Helene- equipment loan extended
- Continued Partnerships with UNCA Atmospheric Sciences Dept (low-cost air sensors in community and loaned out older ozone equipment for Meteorological Instruments Course)
- Continue to modernize data management systems with IT (in process)
  - Adding permitted facilities to Accela
  - Taking electronic payments from facilities
- Office Moved to 35 Woodfin-new and improved Air Quality Lab

Focus Areas

Environmental and Energy Stewardship – Reduce GHG Emissions and Protect Air Quality

- Continue support for BC code enforcement team
- Promote energy efficiency and other pollution prevention programs - permitted facilities and community.
- Continue public outreach on air quality awareness with focus on Helene Recovery - smoke from fires and other clean up and rebuilding efforts (reduce exposure to lead, asbestos, dust)
- Supporting firewood banks formed post Helene with EPA Burn Wise Resources

Goals for FY27

- Establish New Ozone Monitoring Site and Resume NC Air Toxics Monitoring at AB Tech
- Work with Strategy & Innovation to map and improve program processes
- Purchase PM sensors to replace loaned equipment for WNC Post Helene Monitoring Project (when loan term ends)
- Educational displays at air quality monitoring and sensor sites
- Increase outreach on open burning
- File retention policy and digitization project

What's New-Air Quality Monitoring Lab 35 Woodfin





Riverside Stump Dump Fire



Started January 9, 2026; Ongoing



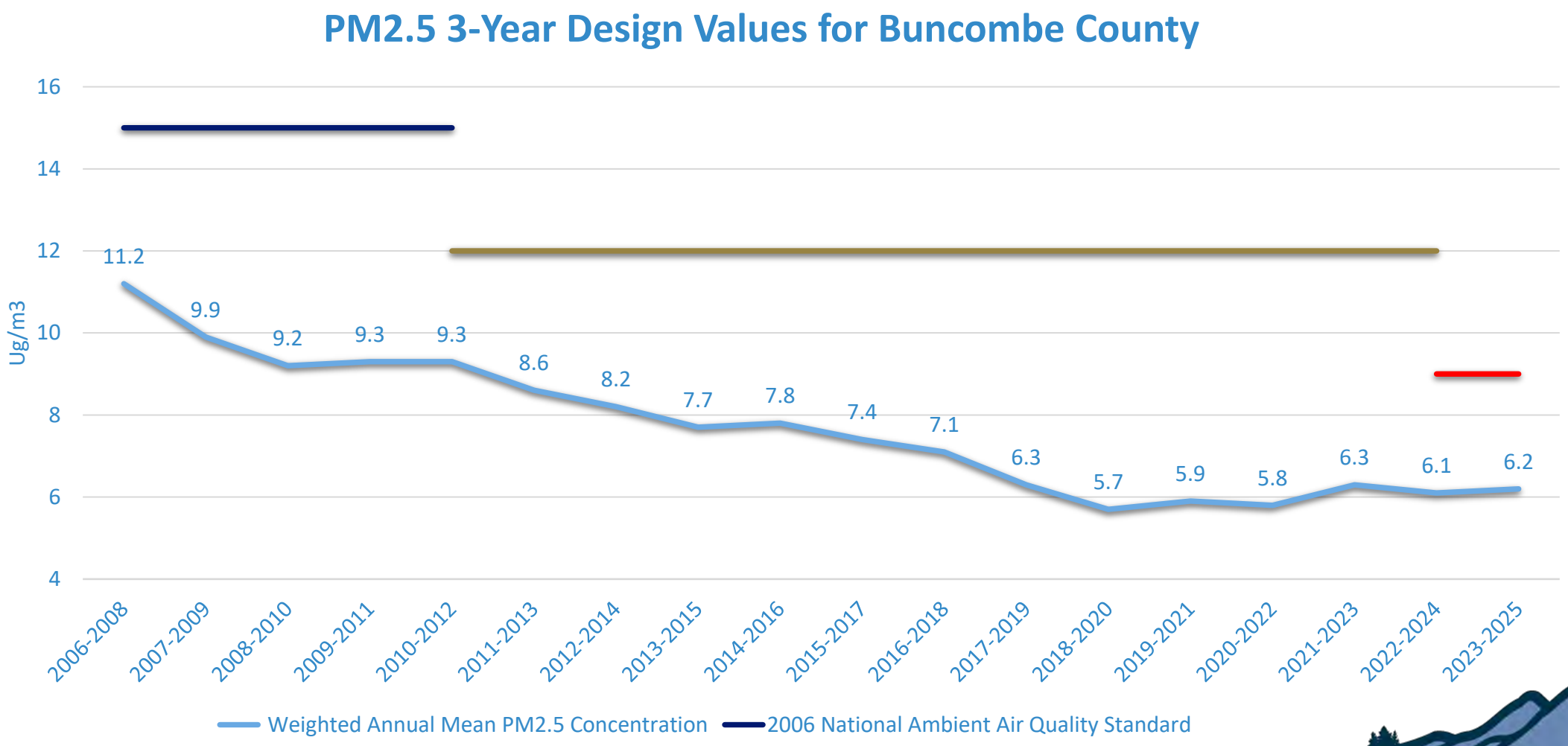
Riverside Stump Dump Fire



View from Board of Ed monitoring site- approximately 1000’



