

NH Prescribed Fire Council
February 28, 2019 Meeting Minutes
9AM USFS HQ in Campton

Attendees: Jim Oehler, Chair (NH Fish and Game), Zack Boyajian, vice chair (NH Adjutant General), Andy Fast (UNH Coop Ext), Jeff Lougee (TNC NH), Lisa Landry (NH Dept Environmental Services), Sabrina Stanwood (NH Natural Heritage Bureau), John Neely (USFS, White Mountain NF), Ralph Perron (USFS, White Mountain NF), Jarred Jones (NH Adjutant General).

AGENDA:

- **Clare Mendelsohn, White Mountain National Forest Superintendent:** Clare welcomed the group to the White Mountain National Forest Headquarters and thanked the group for their involvement and cooperation. She said she values the effort of everyone and was ready to sign the MOU when it was ready.
- **Minutes:** Minutes from the December 12, 2018 were not available for review and approval. Zack apologized for not having them ready and stated he would have them available next week with the current meeting minutes.
- **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and By Laws:** John Neely presented the MOU prepared by Jeffrey Gaede US Forest Services grants officer. This MOU replaces the Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement that was in place from 2013 to December 31, 2018 which allowed for sharing of resources for prescribed burning. The names of the participating agencies/organizations are based on what is registered in GSA System of Award Management (SAM). Jeff Gaede requested that the MOU tie back to the Standards and Guidelines established in “Planning for Prescribed Burning in NH”(PPBNH). The Council discussed what organization are listed as participating in the PPBNH and in the Council By Laws and making them match for the purposes of the MOU. While not the best method for establishing the membership of the Council the following changes were motioned and approved. The council would be made up of the following members:

ADJUTANT GENERAL, NH OFFICE OF THE
FISH AND GAME, NH DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES, NH DEPARTMENT OF (DIVISION OF
FOREST AND LANDS)
SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF NH FORESTS
NATURE CONSERVANCY (THE) (NEW HAMPSHIRE CHAPTER)
UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF NEW HAMPSHIRE (COOPERATIVE EXTENSION)
US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
US AIR FORCE (23RD SPACE OPERATIONS SQUADRON)
US FOREST SERVICE WHITE MOUNTAIN NATIONAL FOREST

The Council would also have participating Technical Resources who are not land holding agencies that would not be parties to the MOU, but would provide technical support: The NH Department of Environmental Services Air Resources Division and NH Department of Safety Fire Academy were adjusted in the Bylaws to be identified as Technical Resources. Local Fire Departments, Licensed Professional Foresters and North County Council were removed from the Council because of a lack of participation.

A motion to amend the PPBNH was also made to align it with the By Laws and approved.

Zack was going to pursue removing requirement for Adjutant General's participation only while in trainee status. He would need to coordinate with US Property and Fiscal Office and would try to get it done expeditiously. Jim stated NH Fish and Game would coordinate with the NH Attorney General's Office review for state agencies.

- **Prescribed Fire Needs Assessment:** Jeff Lougee presented the results of the needs assessment sent to the council members. The need assessment came out of the grant sub-committee that met 1/23/2019. There were 7 responses to the survey; 2 federal agencies, 2 state agencies; 2 NGOs and 1 other (UNH Coop Ext). The results of the survey are incorporated. Jeff asked some additional follow on questions and request for clarifications. Jeff said this information would be helpful in framing the need for grant applications in the future and council strategic planning. Based on the results a large multi-agency grant in the range of 350-500K could be supported by the survey. The grant subcommittee agreed to meet again prior to the next council meeting.
- **Prescribed Fire Use Survey:** Andy Fast state the data collection for prescribed fire use was ongoing for 2017-2018. The data would be added to what was collected for previous years.
- **Forest Protection Bureau Grant Program:** Sabina Stanwood provided information for the Bureau regarding the grant program since Steve Sherman or another representative could not be present. The grant program is available to municipalities up to \$2499 for prescribed burning/fuels reduction activities. It is a 50/50 match and applications are due June 1st 2019. F&G Small Grant Program could be used as match since it is not a federal source.
- **The Interagency Fuel Treatment Decision Support System website:** John Neely presented some basic capability of this fire behavior tool. https://iftdss.firenet.gov/landing_page/index.html The system uses LandFire fuel models and is better for large scale uses.
- **Spring/Annual Plans Round Table**

