

Texas Prescribed Burning Board Minutes

Texas Forest Service Headquarters

College Station, Texas

Wednesday, February 13, 2019

CALL TO ORDER

Pursuant to a notice posted on January 31, 2019, the Prescribed Burning Board (Board) meeting was called to order at 9:00 A.M. by Chairman Justin Penick. The roll was answered as follows:

Present: James “Rooter” Brite, Rich Gray, Amancio Gutierrez, Matthew McEwen, Justin Penick, Wayne Pfluger, Rusty Ray, Dr. William Rogers, Dr. Morgan Treadwell, Chris Schenck, Dale Smith

Absent: Dale Scott,

With eleven members in attendance and one member absent, a quorum was present.

Guests: Patrick Dudley (TDA), Stephen Dillon (TDA), Ray Hinnant, Charles Tatton, and Jose Villareal.

The Chair opened with welcoming everyone to the meeting and had attendees introduce themselves. The Chair called on Patrick Dudley to swear in newly appointed Board members Dale Smith and Wayne Pflueger, representing private landowners. Smith and Pflueger were sworn in and welcomed to the Board.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Chair opened nomination of officers for the Board. Rooter Brite made a motion to nominate existing officers, Justin Penick as Chair and Dr. Morgan Treadwell as Vice-Chair. The motion was seconded by Rusty Ray and passed unanimously by the Board.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Chair laid out the minutes from the previous Board meeting (February 13, 2019) for review. Rooter Brite made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Rusty Ray seconded the motion; the motion prevailed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF APPLICANTS

The Chair recognized Patrick Dudley to present the Board with any new Certified and Insured Prescribed Burn Manager (CIPBM) and/or Lead Burn Instructor applications being considered. Following review of the applicant seeking a CIPBM license from the Board, the applicant Dawn Carrie was approved contingent upon insurance confirmation. Following review of the applicants seeking to become Lead Burn Instructors, the applicants Shane Beavers and Wesley Evans were approved unanimously by the Board.

TDA UPDATE

The Chair recognized Patrick Dudley to present the Board with the TDA update. Dudley presented the Board with the attendance report, a rule update, and legislative update. Chapter 228.2 rule changes regarding notifications prior to Prescribed Burns were adopted and filed January 17, 2019 with no comments. As of the meeting there are no bills affecting Chapter 153 of the Natural Resources Code, but there was indication of bills yet to be filed by Rep. Andy Muir.

TCEQ UPDATE

The Chair recognized Amancio Gutierrez with TCEQ to present the Board with an update regarding possible rule changes to reduce the allowable wind speed required before burning is commenced under General Requirements for Allowable Outdoor Burning Section 111.219 of Title 30, Part 1, Chapter 111, Subchapter B of the Texas Administrative Code. Gutierrez stated TCEQ has tasked an internal and external working group with researching the topic before any potential rules go out for public comment. Gutierrez estimated it wouldn't be until late May before a meeting would be available for the public to comment and would keep the Board informed on the timeline as the project progresses.

TFS UPDATE

The Chair recognized Rich Gray with the Texas Forest Service to give an update on the new process of notification from Centralized Dispatch. Gray indicated TFS has moved to a centralized dispatch system and would like to change notification rules from having

CIPBMs notifying TFS Regional Fire Coordinator, to notifying the TFS Central Dispatch Offices. The change will only be changing who CIPBMs notify and will simplify notification processes. The Board agreed with the change and will vote on the change once a draft has been created.

TEXAS PRESCRIBED FIRE COUNCIL UPDATE

The Chair recognized Dr. Treadwell to give an update on the Texas Prescribed Fire Council meeting. Treadwell relayed to the Board that the first meeting of the Council was a success. The Council has put together a temporary Board to further develop By-Laws. Nominations and elections will be held later in the year to determine who will sit on the Board. A second meeting will likely be held in the summer.

MEETING DISCUSSION AND ACTION

The Chair recognized Dr. Morgan Treadwell and Matthew McEwen to give the Board an update on the Standardized Test Committee. Dr. Treadwell and Mr. McEwen are continuing working on getting a Google Drive account put together for the Lead Burn Instructors to access. The examination itself will be 75 multiple choice and true/false questions chosen from the different question banks. The test has been broken down in different sections relevant to recommended curriculum topics. The question bank is meant to be a living, organic document being revisited on an annual basis; however, questions may be brought to the Board throughout the year to be approved. Dr. Treadwell and Mr. McEwen will bring the Board a clean copy of the draft exam at the next meeting for the Board to review.

The Chair and Chris Schenck provided the Board an update on the review of the PBB-600 and PBB-601 forms and presented the Board with copies of possible changes. The Board agreed through consensus that Chairman Penick and Chris Schenck were on the correct path in revising the PBB forms and ask they continue with the form review and provide the Board with an update on any changes at the next meeting. More changes will be determined after the Boards discussion regarding ecoregions.

The Chair brought to the table the question of whether or not Eco-Regions should be removed as part of the application process. The Board discussed this topic in detail. Discussion included keeping ecoregions as endorsements, rating the complexity of the burn, and the concern for bad actors. With increasing the standards of the application process, and observing that the ecoregions themselves can be extremely different ecosystems from one side of an ecosystem to the other, the Board came to a consensus that the ecoregions should be removed from the application process and to have one statewide application for prescribed burning. Rooter Brite made a motion to eliminate the ecoregions from all prescribed burning applications and rules associated with

ecoregions, based on the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) model, and asks TDA to indicate all language pertaining to ecoregions in rule and applications to bring forward to the Board for review at the next meeting. Dr. Treadwell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The chair recognized Patrick Dudley and Stephen Dillon to discuss CIPBM license review. Dudley informed the Board that a complaint on a CIPBM had been brought forward to TDA. Dillon informed the Board the Complaint process belongs to TDA but will rely on the Board for expertise. Dillon recommended the Board stay on an informed basis. TDA will keep the Board informed through out the complaint process. The Board agreed that upon further gathering on of information, the Board will choose subject matter experts to work with TDA during the complaint process.

The Chair recognized Patrick Dudley to go over the Rule Revisions previously brought up by the Advisory Board. Dudley went through the potential revisions individually with the Board. The Board will make a motion on the rule revisions once a draft is brought to the Board by TDA.

PBB ADVISORY BOARD

The Chair recognized Ray Hinnant to give an Advisory Board Update. There were no additional updates from the Advisory Board.

The Board discussed other business raised during the meeting to be placed on the next agenda. Dudley will contact members of the Board prior to the next meeting to determine additional agenda items. The Board came to a consensus the next meeting should be held Thursday, August 15, 2019 at the Texas A&M Research Station in Sonora, Texas at 1:00 pm.

The Chair then opened the floor for public comment. There was no Public Comment.

AJOURNMENT

With no additional business, Chairman Penick entertained a motion to adjourn until the next meeting. A motion was made by Rusty Ray and seconded by Rooter Brite; receiving no objection, the meeting was adjourned at 1:34 p.m.