

**Smoke Managers Subcommittee  
Conference Call  
March 3, 2014**

**Roll Call:**

**Mike Broughton, Colorado/US Fish & Wildlife Service (Chair)**  
**Claudia Standish, New Mexico/BLM State Office (Vice-Chair)**  
**Ursula Parker, California/Butte County AQMD (Secretary)**  
**Mark Melvin, Georgia/ Joseph W. Jones Ecological Research Center**  
**Pete Lahm, Washington D.C./USFS**  
**Brian Bohlmann, WY/Dept of Environmental Quality**  
**Leif Paulson, WY/Dept of Environmental Quality**  
**Nick Yonker, Oregon/Dept of Forestry**  
**Gary Arcemont, California/San Luis Obispo APCD**  
**Ann Hobbs, California/Placer County APCD**  
**Rick Gillam, U.S. EPA, Southeast Region, Atlanta, Georgia**  
**Dan Chan, Georgia Forestry Commission**  
**Erin Law, Idaho/USFS Idaho-Montana Airshed Group**  
**Andrea Boyer, Nez Perce Tribe**  
**Mary Anderson, Idaho/DEQ**  
**Dar Mims, California/ARB**  
**Christine Paulson, Iowa/DNR**  
**Lisa Bye, New Mexico/BLM**  
**Josh Hyde, Idaho/University of Idaho**  
**Jennifer Malinski, Minnesota/Red Lake Nation**  
**Todd Breininger, Pennsylvania/Dept. of Forestry**  
**Mark Fitch, Idaho/National Park Service**  
**Jeff Eyemie, Winnipeg Canada/Health Office**  
**Gail Kantak, Iowa/DNR Forestry Bureau**  
**Tammy Eagan, Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection**  
**Sam Dearstyne, Colorado/BLM**  
**Jim Brenner, Florida/Forest Service**  
**Andrea Holland, Retired, Air Pollution Specialist**  
**Brenda Wilmore, Colorado/USFS**  
**Dan Washington, Utah/BLM Eastern Great Basin Coordination Center**

*The purpose of the Smoke Manager's Sub-Committee is to increase communications amongst the community of air quality professionals, other state and federal governmental agencies, land managers, and other persons conducting burning activities.*

***Agenda:***

***Introductions***

***EPA Regulatory Update***

***Prescribed Fire Councils – Mark Melvin***

***NEI/Smoke Challenges, Smoke Solutions***

***Round Robin/Schedule Next Meeting***

## **EPA Regulatory Update – Rick Gillam**

- PM2.5 Status:
  - 2012 PM2.5 NAAQS designation timeline
    - December 13, 2013 - State/Tribal designation recommendations
    - August 14, 2014 - 120-day letters
    - August 29, 2014 - FR pubs
    - September 29, 2014 - Close of public comment period
    - October 29, 2014 - Deadline for State & Tribal comments on EPA's intended designations
    - December 12, 2014 - Final area designations
  - As of March 3, 2014) Received recommendations from 49 states (still outstanding: AL), 2 territories (PR, USVI), the District of Columbia, and 6 tribes
    - Submitted recommendations identify 15 different nonattainment areas in Iowa, Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and central and southern California.
    - Most of the submitting states based their recommendations on ambient air quality monitoring data for the 2010-2012 period, although some based their recommendations on preliminary 2013 data.
    - 53 counties with violating monitors (using 10-12 data)
  - PM Designations Mapping Tool that Rick talked about on the last call has been updated – available at [http://geoplatform2.epa.gov/PM\\_MAP/index.html](http://geoplatform2.epa.gov/PM_MAP/index.html)
- Ozone Standard Re-evaluation Status – Targeted to be finalized in November 2015.
  - Notice of Availability of three documents - public comment period open until March 24, 2014:
    - *Health Risk and Exposure Assessment for Ozone - Second External Review Draft (January 2014)*
    - *Welfare Risk and Exposure Assessment for Ozone - Second External Review Draft (January 2014)*
    - *Policy Assessment for the Review of the Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards - Second External Review Draft (January 2014)*

Documents are also undergoing formal review during the same timeframe by the EPA Clean Air Science Advisory Committee (CASAC), which is made up of external experts.

See FR notice: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-01-29/pdf/2014-01721.pdf>
- Nothing new to report on EPA's revised Air Quality Policy for Wildland and Prescribed Fires or Exceptional Events guidance/rule revisions; EPA HQ is working on other priorities.

## **Prescribed Fire Councils – Mark Melvin**

- **Background:** Mark's title is a Conservation Management/Education Technician at Joseph W. Jones Research Center in Georgia (website: <http://jonesctr.org/index.html>). He has 230,000 acres of on-the-ground fire experience. Mark's passion is managing the resource and he has spent the last six-seven years working with Prescribed Fire Councils in Georgia and with the Coalition of Prescribed Fire Councils.

