

Fire Emissions Joint Forum
Meeting Minutes
December 14, 1999
Hotel Lusso
Spokane, WA

Pete Lahm called the meeting to order at 8:40 AM, followed by introductions (including new faces).

Pete Lahm queried group on the use of webpage—apparently Pete has received good feedback on information contained there. Dave Randall was identified as the temporary contact person for questions regarding the FEJF website.

Pete recapped the Seattle meeting using a handout that included the “WRAP work plan for regional haze” (dated November 19,1999). As a result of the Seattle meeting the FEJF role was modified, especially regarding: Definition of control strategies, tracking, monitoring, development of natural backgrounds, effects on state implementation plans.

EPA has funded five tasks out of FY99 stopgap funding: basic smoke management plan, alternatives to agricultural burning, emissions estimation, natural background contribution (support to monitoring group in WRAP), prescribed fire program assessment. For FY00, key categories requested in the budget include: fire emissions tradeoff study, BSMP/ESMP, emissions inventory, agriculture/wildland issues, public education and outreach (for a total of about 650K out of 4.0 M total WRAP budget request)

General Task Team Operating Principles (draft) was discussed, including leadership, membership and coordination (including consensus goal, as well as a suggestion that FEJF establish a target 2-6 week time-frames for review of task team work products), and fiscal responsibility. Clarification was requested on RFP approval process, including the care required in defining the scope of work and potential conflict of interest problems (Pete will discuss issues with Rich Halvey and consult WRAP by-laws for consistency re contracting policies).

Pete noted that work group breakouts at this meeting have the opportunity to develop/streamline scopes of work and RFPs, evaluate contractors, analyze other tasks that can be accomplished, etc. for work to be completed by the end of calendar year 2001. Work group breakouts should also consider using sole-source contractors, e.g., WESTAR

Pete summarized his invited presentation (using the WRAP slide show on regional haze) before the Agriculture Air Quality task force, including desired interactions. The task force report will go out for public review and be considered here.

Storyline was discussed, including mechanisms for getting information to the task team for assembly and desired viewpoints to be included.

During the PM three workgroups will be formed to focus on three tasks: agricultural alternatives, prescribed fire program assessments, and public education outreach. Dave presented a framework for task teams to follow, based on needed tasks, available funds, and work plans that need to be completed. He suggested the following guidelines, based on the work plan developed February 25, 1999: Ascertain what can be done in-house vs. requiring contractors (including sole-source), and desired contractor qualifications. Other items to be considered, including the 90 day requirement for contract solicitation and need for FEJF representation on the WGA contract selection committee.

Attachment

Notes from the Prescribed Fire Program Assessments workgroup

This team is looking at having a contractor assess basic standards for prescribed burn plans from an air quality perspective, including plans developed by federal agencies, states and local jurisdictions, and private owners. The workplan (2/99) for this workgroup also specifies the need to analyze prescribed fire practices, including private timber companies, agricultural burning conducted by a sampling of ranchers, tribal, local, state, and federal entities (stratified by agency mission). The workplan also suggests looking at wildland fire use for resource benefit, i.e., whether emissions will be assessed, seasonality, mitigation of effects in non-attainment areas adjacent to planning unit.

Other questions need to be resolved regarding procedures to be followed for emissions inventory, including adjacent ownerships, or WFSA implementation? Finally, land management and fire management plans need to be evaluated to ascertain whether cumulative effects are considered, assessments of potential intrusions to Class I or other identified sensitive areas, and the extent to which plans comply with applicable laws and regulations.

Different areas and agency jurisdictions will have different burn plan requirements. Pete gave the example of the Tonto National Forest which has 3 class I areas, non-attainment areas, and urban interface. The burn plan requirements for the Tonto will be different than other areas.

Another area of concern relates to operational considerations: what are practitioners doing to mitigate smoke? Was BLM in California using best available tools and how effective are they? Should spot forecasts be required for all prescribed burns. The contractor needs to consider existing guidance, what is actually being done, and make recommendations. Effects on agency practices need to be considered.

The intended audience is the WRAP, federal land managers—so what information do we collect in light of existing manuals, guides for burners, etc.

Note: At this point I had to leave so these notes represent an incomplete representation of workgroup deliberations.