

Natural Background Task Team

Notes from Denver Meeting

June 29, 2000, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Rebecca Reynolds, Facilitator

Attendees

Coleen Campbell, Colorado Dept. of Public Health & the Environment; Ken Evans, Phelps Dodge; Mark Fitch, Arizona DEQ; Carl Gossard, BLM NIFC; John Graves, BIA Arizona; Fred Greef, WA Department of Ecology; Pete Lahm, USDA FS; Rose Lee, Yakima Nation Environmental Program; Bill Leenhouts, USDI FWS; Amy Mignella, White Mountain Apaches; Shelley Nolde, USDA/FS; Darla Potter, WDEQ; Bob Raisch, MT DEQ; Jim Russell, USDA/FS R6; Elizabeth Anderson for Tim Sexton USDI NPS, USDI NPS (Boise); Mike Ziolko, QR ODF; Mike Sundblom AZ DEQ.

Interim Co-Chairmanship assumed by Darla Potter (Wyoming) to replace Fred Greef along with Carl Gossard. The status of the final chair rest with whether WDOE chooses to continue to participate on the Forum, otherwise the position will be open to another state to assume Washington's Forum Membership and participate as a forum member on the FEJF. Fred Greef will inform WDOE in regards to this decision and who will inform the FEJF and NBTT.

NBTT Basic Assumptions Review

The group reviewed the current definitions and assumptions, and developed the following.

Assumptions

1. The regulatory approach for smoke and visibility protection is intended to be applied equally, as appropriate legally and culturally to each state's and tribe's needs, across all ownerships.

2. Smoke management plans should be applied to all natural and anthropogenic [human-caused] fire emission sources.

Possible addition here: *In many cases the extent of fires and the emissions surrounding an area may be greater even while visibility improves, due to effective smoke management.*

3. Smoke management plans may be individually tailored by states, tribes, and local entities.

4. An emission tracking system should be established for all natural and anthropogenic [human-caused] fire.

5. Visibility monitoring and some form of source apportionment will be necessary to show "reasonable progress".

6. The Regional Haze Rule preamble states (see pg. 35735, bottom 3rd column: reword and add tribes – subsequently, prescribed fire can be considered natural.)

7. Some level of prescribed fire.... (reference pg. 35735 of the RH Rule for wording to be used in this section and connect to assumption #6 above)

8. Fires **play a role in the wild lands and agricultural lands of the west**, and are episodic in nature.... The natural return interval must be considered when assessing the pattern of natural visibility impairment. (see Sect 51.301 Definitions).

9. (ADD reference to Federal Wildland Fire Policy, Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Commission Report, and RHR to use prescribed fire to meet reduce long term fire suppression and fuels buildup.)

10. Land use patterns on private land have changed historically and will continue to change into the future, which may affect natural background conditions. This could affect fire as a land management tool.

11. (The use of fire to support agricultural land management objectives should be included in the assumption sections. Relate both to the historical conversion of wildland to agriculture land.)

12. (Establish a placeholder for tribal concerns.)

13. We will have improved Smoke Management Plans – the way we categorize smoke needs to be the same, as does the way we regulate it.

Beliefs/Hypotheses

1. Some human activities, including prescribed fires, are natural sources if they are necessary, desired, or inevitable to attain and sustain the desired future ecosystem and structure. (NBTT may want to include this with an already established option.)

2. The total visibility impairment (natural and manmade) from all fires that impact a Class I Area may be greater, less, or about the same as during the baseline period or any other historical or current period, depending on the collective ecosystem history, future, and condition relative to natural disturbance from fires. (For inclusion in the background information for the workshop.)

3. Climate change will in all probability have a dramatic effect on future natural visibility impairment from fires. Some ecosystems will experience fewer fires than historically, others much more. Ecosystem management will focus increasingly on natural disturbance agents such as fire to manage the adaptation of ecosystems to a changing climate. In some systems the extent of prescribed fires will be greater and more frequent than in the past. (Possibly use as background information without pursuing the issue of global warming which will be actively opposed.)

Definitions (each option will possibly include the appropriate definitions)

Natural: (Deferred)

Natural Background (or natural condition) Visibility Impairment: (Deferred)

Define: Difference between basic and enhanced Smoke Management Plans (bridge)

Goals

Public health, visibility protection and ecosystem health (Possibly use as part of the preamble for the NTTB.)

Task Group to refine the above, put in order and circulate to NBTT for comment: Mark Fitch and Darla Potter.

NBTT Strategy: Two Workshops

The group decided that two workshops would better accomplish the NBTT's goals. The two workshops are to be as follow.

Workshop I For: Senior Staffers. Discuss the merits of a range of options for defining the role of fire in natural conditions definition. Needs to include other Forum Members and other regional planning bodies. Large group (50-75).

Workshop II For: Policy Makers. Decide on the definition of fire's contribution to natural conditions that will affect visibility in Class I areas in the west with in the WRAP. Discuss policy implications as well. Small Group (25) of "handpicked" participants using a sector by sector type of approach.

