

NH Prescribed Fire Council

Thursday April 7th 9:00am-10:00am

Via Zoom Video Conferencing

John Neely (US Forest Service), Mike Crawford (The Nature Conservancy), Zack Boyajian (NH Military Affairs and Veteran Services), Tom Trask (NH Forest and Lands), Chris Kane (Natural Heritage), Ralph Perron (US Forest Service), Stephen Najjar (Space Force), Steve Junkin (Forest Society), Heidi Holman (NH Fish and Game), Brad Simpkins (US Forest Service), Henry Jones (NH Fish and Game), Rebecca DiGirolomo (UNHCE)

1. Approved February 15, 2022 meeting minutes.

Steve Junkin motioned, John Neely second

2. Sub-committee updates:

Mapping Subcommittee – Looking into how to add agency information for partners that have many burn units within a single landholding and working on incorporating comments. UNHCE Intern for the next iteration of the prescribed fire survey will start this summer/fall.

Training Subcommittee – Zach is coordinating. He is reviewing current qualification requirements for the state qualification system and comparing to changes in NWCG qualification requirements. He will set another meeting for suggested changes to the state qualification system.

3. General Updates:

Maine Prescribed Fire Council – Mike Crawford suggested finding a way to stay connected with Maine Council to share ideas and training opportunities. John Neely has been attending Maine Council meetings and will keep the NH council updated. Currently the Maine Council is grappling with having a state qualification system or going NWCG.

John reminded everyone of the Fall TREX training that the Maine Council is hosting and encouraged participation. It is possible some work for the program will happen in NH depending on resources, weather and proper agreements being in place.

Moderate vs arduous pack test – Mike asked if others distinguish on prescribed fires. TNC does the moderate pack test, but never really distinguished between crew members taking either, but if prescribed fire turned into a wildfire then moderate test crew members would have to step back. USFS does have some crew that do moderate for prescribed burning based on position requirements. For extended attack NWCG fitness required, but for initial attack could still be moderate. Identified contingency resources for prescribed burns need to be arduous or whatever test is appropriate to their position type. The guard has had a number of people do moderate to be RXB members. For burn bosses having two tests makes planning challenging particularly if there is a transition to suppression.

Municipal firefighters are not required to be red carded for suppression. Anyone going out west tests appropriate for their position.

The Stafford Act states that all agencies will accept cooperating agency quals for initial attack, once there is a shift to extended attack then NWCG quals are required and non-NWCG individuals need to be in supervised trainee roles. Brad will send language from NH Operating Plan to listserv.

Updates and training opportunities:

John Neely – USFS will begin burning soon, early spring. A number of units planned in different fuel types. Will be helping with Foss Mountain again this year. Will keep council in the loop and send a message with plans for each burn for anyone that wants to help or work on task book.

Zack Boyajian - State military reservation has units prepped, but don't have a burn plan yet. Would need to burn before May 15th prior to Karner season. If not done this spring would transition to fall along with some small units left over at Pembroke.

Steve Junkin – Forest Society has no concrete plans, doing some mapping. Morse Preserve is a site of interest to get fire back into the old blueberry fields.

Tom Trask – Assisting partners with burns this season. June Academy, June 8th - 12th S215, S219, S230 and S231. In May S130 offered over two weeks Tuesday and Thursday nights and Saturday field day. Down to 4 rangers would like to get new rangers out this spring on burns. Tom focusing on engine boss and firing boss task books this season. Equipment trailer is at the fire house in Center Ossipee, contact Tom if you need anything.

Steve Najjar - 4 units complete in New Boston and will be assisting Fish and Game for the rest of the season. Steve is interested in helping partners and has one other employee that can help.

Heidi Holman – NH Fish and Game has 5 units in plan review and doing some unit prep. May 15th cut off for species, so may need to be after August 14th. Heidi is working on pumps (looking for S211) and engine boss task book. Once complete she will be opening the state task book for squad boss. Hoping to get another staff member trained up to squad boss in next two years. Ongoing discussions related to a joint position that could bring in a burn boss.

Chris Kane – Chris would like feedback on fire statistics that would be useful for practitioners to include in fire adapted communities mapping. Considering fire return interval for low mixed and replacement fires. Please reach out to Chris if you have suggestions for what would be helpful also best sources for information.

Mike Crawford – Planning some burns for TNC for later in the summer. He is also working on building a Type 7 UTV and adding some radios to their equipment cache.

Next meeting: July – location and time TBD

Meeting adjourned 10:15 am.

Respectfully submitted, Rebecca DiGirolomo, Vice Chair