- Fire Council History: Fire Councils have been around since 1989. The first modern Prescribed Fire Council was formed in FL/Central FL; FL does a lot of burning and the council has served as a model for the rest of the county.
- Fire Council Organization & Mission: The councils are for the most part ad hoc, but some have evolved to become non-profit entities/501(c)(3). As a formal organization, they have three common themes:
  - Protect the right to be able to use fire appropriately;
  - Manage resources; and,
  - Promote the understanding about Prescribed Fire
- Reasons for Success: Fire Councils are successful because 1) they effectively partner private, state and federal interests, and 2) fire unites us where other issues divide us.
- Policy, Education/ Training: Mark says that is important to improve state statutes; most are pretty antiquated, in the northeast, they are colonial and some in the northwest date back to before they became a state was incorporated into the union and was still just a territory.
  - Mark shared with the group that in Georgia, the fire councils went to all 159 counties in the state, attending every county commission board meeting, and were successful in getting every county to sign a resolution supportive of prescribed burning. Because of this, Georgia, like other states, now has a prescribed fire awareness week/month, signed by the governor.
  - It is important to maintain websites and utilize social media. The message campaign is, “One message, many voices”. See website, [www.goodfires.org](http://www.goodfires.org).
  - Training is an emerging issue; councils are putting together training curriculum to train burners to be more efficient, and smoke management is a piece of that. Mark says that it would be good to have a state-certified burn management program, some form of liability protection to the burner, and it would keep people current and train people new to the practice.
  - Fire safe councils have been instrumental in developing some state smoke management plans as well. Georgia’s SMP is reviewed at the annual Fire Safe Council meeting.
- National issues: 1) Air Quality and Smoke Management; 2) WUI/population growth; 3) Insurance/liability (whether nuisance smoke or visibility); 4) Ecological role of fire; and 5) Global warming/climate change. Health and safety of fire fighters and the public, social political impacts and law/regulations are also big concerns.
  - National council: In 2006, following the last revision of PM2.5 standards, four southeastern states of fire councils felt that having a more regional council to help consolidate their voices held a scoping session and realized that the issues to be addressed were national; regionally they would not be successful. At that time, there were only six states with fire safe councils. Today there are 28 councils, and one international council (British Columbia). OR and AZ are on the verge of joining (2014). (website: [www.prescribedfire.net](http://www.prescribedfire.net)). The desire is to develop councils in all states and to have the promotion of the use of prescribed fire available to regulators, private citizens and to land managers.

- The National Association of State Foresters did a survey (1<sup>st</sup> comprehensive in the country), and found that 23 million acres of prescribed fire was burned in the US in 2011 and 98% of the fires occurred in the southeast and west. The west burns more agriculture and the southeast burns more forestry acres. This survey would be meaningful to be used for national inventory; results showed that capacity/training, weather, air quality/smoke management were the top impediments nationally. Post 2007, they've really made an effort to reach out to their air quality people to try to bridge the gaps, and in the process have found that they themselves have become more educated and they have very similar goals.
- EPA policy and rules recommendations have been made by fire safe council representatives; they have routinely been panelists/participated in reviews. For example, two representatives were part of the review of the smoke impacts from the burning outside of Atlanta, Georgia a few years ago.
- Reality of prescribed fire today: Fire is an ecological imperative; prescribed burning is essential to restoring landscapes & reintroducing fire and fire maintenance through frequent, low intensity surface fires. (Because of societal rules and regulations) we are simply not meeting our fire needs today; even those states burning the most acres aren't coming close to meeting their need. It is expected that this will become even more challenging in the future. Liability needs to be addressed to include the private burn sector (80% of burning is private) and we need to be somewhat consistent across state lines. Balancing public health and safety with the ecological use of fire is challenging, as is training the next generation.
- **Mike Broughton** appreciates that the council is helping private groups and pointed out that through process of developing councils, they (the councils) have developed a large communication network which has a greater ability to get information to a lot of people, including "the guy on the ground".
- **Claudia Standish** commended Florida on doing an outstanding job educating the public on why prescribed fire is necessary. In terms of working at an air quality bureau, she notes that there is great value in people understanding the value of fire; they can function as a conduit for information. **Mike Broughton** agreed having seen it first hand and encouraged the air quality folks to visit their website. The idea is to improve the risk and liability; you're trying to build a culture, not just educate the public.
- **Ann Hobbs** expressed her concern that California Prescribed Fire Councils have not included much on air quality which makes it challenging for air districts to participate. The blame game that goes on makes "having one message, many voices" an unattainable goal. **Claudia Standish** commented that some people see us (air quality regulators) as the enemy and reminded the group that it's a partnership building process; we need to be on a first-name basis with one another. There has to be a willingness on both sides to understand what the other is trying to accomplish. Like any other partnership, it takes collaboration, and sometimes you have to take the first step. **Mike Broughton** agreed; you sometimes have to ask to attend a meeting, or ask to talk about building a partnership. Then, if you do get resistance, Mike offers the help of this organization.
- **Rick Gillam** provided a brief testimonial from EPA's side in the southeast: they really have developed the first-name basis relationships and he stressed the importance of

having those relationships. **Mark Melvin**, adding to Rick's comment, stated that Rick and he met in 2007 and recognized that in the south they are different culturally and burn differently (than in other areas). This past year, they had their first ever regional smoke summit; EPA Region 4 was there, along with Forest Fire Chiefs, and others from several states. They discussed what was working, what wasn't, and strengthened their partnerships. There are other models/examples out there; you can always find a solution.

