



**OKLAHOMA PRESCRIBED BURN ASSOCIATION
BOARD MEETING
February 27, 2014
12:00 PM – 3:10 PM
H&H Shooting Sports Complex – Oklahoma City, OK**

APPROVED MINUTES – 2/27/14

LOCATION: H&H Shooting Sports Complex – Oklahoma City, OK

PRESENT:

John Weir, OSU Extension/Chairperson
Russell Stevens, Noble Foundation/Interim Executive Director
Darrel Dominick, OCC/OPBA – Sec/Treasurer
Verlin Hart, Cross Timbers PBA
Karsen Davis, Roger Mills PBA
Bill Inman, Creek County PBA
Harry Fritzler, NRCS Liaison

ABSENT:

Alva Gregory, ODWC, Woodward
NOTE: Paul Clark, NRCS, is no longer on the BOD

Guests:

None

CALL TO ORDER: John Weir called the meeting to order and welcomed the participants. Weir provided an agenda.

INTRODUCTIONS:

None

DRAFT MINUTES REVIEW/APPROVAL:

Weir led the board in review of the previous meeting minutes provided by Stevens for the 10/22/13 BOD meeting. Time was provided for review and there was no discussion. Inman offered a first to accept the minutes as written. This was seconded by Davis. All present signified approval.

OPBA CORRESPONDENCE REPORT:

Dominick did not provide a report. No correspondence has been sent or received since the last meeting.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Two financial reports were provided by Dominick:

- 9/16/12 to 12/31/13 - The “annual” statement was reviewed by the BOD. Davis asked about an entry on 10/28/13 for \$.01 and if it was a correction to balance. Dominick indicated it showed up as a “reimbursement” on the RCB statement with no explanation. (NOTE: Dominick on 3/3/14 sent Davis, Weir and Stevens a scanned copy of that bank statement.) There were no other comments or questions. Weir asked for a motion to approve and Hart offered a first to accept and Inman provided a second. There was no other discussion and the statement was approved by voice vote.
- 1/1/14 – 2/27/14 – The statement was reviewed by the BOD. Weir asked for a motion to approve and Stevens offered a first to accept and Davis seconded. There was no other discussion and the statement was approved by voice vote.

NOTE: Dominick briefly discussed that he had filed the 2013 990-N electronically for federal taxes and the information needed for Oklahoma OTC. Dominick indicated the need to keep the funds below the \$50,000 threshold or business becomes much more complicated possibly requiring expensive audits.

REPORTS AND OLD BUSINESS –

• **QUARTERLY REPORTS:**

➤ **Grant updates:**

- **PLJV:** Weir and Stevens attended the last PLJV BOD meeting in KS. OPBA was in line to receive a \$25,000 Conoco-Phillips Capacity Grant. Weir and Stevens gave an overview of OPBA activities in the past year which included information concerning the highly successful trainings, online training development, organization of new LPBAs, support of existing LPBAs, equipping of LPBAs, and partnership building. A PLJV BOD member, from a federal agency, repeatedly asked what had been done for grassland birds. Weir and Stevens repeatedly answered that getting the capacity

built for LPBAs to use prescribed fire would help the habitat issues surrounding indicator species, such as the LPC primarily, and secondarily help wildlife species in general. Prescribed fire is the most economical method of managing Eastern red cedar, which for the past 14 years, has been deemed by the broad-based membership of the NRCS State Technical Committee the #1 natural resource concern in OK. Weir and Stevens attempted to explain that 2013 was a year in which the drought lingered and there were fuel issues, burn ban concerns and need for encouragement to get more prescribed fire on the landscape. The PLJV BOD member was not satisfied with these answers and confronted Weir and Stevens that her support was not there for OPBA. In OPBA discussion, concerning this unfortunate lack of a federal official from CO understanding what it takes to organize and support the OPBA mission, Dominick indicated that federal obstructionists were the reason the federal government lacks the needed leadership at times to make a difference. PLJV reduced the grant award for OPBA to \$15,000 (salary for NW OK person; increased acres burned; training; more LPBAs formed....) and funded several research projects that are not specified as part of their charge. In all, nine projects were funded with the \$100,000 available from PLJV.