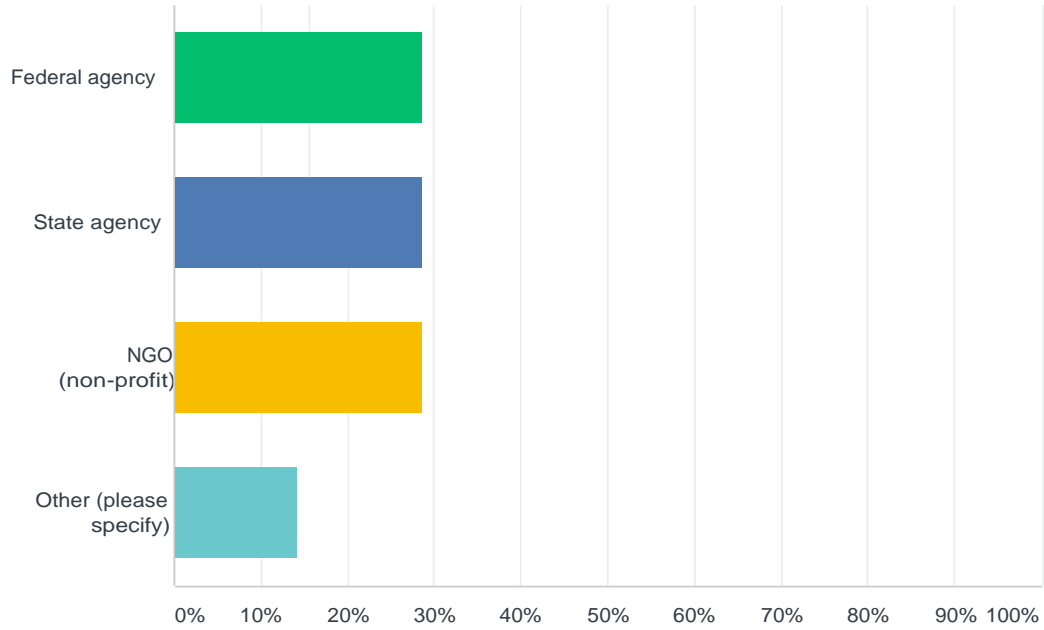
White Mountains National Forest is planning for spring wildlife habitat and oak understory burns as well as 100 acre blueberry burn for Town of Eaton.
NH Fish and Game plans for Concord Municipal Airport
Adjutant General has units prepped in Pembroke
TNC is not planning any burning in the spring. Their Annual Refresher and work capacity test is April 4th. They are also hosting blended Basic Wildland Firefighter in Maine training in June. 60 people signed up.
Lisa Landry NHDES. NH State Implementation Plan still indicates that Regional Haze is not impacted by forest burning and there have been no PM 2.5 exceedances since 2013. Liza is planning on retiring next year and is looking for a replacement to sit on the council.
White Mountains in coordination with Forest Protection Bureau will host Basic Wildland Firefighter Training in NH Southern Region. They are also hosting Resources Advisory Course this spring.

