Wisconsin Prescribed Fire Council Winter Meeting Minutes
10:00-11:45 AM Friday, March 5, 2021
Via Zoom

Board Members Present:

- Carl Cotter, Chair – Riverside Farms
- Stacey Marion, Vice Chair – Adaptive Restoration, LLC
- Clay Frazer, Treasurer – Eco-Resource Consulting, Inc./Pheasants Forever
- Jim Elleson, Secretary – Quercus Land Stewardship Services
- John Schwingel, Director – The Nature Conservancy
- Rob Baller, Director – The Prairie Enthusiasts
- Jeb Barzen, Director – Private Land Conservation, LLC
- Paul Quinlan, Director – City of Madison Conservation Parks
- Matt Smith, Director – Riveredge Nature Center

Also present:
Andrea Weissgerber – WPFC and Eco-Resource Consulting, Cory Gritzmacher – Mequon Nature Preserve, Nathan Holoubek – WDNR, Emilie Burmeister – Milwaukee County Parks, Gary Werner – Dane County Chapter Ice Age Trail Alliance, Evan Nelson – Good Oak Ecological Services, Mark Horn – Conservation Digest, Doug Terrell – Red Card Structural Volunteer, Brent Sieling – Ice Age Trail Alliance, Alex Wenthe – Quercus Land Stewardship Services, Christy Lowney – UW-Madison Arboretum, Peter Duerkop - WDNR, Jordan Rowe – Tallgrass Restoration, Kara Yedinak – Forest Products Laboratory, Adam Gundlach – UW-Madison Lakeshore Nature Preserve, Chris Baxter – UW-Platteville Reclamation, Environment and Conservation Program, Craig Maier - TPOS, Mitchell Groenhof – Aldo Leopold Foundation

Notes:

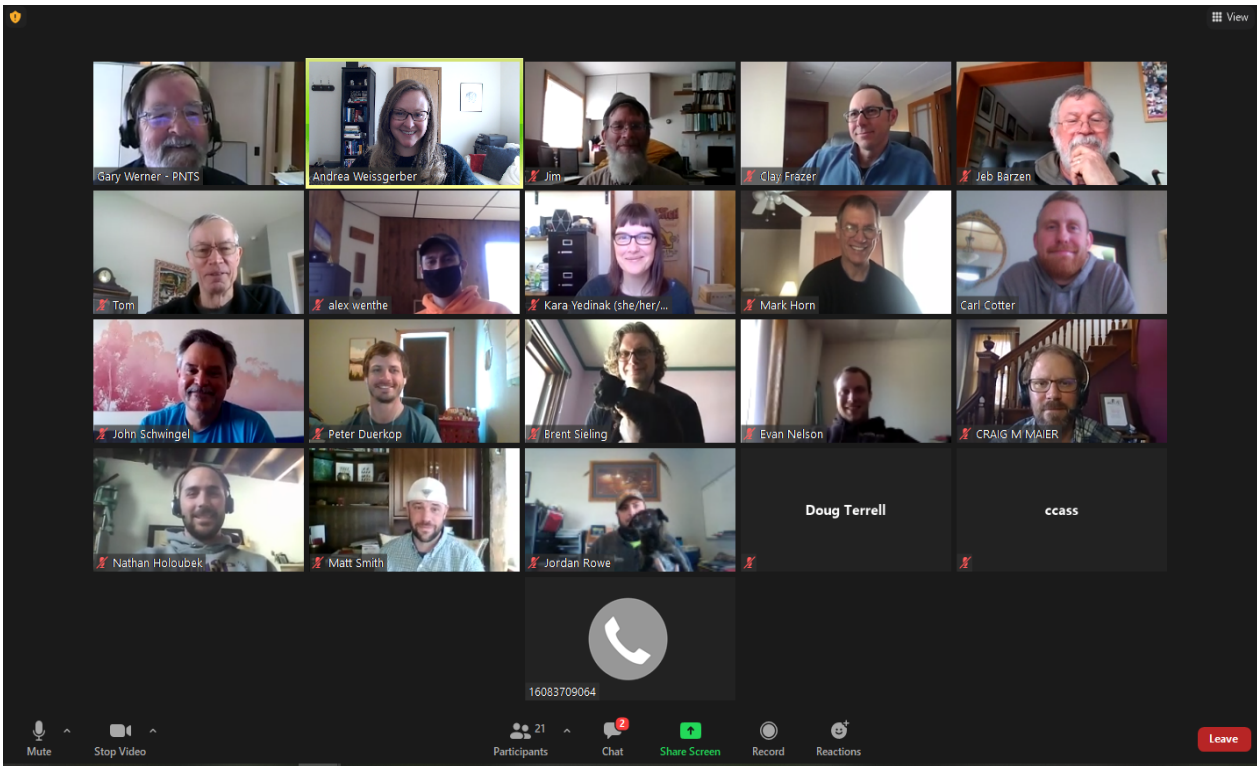
- Commence 10:00 AM
- Introductions and Agenda and Ballot Corrections
    - None
- Officer Reports:
    - Secretary's report – Jim Elleson
        - No updates
    - Treasurer's report – Clay Frazer
        - UW Credit Union
            - Checking, CD and Savings
            - Checking balance as of today: $4510.82
            - CD balance as of today: $4251.45
            - Savings must maintain balance of $5
            - Total = $8,767.27
        - 2021 membership gross total to date: $2,893.00
            - 2020 membership total: $1,696.00
            - 2019 membership total: $2,700.00
            - Biggest membership gross total in 2021!