- **Gary Arcemont** echoed what Ann Hobbs and Claudia Standish had said earlier, stated that he had experienced hitting a brick wall/being considered the enemy. He added that if one party is not willing to consider the other side's perspective, it doesn't work, and he will have that other party contact the group to try to bridge that gap.

If you would like to reach Mark Melvin, you can do so from the Coalition of Prescribed Fire Councils webpage (<http://www.prescribedfire.net/governing-board>). **Mike Broughton** encouraged people to keep working on this and keep reaching out to new and uncooperative people.

### **Fire NEI/Smoke Challenges/Smoke Solutions - Mike Broughton**

- NEI (National Emissions Inventory) is conducted every 3 years and sent to EPA – smoke and emissions from fires is a topic in the forefront right now. States are realizing that the methodology that was used in the 2011/2012 NEI is not as high quality that they'd like to see; fires have been missed and although EPA is aware of it, they do not have the resources to conduct a further in-depth study. Why should we care? EPA makes determinations on what's needed in the near future and if data is flawed, then they're making flawed decisions. A number of states have decided to do their own analysis on emissions from fires and send it into EPA and Mike thinks EPA is welcoming that data and including it in their analysis. **Rick Gillam** confirmed this and agreed that it is a resource issue, adding that NEI is used for national level rule making, such as controls on power plants, motor vehicles, etc, so it's really important.
- Just like EPA, the states have limited resources, as well. Private contractors are also working on this. **Pete Lahm** said that a briefing paper on this issue, including the differences between tribal/agricultural/prescribed burning emissions and wildfire emissions will be posted on the smoke committee website.
- One area that is not well documented by emissions models is smoke from organic fires/fires in peat in places like GA, NC, MN, and others – fires burn and smolder for weeks/months and acreages don't take that into account. This is another area where ground data is very important to try to present the data as correctly as possible.

### **Regional Group Discussions – Mike Broughton**

- We would like to extend as a regular feature that each call have a “hot topics” discussion in each of the regional areas. Mike is looking for a volunteer from each region to report a summary of hot topics such as recent fires, recent smoke events, etc. – can be modified as we go.
  - Southeast: In the Cape Canaveral area, burners try to work with the Kennedy Space Center so that their burns don't coincide with a launch or affect sensitive equipment. When you don't burn in Florida, you get a build-up of vegetation very rapidly and they experience a lot of lightning (and lightning + vegetation = fire). Although fires

- haven't affected Cape Canaveral lately, there have been some burns in FL that have created nuisances.
- Northeast (Pennsylvania): **Todd Breininger** commented that they have a strong Fire Safe Council which is getting their 501(3)(c)/non-profit status and they are trying to get training for burners established.
  - Plains/Midwest: **Jennifer Malinski** states that she isn't aware of anything going on right now.
  - Canada: **Jeff Eyemie** commented about the cold temperatures and said that they were a little behind in their level of sophistication regarding smoke. They will have some training on October 10<sup>th</sup> that will include smoke training. They have plenty of forested acres in their area and it must be managed. **Mike Broughton** brought up the Air Resources Advisor training resource, adding that **Susan O'Neil** and **Pete Lahm** are two people that can give additional information about the program to Canadian agencies.
  - Rockies/Great Basin: **Mike Broughton** reported that in the central Rockies they have a good snow pack going.
  - Southwest: **Claudia Standish** reported that they are working on a smoke workshop November 6-8 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The workshop is open to the public, stakeholders, tribal personnel, government and non-government and community groups. Claudia will send out something more specific as it gets closer. Otherwise, they are doing prescribed burning as they can. They've received a little moisture lately.
  - Northwest: **Nick Yonker** had a little wildfire/prescribed fire to talk about. The drought has moved into the west and northwest, so they had a dry fall and had prescribed fires getting out of control all the way into January with several fire episodes in January alone. (As a result of the heightened fire danger), prescribed burning has been backlogged. Although they have done some burning this winter, but recent snows that have come in southern OR and northern CA have had high snow levels and there is concern that there will be issues with wildfire as a result.
  - California: **Dar Mims** stated that air quality has been negatively affected by the drought/lack of rain. Projects have been pushed back. Next week Dar is going to a fuels mgmt workshop in Eureka and an RX410 (USFS) class is coming up later this month. He noted that there is opportunity to convey information to new prescribed burners. **Ann Hobbs** added that there has been more pile burning because of the lack of snow at the higher elevations (in lieu of underburns).

### **Round Robin/Next Meeting Discussion: Mike Broughton**

The next meeting will be scheduled for mid May or early June. The group will work around the wildfire council training in Montana and the conference in Boise, Idaho in Early May. A "Doodle poll" will be sent.

- Air Resource Advisory training – if interested, please contact **Pete Lahm**. **Erin Law**, **Andrea Holland**, **Mark Fitch**, **Mike Broughton**, and **Claudia Standish** have all been Air Resource Advisors.