

MINUTES
SMOKE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SMAC)
January 20, 2021 | 9:00 am – 2:40 pm
Zoom and In-person

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
Rick Graw, Committee Vice Chair, Forest Service Representative
Kyle Williams, Industrial Landowner Representative
Scott Hanson, Non-Industrial Landowner Representative

Committee Member Absent:

Jason Simmons, Bureau of Land Management Representative

Others Present:

Nick Yonker, Smoke Management Manager, Fire Protection Program, ODF Support
Ron Graham, Deputy Chief of Fire Protection Program, ODF
Chet Behling, Unit Forester, ODF Veneta
AJ Corwin, Forest Officer, ODF Western Lane District
Kyle Tripp, Forest Officer, ODF Western Lane District
Margaret Miller, Air Quality, Department of Environmental Quality
Ed Keith, Deschutes County Forester
Kathy Wells, Protection Finance, ODF
Peter Brewer, Air Quality, Department of Environmental Quality
Pete Parsons, Smoke Management Meteorologist, ODF
Nick Winner, Roseburg Forest Products
Randall Ruddick, State Implementation Planning, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region 10
Travis Knudsen, Public Affairs Manager Lane Regional Air Protection Agency
Gary Votaw, Smoke Management Meteorologist, ODF
Kim Tham, Oregon Health Authority
Gabriela Goldfarb, Oregon Health Authority
Michael McGown, EPA, Region 10
Mike Dykzeul, retired OFIC
Shauna Morris, Administrative Support, ODF
Chrystal Bader, Executive Support, ODF

WELCOME – INTRODUCTIONS

Gregory McClarren opened the meeting at 9:02 a.m. Introductions were made.

MINUTES APPROVAL

A motion for approval of the most recent meeting minutes was made by Gregory McClarren. Nick noted that comments regarding minutes can be submitted to him. The minutes of the June 25, 2020 Smoke Management Advisory Committee meeting were unanimously approved as written.

PROTECTION DIVISION REPORT

Ron Graham noted that Nick Yonker will be retiring in late-April. He introduced Gary Votaw as filling in for Meteorologist, Tom Jenkin's position. Tom was hired at Oregon Emergency Management in November. Ron mentioned that we will work on filling the manager position, but it may not be filled before Nick leaves.

Ron reviewed 2020 with respect to COVID-19. There was a voluntary restriction on all burning prior to fire season. We also developed a plan for prescribed burning during the fall. In addition, there were severe smoke impacts from wildfires during wildfire season. He noted a reported shutdown of outdoor COVID testing through a private clinic during fire season due to significant wildfire smoke. Plans put in place for fire camps resulted in minimal COVID cases - only six positive cases were reported in total.

Legislative workload has begun, and we are tracking over 75 bills related to ODF business. Expect over 100 bills to analyze. A lot are carry-over bills from last session.

The unprecedented September 2020 wildfire event burned hundreds of thousand acres very quickly with nine civilian deaths. Oregon had nearly 9,000 firefighters in the state during the height of fire season with minimal accidents and injuries. ODF added two COVID Coordinators who were brought in to ensure guidelines were met and to provide additional support. Each team had COVID liaisons that had paramedic backgrounds. They provided ability to triage support in the field. The plan to add a health liaison to incident management teams as the benefit was apparent.

The 2020 Fire Season brought 16 Fire Management Assistance Grants (FMAGs), 14 from the September event alone. We had a Presidential and Major Disaster Declaration, that allowed us to increase Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reimbursements up to 90% from the normal 75%. We had a total of \$130M in gross costs, but just below \$50M in net costs.

The Emergency Board (E-Board) has approved a funding plan through the end of this June for limited duration employees. ODF had requested funds for permanent positions. ODF is optimistic the E-Board will allow for full funding of additional severity aircraft for exclusive use. The hope is for a new contract with a large airtanker. Guidance is to allocate \$5M to advance severity aviation assets, adding a next generation large airtanker, and replacing an aging DC7 airtanker. This will allow for modernization that was not able to be used on previous federal fires. Also, the hope is to add an additional helicopter and two single engine airtankers to bolster air support. ODF competes nationally for other air resource availability. Also, there is \$5M for wildfire mitigation efforts, \$3M for agency capacity, which includes 25 limited duration positions and the ability to add months to some seasonal positions. This funding is set to end June 30, 2021. The plan includes an additional Deputy Chief position and added capacity in Fire Cache. The agency is actively recruiting for seasonal firefighters. It would be ideal for these funds to continue into the agency's biennial budget. The \$5M for mitigation and restoration on all lands effort is led by Jeff Burns with Partnership and Planning. Specific projects are being developed to help create fire-adapted communities, landscape restoration, wildfire recovery projects, and could lead to increased spring burning opportunities. The ODF budget was spared heavy reductions as was predicted earlier in the year.

