



**OKLAHOMA PRESCRIBED BURN ASSOCIATION
BOARD MEETING
October 22, 2013
12:00 PM – 3:15 PM
H&H Shooting Sports**

DRAFT MINUTES – 10/22/13

LOCATION: Oklahoma Room at H&H Shooting Sports, Oklahoma City, OK.

PRESENT:

John Weir, OSU Extension/Chairperson
Russell Stevens, Noble Foundation/Interim Executive Director
Verlin Hart, Cross Timbers PBA
Karsen Davis, Roger Mills PBA
Bill Inman, Creek County PBA
Paul Clark, NRCS, Taloga
Alva Gregory, ODWC, Woodward
Harry Fritzier, NRCS, Norman

ABSENT:

Darrel Dominick, OCC/OPBA – Sec/Treasurer

Guests:

None

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

INTRODUCTIONS:

There were no introductions.

DRAFT MINUTES REVIEW/APPROVAL:

The board reviewed the previous meeting minutes (8/20/13). Time was provided for review and there was no discussion. Davis offered a first to accept the minutes as written. This was seconded by Inman. All present signified approval.

OPBA CORRESPONDENCE REPORT:

No report.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

The financial report from 8/20/13 to 9/26/13 was presented and reviewed. The balance is \$28,942.62. There was one deposit of 7,722.00 from PLJV and no checks were written since the last report. Hart made a motion to accept the financial report and this was seconded by Davis. All present signified approval.

REPORTS AND OLD BUSINESS –

- **QUARTERLY REPORTS:**
None.

- **NOBLE FOUNDATION REPORT:**
Stevens described the quarterly report required by the services agreement between NF and OPBA. This report was completed by Stevens, Dominick and Weir and submitted on October 14. The report was very impressive; listing many current OPBA activities and highlighting a Facilitated Learning Analysis written in coordination with OPBA, NF and UFWFS. The report also listed two new local associations; the Okmulgee PBA and the Limestone Game & Range Management Association. Stevens requested photos, stories and activities from the board to include in quarterly reports.

- **GRANT REPORT:**
Stevens reported that the NFWF grant (\$250,000) was not approved. Teal Edelen at NFWF said that our proposal was not grassroots enough and that it did not demonstrate enough involvement with NRCS. Weir mentioned an opportunity to apply for a CIG grant. Weir reported that he submitted a grant to the NWTF Oklahoma Chapter with assistance from Gene Miller (NWTF) for \$10,000. The Chapter awarded us \$4,983. Weir also submitted a grant request to the Quail Forever 89er Chapter for \$10,000. We have not yet received word about this grant but expect to soon.

- **OTHER FUNDING:**

The support of \$25,000 from ODWC is for a three year time frame, not per year as previously understood. Weir reported that Darrel Dominick is working with PLJV for other sources of funding. The OPJV will meet in Ardmore next week. Stevens and Weir plan to attend this meeting. OPJV may also be a source of funding in the future.

- **RADIOS: PROTOCOL FOR DISTRIBUTION:**

OPBA recently purchased 64 Motorola 5 watt radios that have a 2.5 mile range. A protocol for distribution to LPBAs was discussed. Inman mentioned that operational training was needed. Clark suggested that the radios remain on OPBA inventory. Gregory mentioned that radios could be included with burn trailers and provided to LPBAs with burn trailers. Davis suggested that it would be best to determine active LPBAs to loan radios. Hart suggested that 4 radios be provided to LPBAs or to be included with burn trailers. Weir suggested 6 radios per LPBA as a minimum and stated that if LPBAs obtain bank chargers, they charge 6 at a time. The board agreed to begin loaning 6 radios to qualifying LPBAs based on demonstrated or planned level of activity. The board also agreed to provide Creek County PBA with 10 radios due to their level of activity. There are currently two burn trailers nearly ready to stock with radios. The board decided to either require LPBAs to purchase, or OPBA will purchase chest harnesses to use with radios loaned by OPBA in order to protect, keep track of and more easily use the radios. Weir will check on harnesses cost. LPBAs will be liable for the radios and will be required to purchase replacement radios for any that are damaged, lost or stolen while in their possession.