        - Expenditures
            - 2020 staff payroll total: $2,875.00
                - Payroll is 92% of total expenditures
- Committee reports:
    - Standards – Jim Elleson
        - Guidelines finalized (https://prescribedfire.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Qualifications-for-Prescribed-Fire-Personnel.pdf)
        - Short two-page primer for apprentices in progress
    - Government Relations – Stacey Marion
        - In contact with Michele Witecha and others in WDNR to provide feedback on the Fire Data Dashboard (live now) and Prescribed Fire Data Dashboard (in progress)
            - Map with a large number of attributes to see locations, frequencies, attach experience levels to determine risk assessments, etc.
            - https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/forestfire/fireManagementDashboards
        - Council was big impetus in getting these rolling
        - Working to get Prescribed Fire Dashboard live by the spring season
        - These dashboards map the burns the DNR conducts, and might include federal gov burns as well
        - Fire needs assessment says we should be burning 1 million acres!
            - Possibility to setup dashboard with these goals in mind with feedback loops to determine how well we are reaching these goals
            - Can be completed by region, numbers, etc.
            - Identify gaps in where fire is not being implemented
        - Can also be a resource for tools for prescribed fire policies be it insurance, conservation, etc.
        - Quantitatively addresses potential barriers for prescribed fire
        - Goal is for the data to support our ideas and objectives in order to make legislative changes and improve accessibility to prescribed fire
            - Address holes in what is limiting prescribed fire
        - Capabilities to match attributes – i.e. Karner Blue butterfly restoration
        - Michele welcomes input on how it can be improved, especially for contractors.
            - *Gov Relations committee can collect feedback to give to Michele*
        - Suggestion to have a demonstration on how to use the dashboard in order to help people how to populate it.
            - Consider WPFC as the platform for demonstration
        - New permitting system/process in progress
            - Special permits may be tracked online by 2022
            - WDNR and federal burns are being tracked in 2021
        - Burn contract/permit is not void if you did not take advantage of the activation day
            - Extenuating circumstances and can reactivate at a later time
            - Communicate often for permitting