The Headquarters Services Committee (HQSC) group, comprised of landowners that represent each of the three ODF areas, will meet in late January to analyze budgets and set costs. Districts and Forest Protection Areas (FPAs) will build their budgets from there. FPA meetings take place in the spring. These budgets and rates are then presented to the Board of Forestry (BOF) in June. In March DEQ and ODF Smoke Management will provide updates to the BOF and Environmental Quality Commission (EQC).

Scott Hanson asked about the status of the North Cascade District Headquarters building in Lyons that had burned in September. Ron shared that everything is moving forward for rebuilding. The outbuildings

did survive, as well as the equipment still housed at the site. The Lyons' staff has been operating out of the Salem and Molalla Offices.

DEQ REPORT

DEQ update presented by Margaret Miller.

- **SIP Update**
Submitted with the 2019 rules update. Has been signed by regional administrator and sent to the Office of the Federal Register. There could be delays. Summer is the goal to complete.
- **Monitoring Update**
Air Quality Index (AQI) website is down temporarily. There are 12 more sensors to place. Delays in 2020 are due to COVID -19 travel restrictions and location agreements. Monitors have been installed in Hood River, Gresham, Estacada, Tillamook, Ontario and Corvallis. They can be viewed on the Smoke Blog. We are working on a five-year network review to determine how well we are serving needs. Have 12 other proposed locations currently in the plan but may identify more locations in the process. Contact Margaret with any location suggestions. The smoke event of 2020 led to increased traffic on the AQI website that knocked the server offline temporarily. However, 47 of 50 monitoring locations remained operational. Detroit Lake, Mill City and Lyons went offline due to a power outage. No monitors were damaged by fire.
- **EQC Presentation on Smoke Management**
Next meeting will be March 3, 2021 as a joint BOF/EQC meeting. Will provide updated presentations.
- **Community Response Planning Grants (CRP)**
Projects are going well, however some communities were hit with COVID restrictions that hindered collaboration abilities. To utilize all of the funding, funds were shifted, and one community will work on a less comprehensive plan. Ashland received additional funding to distribute more High-Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filter and to develop a how-to-guide. Oakridge is working on a toolkit/template for developing a CRP.
- **National Emissions Inventory (NEI)**
The NEI is completed every three years. Wildfire and prescribed burning emissions inventories are completed by EPA. For wildfire they use the SMART Fire database to create activity data and pair it with BlueSky modeling to produce emissions estimates. BlueSky might be adopting a new method, to include pile burning as well as smoldering, and flaming modeling that may be available in June or July. Pile burning is an emissions reduction technique so we might assume a decrease in emissions. Margaret to plan on doing more investigating on more accurate emissions data gathering. State and local agencies can provide their own data. Also, Nick and Margaret are going to meet with Matt Mavko on future emissions gathering.

Nick asked Margaret to add a little more update on CRP development status and an update on the Toledo monitor.

- **Toledo/Newport monitor**
Needs to be in the SSRA. There are difficulties regarding where to locate. EPA office location is available but may be too close to the coast because of too much wind. Continuing to look at this more.

- Baker County CRP development difficulty - Parks Director had resigned, resources spread thin, and COVID restrictions created challenges. \$10,000 grant reduced from \$35,000. Gregory relayed there were many (Baker County) residents concerned about monitors causing limitations on use of woodstoves for home heating. Margaret clarified with the community that DEQ has its own monitor and that other monitors like PurpleAir do not have the accuracy of DEQ's monitors.
- All other communities are on track. Ashland awarded funds for HEPA distribution, large number of residents at high risk and were on wait list for the filters. Lake County also implementing HEPA filter distribution. Lakeview is doing good again and has a new Grant Administrator, Autumn Muir.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Scott Hanson, Oregon Small Woodland Association (OSWA) representative, mentioned that some forestland owners live within ODF boundaries, and others are outside these boundaries. Those that lived outside of the ODF boundaries are required to follow DEQ rules related to slash burning. He shared that 85 percent of OSWA members are interested in prescribed burning to reduce fuels, who are mostly in rural fire protection districts. They are struggling with DEQ rules that prohibit burning within 6 miles of large cities. Will share more at the next meeting; interested in further development of prescribed burning in these areas.