Senior Staffers Workshop

January 24/25, 2001 Denver, CO

Primary Objectives

1. Critique and modify the methodology to classify smoke emissions into broad categories as prepared by the NBTT.
2. Critique and modify the range of optional proposals prepared by the Natural Background Task Team for describing the contribution of smoke natural background visibility condition.
3. Critique and modify the methodology for tracking and apportionment of natural emissions.

Policy Makers Workshop

March 15, 2001 (location to be decided)

Primary Objectives

1. Review and decide that the methodology to classify smoke emissions into broad categories as prepared by the NBTT is appropriate.
2. Review and decide on the best optional proposals prepared by the Natural Background Task Team that can be used to classify whether which sources of smoke are considered as natural and that don't contribute to potential loss of visibility in Class I areas.
3. Identify policy implications on prepared options. Evaluate and decide on a preferred approach.
4. Evaluate and decide on the methodology for tracking and apportionment of natural emissions.

Proposed Participant List

1. Industry Stakeholders

Electric
Mining
Trucking
Wood Products/Manufacturing
Small Wood Lot
Small Businesses

2. Environmental

Save Our Summers
Environmental Defense
Sierra Club
Nature Conservancy
NRDC
Wilderness Society

3. Agriculture

Farm Bureau
Cattleman's Assoc.

4. Tribes

Tribal Council
David LaRoch
TOC
ITEP
NTEC

5. States

State Agricultural
State Foresters
Air Directors/DEQ
Local Air Districts
Environmental Program
Directors
Dept. of Ecology
Dept. of Natural Resources

6. Federal

FS
EPA
BLM
FWS
NRCS
DOE
DOD
NPS
BIA

7. Other WRAP Forums

8. Other Regional Planning Organizations

Question: Should we include non-WRAP states in the Workshop and the Policy Session? (Nevada as the example). We will leave it open to all potential policy participants to

come to this session. Put word out now to use senior staff to develop the list. Plan workshop for the number of participants that RSVP.

Policy Maker Workshop: Inclusive

- Put word out now – use senior staffers to develop policy maker list
- NBTT develop key list to lobby to come
- Plan workshop for # of RSVPs
- Include both WRAP and Non-WRAP members
- Look at this state by state, to select “best” invitee

NBTT Administration

Keep future meetings facilitated.

On the NBTT “membership”: eliminate “inner/outer” membership; FEJF is default on irreconcilable issues. WRAP-FEJF travel dollars (original \$10,000 budgeted for work on Natural Conditions) approved for 4 Tribes, 4 States, 1 Environmental. Status - The NBTT meeting participants agreed to forward irreconcilable differences to the FEJF for a final decision (will ensure stakeholder balance) so that the “inner/outer” membership designations are no longer needed for the NBTT.

The group decided to appoint a Management Team for the NBTT to organize and facilitate the work. The Management Team decided to hold bi-weekly conference calls to keep items moving forward. 1st Call July 10, 2000 at 11 am Mountain

Management Team

Carl Gossard and Darla Potter, NBTT Co-Chairs
Shelley Nolde, Workshop Logistics
Jim Russell, Workshop Content
Mike Ziolko

Work Assignments

Workshop Content Team

Jim - Lead
Mike
Sam
Mark
Bill

Briefing Paper for Pete

(NBTT workshop framework, timing, goals & objectives, cost)
Ken Evans & Darla Potter

Word Smith Assumptions/Definitions

Darla & Mark

Word Smith Objectives

To be decided

Call Speakers to cancel

(set up when working toward a September Workshop)

Fred Greef

Review Membership list and governance stuff

Carl

Workshop Planning Time Line:

1. Brief Co-chairs (Mark Pitchford) 7/17/00 (Pete Lahm; plan developed by NBTT)
2. Northern Air Managers Budget Request 7/17/00 (Pete Lahm)
3. FEJF Meeting 9/6-7/00 Boise – NBTT Mtg. 9/5/00
4. Briefing to WRAP 9/25/00 (Pete Lahm)
5. NBTT Meeting 10-24-25/00 Denver (possibly move to November?)
6. NBTT content for workshops ready – beginning November
7. Senior Staffers Workshop Jan. 24-25/01 in Denver
8. NBTT Meeting 2/15-16/01
9. Policy Makers Workshop 3/15/01 (location TBD)
10. NBTT 4/16-17/01 and FEJF Presentation 4/18/01
11. Next WRAP meeting probably March/April 2001

White Paper Review: Smoke Contribution to Natural Background Visibility (6/26/00 Draft), Fred Greef

Background on Development of the current options:

System was to cover all western states but the development of the approach to regulating smoke was left up to each state. Fred has written all sections of the options with the exception of the last, which was written by Robert Wilkosz of Idaho DEQ.

All pros and cons have been developed by Fred with one other input from the NBTT.

The concept of visibility is included into both basic and enhanced smoke management plan. (Define the difference between basic and enhanced smoke management plans)

Review Portland notes for included definitions such as cultural burning.

Mike Ziolkowski felt that the matrix based on the elements of fire origin, land use objective, degree of offset, and management response to wildfire. Place under task group 1 from the Portland Meeting.