

Illinois Prescribed Burn Manager Certification Board
Minutes of the 19th Meeting
(Subject to approval at the 20th Meeting)
WebEx Virtual Meeting

Tuesday, December 8, 2020

1) Call to Order, Roll Call, and Introduction of Attendees

The meeting was held via WebEx and was called to order by Mike Wefer at 10:11 a.m.

Members Present: Mike Wefer, Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), Division of Wildlife; Todd Strole, IDNR, Division of Natural Heritage; Tom Wilson, IDNR, Division of Forestry (retired but on contract); Kelly Neal, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, Jack Pizzo; John McCabe, Forest Preserves of Cook County (joined the WebEx in progress at ~ 10:30)

Others Present: Dan McGuire (IDNR, Division of Wildlife), Tom Flader, Tom Gargrave

2) Adoption of Agenda

It was moved by Jack Pizzo, seconded by Todd Strole. The motion carried that the agenda be adopted.

3) Approval of the Minutes of the 18th Meeting, December 10, 2019

It was moved by Todd Strole, seconded by Jack Pizzo. The motion carried that the Minutes of the 18th meeting, December 10, 2019, be approved.

4) Meetings Scheduled for FY 2022

December 14, 2021, IDNR Headquarters, 10:00 A.M.

5) Status of Certification of Prescribed Burn Manager Process

Tom Wilson reported that applications for PBMs were up by a count of 30 – 40 from last year but that he hadn't been in the building to know an exact number. He will send out an email to the group when he can get the exact number.

We are still receiving some letters of recommendation rather than the task book but Tom is taking care of that.

There has been an issue with it taking too long to process applications. The Forestry Division is making changes to the workflow to speed up the process

The position for Tom's replacement has been posted but there is no estimated date for filling his position.

Old Business

6) Introduction of Members

Mike Wefer
Todd Strole
Tom Wilson

Jack Pizzo

All present introduced themselves except Kelly Neal - INPC, because of audio issues.

Mike Wefer reported that last year we had voted to make the recommendation to Director Callahan to change the rules to be able to enforce the administrative rules however, several questions must be answered in order to move forward with the administrative rule: Do we have the capacity to enforce it? Who would enforce it – OLE or would we do it administratively? Do we need to set up a system for how violations are reported and how will we do investigations? How will we define and what will the threshold for personal injury be and what will threshold and definition of property damage be? How do we enforce failure to complete burn reports? How do we enforce fraud or misrepresentation in applications and how will re-instatement work? If we want to make some of it criminal, then we may have to revise the statute itself.

Mike Wefer noted that we have the time to get this right.

Tom Gargrave stated that what concerns him most is that our prescribed burn policy is woefully out of date. Tom went on to say that he does have a small group looking at the policy.

Jack Pizzo stated that only a few instances of bad behavior had been observed and he concurred with Mike Wefer that we should take the time to get things right in reference to rule changes.

It was moved by Jack Pizzo, seconded by Tom Wilson and carried to investigate the administrative rules of other states as well as to answer questions regarding enforcement,

7) Enforcing the Administrative Rule/Revoking Certification

Tom Gargrave stated that burn managers receive training from various sources that differ in quality and so we are very weak in our sponsorship of what “training” really means.

New Business

8) Public Comment

There were no public comments.

9) Other Business

The pros and cons of issuing pocket cards were discussed as well as the idea of simply sending out a .pdf of the certificate. It was stated that some municipalities require a card.

10) Adjournment

It was moved by Tom Wilson, seconded by Jack Pizzo, and carried that the meeting be adjourned at 10:58 a.m.