

Agricultural Burning Practices & Research Task Force #93 Meeting Summary

DATE: November 18, 2014

LOCATION: Washington State Dept. of Ecology, Eastern Regional Office, Spokane WA.

<u>Members Present</u>		<u>Representing</u>
Karen Wood- Chair	Air Quality Program	Department of Ecology
Jay Penner	Washington Association of Wheat Growers	Agricultural Community
Michael Ingham	Alfalfa Seed Industry	Agricultural Community
Dan McCarthy	Okanogan Hort. Association	Agricultural Community
Larry Cochran	WA. Assn. of Conservation Districts	Conservation Districts
Don Potts	WA. Dept. of Agriculture	WA. Dept. of Agriculture
<u>Alternates Present</u>		<u>Representing</u>
Chris Simpson	University of Washington	Public Health
Matt Holmquist	Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency	Eastern Washington Local Air Authorities
Charles Golob	Crop and Soil Sciences	Academia, (Crop & Soil)
<u>Members Absent</u>		<u>Representing</u>
Michael Bush	WSU Extension	Academia, (Tree Fruit)

Introductions, Announcements

The 93rd Task Force meeting was held at the Washington State Department of Ecology Eastern Regional Office in Spokane, Washington. The Agricultural Burning Practices and Research Task Force (Task Force) meeting began at 10:00AM with the introduction of Task Force members and guests.

The November meeting is reserved for a yearly agricultural burning program recap and a discussion about the previous year's burn season. The November meeting is also scheduled for scoping changes and discussion about Best Management Practices, (BMP's). At this meeting, the Task Force also heard updates from researchers conducting research on alternatives to agricultural burning who have received fees from Ecology to conduct such research.

Research

Two presentations were made on continuing research. These presentations can be found at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/air/aginfo/research.htm>

A third presentation was made by John Begley from the Columbia Pulp Company. Columbia Pulp (using research results from long-time Ag. Burn Task Force Research grant-recipient Mark Lewis) plans to open a facility in 2015 which will ultimately process 620 tons of wheat straw (which otherwise might be burned in the field) per day into pulp and other useful products. The

Columbia Pulp presentation can also be found at
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/air/agininfo/research.htm>

Fall Burn Season 2014 Recap

Kary Peterson, Department of Ecology, (Ecology) Eastern Regional Office presented the 2014 agricultural burning recap. The total acres permitted for agricultural burning in 2014 was 130,426, compared to roughly 159,000 acres last year. This number will likely decrease by about 5,000 acres after refunds for unburned acres are issued in December. The number of complaints about agricultural burning was 24 in 2014, about the same as the 26 in 2013, up slightly from 19 in 2011 and 18 in 2012. Ecology's Agricultural Burn Program has been working with the ventilation forecasting modelers to improve the ventilations models we use to do the burn decision.

Best Management Practices

Two issues were brought up for BMP research by local air authorities, Ecology staff, and potential further consideration by the Task Force at future meetings. The first issue was that of Christmas tree farm burning, whether this was agricultural burning, and if so, whether the practice of burning prunings from such Christmas trees qualifies as exempt agricultural burning. **The Task Force determined that Christmas tree farming is agriculture and that the burning does not fall under the category of Orchard Pile burning or exempt agricultural burning.** Matt Holmquist, representing local clean air agencies, volunteered to survey the clean air agencies in Washington to help determine the potential need for and interest in working towards a set of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Christmas tree and other non-orchard agricultural pile burning.

The second issue was that of the burning of land which had been enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and was being withdrawn from that program to be put back into active agricultural production. Apparently, at least one parcel of such land was permitted to be burned in the Spring (before July 1) and planted in the Fall (after July 1) in 2014. Ecology was asked to look into such practices to determine if the practice of burning of CRP in the spring, but not planting until the fall, should be more broadly allowed, or prohibited entirely. The Task Force would like to revisit these issues in a future meeting.

2015 Meeting Schedule

The regularly scheduled meetings for 2015 were set for Tuesday, February 10th, Tuesday, June 9th, and Tuesday, November 10th, 2014 at the Eastern Regional Office of the Dept. of Ecology.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 PM.