

ME RxBC 2-9-21

Tuesday, February 9, 2021

10:06 AM

Participants

- Jon Bailey
- Amanda Mahaffey
- Jim Hamlin
- Aliesha Black
- Brent Woffinden
- Eric Earle
- George Harris
- Daniel Hill
- Jon Janelle
- Tim Bickford
- Matt Gomes
- Logan Johnson
- Chris O'Brien
- John Leavitt

Working Agenda: (please send additional items)

Roll call/welcome

- Program updates/round-robin
 - Jon Janelle - greater Massabesic EF CWPP. Also, this fall, will start putting together env assessment for 1500 ac for RxB, fuels, try to build out a fire research program here in Northeast
 - Amanda Mahaffey - excited about Massabesic CWPP. Also, FSG fire mgmt program spun off into a new entity that will be focused on good fire & good jobs
 - Jon Bailey - RT-130. Pack test for staff only. mid-summer evaluating where COVID is.

130/190 course last year, in limbo. hope again mid-summer to finalize those folks. if field days, opportunities elsewhere to finish it hopefully.

Waterboro Barrens, WUI buffers, forest health, thinning, 200 ac wrapping up. chip market is horrible. chips going to Carrabassett Valley

last fall, mech treatments. 3 new burn units prepped & mowed at Wells Barrens. IF&W same used contractor to mow down gray birch and pitch pine

If we can't use seasonal staff this year, will put that money into maintaining these systems with hope of fire soon post-burn monitoring, catching up on data collection pollinator research at Wells Barrens, as well as SPB with MFS - haven't found any

Penobscot Nation reached out to us with grad student from Umaine, Stephanie Wilson, did her graduate program on RxB and getting RxB into Native lands. Hope to collaborate with Nation to get fire back onto their islands in the future
Fire Learning Trail - collaborating with Logan, Amanda, NAFSE.
Got 4 awesome signs done at Wells Barrens. Why burn, habitat info, connecting people with landscape, wildfire.
Working on Waterboro now.

- Dan Hill - understand your market issues. Thankfully, able to get rid of low-grade products. harvest at Compartment J at Frye Mtn. Conditions have been challenging, but getting good mgmt on ground. game, white-tailed deer, snowshoe hare, American woodcock, hairstreak butterfly. mature beech. also collaborating with Logan on sign for Fryeburg WMA part of Fire Learning Trail. Saw some scarification, would be exciting to get fire on ground.
- Aliesha Black - This winter, have a fair amount of recruitment going on for CWN. great sign people are interested. Young folks. Good for in-state operations. Working on our RT as well.
- Chris O'Brien retiring April 24. FS can use AD's on RxB. big change. As for our training, RT-130s will be virtual, but in-person pack test, probably in association with Ranger District.
- Brent Woffinden - Cape Cod will be part of our program now. I'll be based out of Acadia, they'll be based out of Cape Cod. This spring, hope to get burn done at St. Croix Island, and Moosehorn. Rachel Carson and Moosehorn spring burns. Week of May 17, S290, S212, S270. March 9 at Acadia. April 20 down in Cape Cod. May try to do one at Rachel Carson. ICS300 & 400 in March, virtual. Mostly full, but email me if you need someone. Trying to burn phragmites. anyone got a burn plan to share? Also, air curtain burners?
 - Dave Walker era phrag burning?

Updates

- Additional items
- MOU's
 - still on hold. TNC/IF&W MOU for Kplains in review. Had been on 10-yr rolling basis. Through LePage administration, wanted to go a year at a time. we want to get back to 10-yr. Attorneys talking to AD office.
 - Hope for an all-encompassing MOU with other collaborators. NH's works in that if I bring equipment, it's our responsibility to maintain it, and if something is damaged, it's on us, no finances being moved. For basic MOUs, easier when not exchanging finances with each other.
 - Training standards and quals have to be in place, have to be voted and approved, wrapped into MOU.
 - Eric: We could facilitate an MOU between agencies if necessary. I'll check.
 - Good to have a basic MOU and acceptance of safe collaborative burning.
- Training/qualifications standards working committee next steps
 - Tim's slides - Review of NH RxB Council Task Books

- New Hampshire Advanced Prescribed Firefighter (RXFF2)
 - Under Qualifications, it is optional to take either S-211 or S-231. The subcommittee recommends Maine adopt both as requirements as this is a leadership role where both skills may be necessary on any given fire.
 - For tasks 5 & 6, the subcommittee recommends both be completed in order to qualify for this position for the reasons given above.
 - Various typos and grammatical errors require correction.
- New Hampshire Prescribed Fire Burn Boss 3 (NHRXB3)
 - The task book specifies authorization to lead burns on State and other non-federal lands. The subcommittee recommends changing this to reflect land owner discretion.
 - Under Qualifications, S-230 is listed as “recommended”, the subcommittee recommends making this a requirement.

Under Qualifications, the subcommittee recommends adding I-200 to training requirements.

