

A Trend We Can Live With

Forsyth County Office of Environmental Assistance and Protection began monitoring fine particulate matter (2.5 μ and smaller) in 1999.

In order to better understand the sources of this pollution, we began measuring individual components of particle pollution in 2001. Each sample is analyzed for nitrate, sulfate, ammonium, organic carbon, and elemental carbon.

The Annual Concentration Trend Tables below show these values decreasing significantly since 2001. The burning of fossil fuels, including coal, diesel, and gasoline contribute a large majority to the sulfate and organic carbon concentrations that comprise a majority of the particulate matter measured.

Stricter power plant emission controls along with cleaner burning technologies for industry and transportation has led to much of the observed decrease. While future trends are impossible to predict, the decrease noted from 2001 to 2011 is welcome news that translates fewer respiratory and cardiovascular health problems for Triad citizens.

