



## 2017 Smoke Management Review Committee

May 24, 2017  
9:30 AM – 3:30 PM

Oregon Department of Forestry  
Building C – Tillamook Room

1-888-278-0296  
Access code: 8023888#

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*Objective: Understanding the Enhanced Smoke Management Plan and issues related to prescribed fire.*

❖ Welcome/Introductions

- Facilitator Dan Thorpe opened the meeting.
- Project Manager Nick Yonker noted anyone needing travel reimbursements to contact him.

❖ Opening Remarks

- Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) project sponsor David Collier welcomed and thanked the committee for their time and commitment. He looks forward to hearing from each committee member about what they're experiencing around the state with regard to forest management, prescribed burning (what's working, what's not), and how to improve the Smoke Management Plan (SMP). The Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) will be focused on how the SMP and prescribed burning can be accomplished while minimizing smoke impact on communities.
- Department of Forestry (ODF) project sponsor Doug Grafe also welcomed the group and said that DEQ/ODF have been working together for years on the issues of air quality, public health, forest health, prescribed burning, and wildfire in absolute interdependence. You can't implement policy without impacts. Doug noted the diversity of the Committee and challenged them to fully engage by bringing their own expertise to the table while setting aside biases. This Committee review was one of the recommendations that stemmed from the Fire Program Review.

❖ Meeting purpose/objective

- The meeting purpose and objective was defined as a baseline understanding of the Smoke Management Program and to learn our role as a committee and start getting acquainted with each other.

❖ Overview of Oregon's Enhanced Smoke Management Plan

- Nick Yonker gave a PowerPoint presentation of the Smoke Management Program. He noted that the SMP is within ODF's purview to implement the plan with input. DEQ delegates authority to ODF for management of the program. Described how level of detail of

program implementation increases as one views the laws vs. rules vs. directives.

- A question was asked whether there was a penalty for burning when you're not supposed to. Nick responded that the enforcement is found in the Oregon Administrative Rules (OARs). It is also a Forest Practices Act (FPA) violation where landowners can be fined. ODF can fine up to \$5,000 but we usually try to warn them first. It is rare that landowners are fined but rather encouraged to follow the rules.
- Nick identified the major objectives of the program to maximize essential forestland burning while keeping smoke out of Smoke Sensitive Receptor Areas (SSRAs) and minimizing emissions.
- Nick showed a map of the state highlighting the areas of regulation and areas the program protects. Level 1 regulation, which includes all of the state west of the Cascade crest and federal land east of the Cascades, must abide by all SMP regulations. Level 2 land is private land east of the Cascades. Fees are not required, reporting is less stringently required, and instructions for burning are voluntary. Nick also highlighted the 23 SSRAs, which receive the highest level of protection and the 12 Class I Visibility areas that receive lessor protection.
- Slides were presented describing the various forecasts and other tasks the program does throughout the year. The main focus are the three written weather forecasts and burning instructions produced mainly during the spring and fall, regulating prescribed burning and limiting impacts into SSRAs. A key component is the ability of landowners to ask for waivers to allow more burning by calling into the Smoke Management office.
- Burn bosses also have responsibilities to ensure they know the weather forecast and instructions and verify the conditions match the forecast before lighting. They're also responsible for splitting units as needed to prevent intrusions and to shut off ignitions if a smoke impact is likely.
- The program has reporting requirements to register units in advance, to plan those units by the day of the burn and report details of the accomplishment of each burn the next day for Level 1 regulation and weekly for Level 2 regulation.
- Several questions were asked in order to clarify some of the presented rules and procedures.

❖ Committee charter/timeline/organization

- The Committee reviewed the draft charter dated May 22, 2017 and noted the following:
  - Dan Thorpe noted that if the charter seems unclear, we can make changes but we're not going to "wordsmith" with the full committee today. The primary focus will be on the implementation and rules. EQC/BOF can move policy recommendations; changes in law have to be made by the legislature.



