

MINUTES  
SMOKE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SMAC)  
June 25, 2019

**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, Committee Chair, Public Representative  
Yanu Gallimore, BLM Representative  
Rick Graw, Forest Service Representative  
Dave Cramsey, Industrial Land Owner Representative  
Scott Hanson, Non-Industrial Landowner Representative

**Others Present:**

Nick Yonker, Smoke Management Manager, Fire Protection Program, ODF Support  
Doug Grafe, Chief of Fire Protection Program, ODF  
Tim Holschbach, Policy Manager, ODF  
Michael Orman, Department of Environmental Quality Representative  
Peter Brewer, Department of Environmental Quality  
Pete Parsons, Smoke Management Meteorologist, ODF Support  
Mike White, Coos Forest Protective Association  
Shauna Morris, ODF Support  
Brian Schrag, Roseburg Forest Products  
Kyle Williams, OFIC  
Rick Allen, Starker Forests  
Jason McGovern, US Forest Service  
Linda Chappell, US Forest Service  
Dana Skelly, US Forest Service  
Rex Storm, Associated OR Loggers, INC  
Ariel Cowan, Monitoring Specialist, Private Forests, ODF  
Pete Caligiuri, The Nature Conservancy, via phone

**WELCOME – INTRODUCTIONS**

Gregory McClarren opened the meeting at 9:01 a.m. Introductions were made. Gregory introduced Yanu Gallimore, filling in for Willie Begay who recently retired. Doug Grafe reported the Protection Division is prepared for the upcoming fire season. Doug added that ODF has staff in Alberta, Canada. In addition, Ron Graham has traveled to Alaska to assist with fire management. Gregory welcomed Pete Caligiuri who joined via phone. Nick Yonker shared that committee members now have binders for keeping Smoke Management-related notes and materials.

**MINUTES APPROVAL**

Gregory motioned for approval of previous minutes. Dave Cramsey asked about progress related to the previous meeting's action items. Action items from previous minutes were reviewed and Nick gave updates per item.

- Action Items reviewed (in sequence order) from January 2019 Smoke Management Committee Meeting:

1. Further education for Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) and Board of Forestry (BOF): On hold
2. Updated data system for all public to view: On hold, awaiting IT assistance
3. Request for report of burn data: Completed
4. Request for Bend Air Quality Report: Completed
5. Further discussion on intrusions that exceed the NAAQS by landowners, DEQ & ODF: Work in progress; goal to complete this by Jan 2020
6. Further discussion needed regarding implementing of new instructions especially on poor air quality days: Work in progress
7. Spreadsheet/list of all SSRAs needing PM monitors: DEQ has portable monitors as backup and they are currently working on installing additional monitors.
8. Will USFS and BLM sell PM monitors, possible cost-sharing: Rick Graw will follow up.
9. Top two or three needs of each SMAC committee member (around metrics): Work in progress.
10. Schedule next meeting: Completed.

Minutes approved as presented.

## **PROTECTION DIVISION REPORT**

Tim Holschbach presented protection update, sharing that ODF has 12-15 resources in Alberta working through the Northwest Compact as well as 12 resources in Alaska, including Ron Graham as of today. Tim said ODF is also assisting staff at Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) while their personnel are training seasonal staff. Gregory inquired if ODF has had difficulty finding firefighters, Tim responded that we are able to find good seasonal firefighters, and work toward retaining them. Other updates included an ODF dispatcher is in Arizona for resource assistance. Russ Lane has recently retired. Blake Ellis temporarily replaced Russ to staff the Operations Manager position through the end of the year. Christina Clemons is on assignment in Alberta as Division Supervisor.

## **DEQ REPORT**

Michael Orman informed the committee that Matt Smith had left the agency to go to the Forest Service. They're in the process of hiring a new Air Specialist that will represent DEQ at SMAC meetings.

Michael stated that DEQ continues to work on the state implementation plan with EPA. He noted they hope for approval within a year. Michael gave an overview on the steps for the review process. Rick Graw mentioned the state of Washington is encountering more difficulty with their review process. Rick stated that we have involved EPA in our review process. In addition, our past intrusion limitation has been considerably below the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), which gives confidence that our program will not "backslide" compared to the state of Washington. Nick also pointed out this is Washington's first review in about 20 years, whereas we've been working with EPA on a regular basis. He noted we have reviews every five years and have had EPA and DEQ input along the way.

Michael presented a map of DEQ air quality monitoring sites as well as proposed sites. He said the plan is for siting new PM monitors beginning this summer and continuing into next year. He noted there have been complications with equipment and installation. He informed the group that these monitors are similar to "Purple Air" monitors. They are not federal reference monitors and will be used for wildfires. Peter Brewer shared they hope for portable monitors to be moved around for prescribed burning, beginning in

Bend, Redmond and La Pine. Michael noted that monitors likely will come soon in the priority areas and shared that data will be available through the same website as currently used.

