

**MINUTES**  
**SMOKE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SMAC) MEETING**  
**June 26, 2014**

**477.552 Policy.** It is the policy of the State of Oregon:

- (1) To improve the management of prescribed burning as a forest management and protection practice; and
- (2) To minimize emissions from prescribed burning consistent with the air quality objectives of the federal Clean Air Act and the State of Oregon Clean Air Act Implementation Plan developed by the Department of Environmental Quality under ORS 468A.035. [1989 c.920 §2]

**Committee Members Present:**

Gregory McClarren, Public Representative  
Mike Dykzeul, Industrial Forest Representative  
Willie Begay, BLM Representative  
Rick Graw, Forest Service Representative  
Lee Miller, Nonindustrial Forest Representative

**Others Present:**

Nick Yonker, Meteorology Manager, Fire Protection Program, ODF Support  
Brian Finneran, DEQ Staff Support  
Doug Grafe, Deputy Chief, Fire Protection Program, ODF Support  
Tracy Guenther, Administrative Support, Fire Protection Program, ODF Support  
Harold Merritt, Plum Creek Timber  
Mike White, Coos Forest Protective Association  
Laura Mayer, Forest Service  
Denise Blankenship, Forest Service, BLM  
Amanda Stamper, Oregon Prescribed Fire Council  
David Cramsey, Roseburg Resources Company  
Mike Jackson, Douglas Forest Protective Association  
Steven Hoffert, Chief Information Officer, IT, Oregon Dept. of Forestry  
Brent Grimsrud, IT, Oregon Dept. of Forestry  
Paul Bell, Associate State Forester, Oregon Dept. of Forestry

**ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS – INTRODUCTIONS**

Nick Yonker called the meeting to order at 09:05 a.m.

- Introductions were made.

**MINUTES APPROVAL/MINUTES FORMAT DISCUSSION**

Mike Dykzeul requested three minor changes to the minutes. Gregory McClarren motioned the adoption of the February 06, 2014 minutes, Rick Graw seconded, and the meeting minutes were approved at 9:09 a.m.

Nick began discussion on the minute's format and mentioned based on the last SMAC meeting that "action items" are noted in the minutes. He asked whether there are any other improvements necessary.

There was some concern how to handle action items that required a long-term vs. a short-term solution. Nick answered that generally short-term items would be discussed on the next meeting's agenda whereas long-term items would be added to the "parking lot" list of projects.

**Action:** Tracy will correct and post the updated Feb. 6, 2014 minutes to the Smoke Management website.

**NEW SMOKE MANAGEMENT DATA SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT – FIVE YEAR BUSINESS/FISCAL PLAN**

Steven Hoffert, Chief Information Officer for IT, addressed the committee on how to move forward to replace the existing Smoke Management data system.

- It will be an Enterprise System that will go through a set project methodology. A charter must be developed and a steering committee chosen to guide the process.
- The project methodology will include a user story phase to determine what the stakeholders need in the system then a development team will move forward to program the new system.
- The process will take approximately two years.

- At the next SMAC meeting the charter needs to be presented and include costs, needs and steps to move forward.
- The application will be developed in-house using IT resources and personnel. A Protection Program Business Analyst may be hired part-time or full-time for limited duration to handle user need assessments.

Mike D. asked whether there would be any connection to FERNs or if capacity could be built into FERNs to link shared data. Steve replied that all data will be looked at to see where it resides but building the data system into FERNs would be outside the scope of their work.

Nick mentioned the new system will likely be web-based. Willie Begay asked whether a mapping system would be integrated into the system and whether it would have mobile access capability for land managers in the field.

Harold Merritt said that as a stakeholder he was concerned about the cost of a new system and that we shouldn't proceed unless we know the cost. Nick mentioned that we need a new system and that by IT doing the project in-house, the costs would be greatly reduced.

The cost concern remained with other committee members and that it was necessary to have a good picture of the cost by the next meeting. This will also be essential to the program's five-year fiscal business plan. More on the fiscal plan could be discussed when get to the agenda item later in the meeting.

**Action:** Develop charter and vision forward for data system and have a steering committee created.

### **OREGON PRESCRIBED FIRE COUNCIL OVERVIEW – AMANDA STAMPER**

Amanda Stamper gave a presentation to the committee regarding the Oregon Prescribed Fire Council.

- Consists of public and private groups promoting to varying degrees the use of prescribed burning.
- Prescribed Fire Councils developed in the SE United States in the 1970s and then spread westward.
- Oregon Prescribed Fire Council formed in February 2013 as a result of grassroots efforts on the part of fuels technicians working for Deschutes National Forest.
- Local chapter meets to share information and research and to discuss issues facing prescribed fire including legislation, insurance, smoke management and other topics.
- Challenges include burner certification, smoke management and tradeoffs, hazard reduction vs. air quality, and developing training exchanges.

