



Minutes of the  
**Tennessee Prescribed Fire Council Meeting**  
Feb. 5, 2014  
*Tennessee Fire Service and Code Enforcement Academy*  
*Bell Buckle, TN*

Chair Mark Gudlin presiding

1. Sign in and introductions. 45 people attended representing 16 agencies or entities.
2. Mark Gudlin, Chair. Wally Akins was noted to not be present. The TNPFC began in 2007, now has stable by-laws. Thanks to Craig Harper, John Kirksey. Now have Election and Executive Committee. 2012 Prescribed Fire State law. Thanks to a lot of people. Formal PF Training- Jeff & John K., Certify as a Burner, have a website, logo, and brochure. TPFC was changed to TNPFC. Hard to pay for a speaker, needed funds, thanks to Joey Woodard, TWR Foundation, who will be handling the finances of the TNFPC.
3. Committee Reports
  - a. Training Committee: Jeff Piatt, Chair- 1<sup>st</sup> Certified Burn Manager Training held in Sept. '13 with 24 students, had a good mix of students (private and agency types). Next course is Feb. 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>. TN is first State to do the Fire in the Field on-line training. DVD training disc is obtained through TDF. Tracking of this course will done by TDF. Mark asked for direct link? Jeff said not yet. Robin Bible has agreed to be chairman of Training Committee this year.
  - b. Education/Community Outreach Committee: Craig Harper reported that Clarence Coffey and Robin Mayberry have been extremely active. Shane Paxton's developed and oversees our website. Website address being finalized has helped. Trying to keep website updated. The cost of the website is \$100 annually. Please send usable information to this committee. The "Intro to Prescribed Fire" brochures are finished. The committee will get it to Shane at the National Park Service. Have done good things already. Please be active! Please circulate free brochures. Worked with Joe Marschall, Coordinator of the Oak Woodlands & Forests Fire Consortium, on a Fire Management Field Tour series-June 2-5, 2014 (see item 9 below)...info on website:  
[http://oakfirescience.squarespace.com/storage/January\\_2014\\_newsletter.pdf](http://oakfirescience.squarespace.com/storage/January_2014_newsletter.pdf).  
Give us ideas to post on TNPFC website.
  - c. Membership Committee: Mark Gudlin reported the Council has 30 to 40 agencies/entities. Website has helped a lot. He wrote a letter to Dept. heads thanking them for participation. Other entities? Other ways to get into out? Executive Committee decided to raise funds via a minor annual meeting registration fee instead of annual fee for membership, which avoids discouraging people from having to pay annually simply to be included in TNPFC information mailouts, especially as we are looking to encourage membership.
    - i. Jeff, Secretary/Treas.- Read 2013 minutes, and handed out copies. A motion made and seconded to approve the minutes, with unanimous approval by the Council.
    - ii. It was mentioned that Appalachian RC&D is footing the bill for lunch.
4. Old business was requested? John Kirksey asked if further information was obtained on advisability of becoming nonprofit. It has not been addressed. Ran the topic thru TWRF, immediate need was funds. That has been addressed. Asking for nominees for Vice Chair, and Secretary/Treasurer for 2016 . Next year's meeting will likely be Feb. 4th, 5th or 6th.