- Under task 7, “Know when to declare prescribed fire a wildland fire per agency policy”. This may not apply to private land owners or other potential trainees. The subcommittee recommends removing “per agency policy” from this requirement. The subcommittee recommends detailing this process in the Maine RX Fire Standards.
- Under task 7, “Declare prescribed fire out per agency policy”. This may not apply to private land owners or other potential trainees. The subcommittee recommends removing “per agency policy” from this requirement. The subcommittee recommends detailing this process in the Maine RX Fire Standards.
- New Hampshire Prescribed Fire Burn Boss 2 (NHRXB2)
 - The task book specifies authorization to lead burns on State and other non-federal lands. The subcommittee recommends changing this to reflect land owner discretion.
 - Under Qualifications the subcommittee recommends adding S-200 and I-300 as a requirement.
 - Under task 25, “Review criteria for declaring a wildfire per agency policy”. This may not apply to private land owners or other potential trainees. The subcommittee recommends removing “per agency policy” from this requirement. The subcommittee recommends detailing this process in the Maine RX Fire Standards.

Under task 40, "Declare prescribed fire out per agency policy". This may not apply to private land owners or other potential trainees. The subcommittee recommends removing "per agency policy" from this requirement. The subcommittee recommends detailing this process in the Maine RX Fire Standards.

- Discussion
 - S-230 not as good as it used to be. only one day in person. very crew-based. still a req for FIRB.
 - Some Councils make taskbooks more manageable for in-state burning. Some tasks for FFT1 and ICT5 are glass ceilings for people that want to burn in state. Looking for paths to safe burning, challenge for making in-state quals is that if something were to be adopted by Council for in-state burning only, and federal or other agencies may not accept these standards, some complexity. NWCG RXB3 may work for the Council, but not on agency lands. breaks glass ceiling of training requirement for good, safe burning standards. Will still have to accept agency standards.
 - NH's standard from 2012. anything referencing leadership training? In Rx or wildfire, when things go bad, can point to broken leadership. L-180, L-280.
 - In RXB3 task book after becoming advanced Rx firefighter, 234 Ignition, 290 Intermediate Fire Behavior. 230 just recommended. Not a lot of leadership for RXB3 taskbook.
 - Would be good to add L-280 for RXB3
 - Can be challenging for NGOs or private sector to take S-courses. Can't set a bar that's unattainable. If commit to L-280, host on regular basis. NM legislature study showed agency staff at capacity, need private sector. Southern states have requirements independent from NWCG.
 - As for getting classes offered more than once per year, not sure if Council would take that on. Capability in-house?
 - 2 things: 1) Council MOU on training. 2) private lands burning quals.
 - Add RX410 Smoke Mgmt as optional class
 - Maybe work with NH to offer these classes jointly.
 - We can support burns on their lands to this qualification, but we can't lead it.
 - Get comments from Council, deadline for completion.
- NWCG Covid-19 guidance updates (refresher, training & fire operations)
 - Compact Winter Awareness Meeting - lessons learned from Western deployments
 - Aliesha: first deployments had most difficult time, being the only ones following rules. at end, felt really safe. for us, trying to nail down COVID testing policies, make people comfortable with expectations beforehand.
 - Matt: I went out late as well, to CA, September. Wore masks out there. Didn't see many masks on the line. Some contract medics from NV shared that they saw no COVID in 3.5 months. We have criteria for our own folks, checklist we follow, agreements they must sign. Reinforce that with people.
 - TNC go/no-go checklist and COVID safety protocols (see PDFs from Jon). goal of safe burning together this fall.
- ME-TREX options/updates/2021 postponement

- TREXs have been held, but scaled back and more local, collaborative burning. Not all had camping or food together.
- For some places, TREXs are how they burn.
- Camp did reach out last week, want to get back to them with path on how to move ahead on this. Right now, TNC is very conservative on how we approach fire. Last year, no summer help.
- Camaraderie of folks coming together, staying at camp, IC, teamwork is really key to a TREX. Collaborative burning good, but not the same.
- hopeful that by September, will look better. Maybe July go/no-go.
- maybe opportunity for L280, even if someone coming from another state, give them something to do. would still be very beneficial.
- Camp had no problem extending out. Timing for them is big time for weddings. They were not in session last year, but did private events. If we decided to move ahead, stuck with dates.
- TNC, even without seasonals, possibility of burning on smaller scales.
- Light, nimble, well-qualified crews
- Next step: Amanda, Jon B., Aliesha, Chris, Tim, maybe Jon Janelle call and frame out what it could look like.

New Business

- Possible late summer/fall collaborated burning (If safe & permissible to do so)

An outlook of burn units available for fall

- ME ARNG has burn units ready to go
- TNC has units ready to go in Wells, Waterboro, other. Also Fryeburg Airport potential mitigation work, in collaboration with IF&W, fire chief, airport local mgmt
- MFS BTLT spot prepped. Rome. solar panel spot on base near Bowdoin.
- Kplains forested units
- NPS/USFWS variety across state

Burn unit data collection

- survey to compile list of what to burn. link on web page as well

- CWPP
 - proposal to WRR grant
- working with Wells-Kennebunk Water District on updating their mgmt plan. Area that burned 3 years ago, do active fire mgmt there. They've just done a salvage timber harvest in there. Similar collaboration as with IF&W. Their land is all the way to the airport.

Next steps

- If we want MOU for fall burning, next couple months working on it, draft in spring
- Training & quals, 2-4 weeks back for comments? Tuesday, March 9 have comments back to Tim
- Jon will work with Nancy to get broader MOU developed in parallel
- Aim to have draft MOU by April/May