Mike McGown, EPA and Gabriella Goldfarb, OHA, introduced.

Scott asked Gabriela about people having breathing problems during the peak days of the wildfires.

Gabriela shared that medical complaints increased during the major smoke event between Sept. 7-14. There were a lot of walk-in patients with asthma-like symptoms. Nearly 1-in-10 people came into walk-in clinics/ medical centers. This was double the normal rate of this type of complaint. Need to get hospitalization data to be able to share and establish financial cost estimates. Will be able to provide further details at the next meeting. Benefit of prescribed burning is that the community can plan for the smoke ahead of time such as leave the area or use an air filter. Data shows prescribed burning able to prevent the type of events and smoke levels of a wildfire.

Action item 1: Provide hospitalization data during the wildfire period in September 2020.

FUND BALANCE/ BUDGET/ FEDERAL CONTRACT UPDATE

Nick referenced fund balance documents, explaining that our budget has stabilized with most burning conducted in the fall. Therefore, revenue increases in fall generally drops until the month of August or September. Goal is to maintain a one-year (financial) buffer, near the \$500,000 range. Burn fee invoicing is now month-to-month for the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Lump sum payments had been made; \$112,500 from the previous two-year contract with the Forest Service and a fiscal year-end payment of \$316,000 to cover what ODF considered costs to the program that were not paid. The \$47,000 payment is in addition to the \$316,000 as we transition back to month-to-month payments. Non-federal payments of \$23,110 in January will likely show on the following month.

BLM finished their contract with a \$39,500 payment in 2020. They have a current credit balance of \$60,000, so will not be billed until their credit is used up. Nick explained it is difficult to interpret this in funding projections. Other revenue come from contracts with DEQ and Oregon Department of Agriculture. Total revenue in 2020 was \$637,312. Expenditures during the first part of the year included ODF using Smoke Management funds to make payments to Department of Administrative Services (DAS). This ended in June of 2020. Now expenditures range from \$36,000-50,000 each month. Current fund balance

is \$834,863. Budget projection chart shows flat revenue through the next few years. Calculated five-year rolling average on federal revenue and assumed no changes for private land revenue. Expect a 15 percent increase in federal land revenue in 2021 and a five percent increase each year from 2022 - 2025. This is a conservative estimate. Expect a three percent personnel service increase yearly due to cost of living and benefits, and a two percent service and supply increase. Likely will need new computers in 2023, and a truck replacement for Christina Clemons in 2025 per ODF Motor pool recommendations.

Nick also shared that changes will be needed in Smoke Management. The goal will be one manager and three meteorologists, including adding a lead forecaster position. This will allow the manager to focus time on leadership, policy, bureaucracy, advisory committee, reviews, program implementation, public education, liaison work, and more. Manager could potentially be a forester position and be able to go out on fires. He noted this new position was not included in the projected budget. Ron added that this new position will likely take some time to implement due to necessary DAS approvals.

BURNING SUMMARY

Nick presented the burning summary documents and noted the following highlights.

Accomplished Summary by District - showed 2248 total units burned and 2810 total ignitions. Overall, units registered were below average, as expected. Burning was reduced this year with less than 130,000 acres burned, the lowest acreage recorded since Nick has been in the department. This was due to mainly COVID but also wildfire and a dry fall. Kyle Williams asked about having a historical perspective of past burning. Gabriela asked if there was an estimate of acreage that was burned in the wildfires but had been slated for prescribed burning. Nick stated that 550,000 state-protected acres burned in the wildfires – an all-time high. Nick said there were no numbers available at this time.

- Accomplished Summary by Owner by District indicated private and state land totals of about 76,000 acres burned. Forest Service and BLM had about 53,000 acres burned.
- Accomplished Summary by Owner by Burn Type was also shown. An error was noted in the tons burned column, which is likely an error in the formula that needs to be checked out. No other fields had errors.
- There were no recorded smoke intrusions in 2020. This is the first year in program history that there were no recorded intrusions. One incident was recorded in Florence on November 11th and 12th that lasted 21 hours with a peak particulate reading of 63 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. Two private burns close together caused the smoke impact.

