

Agricultural Burning Practices & Research Task Force #115

Meeting Summary

DATE: November 1, 2023

LOCATION: Moses Lake, WA, available virtually on Teams

Members Present, Affiliation, Representing

Karin Baldwin (Chair), Air Quality Program, Department of Ecology

Larry Cochran, Washington Assoc. of Conservation Districts, Conservation Districts

Jay Penner, Washington Association of Wheat Growers, Agricultural Community

Karen Lewis, WSU Extension, Academia (Tree Fruit)

Scott Steinbacher, WA Dept of Agriculture, WA Dept of Agriculture

Mike Buckley, Alfalfa Seed Industry, Agricultural Community

Members Absent, Affiliation, Representing

Aaron Esser, WSU Extension, Academia (Cereal Grains)

Dan McCarthy, Okanogan Horticultural Association, Agricultural Community

Chris Skidmore, Whitman County Public Health Dept, Public Health

Scott Windsor, Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency, E. Wash. Local Air Authorities

Introductions, Announcements

The 115th Agricultural Burning Practices and Research Task Force (Task Force) meeting was held on November 1st, 2023 in Moses Lake, with it also being available via Teams online. The Task Force meeting began with the introduction of Task Force members and guests.

The November meeting of the Task Force is normally reserved for receiving an update on funded research, hearing an annual burning summary, and scoping changes to the Best Management Practices (BMPs).

Presentation on Air Curtain Incinerators

Philip Gent from the Department of Ecology Air Quality Program, presented a review of how air curtain incinerators (ACIs) are treated under Ecology's jurisdiction. He explained that ACIs are devices that contain a fire, with a fan blowing air designed to complete combustion while containing the smoke. He explained that these devices can be permitted by Ecology, but that the permitting process is somewhat complicated and expensive.

Research Presentations

Paul Rossow from the Department of Ecology Air Quality Program explained that there will be no presentation at this meeting, as the contract for the research was not yet finalized.

Washington Agricultural Burning Program Yearly Review

Daniel Matsche from the Department of Ecology Air Quality Program gave an overview of the agricultural burning which took place in 2023. He explained that acres burned were up significantly in 2023 from the past few years, driven mostly by a dramatic increase in Spring burning, the acreage total being almost 150,000 acres in 2023, compared to an average of about 100,000 acres per year from 2019-2022.

BMP's

Paul Rossow from Ecology explained that there have been no calls or need of changes to the existing BMPs.

Washington Ag Burn Program News and Updates

Ecology's Daniel Matsche gave an update of the online permit application system which went live in late August. Improvements will continue to be made to this system, with most burn permit applications still being received by mail or as a walk-in.

Round Table Discussion

The task force members agreed to schedule the 2024 meetings on Wednesday, June 5th, and Wednesday, November 6th, in Spokane.

Next Meeting

The next meeting (Meeting #116) of the Agricultural Burning Practices and Research Task Force will be on Wednesday, June 5, 2024.