- **USDA NRCS CIGs:** The announcement for the national and state grants will come out tomorrow (2/28/14). Weir indicated he would contact Kenny Hitch, NRCS, concerning the state awarded CIG. There was nothing in the RFP that would be applicable for OPBA. On a regional basis, such as the Alliance for Prescribed Burn Associations (APBA) there is a possibility to qualify for up to \$250,000 for two years. Stevens indicated he would track the development of this announcement tomorrow.
 - **PLJV Capacity Grant:** OPBA received this grant last year for \$15,444. Weir indicated OPBA will need to reapply again this spring (March – May) to continue the grant. Up to \$20,000/year may be awarded.
 - **NRCS:** Dominick indicated that an AD-270 should be prepared and submitted for reimbursement for up to \$5,000. Dominick indicated we need to purchase more safety equipment and training manuals to keep the balance below \$50,000.
 - **Others: NFWF** - Stevens discussed the failure to successfully receive the NFWF grant. Stevens was in WDC earlier in the week and went by to discuss the issue with Dave Gagnon. Stevens indicated Gagnon told him that the NFWF had pulled out support for the LPC concerns because of the developments. Stevens indicated he told Gagnon OPBA was disappointed.
- **OK Chapter of SRM Recognizes OPBA:** Weir showed the BOD the “Outstanding Achievement Award 2013” that was presented to OPBA on 1/30/14. This recognition is for OPBA’s active leadership in working with partners and forming LPBAs to get more prescribed fire on the landscape. OPBA thanks SRM for the recognition of hard work.
 - **OPBA- LPBA Meetings Feb. 3 & 8/other:** Weir discussed the two LPBA organizational meetings held at the H&H Shooting Sports facilities on February 3 and 8. The meeting on February 3 was attended by 35 participants representing eight LPBAs. The meeting on February 8 had bad weather but 25 attended representing ten existing or forming LPBAs. This meeting had tremendous participation. Weir said he highlighted OPBA efforts to serve as an “umbrella” 501(c)(3) for the LPBAs and the benefits of becoming a sustaining member. Inman indicated it was a good effort and the Creek Co. LPBA members he brought with him enjoyed the meeting and it stimulated their thinking. Weir indicated Geary LPBA leadership attended and plan to reactivate their efforts.

Other Discussion: Weir also updated the BOD on a LPBA organizational meeting held in Pawnee County on February 20. Over 105 people attended. Stevens discussed going over the OPBA efforts and the benefits of being a part of OPBA. Stevens covered the draft bylaws and organizational requirements necessary to be a part of OPBA. The packet to provide all LPBAs will be available soon.

Davis asked if the LPBA should submit the paperwork to OPBA. Stevens indicated yes once the LPBA had a EIN and had incorporated in Oklahoma through the Secretary of State.

Inman asked if the Creek County LPBA would need to adopt the draft/recommended bylaws and the answer was yes if they wanted to become a part of OPBA.

Dominick briefly discussed another benefit of being a part of OPBA and that was BOD liability coverage which may cost OPBA about \$3000/year to cover all LPBA BODs that join. Davis made a motion that the general liability coverage is only extended to members of OPBA. A second was offered by Inman. The BOD approved this motion.

Hart also indicated there is a need for the LPBA joining OPBA needing to sign the affiliation letter. Weir indicated a need to join for this coverage.

Stevens commented that many of the members participating in the meetings did not know about the trainings that OPBA has sponsored. There is a need to organize and get the information out to notify members about the opportunities. Dominick indicated that the training held in January 2013 was well attended and that all organized and known LPBAs at the time received \$250 scholarship funds from OPBA to help off-set travel costs and notify their members of the opportunity.

