

Illinois Prescribed Burn Manager Certification Board
Minutes of the 4th Meeting
(Approved at the 5th Meeting)

Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Heron Room
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, IL 62702

Wednesday, September 14, 2011

4-1) Call to Order, Roll Call, and Introduction of Attendees

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m.

Members Present: Randy Heidorn, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC); Michael Moos, Office of the State Fire Marshal, Manager of Homeland Security; Bob Szafoni, Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), Office of Resource Conservation (ORC), Division of Natural Heritage; and Tom Wilson, IDNR, ORC, Division of Forestry.

Members Absent: Paul Brewer

Others Present: Debbie Reider, INPC

4-2) Adoption of Agenda

It was moved by Moos, seconded by Wilson, and carried that the agenda be adopted.

4-3) Approval of the Minutes of the 3rd Meeting, June 14, 2011

It was moved by Szafoni, seconded by Wilson, and carried that the Minutes of the 3rd meeting, June 14, 2011, be approved.

4-4) FY2012 Meeting Schedule

December 14, 2011 - Heron Room, IDNR Headquarters, 10:00 a.m.

March 14, 2012 - Heron Room, IDNR Headquarters, 10:00 a.m.

June 13, 2012 - Heron Room, IDNR Headquarters, 10:00 a.m.

4-5) Status of Certification of Prescribed Burn Manager Process

Tom Wilson stated that there are currently 410 certified applicants. Applications have been trickling in. Mr. Wilson stated that he is in the process of getting the information up on the Forestry website. He has been working with IDNR staff to format the database in order to post just names and numbers. The meeting dates, agendas, and meeting minutes will also be posted. The application, statute, and administrative rules have been posted.

Mr. Wilson stated that money is being deposited into 905 (Forestry Fund), under the burn managers' code, but there was no way to track from the code how much money the program has actually spent and how much money was actually in that fund.

Mr. Heidorn asked if a project code was needed.

Mr. Wilson stated that a determination needs to be made as to how this money is to be used. Approximately \$8,000 has been collected.

Randy Heidorn stated that if a programmatic code was attached to it, a tabulation of the number of hours and expenses for the fund could be compiled. Unless this fund gets a lot bigger, it would not be worth the effort to have its own appropriation code. He stated that he thought it was worthwhile to track the expenses. If the expenses were more than what was being charged, the fee should be adjusted.

Mr. Wilson stated that it was his expectation that the future revenue source would be minimal. He only anticipated receiving 20-50 applications a year.

Bob Szafoni asked if there were any federal fire related grant projects that the Board's time could be used as match.

Mr. Wilson stated that it could be used as match for the State Fire Assistance.

Mr. Heidorn stated that there should be a program code for that reason.

Mr. Wilson stated that he has been using the State Fire Assistance code when recording his time spent on Illinois Prescribed Burn Manager Certification Board (IPBMCB) business.

After discussion, it was decided it would be good practice to request a specific programmatic code for the IPBMCB. Mr. Wilson stated that he would request the programmatic code.

4-6) Equivalent Course Work Standards Crosswalk and Evaluation Form

Bob Szafoni stated that he sent out a draft of the Evaluation of non-National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Coursework and Training as an Illinois Prescribed Burn Manager course for Certification as a Prescribed Burn Manager to the IPBMCB members. Once this document is approved, it will be sent out to those individuals who were petitioning the Board to evaluate a non-S130/S190 course to be recognized by the Board for purposes of certification. A task force developed a list of objectives within each unit of both courses (S130/S190), and those lessons were detailed in a table. This will be given to the petitioner who would have to provide the information as to where in the course work it was addressed. That would allow the Board to more easily crosswalk their course work with those objectives. The first page of the document could be shortened and converted into a standard cover letter. Several comments were received by e-mail and will be incorporated into the document.

Mike Moos suggested that this document be placed on an official form which clearly shows who sponsored the form. He stated that he would also like to clarify the phrase “national standards.” He would also like to see something added to the end of the form outlining the evaluation process by showing who reviewed it, whether it was approved by the Board, and a list of deficiencies that could be checked to make it easy for the evaluator. Mr. Moos suggested that the third column (Board Approval) be grayed out so it was clear to the applicant that they should not mark in the last column. He also suggested that the matrix requirement for all coursework and training materials be made more of a form to be completed. Also a page called “Course Information” could be incorporated as a checklist to show the qualifications that the Board is looking for in the trainer/instructor qualifications. The Board also has to decide if it is going to verify the data.

Mr. Heidorn stated that the Board is only allowed to make recommendations to the Director. The certification authority rests with the Director.

Mr. Wilson stated that, for purposes for recommendation to the Director, it may be as simple as saying the instructor was a certified burn manager with the appropriate level of experience. He stated that he did not expect to see many of those requests being submitted, and if standards were set, it would be up to that organization individual to self police.

Mr. Moos stated that it was the government’s responsibility to make sure the instructor was certified. The Illinois Police Training and Standards Board requires a form to be filled out and that the person be preapproved as an instructor. That information is retained in the file. At a minimum, the Board could require that they file documentation that represents all the information that the Board would want.