- Worked with Indian Affairs early in career as well as with a number of Tribes dealing with smoke. A lot is involved in putting fire on the ground. Concerned with removing the slash and improving forest health.
- Gregory McClarren, Advisory Committee Chairman
  - Public health impact concerns.
- Pete Caligiuri, TNC
  - Brings the landowner/land manager perspective using fire as a tool for ecological restoration/conservation. Fire is an essential ingredient to the forest. Want to bring up my children to appreciate the forest.
- Bob Palzer, Sierra Club
  - Has a Ph.D. in medical biochemistry. Moved to Ashland because he couldn't breathe in his previous location of Berkeley, CA. He knew Ashland had an air quality program but also air quality problems. There were "Wig Wam" burners that were being phased out but woodstoves were also an air quality concern. He's worked on advisory committees dealing with air quality concerns for 25 years and this is the second time he's been on the ODF Smoke Management Review Committee.
- Courtney Vanbragt, Klamath Public Health Director
  - Concern is from the public health perspective and economic improvement. She appreciates the opportunity to learn more about the SMP to educate Klamath citizens.
- Ken Kestner, Lake County Commissioner
  - Interested/concerned with health and economy impacts, especially homesteads outside the sensitive areas. He noted the need to be flexible with what we come up with in this committee – enhance the ability to burn (economical benefit) and balance with community values.
- Amy Patrick, OFIC
  - Represents the larger private landowner. Interested in the many uses of fire on the landscape and benefits for all management plans; fire suppression benefit for landowners balanced with health impacts.
- Craig Glazier, USFS
  - Concerned with forest health/restoration, suppression, backlog of prescribed burning, and WUI pace & scale.
- Carrie Nyssen, American Lung Association
  - Obvious concern with health impacts of smoke. She receives calls from constituents regarding smoke intrusions. Ms. Nyssen hopes to gain an understanding of the SMP to be able to relay to constituents.
- Rex Storm, AOL
  - Represents small businesses using prescribed fire. He is interested in the increase of prescribed burning as well as limiting the regulations of the SMP. He would like access to burning as tool.

❖ Working Lunch

- Dave Cramsey, Roseburg Forest Product
  - Large landowner – wants more available burning days.
- ❖ Prescribed Burning Benefits Presentation by Dave Cramsey & Mark Webb
  - Dave opened with a PowerPoint presentation noting the single biggest challenge to Western Oregon, industrial prescribed burning is location.
    - Western Oregon has a fire history
      - Long fire return interval
      - Large forest replacement fire events
      - Over 6200 fires in Western Oregon over past 10 years – most human caused
    - Landowners burn for both silvicultural needs and fire prevention
      - Burned areas have been shown to help minimize ignition potential and keeps fires small by reducing the spread potential
      - Reducing fire starts and size minimizes unmanaged smoke that can affect people
    - West Side forests are not adapted to survive with underburning. Consequently, most burning is done following harvest actions
      - Pile burning – the ignition of concentrations of fuels
        - Typically done in the fall through winter when rainfall prevents escapement
          - Dry pile emit less PM than wet pile – timing is critical
            - Early windows = dryer piles = less PM and visible smoke
          - Emission Reduction Techniques utilized – polyethylene covers
          - Stormy weather allows for excellent mixing and smoke dispersion
          - Typically have a broad window for accomplishing burns
          - Biomass opportunities are very limited due to low market demand for material and high cost of transportation from the forest to the plant site
      - Broadcast burning – the ignition of larger areas such as a harvest unit
        - Typically done in the spring on bright sunny days
        - Highly visible to the public – smoke plumes are high altitude and move with the transport winds across the sky
        - Four items need to line up to be able to burn:
          - Fuels need to be dry enough to burn

- Surrounding fuels need to be damp enough to control escapement potential
  - Burn day surface winds need to be fairly calm for fire control
  - Smoke forecast needs to allow for burning that amount of fuel on that day in that location (mixing height, transport wind direction away from population centers)
    - It is difficult to get all four to line up under current SMP practices
- SMP historical success
  - Less than 0.25% of ignitions have caused intrusions over the past 10 years.
    - This program excels at keeping smoke out of SSRAs
    - Majority of intrusions over the past several years occur on the east side of Cascades
    - SMP manages smoke very conservatively on the west side of Cascades
  - Less than 80% of planned burns are accomplished (past 10 years)
    - Spring broadcast accomplishment rates are much lower than fall piles
    - West side broadcast targets are not met
    - Landowners only plan what they think they can accomplish in a given season. If they were able to accomplish more they would most likely plan additional units.
  - Mark discussed the ecological benefits of prescribed fire. He emphasized the compelling nature of the scientific research which shows that prescribed fire is a critical part of healthy landscapes, at least in Eastern Oregon.
    - Benefits of prescribed burning include:
      - Ability to control the timing, location, fuel loads – critical if you want to avoid the negative impacts of wildfire;
      - It is less expensive than mechanical treatment;
      - More effective tool for reintroducing and maintaining fire adapted landscapes.
      - Critical for ecological integrity of such landscapes – which include appropriate species types and tree densities that enable forests to better resist drought and insect infestations, and contributes to resilient plant communities supported by best available science.
    - Private landowner use of prescribed fire is low in Eastern Oregon. There is still a sense that suppression is the way to go instead of considering other roles fire might play on the landscape.