COVID burn restrictions and fall burning - There was a voluntary restriction on burning during the spring of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. After discussion between ODF and OHA over the summer, an agreement for fall burning was developed to use legacy rules (rules prior to March of 2019) for those counties on a watch list or in phase 1. Phase 2 areas could use current rules. In later November, the terms were changed as to how to characterize the pandemic. The phased approach was changed to a risk level approach. The agreement memorandum for burning was updated with high and extreme risk areas using legacy rules and moderate and lower risk areas using current rules. The discussion around spring burning was to monitor the risk levels for now. If COVID-19 numbers improve as we get closer to spring burning, there could be an adjustment from legacy rules to current rules. Rick Graw asked about burning in the wildland urban interface (WUI) vs. more remote areas. Nick noted that remote areas often correlate to the lower risk areas regarding COVID-19. Consensus was to keep guidelines as they are until changes show improvement. Gabriela noted there will be the ability to monitor and flex on a county-by-county basis if needed. Nick responded to questions from Rick regarding elevation and topographic features, advising that ODF will be able to assist forecasting these specifics.

Polyethylene covering update in Applegate Valley – Jason Simmons was not available to address the issue. Margaret stated that BLM plans to address public comment through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. There was no formal communication regarding the petition.

Action Item 2: Gather acreage numbers of land scheduled for prescribed burning that burned in wildfires, and then present during June meeting.

Action Item 3: Ask Jason Simmons for a short summary on polyethylene coverings in the Applegate Valley to include in the minutes.

METRICS (PERFORMANCE MEASURES DISCUSSION)

Margaret shared Oregon's Smoke Management - Performance Measures document. She noted this was in response to requests to have measurable (program) metrics. It is a living document with specific objectives and deliverables that are measurable. We are asking for feedback from the Committee using the SMART method as outlined in the document. Nick expressed concern that the performance measurements be implementable and relevant to the goals and tasks of the program in order to improve it. Much of this work will fall on the program and we have limited capacity for extra workload.

Rick wants a comprehensive evaluation of the program. In the past we have only emphasized certain aspects of the program. We need to look at the objectives and what is in rule to ensure we are doing what we can to make improvements. Lastly, there are other programs to be cognizant of and how they affect us, and how we interact with other programs.

Break for Lunch. Resume 12:20 p.m.

Performance Measures were reviewed and commented on.

- 1) Minimize smoke emissions, resulting from prescribed burning:
 - a. Piles – Kyle asked how we get credit for burning dry piles regarding reducing emissions. Nick answered that hand and grapple piles are an emission reduction technique. Tractor piles, underburning and broadcast burning are not considered an emission reduction technique unless there is rapid ignition. We do check for this based on a previous review of the program. Margaret said we need to get a more specific definition for dry piles. How do we collect that information during registration? Gregory noted the National Emissions Inventory (NEI) is done by EPA. Burning dry piles is the focus. Need to teach and communicate this to those doing the work in order to increase efficiency. Margaret suggested hosting an annual meeting on emission reduction techniques. Nick mentioned checking with Christina Clemons, our field coordinator, on a training session. Gregory said we need to inform readers of these specifics, for example, the NEI explanation.
 - i. Kyle mentioned to do an annual training through a webinar as needed.
- 2) Provide maximum opportunity for essential forestland burning:
 - a. Need dry pile understanding/education. How do we define dry? Incentivize use of PE or burning more dry piles. Nick stated we already do the first three deliverables. No. 4 of incentivizing use of ERTs is new from the latest review. All are being done now. Coverage of 75 percent of piles at 60 percent covered per pile is our definition of a dry pile unit. Gregory noted “clean” needs to be added to this section with dry and covered.
 - b. Gregory noted the need for consistency in the objective that only mentions intrusions, which might be confused by the objective in #3.

- 3) Protect public health by avoiding intrusions:
 - a. Gabriela wanted to note a focus on most vulnerable populations. This section and section 7 (Communication) are clearly linked and may need to be put together. Margaret suggested changing the language to: “protect public health by avoiding intrusions” ...”by building smoke resilient communities”.
 - b. Kyle expressed concern regarding the terminology of “zero smoke impacts” as it relates to defining smoke incidents. Nick said that our objective is to avoid intrusions under the current definition. Our goal is not to prevent smoke from going into every small community or smoke going into an SSRA below the intrusion level. We should remove the language of zero smoke incidents. Margaret wanted to pull up the rule to determine what it says. Gregory wants for the agencies to get together to determine exactly how the language should read.

