

## Agricultural Burning Practices & Research Task Force #74 Meeting Summary

DATE: November 4, 2008

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

<b><u>Members Present</u></b>		<b><u>Representing</u></b>
Karen Wood- Chair	Air Quality Program	Department of Ecology
John Cornwall	Grass Seed Industry	Grass Seed Industry
Jay Penner	Washington Association of Wheat Growers	Agricultural Community
Michael Ingham	Alfalfa Seed Industry	Agricultural Community
Larry Cochran	WA. Assn. of Conservation Districts	Conservation Districts
Hasan Tahat (representing Gary Pruitt who is an alternate for Dave Lauer)	Yakima Regional Clean Air Agency	Eastern Washington Local Air Authorities
Charles Golob (Alternate for William Johnston)	Washington State University	Academia, (Crop & Soil)
Michael Bush	WSU Extension	Academia, (Tree Fruit)
Sverre Vedal	University of Washington	Public Health
Jeff Canaan	WA Dept of Agriculture	WA Dept of Agriculture
<b><u>Members Absent</u></b>		
None		

### **Introductions, Announcements**

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The 74<sup>th</sup> 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 two new task force members were introduced; Jeff Canaan, representing the Washington Dept. of Agriculture, and Dan McCarthy, representing the Orchard Industry.

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).

During the recap discussion, a table of permitted burn acres, complaints, and enforcement actions broken down by county was distributed to the task force members.

## **Fall Burn Season 2008 Recap**

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Kary Peterson, Department of Ecology, (Ecology), Eastern Regional Office presented the 2008 recap. Mr. Peterson began with the air monitoring network, including results from mobile monitors which had been placed near Touchet in the winter, and East of Mattawa in the spring and summer. The data from these monitors were used to quantify the impacts, or lack of impacts of agricultural burning in Touchet and in Southern Grant County.

The Outdoor burn unit had meetings regarding the agricultural burning program with representatives of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Idaho and Oregon agricultural burn programs, and several Tribal agricultural burning programs.

The total number of acres burned in 2008 is estimated to be very close to the same as in 2007, approximately 199,000 acres in 2008 and 195,000 acres in 2007. Complaint numbers have risen in the last year to a total of 35 complaints about agricultural burning, 25 of which came from Walla Walla County. The Walla Walla county complaints were from a variety of sources; some were visibility complaints, some were probably as the result of burning from Oregon, and some were the result of smoke impacts from agricultural burning in Walla Walla County. The burn team continues to investigate each complaint, and use what is learned from the feedback to improve burn decisions and enforcement.

Sean Hopkins then gave a review of the numbers of burn acres permitted, complaints, and enforcement actions for the Central Regional Office.

## **BMP's**

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Curtis Coombs, a grower from Walla Walla County, made a presentation to the Task Force on efforts to bale residue right off the back of the combine, in one operation. He has had some success in this effort, but sometimes, either due to disease or to lodged wheat, he needs to burn the field even if he has baled. The potential benefits to the practice include decreased burning emissions and another marketable product (if a market can be found for such bales). Patti Gora, from Safe Air For Everyone, suggested that a study of the emissions from such burning might be necessary to quantify whether emissions decreased, increased, or stayed the same.

## **Fees and Research**

Karen Wood informed the other Task Force members that Ecology would again request \$180,000 be made available for research on agricultural burning alternatives in the upcoming biennium. She also informed them that a Request for Proposals (RFP) would be out in March or April for the research to start in July. She asked whether the RFP should be general or more focused on one particular area of research. The members decided that the RFP should be general in nature. Michael Ingham asked whether research money could go towards a marketing and branding effort for alternative use of straw. Ms. Wood said she didn't know, but that Ecology would find out.

Ms. Wood then discussed Ecology's intent to propose changes to the Clean Air Act which would increase the cap on Agricultural burning fees to six dollars per acre, and make the cap on burning of agricultural pile burning to \$1 per ton. Whether Ecology will be in support of such legislation, however, depends on whether such changes are a part of the Governor's budget,

which has not yet been finalized. She reminded the Task Force Members that the Task Force would still have the responsibility of setting the fees. She also informed them that a "Policy-neutral" rewrite of the portion of the clean air act dealing with outdoor burning was expected to be advanced in the legislature in the 2009 session. This rewrite is not Ecology's and is not expected to alter the meaning of the law, just make it better organized and easier to understand.

### **Governance Document**

Kary Peterson presented an amended version of the Washington State Agricultural Burning Practices and Research Task Force Governance Document. He had amended this document to incorporate changes made in the amended Agricultural Burning Rule (WAC 173-430) which had been updated in 2006. The Task Force unanimously voted to incorporate the changes Mr. Peterson presented.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50PM.