

New Mexico Prescribed Fire Council

By-Laws

The mission of the New Mexico Prescribed Fire Council is to promote the safe, responsible, and effective use of prescribed fire and facilitate the exchange of information, techniques, and experiences among practitioners of prescribed fire in New Mexico.

ARTICLE ONE: NAME

1.1 Name

The name of this organization shall be New Mexico Prescribed Fire Council, hereafter referred to as the “Council.”

ARTICLE TWO: PURPOSE

2.1 Purpose

The Council assembles the diverse community of individuals in New Mexico interested in prescribed fire into an organization to:

- a. provide a framework for communications in relation to prescribed fire objectives, techniques, and issues;
- b. provide a forum to discuss prescribed fire practices, regulations, and policy.
- c. disseminate technical information regarding prescribed fire;
- d. promote the development and utilization of safe, responsible, and effective use of prescribed fire practices;
- e. promote public understanding of the benefits of prescribed fire; and
- f. identify and work collaboratively to remove barriers to the safe, responsible, and effective use of prescribed fire.

ARTICLE THREE: PARTICIPATION

3.1 Membership

Council members shall be any agency, organization, corporation, institution, or individual with an interest in the safe, responsible, and effective use of prescribed fire in New Mexico.

3.2 Funding

The Steering Committee shall identify and procure funding to cover the fiscal needs of the Council. Funding may include grants, donations, and other sources appropriate to a 501c3 nonprofit organization. To encourage the highest level of membership and participation, a membership fee will not be required to join the Council. The Committee may, at its discretion, amend or revise the need for a membership fee from time to time.

3.3 Steering Committee

A Steering Committee of at least nine members and not more than 13 members is elected by the general membership to guide the organization and to develop positions and coordinate meetings. The Steering Committee shall function as the Board of Directors for the Council. The committee is composed of a diverse representation with a preferred makeup that includes a balance of representatives of federal, state and tribal government agencies, and representatives from the private and non-government sectors including private landowners, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions.

3.4 Election

Election of Steering Committee members may occur as regular business during any meeting of the Council whether to increase the number of Steering Committee members or to fill a vacancy. A majority vote of Council members present is required.

3.5 Steering Committee Term

Members shall serve for two-year terms. With the approval of the general membership, members may serve for multiple two-year terms.

3.6 Steering Committee Member Attendance

If a Steering Committee member must be absent from a meeting, he/she may designate an alternate representative in writing to the committee prior to the meeting. A quorum of members shall be required for official Council business concerning programmatic direction or financial matters.

3.7 Sub-committees

Sub-committees composed of Steering Committee members and general Council members may be formed with agreement of the Council to address specifically assigned issues.

ARTICLE FOUR: OFFICERS

4.1 Elected Officers

The officers of the Council shall be the Chair, Vice-chair, Secretary and Treasurer who will be a member of the Steering Committee.

4.2 Officer Term

The term of office will be for two years beginning immediately after the annually held general membership meeting during which officer elections shall take place.

4.3 Election

The officers shall be elected by a majority vote of members of the Council present at the annual general membership meeting. Council members wishing to be considered for election should make their interest known at least one week prior to the annual meeting in order to be considered.

4.4 Resignation and Removal

Any officer may resign by presenting written notice to the Secretary. An officer may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of the current Steering Committee.

4.5 Vacancies

If an officer position becomes vacant for any reason during the office's term, the Steering Committee shall appoint a replacement to complete the remainder of that office's term. Nominees for the position shall be presented to the general membership at the next scheduled election.

4.6 Duties

The Chair is responsible for setting agendas for Steering Committee and general membership meetings, running said meetings and communicating with committee chairs in the interim between meetings. The Vice-chair, Secretary, and Treasurer shall support the Chair. The Vice-chair shall set agendas and run meetings in the absence of the Chair. The Secretary tracks the membership, records the minutes of Council meetings and distributes those minutes to the Council membership. The Treasurer manages the Council's funds and provides a financial report including summary of all income and disbursements to the Steering Committee during each meeting. Officer duties are more completely described in Attachment 1 of this document.

The Chair shall preside at all Steering Committee and general membership meetings and see that all resolutions approved by the Steering Committee are acted upon and put into effect. The Chair may appoint committees from the Council members or other partners as needed. The Chair may authorize actions and public notices after a majority approval of the Steering Committee.

4.7 Disbursements

All disbursements must be approved by the Chair and the Treasurer. All disbursements over \$200 must have prior approval of a majority of the Steering Committee.

Article Five: Meetings

5.1 Meetings

At least one Council meeting and two Steering Committee meetings will be held annually. Meetings may be held in person or via virtual phone or web platforms by means of which all persons participating in the meeting hear each other.