PM2.5 Levels in Buncombe County



*2025 data set incomplete

Helene Response Monitor Locations

Helene AQ response

Locations of ABAQA temporary monitors

2 views

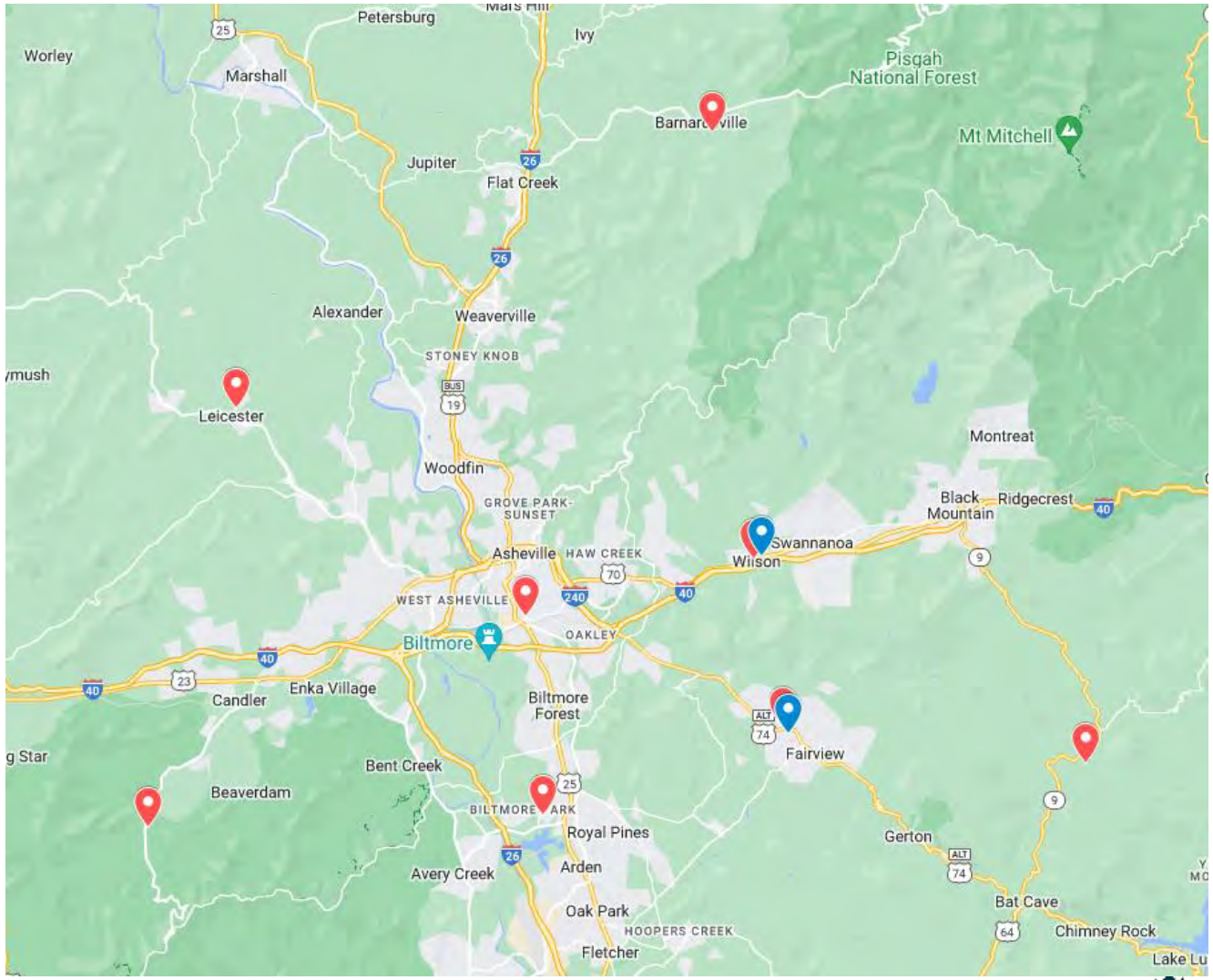
Last edit was 12 days ago

Add layer Share Preview

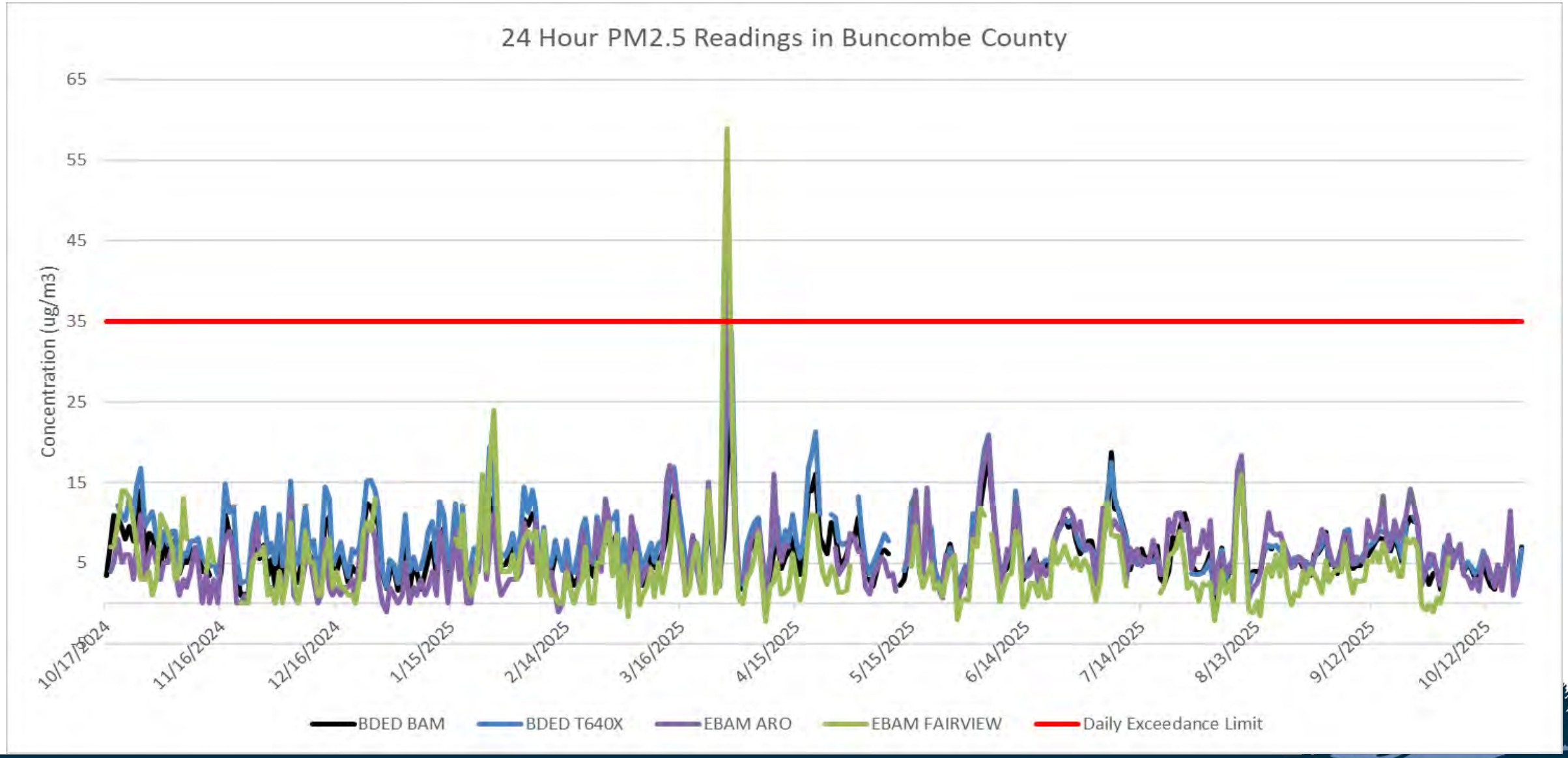
Untitled layer

Individual styles

- Leicester Library (PA)
- Barnardsville FD (PA)
- Upper Hominy Fire (PA)
- Biltmore Village (PA)
- Art Space (PA)
- ARO (EBAM)
- Skyland Library (PA)
- Fairview Library (PA)
- Fairview Elementary (EBAM)
- Broad River FD (PA)