Mr. Heidorn asked that the signature line on the last page be changed to read Presiding Officer instead of Chair. He also suggested that the word “recommend for” be placed before Approval on the last page of the form.

Mr. Moos suggested that the information discussed today, along with the revisions suggested in e-mail correspondence, be incorporated into the document. The final draft should then be sent out to the Board for review.

Mr. Szafoni stated that the first page would be shortened and converted into a cover letter. Some of the information would be moved to the top of the instructions page and a form requesting names, addresses, phone numbers, and instructor training information would be added. The following pages would show the separated Board Approval column. The last page would be an official use only summary of the findings and recommendation to the Director.

Mr. Szafoni stated that he would still like more clarification on instructor training certification. He felt it was more important that the course be approved because the instructors would change over time. As long as the instructor was a Certified Prescribed Burn Manager, no additional information would be needed.

Mr. Heidorn stated that he would find it acceptable to say that the instructors of an equivalent course must be a Certified Prescribed Burn Manager.

Mr. Moos stated that Public Health uses a process with the EMT recertification where a class has to be under the direction of a lead EMS instructor. A subject matter expert was able to teach a segment of the class because the class was being overseen by a lead instructor.

Mr. Wilson stated that this also occurs with the NWCG courses. Meteorologists are brought in to teach a segment of the course. Out of state classes would not have the Illinois burn certification for the lead instructor.

Mr. Heidorn stated that the Board would be saying that Illinois' standard is reciprocal to that state's standard. There was an equivalency standard in the Administrative Rule, and the Board has to determine whether or not there was an equivalency between their standard and Illinois' standard. The Board does not have control over who the instructors are. Most probably there would be very few state standards that the Board would not accept because Illinois' standards were not extreme.

Mr. Wilson stated that he was not familiar with any state standards that did not follow NWCG with the exception of Florida. Florida has its own certification, but the training was largely NWCG.

Mr. Heidorn stated that the target approval date of the document would be December 14, 2011.

Break was taken from 11:00 – 11:10.

4-7) Request Pursuant to 17 Ill. Administrative Code 1565.70 e for Approval of the Midwest Prescribed Fire Crew Training as a Substitute for the Requirement of S130 and S190 for Certification of Prescribed Burn Managers under 17 Ill. Administrative Code 1565.20(a) (1)

It was decided that Mr. Heidorn would send a draft document to Ed Collins for comment.

3-8) Equivalent State Prescribed Burn Manager Certification Programs

Mr. Heidorn stated that there would be course evaluation criteria, and the Board would have to think about what additional standards it wanted to have. Currently, the Illinois standards were experience and course work. He asked if anything beyond that needed to be developed.

Mr. Moos asked if the evaluation criteria would validate that their training and instructor process was equivalent or exceeded the Illinois standard.

Mr. Heidorn stated that the rule specifically stated that this Board would determine whether or not a state's program was equivalent.

Mr. Moos asked if the form that was previously discussed could be adjusted to be used in that process.

Mr. Heidorn stated that the form could be used to look at the course work. The other aspect would be to review the experience and confirm that I100 had been taken. This could be added as a separate sheet.

Mr. Wilson stated that Part d of the Administrative Rule addressed the certification from another state that meets or exceeds requirements in the burn manager certification.

Mr. Heidorn stated that the Rule talked about the Board determining what the equivalent was, and the Board has to do that at least once for each state.

Mr. Moos stated that it may be possible to show on the website which states Illinois has determined to be equivalent. Those states may then want to show who they are reciprocal with.

A simple form with checkboxes could be developed showing that the applicant has had I100, S130, S190, and the required experience. Once those things have been verified, the state would be considered to be equivalent.

It was decided that until the Board accepts the evaluation standard and has that approved by the Director, it cannot determine which state is considered to be equivalent.

4-9) Annual Report on Prescribed Burning Under Illinois Prescribed burning Act 525ILCS37

Mr. Wilson suggested that the minutes could suffice as an annual report.

Mr. Moos asked if there could be a one page fact sheet that would serve as the annual report. The fact sheet could show that the Board has been formed, the number of members, the number of meetings, goals and objectives accomplished, and some of the detailed information regarding the applications and funds. This could be posted on the website and used by the IDNR. This would be used to defend the time spent on this, and it could be easily sent out to the Fire Service and other entities in regards to what is being done. He suggested that the minutes could be posted on the website.

It was decided that a fact sheet would be of value and could serve several purposes. Mr. Wilson and Mr. Heidorn agreed to put the fact sheet together.

4-10) Modifications to the Administrative Rules

Mr. Heidorn stated that no progress has been made on this item; however, he will work with Mr. Wilson to put together a list of modifications.

4-11) Illinois Prescribed Burn Manager Certification Board Web Page

Mr. Wilson stated that he has made great progress on the web page development, and he would continue to work with IDNR staff to launch the page in the very near future. In addition to the items to be put on the web page, links to training opportunities would also be posted.

4-12) Public Comment

There was no public comment

4-13) Other Business

There was no other business.

4-14) Adjournment

It was moved by Szafoni, seconded by Moos, and carried that the meeting be adjourned at 11:30 a.m.