NEW BUSINESS –

- **WEB SITE:**

Weir inquired about domain names for an OPBA web site. OPBA.org is owned and can be purchased for \$1,000. Other options include OPBA.CO (\$12.99), OPBA.US (\$3.99), OKPBA.CO (\$12.99), OKPBA.NET (\$9.99), OKPBA.INFO (\$2.99), OPBA.US (\$3.99), OK-PBA.ORG (\$12.99), OK-PBA.CO (\$12.99) and OK-PBA.NET (\$9.99). The board chose to use **OK-PBA.ORG**. Inman made a motion to approve and this was seconded by Gregory. All present signified approval.

Weir also checked on web site hosts. Costs to host our web site can be up to \$108 per year except for Dreamhost.com. If OPBA demonstrates that we are a 501c3 entity, they will host our web site for free but will charge a \$9.95 domain register fee. OPBA will need a credit card to pay. Clark made a motion to approve Dreamhost.com as the OPBA host site and this was seconded by Inman. All present signified approval.

Someone or some business will need to be contracted to construct the OPBA web site. Weir checked with Blayr Gorley about creating and designing the web site. Blayr has a working knowledge of prescribed fire and a lot of experience creating and designing web sites. Her fee is \$1,800 for the design (flat fee for unlimited pages) and \$250 for each quarterly update. The contract would be on an annual basis. A brief discussion ensued regarding features to highlight on the web page. Features included pages for LPBAs, data collection regarding Rx fire in the state, communication among LPBAs and OPBA, burns planned each year, etc. Davis made a motion to approve Blayr Gorley to create the OPBA web site and this was seconded by Hart. All present signified approval.

- **BURNING REQUIREMENTS:**

The board discussed requirements for prescribed burns in order to protect OPBA and LPBAs from lawsuits and to help set requirements for individual landowners to obtain prescribed fire insurance. Weir presented a checklist of 7 items to the board for discussion:

- Written prescribed burn plan
- Adequate firebreaks for the burn unit
- Adequate equipment for the burn unit
- Notification of local fire departments, county sheriff, and other required agencies
- Notification of adjoining landowners
- Watch over the burn until it is extinguished or considered safe
- Burn conducted in accordance to all local, county and state laws

These items are more inclusive than state law requirements and should be addressed by anyone conducting a prescribed fire. Inman presented the Creek County PBA checklist to the board for comparison, ideas and discussion. The Creek County PBA will modify their 5 point checklist to match the OPBA checklist when finalized. Stevens pointed out that this is a checklist that each individual landowner is responsible for addressing in order to qualify as a prescribed burn and for insurance coverage if approved by an insurance company. It is not something that OPBA will be required to approve or that any LPBA will be required to approve in addition to their own guidelines before each prescribed burn. Clark made a motion to approve the checklist and this was seconded by Inman. All present signified approval.

- **DUES STRUCTURE:**

The board discussed setting annual dues required for LPBAs and individuals to be a member of the OPBA. Weir proposed \$250 per year for established LPBA, \$100 for the first two years for new LPBAs then \$250 per year thereafter, and \$100 per year for individuals. After the ensuing discussion, proposed dues for new LPBAs were changed to \$100 for the first year then \$250 per year thereafter. Dues for organizations such as TNC, ODWC, NWTF, etc. will not be required. Inman made a motion to approve the dues structure and this was seconded by Davis. All present signified approval.

- **AFFILIATION LETTER:**

Stevens reported that the affiliation letter for LPBAs to sign in order to fall under OPBAs 501c3 status has not been finalized and added that he and Jeff Moen need to file a group exemption letter with the IRS before the affiliation letter will be valid. Stevens and Moen will attempt to complete this process very soon. Weir proposed that the reporting time frame and dues be included in the affiliation letter.