* Next meeting June 12th 1 PM NH Fish and Game, Concord

Meeting adjourned 12:15PM

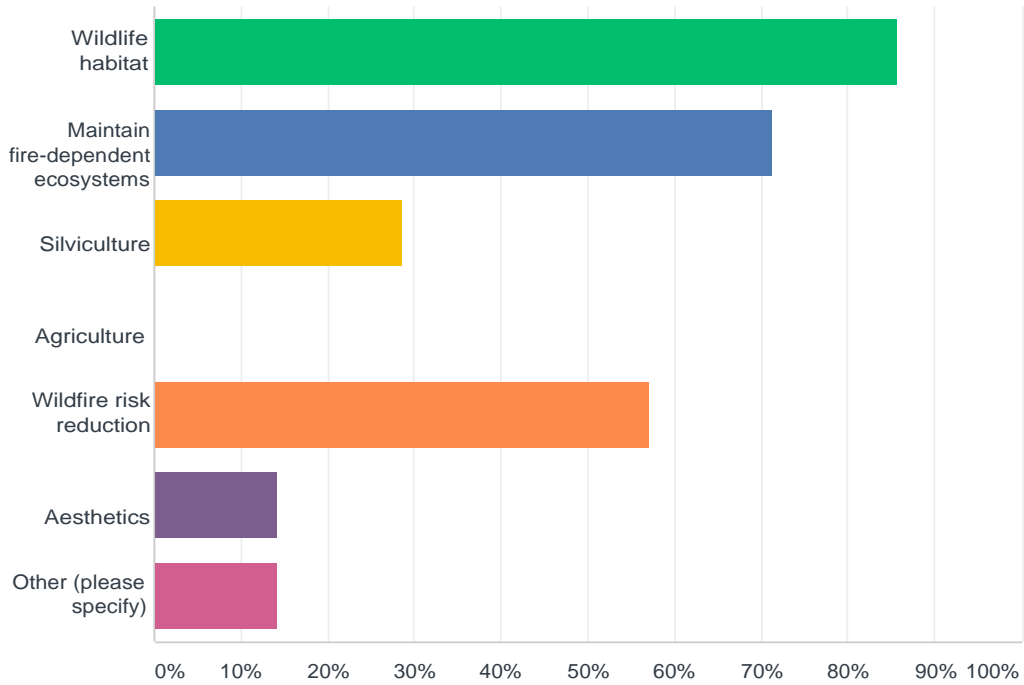
Q1 Please select your organization type

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0



Q2 What are the primary reasons you are using prescribed fire? Select all that apply.

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0



Comments on Other:

- Education

Q3 How many sites (an example of a site is Pine River State Forest) does your organization lead the implementation of prescribed fire at? Enter a whole number.

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

- Range of 1-5 sites
- Average/respondent was just over 2

Q4 How many of the sites that you lead prescribed fire implementation at are under your organization's ownership? Enter a whole number.

Answered: 6 Skipped: 1

- 4 respondents said they lead fire at sites on behalf of others

Q5 How many sites would your organization lead prescribed fire at if you had no resource constraints? Enter a whole number.

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

- Most would ramp up their work and lead fire at additional sites if they had enough resources
- Respondents identified 16 sites where they are currently leading Rx fire, and have indicated that they would lead Rx fire at as many as 26 sites with enough resources

Q6 How many acres of prescribed fire would your organization strive to implement annually if you had no resource constraints? Enter a whole number.

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

- Respondents strive to implement an average of 400 acres/year of Rx fire. This amounts to roughly 3,000 acres/year for all the respondents
- The range was from 10 – 2,000 acres

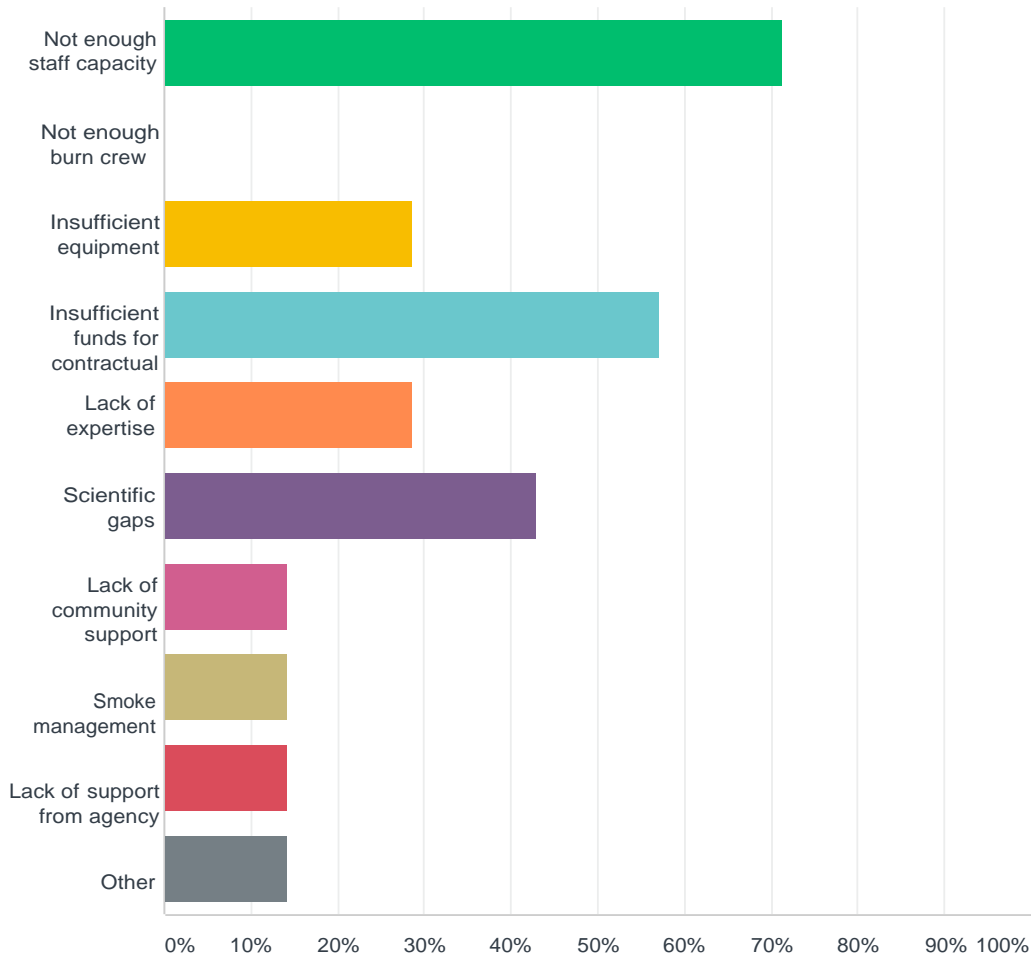
Q7 If the previous questions about sites and acres do not make sense for your organization, please describe your organization's role and priorities with respect to prescribed fire here.

