

Agricultural Burning Practices & Research Task Force #77 Meeting Summary

DATE: November 10, 2009

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
Dave Lauer	Benton County Clean Air Authority	Eastern Washington Local Air Authorities
Jay Penner	Washington Association of Wheat Growers	Agricultural Community
Michael Ingham	Alfalfa Seed Industry	Agricultural Community
Dan McCarthy	Okanogan Hort. Association	Agricultural Community
Charles Golob (alternate for Bill Johnston)	Crop and Soil Sciences	Academia, (Crop & Soil)
Larry Cochran	WA. Assn. of Conservation Districts	Conservation Districts
John Cornwall	Grass Seed Industry	Grass Seed Industry
<u>Members Absent</u>		
Jeff Canaan	WA. Dept. of Agriculture	WA. Dept. of Agriculture
Michael Bush	WSU Extension	Academia, (Tree Fruit)
Sverre Vedal	University of Washington	Public Health

Introductions, Announcements

The 77th 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).

Fall Burn Season 2009 Recap

Kary Peterson, Department of Ecology, (Ecology), Eastern Regional Office presented the Fall, 2009 recap. He mentioned that the audits of the delegated permitting authorities have been completed, with the one area of concern being that some of the permitting authorities have not set minimum residue levels for burning under the cereal grain residue management BMP. The Outdoor Burn Unit once again participated in a US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-

sponsored smoke management conference which included Idaho DEQ, and the tribes. The members of the unit also attended grower meetings and meteorological trainings in 2009. The problem areas for enforcement in 2009 were the Tri-cities area and Walla Walla. Mr. Peterson explained that the Lewis Peak area is particularly challenging for smoke management, this area being in the typical path for smoke from several burns East of Walla Walla. The total number of agricultural burn permits in 2009 was 1096, with 366 total non-agricultural outdoor burn permits issued. The total acres for agricultural burning in 2009 was 181,000 which is the same (rounded to the nearest 1,000) as in 2008. Enforcement cases in 2009 include 33 Notices of Correction, 22 Notices of Violation, and 7 Notices of Penalty. He also noted improved cooperation between the Dept. of Natural Resources and the air agencies in the past year.

Mr. Peterson informed the Task Force Members that the Mobile particulate monitor was up and running in the Lewis Peak area this fall to establish baseline levels, and that the hope is to monitor smoke impacts in that area again next burn season.

Fees Discussion

Marsh Taylor, an Air Program policy analyst from Ecology Headquarters presented Ecology's ideas on proposals for agricultural burning fees. The Task Force, at its last meeting in June, voted to raise the burning permit fees to the legislatively-mandated cap of \$2.50 per acre. This change would need to be captured in rule in order to become effective. Ecology plans to recommend the governor include in her proposed legislation for the 2010 legislative session a provision to raise the cap on agricultural burn permit fees to a higher level than the currently mandated cap of \$2.50 per acre. There will also be a tonnage provision in the recommendation for orchard burning, which is a change sought by the Yakima Clean Air Agency. Such changes, should they become law, would also require a rule-making. Ecology would prefer to do rule-making once on this issue, rather than twice.

Mr. Taylor and Ms. Wood of Ecology also explained that Ecology now spends approximately \$725,000 per biennium on the agricultural burn program, and collects approximately \$180,000 per biennium from agricultural burn permit fees, recovering about 25% of the costs of running the program, the remainder being filled by money from the general fund. General Fund allocations, they explain, will be increasingly difficult to secure in the next several budget cycles due to the recession and the financial crisis it has caused in Washington. It will be Ecology's intent to move toward greater cost recovery for the Agricultural Burn Program.

The task force then discussed briefly whether to decide on supporting some level of cost recovery at this meeting, or to hold off on such a discussion until a later meeting. The consensus was to wait, allowing the Task Force members time to gauge their constituency's support for such a measure. Dr. Lauer suggested that a program analysis be performed to show the task force how the costs break down by individual program components.

Best Management Practices

Paul Rossow mentioned that the Northwest Clean Air Agency has expressed an interest in the possibility of developing a Best Management Practice (BMP) for the burning of non-cereal crops

such as potatoes, berries, and tulips, though no draft is available at this time. No changes to the BMPs are to be drafted for the year starting July, 2010.

Alternatives to Burning Research Possibility

Dr. William Schillinger presented a research project he and some associates are pursuing. The project involves planting winter canola after wheat without stubble burning at the Washington State University Dryland Research Station in Lind, WA. The experiment will be established in 2010, and his group plans to submit a proposal for funding to the Ag Burn Task Force in 2011.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 PM.