Questions were brought forward to Amanda on the use of private contractors on forest service land, woodstove regulation, the council role dealing with prescribed burning on federal land, liability concerns regardless of training, how the council will work with the Smoke Management program, and whether the Oregon Prescribed Fire Council will be an advocacy group or not.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mike D. took time to explain a concern he had regarding a Deschutes Collaborative meeting that took place in Bend the previous week. The Forest Service was seeking ways to increase awareness of the conflict created by the competing objectives of increasing the pace and scale of forest restoration and the objective of the Oregon Smoke Management Plan to minimize intrusions. Denise Blankenship from the Forest Service explained that they had attended the meeting to provide information on smoke management and air quality, and discuss the regulations and issues that govern prescribed burning. Forest Service wants to work as partners with the regulatory agencies despite the pressure to increase restoration burning.

### **SMAC FUTURE (CHARTER/MEETING STRUCTURE/TASKS/PRIORITIES/FUTURE GOALS)**

Doug Grafe addressed the committee by wanting some clarity on the purpose of the committee. Doug went through the law and what roles the committee plays within the statute. He expressed concern that Nick Yonker is acting as the chair of the committee vs. secretary of the committee and this was becoming an undue burden on him.

Doug sought for the committee break into a smaller workgroup to review the committee's organization, principles, and the direction on where the committee needs to go.

- Concern was expressed if a majority of the committee met as a workgroup, would it be considered a public meeting?
- The committee and staff discussed whether a chairman, facilitator or some other model would work for running the meetings in the future.
- The committee agreed they wanted to move forward to determine how to proceed.

**Action:** Staff will find out whether additional workgroup meetings with committee members are allowable without being a public meeting.

Small workgroup would meet to develop a committee charter. Workgroup members would include: Doug Grafe – leader, Willie Begay, Mike Dykzeul, and Gregory McClarren.

Small workgroup would meet to develop a new data system charter. Workgroup members would include: Nick Yonker – leader, Rick Graw, Lee Miller, Dave Cramsey, and Mike White (see action item under “New Smoke Data System Development”).

These two workgroups would report out their results at the next committee meeting.

### **WORKING LUNCH/SPRING INTRUSION REPORT**

Pete Parsons presented a PowerPoint presentation of the 2014 smoke intrusions. A summary of all intrusions showed eight occurred in 2014; all from the Forest Service with three in Bend, one in Bend/Redmond, three in John Day, and one in Klamath Falls. Details of the 2014 intrusions follow:

- April 11, 2014 – Sisters Ranger District smoke into Bend. It was light intrusion lasting eight hours from the main plume.
- April 13-14, 2014 – Bend/Ft Rock Ranger District smoke into Bend from overnight smoldering. It was a heavy intrusion lasting over a two night period.
- April 16-17, 2014 – Sisters Ranger District smoke into Bend. It was a light intrusion lasting 12 hours with smoke settling overnight.
- May 30, 2014 – Blue Mountain Ranger District smoke into John Day. It was a light intrusion lasting three hours from drainage flow.
- May 31, 2014 – Blue Mountain Ranger District smoke into John Day. It was a light intrusion lasting four hours from thunderstorm outflow.
- May 31-June 1, 2014 – High Cascades Ranger District smoke into Klamath Falls. It was a light intrusion lasting 14 hours from a marine push that settled in overnight.
- June 5, 2014 – Multiple burns from McKenzie Ranger District and Sisters Ranger District combined smoke into Bend/Redmond. It was a light intrusion lasting five hours from the main plume.
- June 10-12, 2014 – Blue Mountain Ranger District smoke into John Day. It was a light intrusion lasting over a three-night period from overnight smoldering.

Fuel consumption estimates given by districts for many of the intrusions were significantly less than what the Smoke Management section estimated. It appeared that duff consumption was not considered in the plans or accomplishments. Fuel consumption is very difficult to estimate and staff have worked with Roger Ottmar at Pacific Northwest Research Station to get better fuel consumption estimates.

Pete expressed concern whether the standard guidance matrix allowed for too much tonnage or whether marine air or smoke moving through corridors are an exception to using the matrix. Nick mentioned that the matrix is just guidance and can't handle all weather situations. Coordination with forecaster is often necessary to get a better allowable tonnage estimate.

### **SPRING BURN SEASON**

Nick presented the committee with a summary of district burning through June, 2014 and compared it to yearly burning since 2005.

- Tons Submitted: 486,452
- Tons Burned: 297,681
- Acres Submitted: 61,230
- Acres Burned: 40,001
- Units Submitted: 484\*
- Units Burned: 507
- Ignitions: 723\*\*

\*Units submitted can be less than units burned because units can be burned from previous years.

\*\*Unit ignitions can be greater than units burned because a unit can be burned more than once.

This was another busy year of spring burning with the most units and acres burned in spring during the last 10 years.

A question was asked what the asterisk on the handout meant, and if intrusions could be added to the list of burning accomplishments.