## **FUND BALANCE**

Nick referenced the Fund Report and said the range of the fund balance can be \$400,000 - \$500,000 from high to low. He noted September funds are generally the low point of the year. He explained that the BLM contract is updated every two years and the Forest Service contract is updated every year. Nick also pointed out that USFS burn fee revenue has been received. A payment was made in March and we expect another payment within the next month of \$112,500. He explained BLM makes payments of \$38,500 and noted that currently BLM is paying more than what they are actually burning. He explained an adjustment was made to the non-federal burn fee revenue. The subtraction of \$1407 was due to 37 duplicates last fall in the data system. This had to be refunded. He stated the January \$167,000 non-federal revenue was from fees collected late from fall burning. Gregory noted that it would be wise to look into why the error of duplicate billing happened and how we can prevent this in the future. Tim mentioned there is a "checks-and-balances" system in place to catch such errors. Nick indicated the fee structure is complicated and the new data system could be having some trouble with the programming of the fees.

**Action item 1:** Update fund projection as agenda item for next meeting (prompted by question from Dave).

Yanu Gallimore asked about BLM overpayment discussion. Nick answered that this is a two-year contract and he will look at future burning. There was agreement that there will likely be a discussion closer to the end of the two-year contract.

**Action item 2:** Gregory responded to a question about how refunds are provided. Is there a credit system or refund system? Email to update the committee.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Brian Schrag noted his organization in Roseburg completed two-thirds of their burning this spring. He mentioned that he is supportive of the rule changes. He questioned how the data from monitors is being collected to adjust forecast models based on the new rule. Nick answered that he is looking through past intrusions and burning to assist updating the instruction model. He also noted this requires reviewing the use of polyethylene (PE) covering to determine increases to burning. Our PE study showed non-covered piles produce 4 times more smoke emissions than covered piles. However, this only considers one pile at-a-time vs. a unit that has 100 piles. It's difficult to capture actual information for pile wetness from covered piles vs. non-covered. Thus we will cautiously implement the new rule because much of our changes will be mostly "guesswork." Brian responded that they had done some research on their burning showing that of the nine days they burned with smoke going toward an SSRA, only one day produced a minor impact on the Roseburg monitor. He gave an example of a burn on 4/25/19 that burned approximately 1700 tons but did not impact the monitor. Brian noted this information would suggest an ability to increase the tonnage to burn.

Rick Allen advised his organization, Starker Forests, to use PE in their pile burning last fall. He noted challenges have been spring broadcast burning for fuels management and having SSRA's on both sides of their forests. Rick stated they are overall, happy with the new rules and have been shrinking units to enable broadcast burning. He stated he would like to see an increased ability to burn, yet recognizes the "work-in-progress" in implementing the new rules.

Dave wondered what the burn limits would look like and suggested asking landowners if they can estimate ahead of time how much they might need to burn.

Dana Skelly stated the Forest Service has 1.375 million acres of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulated forestland available to burn but average 65,000 acres of burning between Washington and Oregon each year. It continues to be difficult to balance burning with air quality.

## **BURNING SUMMARY**

Nick referred to the Burning Summary charts and noted these main points:

- 354 units were burned, 24,000 acres, 145,000 tons this year
- BLM treated about 3,000 acres
- Other federal lands treated - mostly in Douglas FPA (Cow Creek Indian Tribe) - 213 acres
- Private lands treated 4,700 acres
- Forest Service treated 16,000+ acres
- Plan vs. accomplished broadcast burning for private landowners: 21 units planned for 863 acres; 16 units burned for 641 acres.
- Comparing to previous years, it was a near average spring burning season.

**Action item 3:** Dave Cramsey requested to breakout burn type acres and tons by owner. In order to do this from the database, it would require data exported and sorted in Excel. Rick also asked if it's possible to have the database accessible to outside viewers.

**Action item 4:** Dave Cramsey requested to add an incident column to the 10 year summary sheet.

## **INTRUSION / INCIDENT SUMMARY**

Pete Parsons presented the Smoke Intrusion Report, briefing from PowerPoint slides, and noted the following main points:

- Two intrusions so far this year
- Intrusions in Bend and Baker City, related to overnight burning close to SSRAs
- Preliminary intrusion report is not being sent out any more. We do notify DEQ and district.
- Final intrusion reports come out faster now. Intrusion is noted as smoke incident if it does not meet new criteria for a smoke intrusion.
- This data will help us with future forecasting.
  
- Bend: 5/9/19 - 5 mi SW of downtown Bend. Ignition 9am-5 pm, originally scheduled to end at 3 p.m. but extended to 5 p.m. due to resources allocated to a nearby wildfire. 231 acres (693 tons). Initially smoke went SW'erly. Overnight smoldering and switch to drainage flow overnight resulted in smoke going into Bend.
- No complaints noted.
  
- Baker City: 5/10/19 – 2 mi W of Baker City, 180 acres, 1440 tons. This area had not been treated with fire. Light NE wind. Evening winds turned light westerly. No complaints received.
- Pete noted there was a lot of community education and awareness related to this burn. Future burn plan for this area is to test smaller units that are less than 100 acres in the fall due to drainage issues in the area.
- Pete said he had communicated with the Forest Service and agreed to limit burning to 100 acre units or less in the future.
- 14 additional incidents: Baker City 1, Bend 7, Burns 1, Sisters 5.

