

WASHINGTON PRESCRIBED FIRE COUNCIL STEERING COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

November 17, 2020

1:00 pm – 2:30 pm

Virtual Meeting

Present: Chris Martin, Chair; Mike Norris, Secretary; Dale Swedberg; Lonnie Newton; Tonya Neider; Sami Schinnell; Ernesto Alvarado; Sarah Hamman; Michael Barajas, Vice-Chair; John Richardson; Matt Eberlein; Kara Karboski, Coordinator; Jon Culp

Also Present: Brenda Hallmark (USFS Region 6 Fuels Coordinator – alt. for Dana Skelly)

Absent: Reese Lolley, Jonathan Tallman, Joe Murray, Jay McLaughlin, Karen Zirkle, Ken Meinhart, Sean Hopkins, Steve Pietroburgo, Lee Hemmer, Dana Skelly

1. Administrative Items

Actions **Minutes from September 2, 2020 Steering Committee Meeting were approved.**

Discussion/
Decisions No new additions to the agenda.

Motion: Ernesto makes motion to approve the minutes from the September 2nd Steering Committee Meeting. Sarah seconds the motion. Unanimously approved.

2. Staff Update

Discussion/
Decisions **Prescribed Fire Outreach Toolkit (www.putfiretowork.org):**
Toolkit is finished. Over the winter Kara will be continuing to refine, simplify the content and address any additional feedback that comes in. Will also be working on a prescribed fire messaging guide that will be an additional component of the toolkit.

Cascadia TREX:

Coordinated a modified, locals focused and supported training exchanged. In October, burned 22 acres cross-boundary on City of Roslyn (Urban Growth Area) and adjacent private lands. 30 participants, with multiple taskbook training opportunities. Primarily lead by local Kittitas County Fire Department personnel, including volunteers. Still continuing to assess training opportunities on pile burns that would help prep burn units.

Moving forward:

- Council budgeting, work planning, strategic planning
- NE TREX this coming spring 2021, postponed from 2020. Will be talking with partners and assessing path forward.
- Prescribed Burn Associations – what’s needed to support that in WA? Next steps locally?

3. Budget Update

Actions	Reese and Kara will be developing a budget to present at next Council meeting.
Discussion/ Decisions	See attached financial summary. Major updates from last Steering Committee include awarded FLN FY20/21 agreement, TNC (USFS SPA) agreement has ended and deliverables completed, and USFWS agreement is almost spent out of allocated \$10k.

Lonnie mentioned that BLM would have an additional \$30k in FY21 for Council.

Kara and Reese are working to develop Council budget. Have a draft of a draft ready and will have a version to present to Steering Committee by next meeting, if not before. This will show baseline costs of Council, TREX implementation, and work on the Strategic Plan.

4. Council External Priorities

Actions	<p>Steering Committee approves the Council External Priorities document. Council Officers will move forward on those actions.</p> <p>Dale will send a note to the Washington Association of Conservation Districts.</p>
Discussion/ Decisions	<p>Review and discussion of the Council External Priorities document developed by the Officer's in alignment with the Strategic Plan.</p> <p>Smoke Management – want to become more outspoken and aggressive in sharing the issues we've identified through TREX and heard from partners and stakeholders. Overall, worth getting our voice heard, though bureaucracy of state and federal can be frustrating. Hoping as 4th party we can more than a single agency or individual alone.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1b: Smoke Management Implementation Feedback – we want the Council to be the collection point for issues that come up. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <u>Air Quality Burn Ban</u>: USFS ran into county wide burn bans recently that limited burning for piles (Okanogan, Ferry, Stevens, and Pend Oreille). Sounds like a Dept. of Ecology air quality burn ban. Had it in Lincoln County too (BLM). b. <u>IFPL</u>: IFPL and public use restrictions meeting going on right now. One of the topics they are going to discuss is how to interface with the counties in terms of coordinating fire restrictions and use restrictions and bans. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Can't do fuel prep and fire mitigation work when IFPL is high. ii. WDFW has been able to get waivers on IFPL ratings when you have qualified firefighters for equipment, working with DNR region by region. c. <u>Fire Danger Safety Rating</u>: Permit for TREX burn said couldn't burn during high Fire Danger Safety Rating. Updated once a week on Tuesday and usually doesn't go in to effect until Friday. They updated it early for us this year. d. <u>Statewide DNR Burn Ban</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. TREX, WDFW have been able to get exemptions for burning ii. In South Sound, they have an exemption built in to burn ban to allow burns for ecological reasons for the past 5 or 6 years <p>Enhanced TREX – Take TREX to the next step. Combination funding through legislative ask, fundraising, corporate sponsorship, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestion: Have a workshop strategically, geographically located for interested landowners and coordinate that with local conservation districts. Perhaps a note to the

WA Association of Conservation Districts to start that partnership. And bring someone from PBAs from mid-west/Great Plains or CA to share their story (Dale).

- Question: Who would manage or supervise those crews? We would look locally in each area at Conservation Districts, Fire Departments, or other local organizations.

Certified Burner Program – Mike Norris is leading the development of that program within DNR with Kate Williams. The program is largely developed and at this point it's about how to do classes during COVID. No comments or concerns with this.

- Other Types of Courses/Training
 - a. Regional Training Center is putting on a virtual advanced burn boss workshop. Might be an option for folks to get some training. Still working on the final agenda and what it is going to cover. **They will keep us in the loop on that. Contact Brenda at brenda.hallmark@usda.gov or Dana Skelly.**
 - i. Is there going to be a class size on that USFS course? Brenda doesn't know, she will ask.
 - b. Courses are difficult to get in to with class size limitations and federal agencies as priorities. States have to battle for few seats remaining. Chris Buhrig (christina.buhrig@usda.gov) is the regional training person for USFS and BLM

Actions –

- Would suggest if meeting with Wildfire Caucus, set that up fairly soon.
- 3 ambitious priorities! These might be large bites, but worth pushing forward.

Note: Any objections to the External Priorities or the 3 items? No objections and the External Priorities are approved for the Council Officers to move forward.

5. New Business/Member Updates

Actions **Will figure out how to handle the annual meeting. If anyone has any ideas or would like to be a part of planning that, let Kara know.**

Discussion/Decisions Matt Eberlein: WDFW is burning this winter/early spring in the Potholes. Couple 100 acres, vegetation management.

Lonnie Newton (BLM): Lonnie is working also with Idaho in developing their Prescribed Fire Council, working with Heather Heward (UofI). They are looking towards WA Council as leaders.

Ernesto Alvarado (UW): Shared a website that shows real time COVID 19 and real time smoke emissions: <https://covid.airfire.org/tracking/>