



WASHINGTON PRESCRIBED FIRE COUNCIL

2020 Annual Meeting Summary

Spokane, WA – February 27th, 2020

The 2020 Annual Meeting of the Washington Prescribed Fire Council was held once again in Spokane, WA on February 27th. This year's meeting marks the 8th annual meeting of the Council. Last year, in lieu of an annual meeting, the Council hosted a larger Steering Committee and Facilitated Strategic Planning session to update the expired Strategic Plan and set the direction and priorities of the Council for the next three years.

This year's meeting was attended by members and representatives from the Borderlands LLC, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Center for Natural Lands Management, City of Roslyn Fire Department, Forest Service, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Kalispell Tribe, The Nature Conservancy, Spokane Tribe, Washington Association of Conservation Districts, Washington Conservation Commission, Washington Department of Ecology, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife, Washington Department of Natural Resources, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Yakama Nation, and others.

Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges (TREX)

The TREX Program in Washington was developed based on Council priorities. The TREX Program Lead Coordinator Kara Karboski provided an update on program accomplishments to date. This last fall marked the 4th Cascadia TREX. So far, there have been 91 participants from 11 different state and British Columbia who have gained experience and training opportunities at TREX in WA. The program's long-term goals include increasing capacity and number of personnel who have live prescribed fire experience, increase expertise and qualifications, better understanding of constraints and enabling conditions across entities, and increased local cooperation and sharing of resources to complete work outside of TREX. The Northeast Washington TREX planned for this spring has been postponed until 2021, while Cascadia TREX is being tentatively planned for this fall.



The 8th Washington Prescribed Fire Council Annual Meeting (photo: Reese Lolley/TNC)

Certified Prescribed Burner Program

The Washington State Legislature passed [Bill 2733](#) in 2018 that mandated the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to implement a Certified Prescribed Burner Program. The legislation will provide Certified Burners with increased liability protection. Mike Norris, the Prescribed Burn Program Manager for DNR has been working on developing the program, outlining the curriculum and coursework, and identifying the policies that will support the program. The Council coordinated with the Forest Stewards Guild to produce a [summary](#)

[report](#) of Certified Burn Programs across the U.S. that was a resource in developing the Washington program. Mike provided an overview of the Program so far. The tentative plan is to initiate the first class in June or July of this year and certify the first class of burners under this program this coming fall and the following spring.

Prescribed Burn Associations

There has been interest from some regions of the state on models to burn cooperatively on private lands. Lenya Quinn-Davidson from University of California Cooperative Extension gave a remote presentation on Prescribed Burn Associations (PBA) and the work she's been supporting in Northern California. There are multiple PBAs at the county level in California building year round capacity, burning in a variety of fuel types for different objectives, and engaging a broad set of members, including landowners, volunteer fire departments, and Cal Fire. The first PBA in California was officially formed in early 2018. Since then the number of formed PBAs has grown rapidly, 8 PBAs currently with 3 more in the process, and more in conversation. This model has helped keep costs low. Biggest concern is around liability and insurance. The Council is considering hosting a fall workshop around PBAs.

You can find more information on PBAs from [this webinar](#) by Jenn Fawcett (North Carolina Cooperative Extension).

Smoke Management Plan Update & UGA Burning

Presenting remotely, Karen Arnold, DNR Assistant Wildfire Division Manager who oversees the Smoke Management Program, provided some updated information on the DNR Smoke Management Plan (SMP) Update and recent updated policies on burning within the Urban Growth Area. The SMP has been completed from DNR's end, passed on to the WA Dept. of Ecology, and is now with the EPA. The EPA will determine what information is needed to demonstrate that the updates won't contribute to exceedances of national air quality standards before the SMP can be approved. DNR is drafting guidance and policy right now to outline ability and procedure

to get permits to burn within Urban Growth Areas for reduction of wildfire risk.

Strategic Plan

Council Chair Chris Martin provided an overview of the updated Strategic Plan developed last spring. This Plan builds off the structure and priority areas of the previous Plan. The Council is working on identifying leads to move priority work forward.



Counties in California with a PBA or other Cooperative Burning Organization

Blue = group officially formed

Orange = group in formation

Yellow = having conversations about forming

Credit: Lenya Quinn-Davidson/University of California Cooperative Extension

