

Illinois Prescribed Burn Manager Certification Board  
Minutes of the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting  
(Approved at the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting)

Illinois Department of Natural Resources  
Heron Room  
One Natural Resources Way  
Springfield, IL 62802

Tuesday, June 11, 2013

8-1) Call to Order, Roll Call, and Introduction of Attendees

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m.

Members Present: Les Albert, Office of the State Fire Marshal; Paul Brewer, Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), Division of Wildlife; Jack Pizzo, Pizzo and Associates; and Bob Szafoni, IDNR, Division of Natural Heritage.

Members Absent: Randy Heidorn and Tom Wilson.

Others Present: Kelly Neal and Debbie Reider.

8-2) Adoption of Agenda

Paul Brewer stated that for the record, today's meeting is on a Tuesday, but the Agenda shows Wednesday. He asked that the agenda be amended to show Tuesday, June 11, 2013.

It was moved by Szafoni, seconded by Albert, and carried that the agenda be adopted as amended.

8-3) Approval of the Minutes of the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting, September 25, 2012

It was moved by Albert, seconded by Szafoni, and carried that the Minutes of the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, September 25, 2012, be approved.

8-4) Proposed Meeting Schedule for FY 2014

September 24, 2013, IDNR Headquarters, 10:00 a.m.  
December 10, 2013, IDNR Headquarters, 10:00 a.m.  
March 11, 2014, IDNR Headquarters, 10:00 a.m.  
June 10, 2014, IDNR Headquarters, 10:00 a.m.

Paul Brewer stated that the statute says this Board must meet at least annually. After some discussion it was decided to meet twice a year with the option of calling an additional meeting with the understanding that public notice would be needed if a special meeting was to be called.

It was moved by Pizzo, seconded by Albert and carried that the following 2014 meeting schedule be adopted:

December 10, 2013, IDNR Headquarters, 10:00 a.m.  
June 10, 2014, IDNR Headquarters, 10:00 a.m.

8-5) Status of Certification of Prescribed Burn Manager Process

Paul Brewer stated that the applications were coming in. To date, the number may be as high as 500 applications. The biggest issue seemed to be that people do not send in the correct documentation such as photo identification or a training certificate for one of the classes they took. He felt that the application process was going well overall.

8-6) Equivalent State Prescribed Burn Manager Certification Programs: Status Updated

Mr. Brewer stated that he had no updated information on this agenda item, and this would be deferred until the December, 2013 meeting.

8-7) Report on Prescribed Burning Under Illinois Prescribed Burning Act 525ILCS38

Bob Szafoni stated that at the September, 2012 meeting, he volunteered to compile the annual report for the Board's action through June, 2012. He stated that he has a draft of the report that he will send to the members later today. He volunteered to write a report summarizing the actions of the Board for the period of July, 2012 – June, 2013. These are the reports that are submitted to the Director.

8-8) IPBMCB Web Page: Status update

The IPBMCB information can be found at [http://dnr.state.il.us/conservation/forestry/Wildland\\_Fire/index.htm](http://dnr.state.il.us/conservation/forestry/Wildland_Fire/index.htm).

The possibility of providing a link to the IPBMCB web page from the other sites such as the Prescribed Fire Council page was discussed. Bob Szafoni stated that he would talk with Tom Wilson about this.

8-9) Discussion on Incorporating Burn Complexity in the Evaluation of Apprentice Applications

Paul Brewer stated that a few applications have been received listing non-complex burns as documentation for the experience requirement. The concern in these instances was the decision to approve applications from individuals with very little experience. Once an application is approved, the individual will be responsible for writing burn plans and supervising a burn when they have not had experience with a complex prescribed burn. A possible solution to this would be to develop a complexity rating. Mr. Brewer stated that The Nature Conservancy (TNC) uses this type of rating. The alternative would be to leave it up to the people who are grading the application to contact the applicant to advise them that they need more experience with a complex burn before certification would be granted.

Jack Pizzo stated that there was a concern because once a person was certified, they could use that certification anywhere in the state with any complexity of a burn. He stated that it has been his experience that there are people out there that are not qualified to be leading burns. He felt that raising the level of compliance to add a degree of complexity would be a good thing.

Mr. Brewer stated that the applicant must submit burn plans which allow the person grading the application to get a sense of the complexity of the burn. One of the advantages of developing a complexity rating would be that it takes the subjective review by the person grading the application out of the process.

Bob Szafoni asked if there was an estimate of how many applicants fail to meet the level of burn complexity that would be needed for certification. He stated that he would be reluctant to add another step that may be a huge encumbrance on all applicants to treat two percent of the problem. If this Board receives an application with only three one-acre cemetery burns which are surrounded by bean stubble listed as their burn experience, it would be a simple process for the person grading the application to tell the applicant that the experience listed was not complex enough to allow certification.

Mr. Brewer stated that reaching out to the mentors may also be beneficial to let them know what the Board was looking for in an applicant.

Mr. Szafoni discussed the possibility of working language into the application form that would help the mentor understand what qualities the Board was looking for in an applicant to be able to grade their experience.

After discussion, it was decided that the complexity rating was not needed at this time. Mr. Brewer stated that he would provide the members with TNC's complexity rating, and he asked that this issue be revisited at a later date.

#### 8-10) Public Comment

There was no public comment.

#### 8-11) Other Business

Jack Pizzo asked what the process was to replace a lost burn manager certificate, and he was asked to find out if the name and phone number of the appropriate person as a point of contact could be added to the web page.

Paul Brewer stated that one of the reasons there was no name or phone number listed was because of staffing issues.

Mr. Pizzo asked if it would be more appropriate to add an email address, such as info.IPBMCB.illinois.gov, to the web site. This would allow staff a window to respond to questions in a reasonable timeframe.

Mr. Brewer stated that he would talk with Tom Wilson to see if this would be feasible. He stated that he would also inquire about the process to replace a lost certificate.

Mr. Pizzo asked if there was a revocation process in place.

Mr. Brewer stated that if an incident was brought to the Board's attention, the Board would review the incident, but he did not recall if there was a specific procedure for a revocation. If there was a finding that someone was negligent, there would be language that would allow the Board to take action and make a recommendation to the Director. The Director would then have the final decision on any action taken.

Bob Szafoni stated that he would review the administrative rules to see what the process was for revocation of certification.

The mechanism for reporting an incident to the Board was discussed. The role of the local fire protection districts was also discussed.

It was agreed that the administrative rules would be reviewed, and the topic of revocation and documentation would be brought up again for further discussion at a future meeting.

Mr. Brewer stated that the Illinois prescribed burning law was patterned after Florida's law, and it may be interesting to see what was in place there to deal with these issues. He suggested that Randy Heidorn may be the best person to research this since he was very familiar with the legislation.

#### 8-12) Adjournment

It was moved by Szafoni, seconded by Pizzo, and carried that the meeting be adjourned at 11:00 a.m.