Action Item 4: Kyle, Nick, Gregory, Margaret & Gabriella request to be a part of an offline conversation to determine language of “zero smoke impacts” and whether to specify incidents vs. intrusions. Gregory expressed support for keeping section #7 (Communication) a separate discussion item.

Action Item 5: Separate meeting for continued review & discussion on remaining metrics, while being mindful of the SMAC meeting quorum restrictions.

ANNUAL REPORT REVIEW

Appendix B – Optional Reporting Parameters – potential to be included on future annual reports.

- Forestland classification system – may not be relevant today. Is it working now? Is there need for a change? Map of forestland classification (Class 1,2,3)? AJ Corwin explained that forestland classification does not necessarily tie in with prescribed burns. Nick explained that we classify land as Level 1 or level 2. Level 2 exempt (burn reason) is exempt from paying fees as well as rangelands. Level 2 land is east of the Cascades. Nick stated that he does not understand why we want to use land classification for tracking prescribed burns. Margaret was explaining that the rules are based on forest land classification that information should be easy to obtain and trackable. If it isn't then why base our rules on it. It became understood this would take a lot of work to track prescribed burning accomplishments by forest land classification. No decision made.
- Change to intrusions per ignition vs. intrusion per units burned.
- PE usage - have a current survey, note how much PE at registration. Then add confirmation after the burn completion to collect accurate data.
- Track duration of approved hours to burn for understory and broadcast burns. Not sure this could be tracked in a new, upgraded IT data system. Nick asked what is the purpose of tracking this information? Margaret said this helps determine how much opportunity to burn there has been and if improvements could be made in the future. Rick mentioned about tracking burning that smolders overnight and determine trends to determine what the restrictions are. No decision made.
- Track exceedances of wildfire smoke that caused or contributed to a NAAQS exceedance. Emissions are overwhelmingly from wildfire during the year. Prescribed burning produces less emissions than wildfire. Margaret noted that we need to track

these emissions similarly in accordance with EPA as part of the triannual NEI. No decision made.

- Tracking of alternatives to burning. Pie chart might be helpful? Biomass, hog fuels, fire permits, Biochar. Moving fuel off-site becomes an alternative to burning.

Table rest of items for a later time.

Action item 6: Nick, Margaret, Christina to further discuss emissions tracking mechanisms.

EPA ANNUAL MEETING

Mike McGown, EPA plans to put on a webinar that includes an after-action review of the 2020 wildfire season. Not expecting an annual meeting until fall.

DATA SYSTEM UPDATE

Federal data system decommissioned on 12/8/2020. The short-term plan is for ODF staff to provide data entry for federal partners through spring of 2021. Those districts that could enter data, will do so. Long term solution has not been determined but the goal is for ODF to use its data system for State and Federal data entry.

ACTION ITEM REVIEW

- 1) SIP update. Complete.
- 2) Monitor in Toledo. Needs follow up. Best contact for Margaret is Unit Forester Matt Thomas for the Toledo area monitoring location.
- 3) Purple Air – need education piece that these are not an official standard. We do not have the confidence that Purple Air is an accurate source. DEQ and LRAPA provide education opportunity regarding Purple Air at the 2021 Air Quality awareness week May 3-7.
- 4) Complaint system - Add to next review. DEQ also in the process of addressing a system for complaints. Possibly funneled through OHA, as they have a location in each county in the state.
- 5) Projection of the revenue – finances. Complete.
- 6) Complete
- 7) Fall burning. Complete
- 8) PE update. Complete
- 9) Response from PE in Applegate. Needs follow up.
- 10) Performance measures – collaboration. Complete.
- 11) Communication objective. Effectively communicate the needs, challenges, and strategies of prescribed forestry burning. Gregory proposed this be combined with Performance Measure #7. Complete.
- 12) Reviewed annual report. Action taken.
- 13) Private forest land treatments. Needs follow up.
- 14) PE checkbox. Awaiting IT.
- 15) Complete.

NEXT MEETING

June – last full week of June. Doodle Poll upcoming. Meeting adjourned 2:58pm.