Answered: 6 Skipped: 1

- State agencies expressed an interest in supporting each other's goals
- Selected comment: "There is a tremendous opportunity to implement Rx fire on private lands, which is not currently captured by the work of the Council." Note: If funded, the fire communities map that NHB will work should help us to better understand this.

Q8 What are your primary obstacles to getting more fire on the ground? Choose only your top 3. You can also use the "other" option to provide any explanation of your choices.

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0



Comments:

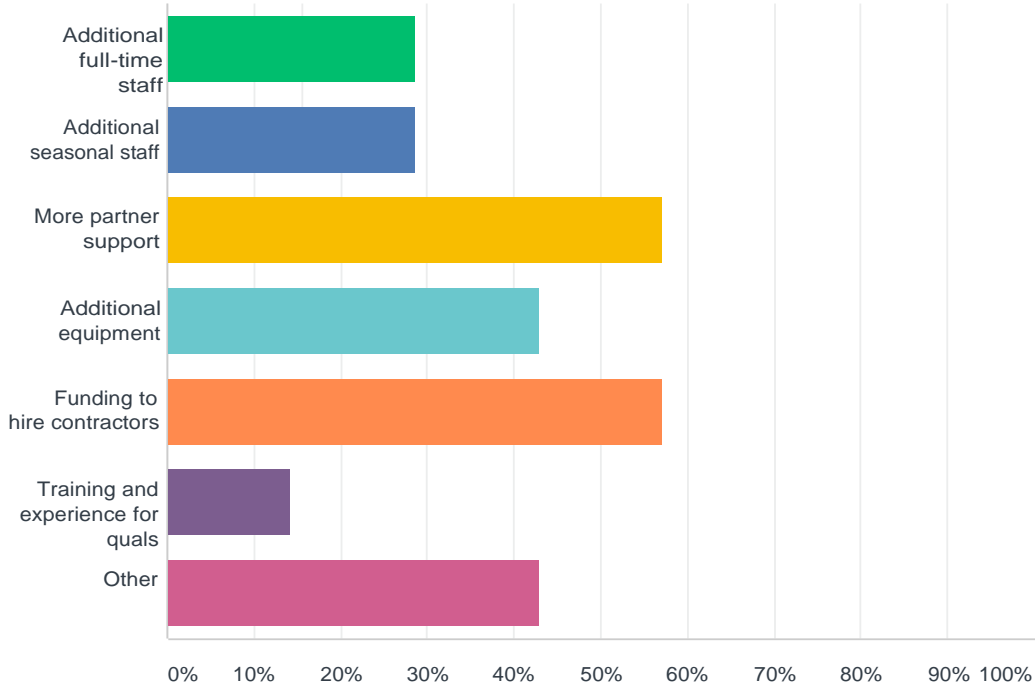
- Insufficient funds only in terms of burn planning. If we had enough capacity and expertise, this would not be an issue.

Notes from 2/28/19 Discussion @ Council Meeting:

- Scientific gaps:
 - Science is good for places like pine-barrens, but it's not as good for other places in the state, like pine-oak forests in southern NH
 - Need more information on what the most cost-effective treatment options are. For example, a comparison of mechanical treatment vs. prescribed fire.
 - Not sure about the best approaches for maintaining fields and retaining grassland habitat in fields.
- Lack of expertise:
 - This is largely driven by the fact that most folks in NH do fire on a part-time basis and can't commit the necessary time to really building up expertise

Q9 To advance your prescribed fire work, what are your most important needs? Choose only your top 3. You can use the "other" option to provide any explanation of your choices.

