

NH Prescribed Fire Council
December 10, 2010 Meeting Minutes
Submitted by Andy Fast and Jeff Lougee

Present: Bryan Henderson (New Boston), Dick Weyrick (UNH), Brad Simpkins (DRED Forests and Lands), Chase Marshall (WMNF), Zach Boyajin (NH ANG), Lisa Landry (DES), Tom Natale (DRED Forests and Lands), Bill Nichols (NHB), Andy Fast (UNH), John Neely (WMNF), Jim Oehler (NHFG), Jeff Lougee (TNC)

Topics for Discussion:

- Introductions
 - Reviewed the agenda and thanked everyone for the flexibility in changing the meeting time so Brad Simpkins could attend.

- Training working team presentation: Qualification / training matrix (Zack Boyajian and Heidi Holman)
 - Start with the training: Zach B.
 - SOP working group and Training working group both had input
 - Reviewed training standards, including NWCG, Minnesota, Florida, and Ohio, and reviewed costs of 8-9 person crews with each standard (excel spreadsheet details assumptions). Proposed standards similar to Minnesota. Zach reviewed positions and qualifications. Zach can provide the PowerPoint presentation and more details upon request.
 - IQS should be able to track the new NH qualifications, including non-state employees
 - Questions were fielded.
 - Process for reviewing and adopting qualifications. Get some copies of templates from other states, modify to NH and work preformed, and circulate for review. Eventually, get approval from appropriate agencies.
 - Taskbooks. Who initiates, who can sign, and who certifies. The White Mountain National Forest could probably fill that role well at least for first fire leader and sign off.
 - Taskbooks and qualifications could be on the website.
 - MOU for prescribed fire between WMNF and DRED could be discussed at meeting for annual operating plan.
 - Multiparty MOU? Is something that needs to be looked at further.
 - WMNF may have capability to put on RX-300 level and S-234. Will make available to folks and WMNF will let folks know and we'll try and get on website.

- Overview of NH RX burn guide (Jim Oehler)
 - Jim reviewed burn guide and approach. No state level standards. And hard to partner. Reviewed purpose, Powerpoint is available.
 - Smoke sensitive areas screen for 1 mile. Why. TNC screen ½ mile, 1 mile, and 5 miles. Due to the size of the burn in NH, it is surprising if there are impacts outside 1 mile.
 - Asked about size of burns – maybe 50 acre units on average.

- Smoke Management program discussion (John Neely)
 - Legislative team has some idea, but thought it might make sense for the council to direct the legislative group. Perhaps work on something like cross-group cooperation.
 - We could be thinking about what we are producing for particulates on our burns. WMNF thinking about increasing the acreage of their burns. Others are thinking of doing the same. Thinks there may be revision of projected models for particulates and we should have some figures so we can provide input, Prescribed fire is not considered much, but someone could say “we did not know they were doing that” and restrictions come into play. Ozone is at federal agreeable levels but most levels of air quality are acceptable. Lisa, there was a new report indicating ozone standards may be reduced. Not sure what standard they will be working under.
 - John thinking if they lower the ozone, certain areas may become non-compliant, and all of a sudden don't put smoke in the air. May get rolled over if not proactive.
 - Worthwhile to have a focused discussion on legislation. Two things we should look at: Funding mechanisms for prescribed fire and burning laws in NH and think about whether we like them or inhibit us from doing what we need to do. Adopt new administrative rules in 2013 and 6 month adoption process. Not too soon to think about our rules. Fire Laws in the state are simple and administrative rules are complex. Nothing in rules about prescribed burning. 1 of 3 states with strict liability which is a problem from a cooperation standpoint or inhibits cooperation.
 - Put on agenda for next meeting.

- Website
 - Andy reviewed the website and welcomes any suggested content.
 - Add photos and media. Get on google alerts.
 - Important to have the website static

- 2010 review
 - Working teams have put in a lot of work.
 - Brad thanked everyone for all the work. This is a lot of work and the product is exactly what he envisioned. NESAF news quarterly highlighted prescribed fire with our press release as the first page.
 - Andy email fire news quarterly out.
 - Funding. A couple years ago took 15% off the block grants states get and compete for the funding. “Single rfp process” now there is a whole lot more fire assistance grants in there. SFA and forest health money in there. Any grant requests have to be tied to State Forest Plan and one was supporting prescribed fire council Feb 1 the deadline.
 - Ranked by state foresters in other regions but has to be linked to state plan – more different things fire/stewardship funding 30,000 minimum with 50% match. Different opportunities were discussed.
 - Asked Dick how we could meet UNH and what his thoughts were. Dick suggested a technical conference (not just NH, but could be a focus). And getting Foresters involved.

Conference could be tied to grant. Fire ecology and fire effects might be helpful. Fire and invasives.

- 2011 Direction of council
 - Funding on radar screen.
 - Watching BMP timeline.
 - Trainings standard taskbooks.
 - Legislation
 - Implement some training
 - Updating the website.
 - Keep each other in mind for upcoming burns.
 - Outreach to municipal fire chiefs.

- National prescribe fire coalition
 - Brian discussed opportunities to be more involved with the national prescribed fire council. He will get more information about the benefits and what it entails for the next meeting.

- Good of the order
 - Get information out to the compact about the council.

- Around the room
- Working team updates

March 11. Next Mtg. 12:30pm-3pm