5. New issues were called for. None were reported.
6. David Pelren, USFWS, delivered a presentation on: "Forest Dwelling Bat and Prescribed Fire: Implications for Managing Tennessee Forests". Timber harvest groups, Indiana bats, little browns, Big South Fork, Stones River, Smokey Mountains, foraging area and roosting habitat are important Oct. 15 thru late March, bats are in caves. Early April thru May females establish maternity areas, late May to early June young are born. August they leave maternity area. The question was asked, "How much does it affect bats if you cut a maternity tree?" Answer: It depends on how many trees/acres. Russ Skoglund asked, "What has been done to study survival?" We need to do more research. Seeing big losses of Indiana and little brown and tri-color bats possibly white-nose syndrome. Bats feed out 3 to 5 mi. from maternity tree. Direct and indirect effects on bats are studied. Grasslands? Smoke? Focus is on forested areas. NLAA stands for "Not Likely to Adversely Affect." Habitat Conservation Plans are made. Seasonal impact to bats? Can TNPFC help? KY has worked with wildlife and fish to make a plan for burning with minimal impact. Maybe we can come up with spring burning in smaller areas. Research is badly needed, cutting alternatives. Dangers to species act 1973, have bats increased since? White-nosed syndrome is taking a toll. Andrew Lambert asked, "Bats don't use structures? Looking to see if you can put a box on a barn, etc.? Do you see a nationalized direction coming? Like regulations? Between States? We need more consistency and options...leaving buffer areas..."Copperhead Consulting" is on the leading edge on artificial bark and boxes. Need bat stuff for TNPFC website.
7. Tom Skaggs, Outdoor Underwriters, Inc., with Ed Wilson, discussed the fact that his company offers new Rx Burn Insurance Policies. Does a lot of hunt club-related policies. Timberland liability, prescribed burning policy is new. Full underwriting power within their guidelines, consulting forester/wildlife biologist policy. Looking for customers who do 35% burning among other things making up their overall business. Landowners working with Forestry Commission or Wildlife Commission. Sold on per acre basis up to 170 acres, 50 acres increments after that. Not limited to 1 burn, talk about a burn plan. They need a burn plan that meets State guidelines, burn manager, date, etc. Liability up to 1 million. Rx Burn Annual Policy with liability up to .5 million, no sub-limit, outside becomes 3<sup>rd</sup> party claim. TN Certification as a Burn Manager is not reciprocal w/other States. Gross negligence must be proved. They advertise thru organizations. They don't publish rates. They don't sell many policies in TN. Policies can be purchased at a per-acre price for as low as \$250 per single policy.
8. It was mentioned to consider committee membership over lunch. The training committee and the legislative committee have open positions. Lunch break was taken.
9. Joe Marschall, with Missouri Tree-Ring Laboratory, discussed "Oak Woodlands and Forest Fire Consortium, OK to TN. They provide Fire Science info to organizations and the public. @LBL Field Tour June 2, Fire Management in Open Communities, @Stones River National Battlefield June 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, Prescribed Fire &... Steven Cline @Crossville
10. Steve Roark, with TDF, presented "TN Wildfire Trends". Number of fires... trend... public is smarter, more obedient to the law. In 1987- 112,459 acres wildfire; 85 to 88, 13" below average. 2003- 7,110 acres wildfire; 10" rainfall. Average Fire size- 11.1 Acres- going up because people have more access per 4-wheelers, etc. Highest cause is incendiary and debris. Need to add wildlife under debris burning cause on fire reports?

#### AGENCY REPORTS

11. Chris Elkins, with Dept. of Defense at Arnold Air Force Base- spoke about the new trend of partnering with other agencies. They have been working with USFWS & USFS. They have a dam, and grey bat maternity roost with around 40 bats. TN Army National Guard leases acres from them. They built a firing range... removed a lot of trees... did a study of bat populations. They burn every other year.