Gregory noted that Deschutes Collaborative has educated the public extensively, which has resulted in few complaints. He also suggested it would be ideal to use the same prescription for Baker City in the fall to see what happens, rather than changing to more conservative burning ways right away. Discussion around whether to make changes because of the previous intrusion.

Pete asked DEQ if it's possible for the air quality monitoring web page to flag any PM2.5 emissions over 70 microgram/cubic meters. Michael Orman noted that it's been difficult to get changes/updates in this new program so far.

## - SMP IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

Nick presented Statewide Communication Plan updates, referencing the ODF Implementation Plan for 2017-18 Smoke Management Review Committee Recommendations. Main updates include:

- Response plans
  - o There is a draft of the community response plan framework
    - Plan to distribute this in the fall, when prescribed burning increases. Hope of being proactive, with explanation of why we burn, health impacts of smoke and how to mitigate this, and educating the public about how to get information about planned burns. Plan for this to be in some kind of brochure sent out to stakeholders, media, and social media. This will be in cooperation with DEQ, ODF and OHA.
  - o Listing of candidate SSRAs for community response plans
    - Tier
    - I. Ashland, Eugene, Springfield, Medford, John Day, Baker City, Roseburg, Klamath Falls, Bend, Cottage Grove, Lakeview
    - II. Burns, Coos Bay/North Bend, Enterprise, Grants Pass, La Grande, Oakridge, Redmond, Veneta
  - o Response plan development
    - We received a plan from Bend but it was withdrawn as there was need for additional information on a more robust list of stakeholders, especially smoke vulnerable population representation, and more proactive ways to notify public of smoke.
- Smoke instruction updates based on new smoke intrusion definition
  - o Planning stage currently - should be ready this fall.

Nick noted that community response plans would take quite a bit of work. He noted the county health departments need to be guided, and also wants them to be involved. He laid out his plan to strategize for this fall:

- Awareness out statewide through a communication plan (what and why)
- Complete an MOU (ODF, DEQ and OHA) that will show implementation progress to policy boards. This will start with selected communities that are community response plan leaders. The initial plan will be to notify the County Health Officer that we are going to be burning and let them handle the next steps (active approach) of notifying key stakeholders. This may be a burden to the county health department.

Pete, via phone, commented the Bend plan did have a 12 month collaborative process and included represented populations such as medical clinics, Pacific Source (Medicare provider), and medically challenged populations. He noted all of these groups were involved in the 12 month planning process. Michael said the process includes ODF, DEQ and OHA looking over the plan to see if elements are present before submitting. Pete requested better internal communication between agency representatives

that attend these meetings to ensure communication up and down the chain. This would aid in a more smoothly developed plan.

## **CHARTER UPDATE**

Discussion regarding Chair and Vice Chair positions. Committee agreement to keep annual elections for these positions. Committee agreement to re-elect Gregory as Chair and to elect Rick as Vice Chair.

## **KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR PROGRAM**

A chart presented by Rick provided details and discussion around key performance measures. Main points noted:

- Objective - what's reported in the annual report
  - o Minimize smoke emissions
  - o Provide maximum opportunity for essential forestland burning
  - o Protect public health by avoiding intrusions
  - o Coordinate with other state smoke management programs
    - southern Oregon border as an example
  - o Comply with state and federal air quality and visibility agreements
  - o Promote burning alternatives
- Feedback for burning
  - o Broadcast burns - track duration of approved hours to burn for each burn approval vs. acres accomplished
  - o Track acres vs. acres approved
  - o Track how many total requests, approved requests, number requests modified, requests denied and reason
  - o Track same information but by WUI

Rick summarized the goal is to maximize burning efforts. He noted Ashland has matrix for maximizing burning and Bend is still working on procedures for maximizing burning.

Rick noted the need for metrics to represent progress to be able to report to BOF. He stressed questions to think about:

- How do we present this information?
- How do we present the data about how prescribed burns help mitigate wildfire risk?
- Repeated Wildland Urban Interface burns, repeated use of prescribed burning is a way to reduce wildfire risk.

**Action item 5:** Rick will send out list of metrics regarding future reporting and gather ideas.

## **FEDERAL BURNING REPORT**

Rick provided a Federal Burning Report. He noted much of this data is from 2014-2018. Main points noted:

- Acres per ignition: mostly not much change except Ochoco NF increased. No substantial changes. Likely not much change because we are implementing changes conservatively.
- Approximately 100,000 acres/year are treated with Rx fire on federal lands yearly.

## **FUELS TREATMENT EFFECTIVENESS**

Dana Skelly presented data on fuels effectiveness. She showed a website to illustrate. In summary, she noted that treatment areas have played a significant role in limiting wildfire spread. Dana stated there's a need for strategic planning for fuels treatment, as these areas have been significant perimeters for limiting wildfire spread. She emphasized there are currently 10.4 million acres in need of restoration in the Pacific NW with 905,351 acres within a quarter mile of homes. She shared that treatments that make the most difference in wildfire prevention and early suppression are previous wildfire scars, pile burning, broadcast burning and thinning. She said we do not have long term trend data. What can we do to improve future treatments?

Meeting adjourned at 2:36 pm.