- **Western Regional Coordinator Position:** Weir handed out the OPBA Independent Contractor Agreement for review. Weir discussed that there is a \$25/hr salary with a limit of 40 hrs./month and a cap on mileage of 1000 miles/month at \$.56/mile. The contract is for six months and has safeguards for terminating the contract. This would be a max of \$1560 for a month. There would

be flexibility to go over this per month, with approval, but with the average over six months being this limit. The coordinator would submit invoices and a written report monthly. Weir reviewed the handout in detail and made motion for the BOD to approve. The BOD reviewed and then Inman offered a first and Hart a second. The motion was approved.

Weir then discussed that the funds for the position had come from PLJV and that there had been discussion with several individuals concerning this opportunity. These contacts had involved OACD, a former BOD member and TNC. The best option to arise is with Bryan Hajny. Weir provided Mr. Hajny's resume which showed him well qualified for this part time opportunity. The candidate has a lot of contacts in NW OK and has over 20 years of experience with prescribed fire. Weir indicated Hajny lives in Arnett, OK and currently works for Johnston Seed Company. Davis voiced a concern that Hajny would need the flexibility in his schedule with his current full time employer. Weir indicated he believed that he had this flexibility. Weir made a motion to hire Hajny. Hart offered a first and Inman a second. The motion was approved.

Other Discussion: Dominick then discussed the opportunity OPBA has in regards to John Weir. Weir works tirelessly for prescribed fire and the effort. Weir is also one of the premier fire scientists in the world. Dominick told the BOD that Weir works for OSU on an 11 month appointment and that OPBA has the opportunity to partner with OSU for Weir's time to be more involved with OPBA. Dominick apologized that he had not brought a hard copy of the proposed agreement with him but indicated he would send out via email (Note: This was done.). Dominick indicated there is really no room to negotiate the agreement as it is "boilerplate" and that this would cost OPBA approximately \$8,150/year. That includes salary and overhead through OSU. Davis made a motion to approve once the agreement was reviewed via email. A second was offered by Hart. The motion carried. NOTE: Dominick sent out and the BOD approved via email.

- **OPBA Affiliation Letter/Agreement:** Weir handed out the "OPBA Affiliation Agreement Summary" that will be placed in packets and given to LPBAs for joining OPBA. Stevens indicated he is getting the packets ready. This highlights the benefits of joining OPBA as an affiliated member. Stevens also indicated that a LPBA would need to be incorporated in Oklahoma and have an EIN. Weir also handed out the actual agreement. Weir asked for a motion to accept the summary and agreement letter. Hart provided a first and Inman a second for approval. The motion carried. Inman indicated he was working to dissolve the Creek County LPBA's 501(c)(5) status to join OPBA.
- **Website:** Weir updated the BOD on the OPBA website development. This is moving forward and is being built to "fit" the each user's format to access. It will be flexible in this regard. Weir indicated the need for photographs from the LPBAs and their activities so the website can be populated. Weir indicated that when there was a local LPBA helping someone conduct a prescribed fire that someone needs to be assigned the duty to take photos. There is no time frame yet for completion of the website and the BOD will be the first to "beta" test the site once it is functional. There will be contact information for BOD members and each LPBA will need a POC listed. This site will allow us to have our own email addresses for members if wanted. The website will serve as an information exchange and will also have a page for donations to this non-profit. Weir indicated it will have a "prescribed fire" event schedule and place to sign-up for a newsletter. Fritzier indicated the need for the system to possibly have the ability to notify other LPBAs and interested parties of burns taking place within a couple of counties of the event. Weir indicated there would be fillable forms access on the website.
- **Washington, D. C. Update:** Weir, Stevens and Davis flew, on the NF jet, to WDC on 2/23 -26 and talked to various elected, government agency and private entities that may be sources of financial and technical assistance to help OPBA with the prescribed fire mission. OPBA wants to thank the NF for the opportunity to go to WDC on the corporate jet. GLC BOD was meeting and OPBA went along.