5.2 Notice

Notices of Council meetings shall be sent to members at least one week prior to all such meetings. Both e-mail and written notices may be used.

5.3 Quorum

At meetings of the Steering Committee, including regular business meetings, a majority of the committee or their proxies shall be necessary to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

5.4 Vote Required for Action

Except as otherwise provided in these bylaws, the act of a majority of Steering Committee members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present at the time shall be the act of the Steering Committee.

5.5 Telephone and Similar Meetings

Steering Committee members may participate in and hold a meeting by means of virtual phone or web platforms by means of which all persons participating in the meeting hear each other. Participation in such a meeting shall constitute presence in person at the meeting.

5.6 Action by Steering Committee without a Meeting

Any action required or permitted to be taken at a meeting of the Steering Committee may be taken without a meeting if a consent in writing, setting forth the action so taken, is signed by all the members of the Steering Committee before the action to be taken. Electronic mail from each of the members of the Steering Committee shall constitute acceptable written consent. Such consent shall have the same force and effect as a unanimous vote at a meeting. The signed consent, or a signed copy, shall be made a part of the official record of the Council.

Article Six: Amendments

6.1 Amendments

By-law amendments will be proposed by a simple majority vote of the Steering Committee and then approved at the next full Council meeting.

Attachment 1: Officer Duties

Chair

1. Assist Secretary with development and proofing of minutes and agendas for meetings.
2. Lead monthly calls; Vice-Chair or other Officers are alternate leads.
3. Assist Secretary and Treasurer with yearly non-profit reporting to state or financial reports, if and as requested.
4. With the other Officers, lead or support the essential business functions of the Council such as contract and agreement creation and review, financial management (led by Treasurer), data management, volunteer and employee (as applicable) management, and communications to membership and the Steering Committee.
5. Sign contracts, agreements, and other official documents on behalf of the Council
6. Serve as a Council contact for inquiries from the public, media, or fire professionals.
7. Support Council initiatives, such as public and landowner outreach, meetings/seminars, annual meeting planning and implementation, outreach to legislators and policy makers, strategic plan development, etc.

Vice-chair

1. Assist Secretary with development and proofing of minutes and agendas for meetings.
2. As requested, lead monthly calls in lieu of the Chair; other Officers are alternate leads.
3. Assist Secretary and Treasurer with yearly non-profit reporting to state or financial reports, if and as requested.
4. With the other Officers, lead or support the essential business functions of the Council such as contract and agreement creation and review, financial management (led by Treasurer), data management, volunteer and employee (as applicable) management, and communications to membership and the Steering Committee.
5. Sign contracts, agreements, and other official documents on behalf of the Council in lieu of the Chair.
6. Serve as a Council contact for inquiries from the public, media, or fire professionals.
7. Support Council initiatives, such as public and landowner outreach, meetings/seminars, annual meeting planning and implementation, outreach to legislators and policy makers, strategic plan development, etc.

Secretary

1. Be present at meetings to record minutes documenting discussion, decisions and direction of the Council.
2. Send meeting agenda and minutes of previous meetings to Council membership as required by Bylaws.
3. Send draft meeting minutes for formatting and posting on the Council's website.
4. Maintain Council membership and contact info list.
5. With other officers, draft agenda for upcoming meetings.
6. Complete required New Mexico 501c3 non-profit reporting, including semi-annual TAP reporting on the Taxation and Revenue Department Website, annual reports for Secretary of State, and annual reports for the Attorney General's Office.
7. Maintain Council files including grant, contractual, financial, and non-profit reporting documents, and meeting minutes recording Council decisions and actions taken, projects under way or completed.
8. Serve as a backup to the treasurer with access to the checking account, budget spreadsheets and back statements.
9. Send out or forward emails or other pertinent documents or announcements to the Council membership.
10. Serve as a Council contact for inquiries from the public, media, or fire professionals.
11. Support Council initiatives, such as public and landowner outreach, meetings/seminars, annual meeting planning and implementation, outreach to legislators and policy makers, strategic plan development, etc.

Treasurer

1. Responsible for maintaining records (excel spread sheet, amounts on deposit or in transit) of activity of the Council's bank account(s) and reporting said account's status at meetings.
2. Assist Secretary and/or other officers to perform needed fiduciary activities, such as filings, reports, audits and monitoring, as determined by the Steering Committee or as required by state law.
3. Serve as a backup to the Secretary, as requested.
4. Serve as a Council contact for inquiries from the public, media, or fire professionals.
5. Support Council initiatives, such as public and landowner outreach, meetings/seminars, annual meeting planning and implementation, outreach to legislators and policy makers, strategic plan development, etc.