- **BYLAWS:**

Stevens sent copies of the revised bylaws to each board member 4 days prior to the meeting and handed out hard copies at the meeting for the boards review during discussion. Weir asked if members were allowed to vote or if only board members could vote. Stevens explained that the bylaws are set up so that members can vote during an annual members meeting but not during meetings conducted by the board. There being no further discussion, Davis made a motion to approve the bylaws and this was seconded by Inman. All present signified approval.

- **OPBA CREDIT CARD:**

Weir presented the need for OPBA to obtain a credit card. This will help OPBA conduct financial business more effectively and timely. Weir will work with Dominick to get complete the necessary paperwork. Gregory made a motion to approve pursuing a credit card for OPBA and this was seconded by Clark. All present signified approval.

- **OPBA PRESENCE IN NW OKLAHOMA:**

In order to comply with PLJV grant requirements, OPBA needs to begin working in NW Oklahoma to form LPBAs, conduct educational events, etc. in order to get more fire on the ground. OPBA can use PLJV grant money to contract with an individual familiar with prescribed fire and individuals in the region to work on forming LPBAs.

Gregory and Clark proposed Brian Hajney and agreed to visit with him to determine his interest. Brian majored in wildlife management at OSU, worked at the Black Kettle WMA and has a lot of prescribe fire experience and knowledge. He currently works in the oil field industry.

Also discussed was engaging Chris Hise with TNC. Chris also has a lot of knowledge and experience with prescribed fire and works for TNC.

Lauren Sizelove is a County Extension agent in Beaver County. He is working on starting a PBA in Beaver County. OPBA need to provide assistance to Lauren as well. Gregory agreed to contact Chris Hise and Lauren Sizelove as well.

- **ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT THE STATE:**

The Okmulgee PBA is now formed. Stevens made a presentation to their members and the Deep Fork Wildlife Management Association. Stevens and Ken Gee (OPJV) have also helped a group of landowners near Fitzhugh, OK form the Limestone Game and Range Management Association. Lauren Sizelove is working on forming a LPBA in Beaver County.

- **OTHER ITEMS:**

The EPA plans to lower the ozone air quality standards which can negatively affect prescribed burning efforts. EPA is planning public hearings during the holidays when people are busy and congress is out of session to possibly make changes with little resistance or questions. Weir will monitor and plan OPBA presence at the EPA meetings when announced.

Harry Fritzier will send a letter to all LPBAs in the state outlining his role in the prescribed burning effort in the state as an NRCS employee and offer to attend their meetings to answer questions and address comments. Harry hopes to send the letter by the end of fall. If LPBAs can get their planned prescribed burn efforts to Harry, he will notify NRCS staff qualified to work with landowners on prescribed fire in all adjoining counties so they may be able to serve as a resource to the LPBAs and individuals.

- **OPBA BROCHURE:**

The board almost forgot to address one last business item, the OPBA brochure. Stevens provided draft copies of an OPBA brochure that also included proposed changes to the OPBA vision and mission. NF Communication staff agreed to provide the layout and design of the brochure. The approved OPBA web site address will be added. Stevens and Weir will provide photos for the brochure. Board members are welcome to submit photos as well. Stevens will send the board an electronic copy of the final draft for any last minute adjustments. When final, printing arrangements will be discussed with Davis Printing.

Proposed changes to the OPBA vision and mission statements are as follows:

Vision

The Oklahoma Prescribed Burn Association (OPBA) aspires to be the premier organization that significantly increases the application of prescribed fire on the Oklahoma landscape.

Mission

Our Mission is to promote and protect the right of Oklahoma landowners to use prescribed burning as a safe, economical and effective land management practice by supporting member prescribed burn associations and individual landowners.

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Inman made a motion to approve the brochure and this was seconded by Davis. All present signified approval

MEETING ADJOURNED -

Weir entertained a motion to adjourn. Hart provided a first and Inman a second. The board agreed to adjourn at approximately 3:15 PM.

MINUTES APPROVED: 1ST _____

2ND _____

VOICE VOTE APPROVAL: YES NO

APPROVED MINUTES SUBMITTED: _____
RUSSELL STEVENS DATE