

## ABOUT

# Regional Haze

## FACT SHEET

MANE-VU

Mid-Atlantic/Northeast Visibility Union

- Regional haze is a form of air pollution that can obscure the views of mountain ranges, city skylines and scenic vistas. It is caused by fine particle air pollution and can be exacerbated by water vapor on very humid days. The particle pollution that causes haze also poses a threat to human health, and it can cover an area of several hundred miles.

- Regional haze demands regional solutions, and that has prompted the formation of MANE-VU - the Mid-Atlantic/Northeast Visibility Union, an association of federal, state and tribal air quality officials working to reduce haze at Eastern national parks and wilderness areas. In addition, MANE-VU's efforts to reduce regional haze will also contribute to decreasing fine particle pollution in urban areas.

- Hazy days of summer are a result of human activity formed by emissions from many sources in a wide geographic area. The emissions come from power plants, factories, and vehicles that combine with moisture in the air. Haze is not just a summertime problem, it can occur at any time of the year. This means that some people can be at risk on any given day.

- If you can see haze on the horizon, it is likely that you are being exposed to the fine particle pollutants that create it. The presence of regional haze is almost always associated with high air pollution levels, but the converse, that air pollution levels always result in regional haze, is not necessarily true. In other words, we cannot always "see" air pollution in the air.

- When particle pollution reaches certain levels, human health is at risk, especially children, older adults, and people with heart or respiratory problems. At times, even healthy people may experience symptoms from exposure to elevated levels of particles. Symptoms may include: irritation of the eyes, nose and throat; coughing; phlegm; chest tightness; and shortness of breath.



Moosehorn  
Wilderness Area,  
Maine

- Other than visibility and health effects, fine particle pollution also contributes to acid rain, damaging plants, soil, bodies of water and wildlife.
  - Natural visibility conditions in the East are estimated at over 60 to 80 miles in most locations. Under current polluted conditions, average visibility ranges from 20 to 40 miles. On the worst days, regional haze can reduce visibility to just a few miles.
  - MANE-VU reminds everyone that the choices we make every day can help reduce the pollution that causes haze:
    - Energy-saving appliances help reduce the pollution that comes from power plants;
    - Simply turning off the lights when you leave a room can help;
    - Proper maintenance of cars and trucks ensures that they are running as clean as they should; and
    - Every time you take public transportation rather than slide behind the wheel, you are doing your part for clearer, cleaner air.
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*Prepared by the Mid-Atlantic/Northeast Visibility Union (MANE-VU), an organization of Mid-Atlantic and Northeastern states, tribes, and federal agencies for coordinated planning and action to reduce regional haze in major national parks and wilderness areas.*

Mid-Atlantic/Northeast Visibility Union

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