The following were met with on this trip:

- Rep. James Lankford
- Rep. Frank Lucas (Chairperson of House Ag. Cmt.)
- Jason Weller (NRCS Chief) and Kirk Hanlin (NRCS Assistant Chief)
- Bruce Beard (Associate Director Institute of Renewable Natural Resources)
- Nancy Labbe (World Wildlife Fund)
- Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (National Board of Directors)
- Dana Larsen (NRCS Technical Service Provider)
- Dave Gagne (National Fish and Wildlife Foundation)

Davis provided an overview of the trip. Davis indicated the effort was to make the contacted individuals and groups aware of the need for prescribed fire, OPBA's efforts and the needs to expand prescribed fire in OK and the Great Plains. Davis was a major factor in getting a sit down meeting with Congressman Lucas. Davis indicated he laid the groundwork for the need for \$2.5 million for two years and that this region (APBA region in the Great Plains). Davis also worked on the attempt to get excess fire equipment from the USFS. Davis indicated he would continue to follow-up with Josh Maxwell from Lucas' office. Davis indicated he believes Congressman Lucas will help in some way.

Stevens indicated that Davis did an excellent job with the visits and provided that local experienced voice at the table. Stevens also discussed NRCS CIG grants and the possibility here for a regional approach (ex. APBA) to be successful. OPBA and APBA would be the vehicle to qualify for this opportunity.

Stevens also indicated they had a conference call with NRCS Chief Weller. Some of the visits occurred by phone as the weather turned bad and several contacts were unable to come into WDC for face to face visits. Stevens told Weller that OPBA appreciated the efforts of Gary O'Neill, OK STC, and Harry Fritzler, NRCS Liaison to OPBA. Stevens indicated he would like to see Fritzler appointed full time to this effort. Stevens indicated that OPBA had a Great Plains regional network through the APBA and this could be a vehicle for a regional CIG.

TSP/NRCS: Weir discussed a phone conversation with Dana Larsen, National TSP Coordinator, NRCS. The discussion centered on the writing of burn plans as a TSP and the amount of funds that could be earned through NRCS by a trained (17 hrs of training) TSP. Preparing a plan to burn less than 20 acres pays \$400, 20 – 100 ac. \$670, 250 – 500 ac. \$900, 500 – 1,000 ac. \$1,128 and more than 1,000 ac. pays \$1,350.

Dominick encouraged all participants to continue with follow-up emails and calls and to write thank you notes to all who was met with on this trip.