12. Greg Byrd, US Dept. of Energy at Oak Ridge Reservation- gave the following presentation, spoke of his Dept.'s collaboration with DOE, Oak Ridge National Lab/TDF/TWRA/City of Oak Ridge and CROET Community Reuse Org. of ETN.
13. Shane Paxton, National Park Service at the Great Smoky Mountains stated that their fuels funding dried up. They had to identify alternative funding sources within their own division. They burned 300 acres in the Smoky Mountains in the fall. GSMP is very specialized in terms of management.
14. Travis Neppel, NPS at Natchez Trace Parkway- gave a presentation and mentioned that fire return interval is based on funding. In Collinwood there are areas they would like to burn.
15. Brian Bowen, TDEC Div. of Natural Areas stated that they do a little burning on 1 or 2 Natural Areas. This depends upon partnerships with TDF, etc. 83 State Natural Areas, State Natural Areas Act of 1975. Some private lands. Primary focus is communities, restoration and rare species. They are transitioning to a more intense burn program. Have a lot of scattered Cedar Glades which are globally rare. Funding is received to run a Gyro-Trac machine. Cedars are the objective to manage for- eliminating thickets, creating potentially large burn units, creating 5 burn units, getting out of mechanical, as much Rx as possible, and blue ash and post oak. Issues with adjacent landowners? Not really, except one small place. Some are in Cedars of Lebanon State Forest (or Park?) TN Coneflower sites; the TN. Coneflower was de-listed three years ago. May prairie is annual because of red maple. Red maple project, idea is to raise the water table. Fall and March burning.
16. Robin Bible, TDA Div. of Forestry noted TDF does a lot of burning as a vendor service. He passed out the most current TDF rate sheet for vendor services dated 2009. Minimum fee for Rx burn is \$220.00/acre. The question was asked, "Will TDF burn a field (no trees)? Yes although it is handled differently per County or Area and a burn beneficial to woodlands or in preparation for tree planting would most likely take priority over a field burn. If there is a vacant forester position the Forest Technician decides.
17. Jack Muncy, Tennessee Valley Authority transferred Land between the Lakes to the USDA Forest Service, when TVA gave up congressional appropriations. Today they manage 300,000 acres of land (not one huge chunk, but parcels) and over 1,000 diverse use sites. Eight resource management units including Norris, Bear Creek, Upper Chickamauga, etc. Prescription burning has gone thru a public land planning/zoning. Natural Resource Management lands. Partnering is crucial with agencies such as National Park Service, Ruff Grouse Society, etc. There are seven different provinces from the Blue Ridge Mountains to West Tennessee. They conduct prescribed burns for wildlife enhancement, and to create natural areas. Issues they have include education about smoke, invasive plants, etc. The question was asked, "Is there an App for that?" Yes, an App is available. They are in the process of re-marking boundaries.
18. Mark Gudlin, TWRA- presented TWRA's Prescribed Burning Profile. The question was posed, "Personnel being an issue for most, is there a possibility of forming an Interagency Burn Team?" It was agreed to be given some thought. Something was mentioned about inconsistency in ability to obtain a burn permit during dry weather because of burn bans.
19. Brad Bingham, USFWS- stated that his organization does not do very much burning at all on service lands. Dale Hollow Lake- native seasonal grass is now being mowed. Refuges- Reelfoot Lake, Chickasaw, Hatchery, TN CrossRoads are not burning. Company for burns for T & E species, open and actively pursuing what role to play in cedar. The question was asked, "Are they bound to the same rules?" Yes.
20. Matt Walker, USDA NRCS- stated that they can help landowners technically or financially. NRCS personnel do not perform burns on private lands, but they may assist TWRA biologists that serve as burn bosses. --Exploring, growing season burns, --short leaf pine restoration. They have more demand than they can meet. Issue is education. NRCS employees are required to go thru 16 hour course every 5 years on Rx Burning, necessary for them to be able to write prescribed burning in management plans. 100 People are trained. This number will drop to 75. 6 can be burn boss. Is interest in burning pocketed? Yes, it is landscape driven. Yes, West and Middle TN primarily.
21. Marty Bentley, USDA Forest Service, Cherokee National Forest- along with Trent Gerard, Telco Dist. FMO and his assistant Brandon Corbit. 650,000 Acres GA to VA. Great Smokey Park in Middle. 18

Fire Management Personnel. 20 Person crew hotshot, 2,000 to 4,000 acre blocks. Small program— increase in 1998, got funding from Congress.

a. Reasons

- i. Fuels
- ii. Wildlife
- iii. Restoration, Partner with TNC—study effects of fire exclusion  
Part of Fire Learning Network

b. Concerns

- i. Smoke
- ii. Personnel Resource Availability

- 22. LBL, Fort Campbell, Nature Conservancy, not present.
- 23. Carl Wirwa, Wildlife Management Services stated there are 2 questions, Insurance, covered? Issue- education of reason for burning and option of burning.
- 24. Leon Konz- FireWise & Prevention Coordinator- Primary aim is toward fire prevention and FireWise communities. Prescribed Fire Initiative set up by Southern States. Website, Take a Forest Break.
- 25. Carol Williams- TDEC, Air Pollution Control- Attended Southern Smoke Summit where fire folks and Regulatory Agencies (air pollution) and shared common interests. EPA Region 4 folks carried our Rx burn that was interesting. Question was posed...Particulate matter? In states that do a lot of Rx Burns it can be an issue. Get a smoke management plan. They monitor for particulates from smoke/fire. Those amounts can be taken off books. In TN there is not a smoke management plan because it hasn't been an issue. If standards are tightened it could become an issue. Other States using Air sheds cut off Rx burns if particulate measures are reached.
- 26. Mark Gudlin, TWRA- presented an overview of the Prescribed Burn Survey sent to agency representatives. Summary: #1 reason to burn- Restore native plants, #2 reason- Wildlife Habitat Enhancement, #3 reason- Wildfire Prevention & Restore T&E Species. Concerns & Issues: #1- Smoke Management, #2- Lack of trained personnel. Once finalized into a report, it will be posted on the website.
- 27. Suggestion was made to put a group photo on the website.
- 28. Other upcoming Workshop/Meeting: Appalachian Fire @Mammoth Cave, April 30 thru May 1, 2014
- 29. Adjourn