

Agricultural Burning Practices & Research Task Force #94 Meeting Summary

DATE: February 10, 2015

LOCATION: Department 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
Dan McCarthy	Okanogan Horticultural Association	Agricultural Community
Michael Bush	WSU Extension	Academia, (Tree Fruit)
Michael Ingham	Alfalfa Seed Industry	Agricultural Community
<u>Alternates Present</u>		
Matt Holmquist	Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency	Eastern Washington Local Air Authorities
Dan Harwood	WA. Assn. of Conservation Districts	Conservation Districts
Charles Golob	Washington State University	Academia, (Crop & Soil)
Scott Steinbacher	WA. Dept of Agriculture	WA. Dept. of Agriculture

Introductions, Announcements

The 94th Agricultural Burning Practices and Research Task Force (Task Force) meeting was held on February 10th, 2015, at the Department of Ecology's Eastern Regional Office in Spokane, Washington. The Task Force meeting began with the introduction of Task Force members and guests.

The February meeting is reserved for updating the Task Force on the Agricultural Burning Program costs and revenues, hearing research project reports, scoping future funding needs and discussing research direction. Per the Task Force Governance Document it is also scheduled for scoping changes and discussion about Best Management Practices, (BMP's).

Agricultural Burn Program Costs and Revenues

Kary Peterson, from Ecology's Eastern Regional Office, presented two graphics illustrating the dollar-amount the Agricultural Burning Program brought in from permit fee revenue, and how much the program cost to operate over the past several years. The results show that the agricultural burn program is now very close to being cost-neutral, with year-to-year variability stemming mostly from the number of acres and tons burned, and the personnel costs with retirements and rehiring. The Task Force requested that Ecology survey the delegated permitting authorities to determine whether they were being adequately compensated for the costs of permitting.

Research Update Presentations and Future Research Direction

The research projects the Task Force recommended funding during the 2013-2015 biennium are coming to a close and researchers were invited to share their results at this meeting. Both researchers shared results at the last Task Force meeting in November and had nothing new to share at this meeting. They will be presenting their final results at the June meeting. Jeff Schibel, a cooperator involved in the “Management of Fresh Wheat Residue for Irrigated Winter Canola Production” study, shared that the cropping for this study has been winter killed. Paul Rossow of Ecology said that the Principal Investigator of this study would like to continue the research in the next year using provisions in the current contract.

Task Force discussion

The Task Force asked to have Ecology draft a Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit research grant proposals for the 2015-2017 funding cycle which begins July 1, 2015. The Task Force would like to keep the request general in nature, but with specific examples of areas of study which might garner more interest from prospective researchers. Submitted proposals should be distributed to Task Force prior to the next meeting.

BMP's

The Task Force would like Ecology to work with Val Turner of the Columbia Conservation District to develop Best Management Practice (BMP) language which ensures that permittees burning Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) take-out acreage are complying with the provisions of their contracts and farm plans. Matt Holmquist reported that he has not had much interest from the other local air authorities in developing a pile burn BMP. However, Alex Sligar from the Benton Clean Air Agency stated that about half of the permits his agency issues in a year are vineyard burn permits and that it would be desirable to have a BMP for this type of burning. Mr. Holmquist said he would work with the local clean air agencies to scope the need for and/or develop a draft non-orchard pile burning BMP, for possible implementation at the June, 2016 Task Force Meeting.

The next meeting will be held June 9th, 2015.