Rick asked how the definition and rationale for intrusions was derived. Nobody really knew but it was thought it came with the beginning of the program. Discussion continued on how to determine an intrusion and what investigation takes place to confirm complaints of smoke into SSRAs. Nick explained how the investigation process works in that it involves checking the weather, wind, burning, and verification by a public official in the community.

**Action:** Document any asterisks on handouts. Include intrusions with units, acres, and tons burned.

## **CURRENT BUDGET**

Nick explained the program continues to increase in revenue which will be helpful for projects such as the data system.

Fund balance continues to increase and isn't falling as much during the off season due to longer burning windows due to beneficial weather patterns.

Mike D. pointed out that we need to discuss whether the fee structure needs to be evaluated in light of the increasing funds. A five-year financial review will help to determine the proper amount of funding the program needs.

**Action:** Staff needs to discuss how to establish a five-year financial review and what will be evaluated and tie it to the data system project charter for the next committee meeting.

## **REPORT ON REVIEW (HEARINGS/BOF/EQC/REVIEW REPORT)**

Nick Yonker and Brian Finneran provided the committee with a handout package and brief overview and summary of the public hearings and public comments. Four of the five hearings were held jointly with DEQ and ODF. DEQ received eight public comments and ODF received six public comments. The comment period opened January 24, 2014 and closed March 12, 2014, at 5 p.m.

The following lists the five public hearings, locations and dates.

- February 25, 2014, The La Grande Library; La Grande, Oregon.
- February 26, 2014, DEQ Eastern Region Office; Bend, Oregon.
- March 4, 2014, Lane Fire Authority; Veneta, Oregon.
- March 5, 2014, Jackson County Roads & Parks; White City, Oregon.
- March 6, 2014, CU Auditorium, OIT; Klamath Falls, Oregon.

## **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

Nick Yonker gave an overview regarding the ODF Implementation Plan for 2012-13 Smoke Management Review Committee recommendations.

- Burn Fees – Review to determine whether current and projected fees are adequate for program operation. Timeline is January 2015.
- PE on Piles – Investigate feasibility of field study through a workgroup. Timeline is fall of 2015.
- Class I Area Visibility Protection – Update Smoke Management brochure language to avoid main plume impact into Class I Areas. Timeline is 2015.
- Class I Area – Inform Forest Practices Regional Advisory Committees of importance to avoid prescribed burning smoke main plume impacts into Class I Areas. Timeline is 2015.
- Emission reduction techniques (ERT) and alternatives to burning – Identify workgroup to review long and short-term ERT improvements based on data needs. October 2014.
- Emission reduction techniques (ERT) and alternatives to burning - Combine analyzing existing ODF ERT data with developing a baseline to identify ERTs. October 2014.
- Emission reduction techniques (ERT) alternatives to burning - Report available ERT and alternative data in the Smoke Management Annual Report. Smoke Management staff is responsible party.
- Periodic Review – Update administrative rule to specify Smoke Management Plan (SMP) will be reviewed every five years not to exceed 10 years from previous review. Note to “coordinate with DEQ” in completion method.
- Data System Changes – Build a new Smoke Management data system to improve functionality and the long term support of the system. Timeline is 2016.

- Registrations vs. Notifications – Work with Private Forests to investigate the ability to match timelines of prescribed burn registrations and harvest notifications. Timeline is 2016.
- Education and Communication – Investigate more opportunities for educating and communication of the Smoke Management program to the public and stakeholders. Timeline is 2016.
- Training – Investigate implementing that training is needed to bring consistency to rating fuel loading. Timeline is 2015/16, Further discussion is needed.
- Prescribed Fire vs. Wildfire for Resource Benefit – Define the difference between prescribed fire and wildfire for resource benefit and how to administer programs with differing agency definitions. Timeline is 2016

#### **Other Implementation Plan Items**

- Smoke Sensitive Receptor Areas – The review committee asked the SMAC to review the process for simplifying designating new Smoke Sensitive Receptor Areas (SSRAs). Rick asked, “What’s the process for removing SSRA designations?” Rick stated that Malheur NF is interested in removing the SSRA designation for John Day. Brian indicated that it’s too premature to discuss this. Timeline is 2016.

**Action:** Update implementation plan with new timelines.  
Add discussion on rating fuel loading training at next committee meeting.

#### **ITEM 10: NEXT MEETING – ADJOURN**

Nick adjourned the meeting at 3:55 p.m. The next regular meeting of the SMAC will be held January, 2015, in Salem.

**Action:** Nick will send out a Doodle Poll to the SMAC to determine the best available date.

Throughout the meeting there was quite a bit of discussion regarding the competing objectives of accelerating the pace and scale of forest restoration and minimizing smoke intrusions into SSRAs. During the next meeting we will allow time for a presentation on the West Bend Project as an illustration of this issue and allow time for discussion.

**Action:** Allow an agenda topic for the Forest Service to present a briefing on the West Bend Project.