

NH Prescribe Fire Council Meeting Minutes
July 24th 2013 9AM
State Military Reservation, Concord NH

Attendees: Lisa Landry (NHDES), Chase Marshall (USFS), Wendy Weisiger (SPNHF), Jeff Lougee (TNC), Tom Natale (DRED FM), Bill Nichols (DRED NHB), Jim Oehler (NH F&G), Steve Najar (USAFB), Zack Boyajian (NHARNG), Arin Mills (NHARNG)

1. Signing the interagency MOU (Where are we now?) – Jim O.
Jim Oehler reviewed who had signed the Cooperative Fire protection Agreement (MOA) and who was left to sign. Jeff Lougee asked if member are working toward meeting the burn plan guidelines and qualification standards? Jim stated that Fish and Game is getting people pack tested and trying to get more qualified people. The National Guard has some staff that meets training standards and is working on advance qualifications. Many council members stated it is difficult to get task books signed.
2. Public outreach session outcomes – Andy F.
Andy Fast discussed the failed attempts at public outreach in Ossipee and Concord. Both info sessions failed to have anyone sign up and were cancelled. The council agreed we should probably not focus on outreach at this time or come up with another mechanism.
3. Nominations and voting for next Vice Chair – Jim O. Tom Natale from DRED Forest Management Bureau volunteered for Vice Chair. The motion was seconded by Zack Boyajian. Tom was voted unanimously as Vice Chair for the next year. Term to start at the next meeting.
4. An Update on Fine Particle Pollution in NH– Lisa L.
Lisa Landry provided a power point presentation regarding particulate air quality. Discussion included non-attainment areas for SO₂, Possible new legislation to address nuisances smoke with possible exemption for prescribe burning. The question was asked “ How do you make the call that elevated levels of pollutants (PM_{2.5}) should limit or delay a prescribed burn. The general consensus was that days good for prescribed burning are generally not the days when air quality is impaired, but that a screening item in a GO-NOGO Checklist could include an air quality check or some other planning tool could be used.
5. Rx Fire Council priorities – summary of member input, discussion, voting to prioritize future actions – Jim O.
Each member was given 5 votes. Summary of votes is below and will be used to focus the council’s efforts over the next year.

NH Prescribed Fire Council	
POTENTIAL PRIORITY ISSUES FOR COUNCIL TO ADDRESS IN COMING YEARS	
ISSUE	#VOTES
ISSUE 1: Increasing Public Awareness	7
ISSUE 2: Increasing Interagency Cooperation to Plan and Implement Burns	13
ISSUE 3: Providing Additional Training and Qualifications Opportunities	13
ISSUE 4: Increasing Opportunities for Private Landowners and Municipalities to Use Prescribed Fire	7
ISSUE 5: Developing Prescribed Fire BMPs for Rare Species	3
ISSUE 6: Implement Prescribed Fire Research	1
ISSUE 7: Monitoring Efficacy of Prescribed Burns	1
ISSUE 8: Obtaining Funding to Support Rx Fire Programs	5

6. Roundtable News from Rx Fire Council Members

Lisa Landry suggested compiling a history of prescribed burns and potentially comparing them to air quality data.

Fish and Game doesn't have staff and time to develop burn plan.

US Forest is working on a landscape level burn plan

National Guard is developing a wildland fire management plan with Forest Service.

Forest Service could function as Burn Boss with a Delegation of Authority

TNC burn crew resources have gotten smaller as MA TNC fire program split off into a separate non-profit.

7. Burn Window Updates

Burn Windows were typically in late summer/fall or early spring. The Council discussed the number of trained people available per organization and other resources (equipment) and knowing what is available would be helpful for all agencies.

US Forest Service may be able to request a dedicated prescribed fire module. It would be helpful for the council to provide a letter of support. Other possibilities for support include SCA Crews.

8. Upcoming Training Opportunities

Forest Service is planning an RX Academy in FY2014.

DRED is offering a blended Crew Boss Training in October 2013.

Matt Dillon can post training opportunities on the Eastern Area Wildland Fire Site.

DRED sends out daily Fire Weather info to Wardens that often includes training announcements.

9. Other

Future work should include sending out a request for resources available (trained personnel and equipment) as well as developing priority for burning on a landscape scale. Also a way of providing a dispatch or notification functions to council members.

Next Meeting is Scheduled for September 25th 2013 USFS HQ Campton.