- ❖ Air Quality/Human Health Presentation
  - Kirsten Aird gave a PowerPoint presentation on Human Health as it relates to air quality.
    - Ms. Aird noted that health impacts are great even with low particulate matter, especially on vulnerable populations.
    - Rural communities are different than they were when standards were lower due to demographic changes (more older adults, who are a very vulnerable population).
    - Kirsten also noted that Oregon Health Authority (OHA) is “smoke-neutral” regarding the source of the forest fire smoke. OHA will provide data and science to information decision making.
  - Rachel Sakata, DEQ also provided a PowerPoint presentation on air quality.
    - A discussion ensued about how the Particulate Matter (PM) standards are calculated and what constitutes an exceedance of the standard, which could result in a designation of nonattainment. Nonattainment means an area is not meeting the standard and the area is breathing unhealthy air. .
    - There was some concern with being able to differentiate between woodstove and prescribed burning smoke for PM monitors. Rachel noted that unfortunately, we do not have the ability for this.
  
- ❖ Public Comment
  - Amanda Stamper with The Nature Conservancy spoke on how prescribed burning is targeted through the SMP as the only source of intrusion. She feels the playing field needs to be leveled so prescribed burning is not the sole cause of intrusions. Woodstove burning is also a major concern. She would like to see NAAQS used more frequently rather than the SMP standards.
  
- ❖ Smoke Management Plan discussion in light of Prescribed Burn and Air Quality presentations (see above under Committee Roundtable)
  - Successes
  - Challenges
  - Will be discussed at next meeting.
  
- ❖ Next meeting (date, purpose, outcome, tasks)
  - Sisters Fire Hall – June 27 @ 9:30 AM
  - Tour of Deschutes National Forest in AM, meeting in PM (policy discussion)
  
- ❖ Closing remarks
  - David Collier noted that this group seems to be working well together and enjoyed the opportunity to hear both sides.
  - Doug Grafe encouraged the Committee to be flexible for fire season as this Review could be derailed because of it. He also noted the need for a month between committee meetings as there will be more information requests.

- It was also noted the Review section of the Smoke Management website is “up and running” and Chrystal will be posting presentations, meeting minutes, recordings, etc.
- Request from Mark Webb to OHA & DEQ
  - Can you quantify the actual impact on people’s health at different intrusion levels?
  - What would the actual health impact to vulnerable populations be if intrusion levels were averaged over a 24-hour period, rather than a shorter period as it is now?
  - If you increase smoke levels from prescribed burning by 25%, 50%, or 75% how many more individuals would be impacted? Is there data that supports any kind of correlation between such smoke levels and actual health impacts to vulnerable populations?
- Bob Palzer commented about the definition of “intrusion.” He feels the word “intrusion” is deceptive because any smoke into a receptor area is considered an intrusion whether it has an impact or not.
- Pete Caliguiri asked about forest systems and air quality data “boom/bust” swings. From a public health perspective, are we seeing a similar increase in health problems during wildfires? If so, how are we using prescribed fire in the mitigation of wildfire?
- Merlyn Hough asked about doubling the amount of prescribed burning, whether there is confidence that it’s going to more than offset future wildfire impacts in the long run?
- Willie Begay highlighted that DEQ has all the monitoring information that shows what and when communities exceeded the National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

❖ Meeting adjourned at 2:58 PM

❖ Attendees

- David Collier, DEQ Project Sponsor
- Doug Grafe, ODF Project Sponsor
- Dan Thorpe, ODF Facilitator
- Nick Yonker, ODF Project Manager
- Rachel Sakata, DEQ Air Planning
- Jim Gersbach, ODF Public Affairs
- Chrystal Bader, ODF Executive Support
- Gregory McClarren, Public Rep, SMAC Chair
- Dave Cramsey, Industrial Landowner Rep
- Scott Hanson, Non-industrial Landowner Rep
- Willie Begay, BLM
- Craig Glazier, USFS
- Kirsten Aird, OHA
- Ken Kestner, Lake County Commissioner
- Courtney Vanbragt, Klamath County Public Health Director
- Mike McGown, EPA
- Merlyn Hough, LRAPA Director

- Carrie Nyssen, American Lung Assoc.
- John Stromberg, Ashland Mayor
- Bob Palzer, Sierra Club
- Mike White, CFPA
- Amy Patrick, OFIC
- Rex Storm, AOL
- Colin Beck, Coquille Indian Tribe
- Pete Caligiuri, The Nature Conservancy
- Mark Webb, Blue Mountain Forest Collab
- Jim James, OSWA