

NM Prescribed Fire Council
First Annual Meeting
Albuquerque Fire Department
October 21, 2010

INTRODUCTION

Welcome - Butch Blazer, State Forester

Butch Blazer welcomed everyone to the meeting and discussed the importance of RX fire to the overall forest and watershed restoration goals for New Mexico.

“12 things I have learned” - Don Kearney, BLM

1. Fire and water are a lot alike
2. Wind can be your best friend or worst enemy
3. There is more satisfaction in managing a fire for the right reasons.
4. Timing is everything
5. Good design = fewer problems
6. Bigger is better
7. Have a Plan B, C, or D
8. Listen to the locals, trust your experience
9. Models lie, but they can be useful
10. Be Intrusive, Invite people
11. Prescribed fire is a planned event
12. Have Trigger Points

National Coalition of Rx Fire Councils - Laura McCarthy, TNC

The first RX Fire Council started in Florida during the late 1990's and expanded to other southern states and then to the Midwest. There are currently 25 active councils including Washington State and Northern California. Most focus on private lands.

Reasons to be a part of the Council include: protect your ability as a landowner to burn, be in the process so that you can help shape it, keep up to date on the best burning practices, access to material for education work to better inform the public as to the benefits of RX fire.

Current Organizational Structure and Needs

Brian Henington discussed organizational structures and needs of other RX Fire Councils throughout the nation. Major points include: Passionate involvement vs. passive involvement, Positive networking, Support to our partners.

The possibility of membership dues to give the council operating funds was breached but was not discussed.

Vision and Mission Statement

Doug Boykin presented the current language as well as possible changes.etc.

Vision: Working with cooperators to support them in their ability to apply fire at the right time, in the right place, and for the right reasons.

Mission Statement (from by-laws): to encourage the exchange of information, techniques, and experiences among practitioners of prescribed fire in New Mexico, and to promote public understanding of the importance and benefits of safe use of prescribed fire.

Successful strategies and steps from other states

Jeremy Kruger talked about other Rx Fire Councils. Topics included:

Benefits achieved by councils:

- 1) Protecting landowners ability to burn- improving state law
- 2) Georgia, Alabama, Penn and Florida - good examples of states working with legislation
- 3) Liability protections - training and standards development, getting stakeholder involvement (process)
- 4) Tech Transfer - Florida, NC, SC, Georgia, Alabama
- 5) Common barriers - “Plugging the biggest holes in the bucket”
- 6) 13-state public education campaign - anything that can be done to educate the public will benefit Rx practitioners,
- 7) State Forestry could be a cornerstone for the Council, but the Council could take the lead or take the heat off of the state...
- 8) Get the public to understand what we are doing and have some tolerance...
- 9) Engage with local politicians (outreach and education)
- 10) The coalition of Rx council offers a way for NM to have a national voice...
- 11) Pennsylvania Prescribed Fire Council (<http://www.paprescribedfire.org/>)

Breakout Groups

POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION

1. Policies and procedures that limit RX fire
 - a. Anti-donation clause
 - b. Liability – regulations that are statewide that could be a deterrent.
2. Action
 - a. Research existing county/state/local/fed laws that limit or preclude interagency RX fire implementation. (committee)
 - b. State sanctioned certification for qualifications/education/training
Technical expertise & technical review
 - c. Working with tribes to increase awareness and adopt a RX fire template
Technical expertise & technical review
 - d. Interagency technical reviews for prescribed burn plans with the DOF, tribes, and private landowners as needed and or requested.
 - e. Council support on develop MOU between tribes/DOD/Private to tech review burn plans.
 - f. Engage in smoke management discussions now and in the future when needed.

EDUCATION AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

1. Smoke management issues, how they affect RX
2. Promoting “good fire” as much as possible
3. One voice among all partners – consistent stance using fire for resource management, same concept, same ideas
4. Get Public Involvement on burns (field trips for partners during implementation)
5. Push Natural Fire Regimes
 - Historic perspective
 - Educate the public
6. Websites (would include)
 - Information clearing house
 - Qualifications FOR
 - Qualified Contractors list
 - Information and resources
 - Templates (burn plans, etc)
 - Check list for process/ processes
 - Agency help on BMP’s
 - Permission/ consultations across agency jurisdictions – where to go

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

1. stand replacement vs maintenance burns for some fuel types (aspen vs. Mixed conifer)
2. different fuel types require a different application to meet restoration objectives
3. Site visits (quarterly)
4. to show success and failures
5. RESTORATION VS. maintenance
6. visit live burns – report visit on website

COORDINATION

1. Multi-jurisdictional burns
2. Communication about technology
3. Landscape scale projects
4. Drives down cost due to cost
5. Cost-sharing
6. Varied approaches based on population, veg. types and terrain
7. Lead time and planning
8. Shorten it up
9. 18 months from start of planning to implementation is too long.
10. Lose interest, funds etc, in meeting/etc/

AT THE END OF THE MEETING, 6 SUBCOMMITTEES WERE FORMED. THEY ARE:

Smoke Management issues - Doug Cram (NMSU) - chair (3 volunteers)

Policy issues - John Tunberg (NRCS) - chair (5 volunteers)

Website - Jeremy Kruger (BLM) – chair (4 volunteers)

Site visits - Gabe Partido (USFS) - chair (7 volunteers)

Public Information and Education – Dan Ware (NMSF) – chair (12 volunteers)

Training – Orlando Romero (Forest Guild) - chair (4 volunteers)