- **Burn Bans:** Weir discussed the need for OPBA to weigh in on what is going on with burn bans. Several currently in place do not meet the intent and letter of the law. Weir indicated the need to watch what is going on with proposed legislation to take the “and” out of the legislation so that it would be easier to have a burn ban which would lead to a perpetual burn ban in OK which would be extremely negligent on the part of local officials due to stopping prescribed fire which is necessary to reduce eastern red cedar to prevent wildfire fuel loads. There is a need to be aggressive at looking at the burn ban legislation, meeting with others who can weigh in on this issue, and possible getting prescribed fire exemptions. Stevens indicated there would be a meeting with some possible partners on this issue after the OPBA BOD meeting today.
- **Radios:** Weir indicated that 22 radios have been provided to LPBAs. Weir gave a breakdown on which LPBAs received radios: 6-Okmulgee PBA, 6-Twin Rivers PBA, 10-Cross Timbers PBA, and have given the frequency out to 2 PBAs so they can program their own radios to it. Weir has kept the serial numbers of the radios and where the radios were distributed. The LPBAs receiving the radios are very appreciative of this effort.
- **Stickers for Burn Trailers:** Weir discussed acknowledging OPBA partners with their emblem placed on the side of the trailer. Weir had sent a photograph to the BOD via email a few weeks back. It showed the side with the sticker emblems highlighted. Weir thanked Davis and his print business for providing the stickers to OPBA for the trailers. Weir indicated that ODWC had received the photo and voiced concern that ODWC’s emblem was not shown. Weir said he had conversations with ODWC POCs that when the stickers were developed ODWC did not have an agreement with OPBA nor financially supported the three year effort. Weir explained to them that their sticker emblem was being developed. Also during this discussion, Weir and Stevens handed out the OPBA brochure and it was complimented by the BODs.
- **Local Prescribed Burn Association Updates:**
 - Pawnee County met on 2/20/14 and had 105 in attendance. Over 60 applications for membership were handed out and they are planning a formation meeting soon. Weir complimented Hart for his participation in the meeting and his comments on a successful burn. Having a Verlin Hart speak is very beneficial for the new LPBAs to hear.
 - Beaver County is forming a LPBA.
 - Eastern Woodward County is meeting on 3/12/14 to form a LPBA.
 - Rogers County Cattleman has a meeting planned for March 20th to discuss a LPBA.
 - Cimarron Range Preservation Association is meeting on 3/10/14 at the VFW west of Alva. Jeff Moen, NF Attorney, Stevens and Weir will attend.
 - The LPBA from Geary, OK is trying to reorganize and will meet on 3/13/14.
 - Ellis County will meet on 3/17 and Beaver County leaders will come to that meeting.
- **American Farmers and Ranchers Annual Meeting:** Stevens made a presentation at this meeting which was attended by several hundred from across the state. The presentation was well received. Stevens also said he had a brief visit with Congressman Lankford who attended. Lankford was suffering from an allergy attack and Stevens discussed what OPBA is trying to do with prescribed fire to manage cedars which are the #1 pollen producing culprit responsible for allergy issues in OK.
- **OK Farm Bureau:** Weir indicated he had a brief discussion with Bob Drake concerning the TX Farm Bureau adding prescribed fire to their policies in regard to liability coverage. Weir indicated the need to get FB or AFR to do the same here in OK. Stevens said he would get the language from the TX FB so it can be discussed with OK FB, AFR and other insurance companies.

- **Conservation Day/Prescribed Fire Day at the Capitol – March 24:** Dominick and Weir have worked with Clay Pope, Executive Director of the OACD, to partner on this event. LPBAs are welcome to attend and display space will be available.
- **Wildlife Expo September 26-28 (ODWC):** OPBA will partner with OSU, with Weir coordinating, to participate. Over 48,000 have attended in the past.
- **Prescribed Burn Alliance of Texas (PBAT):** Weir attended PBAT’s second annual meeting on 12/13/13 in Fredericksburg, TX. Weir spoke on the “Strength & Value in PBA Alliances”. There were 30 in attendance. Weir provided the BOD with a handout of the meeting.
- **Great Plains Fire Science Exchange:** Weir indicated he is on the BOD and participated in their meeting on Jan. 21, 2014. in Sonora, TX. PBAT and Edwards Plateau leadership attended. This group will help to publicize the OPBA efforts in regard to trainings and meetings. Weir indicated he is glad he lives in Oklahoma.
- **Other New Business:**
 - Inman and Stevens discussed the opportunity as a nonprofit to access EarthPro from Google Earth and be able to use it for developing plan maps (acre measurements) for prescribed burn plans. A motion was presented to sign-up for this with Inman offering a first and Davis a second. The BOD approved. Stevens indicated he would take the lead on this effort.
 - Weir indicated he had accessed a smoke management software tool developed at the University of Georgia. Weir indicated he would send the web address to the BOD.
- **Next Meeting:** TBD
- **Adjournment:** Weir offered a motion to adjourn and Davis offered a first and Inman a second and it was approved. Meeting adjourned at 3:10PM.

MINUTES APPROVED: 1ST __ Bill Inman _____

2ND __ Karsen Davis _____

VOICE VOTE APPROVAL: X YES NO

APPROVED MINUTES SUBMITTED: _____ MDD _____ 6/18/14
M. DARREL DOMINICK DATE

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