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0



Comments on Other:

- Need a qualified burn boss on staff
- More support from partners (crew and equipment)
- ID fire dependent/adapted systems and develop a plan to work at scale
- Developed shared priorities amongst the council members. Examples:
 - Collaborative goals on Rx fire acres
 - Alternatives to strict liability laws currently in place in NH

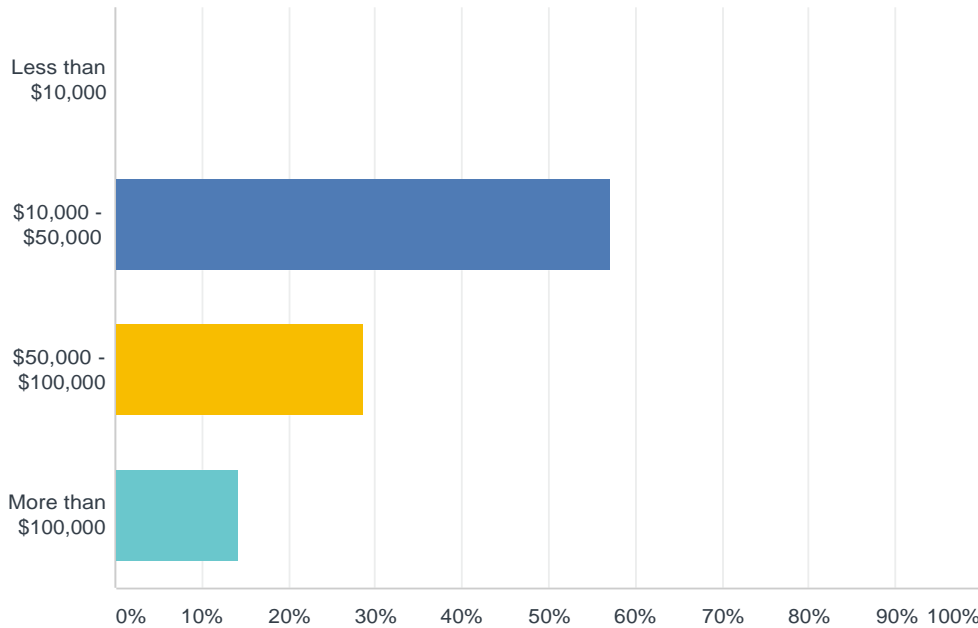
Q10 Please describe your needs further. For example, if equipment is a priority need, please list what kind of equipment you need.

Answered: 6 Skipped: 1

- ID fire dependent/adapted systems and develop a plan to work at scale (2)
- Focus on developing Rx fire portfolio with existing staff
- Use of contractors (2)
- Education programs for private landowners who do not have fire management expertise
- Determining most cost-effective approaches for implementing Rx fire
- Engines (both Type 6 and 7) (2)
- Seasonal burn crew

Q11 If your organization was part of a 3-year grant, how much funding could you use, and what would you use it for? Select a funding choice and describe below.

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

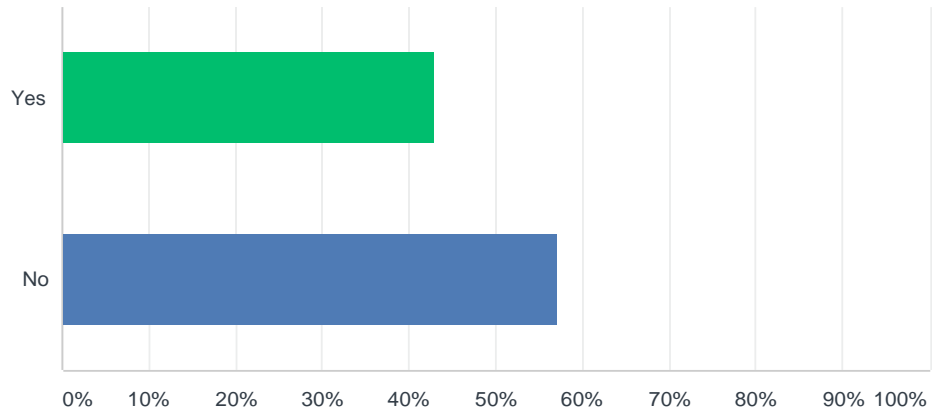


Comments:

- Estimate \$11-12K/annually with an approach that relies on partner support. This would go up if we had to use contractors.
- Burn module
- Research and facilitation of strategic efforts that promote fire at the state level and benefit most if not all partners and other forest landowners. Example projects related to this:
 - Project to evaluate barriers
 - Develop models that are cost effective
- Sites listed: Morse Preserve (SPNHF), Concord Pine Barrens, Pine River State Forest, Blue Job, Joy State Forest, White Lake State Park
- Slip-on and 2 UTVs

Q12 Can you provide non-federal match to a grant?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0



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Q13 Do you have "shovel-ready" projects to include in a grant proposal?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