Post Helene Monitoring Results



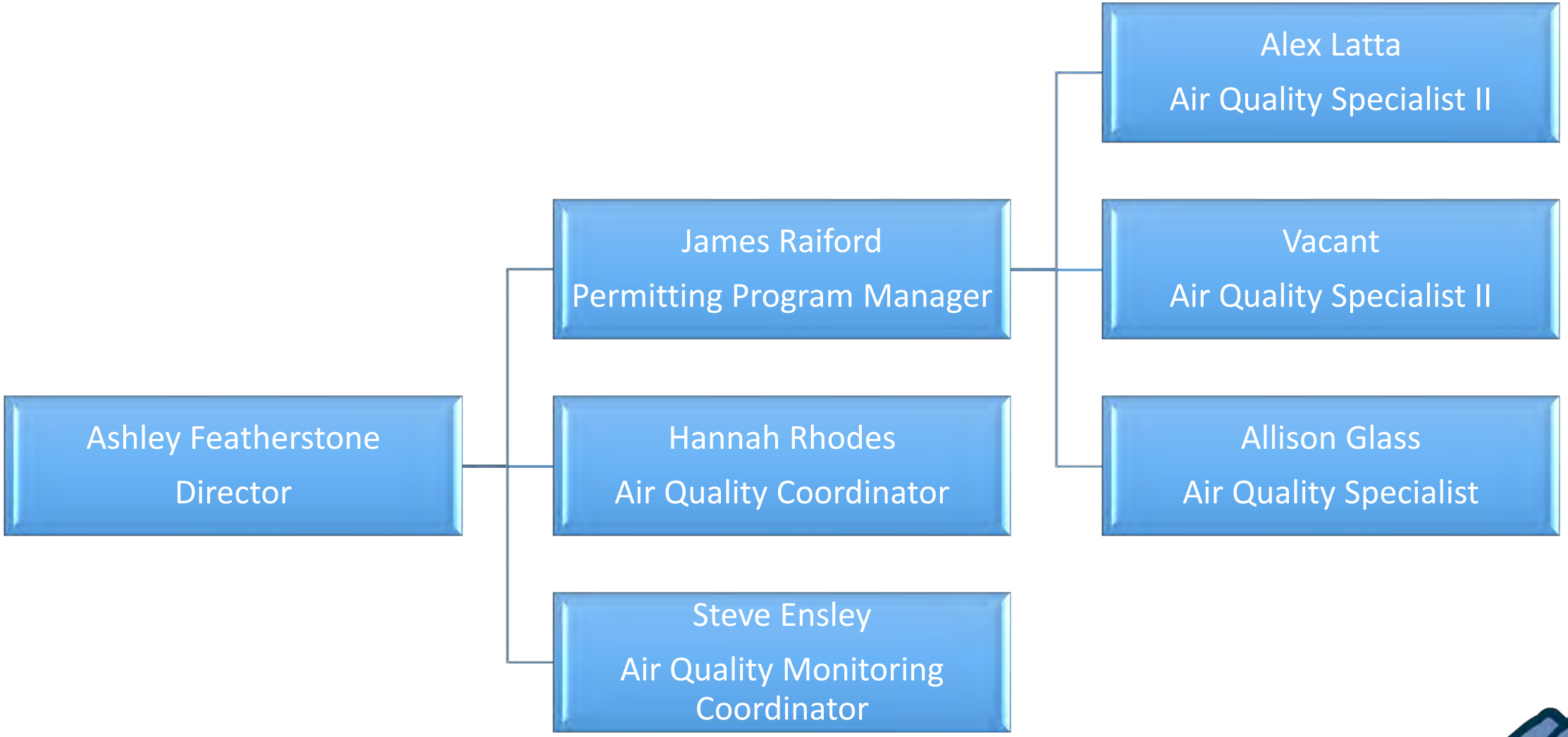
*Courtesy of Jeremy Pope NC DEQ

Resources for Recovery

- Barnardsville Wood Stove Safety Community Event-2026
  - EPA Burn Wise Program
  - Air Awareness-Air Now Fire and Smoke Map
  - Other Agency Services: Open Burning/Dust/Odor
  - How to make a DIY Air Cleaner
  - Wildfire Risk and Mitigation
  - Other county programs



Organizational Chart



Title V Application Fee Change Details

Fee Name	FY2026 Fee	FY2026 Unit	FY2027 Proposed Fee	FY2027 Proposed Unit
Initial Application or Major Modification or Renewal	$12,066	Per Application	$12,386	Per Application
Initial Application or Major Modification (PSD **or** NSR/NAA)	$18,099	Per Application	$18,579	Per Application
Initial Application and Major Modification (PSD **and** NSR/NAA)	$36,196	Per Application	$37,157	Per Application
Minor Modification	$3,620	Per Application	$3,716	Per Application
17.0300 Permit	$1,207	Per Application	$1,239	Per Application
General Title V Air Curtain Incinerator	10% of otherwise applicable fee	Per Application	10% of otherwise applicable fee	Per Application

Title V Annual Source Fee Change Details

Fee Name	FY2026 Fee	FY2026 Unit	FY2027 Proposed Fee	FY2027 Proposed Unit
Annual Base Fee	$12,066	Per Year	$12,386	Per Year
Annual Medium Complexity Fee (3-5 Federal Programs)	$3,016	Per Year	$3,096	Per Year
Annual High Complexity Fee (6 or more Federal Programs)	$9,049	Per Year	$9,289	Per Year
Title V Tonnage Fee (no change to 100 ton minimum)	$64	Per Ton	$65	Per Ton
Nonattainment Area Added Fee	$4,826	Per Year	$4,954	Per Year
General Title V Air Curtain Incinerator	10% of otherwise applicable fee	Per Year	10% of otherwise applicable fee	Per Year