        - Other States Burn Programs webpage in progress
            - *Send info to Andrea or Stacey if you hear any news on what states are doing in regard to certified burner programs, legislation, etc.*
            - http://www.forestencyclopedia.net/p/p544
    - Training – Jeb Barzen
        - Developed basic Fire Crew Primer (https://prescribedfire.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Basic-Fire-Crew-Primer-2020-11-22.pdf)
        - Recurring Training section in progress for Training Committee webpage
            - Information on organizations that offer yearly training, when it is typically offered, and the target audience
            - *Reach out to Andrea or Jeb about adding to this working list*
        - UW-Madison Course
            - Working on making it an official course starting 2022
            - 2021 course happening now, part virtual part field
            - 28 organizations have agreed to mentor students, including numerous members on the council in order for students to volunteer on burns as part of their training requirements
            - Curriculum developed in cooperation with numerous organizations including TNC
            - Looking to expand this curriculum model in other UW schools
                - Most tangible interest from UW-Platteville
                - Reach out to Northland College
        - TPE Burn School
            - Lots of participation – 170 participants
            - Mostly students and private landowners
    - Education and Outreach – Alex Wenthe
        - Main focus has been on website
        - Website construction
            - Updated logos on home page tab
            - Updated parent tabs (Burn, Plan, Learn) to reflect new content within and be more friendly on all platforms
            - Updated landing pages
            - Updated homepage supporting and organizational member to be featured in prominent home page location
            - Updated contractor page
            - Fixed link on Join page for listserv sign up
                - Looking to make this its own page
        - *Take a look at the website and provide any feedback to Alex or Andrea*
        - Looking to have a virtual meeting before burn season ramps up
            - Thursday March 11th @ 5:30
        - Scott willing to help managing the website as needed
            - Don't need to ask for a budget item
        - Quercus employee to help with cleaning up website and improve aesthetics and design aspects
        - Website analytics:

            - Contractor page is most viewed webpage on website
            - 2,368 page views in the last 30 days, up 20%
    - Membership – Andrea Weissgerber
        - 63 total members
            - 10 organization members
            - 5 supporting members
            - 7 lifetime members
            - 8 student members
            - 33 individuals
        - 614 total page likes on Facebook
        - 47 total followers on LinkedIn
- 2021 Budget Requests
    - Website expenditures
        - None
    - PPE Support
        - 14 students enrolled in the 2021 UW course
        - Currently have 18 coveralls and helmets
        - Plenty of PPE, but not a good variety of small sizes
        - Up to $500 allotment for additional PPE
        - Gary Werner moves to approve motion for $500 PPE budget
        - Mark Horn seconds motion
        - Motion Approved
    - WPFC Zoom account
        - Basic membership is ~$15/month
        - Need to look into ability for multiple people to host meetings
        - Gary Werner motion to authorize up to $250 to establish Zoom for 2021
        - Clay Frazer seconds motion
        - Motion Approved
- 2021 Winter Board Elections
    - Paul Quinlan and Carl Cotter rotating off the board – Thank you both!!
    - Cory Gritzmacher – Director
        - Mequon Nature Preserve Director of Operations and Restoration
        - Looking for opportunities to expand knowledge of fire and how to best use it at the MNP
    - Nate Holoubek – Director
        - Wildlife Biologist with WDNR
        - Previous fire behavior scientist for DNR, experience with historical fire history work, and studying ecological framework on how fire shaped native communities in WI
    - Jeb Barzen – Chair
    - Motion to nominate new board of directors and chair, all in agreement
    - Matt Smith – Incumbent Director
    - Rob Baller – Incumbent Director
    - **BIG thanks to Carl and Paul for all the work they have done for the council!**
- Discussions
    - TPOS Updates and Discussion – Craig Maier

- New request for support from Joint Fire Science Program
    - Budget for 16,000,000 in federal budget
    - Support in Congress appropriations committees
        - House and Senate sub committees
        - Reach out to representatives
    - Biden administration DOI budget not released yet
- Sign the letter of support for the Joint Fire Science Program
    - https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdjO2kahUK5PGgjQh64-kpiwT-BxftkQLh6t9qTiN1f0ZVR5w/viewform?gxids=7628
        - WPFC should be recognized as an organization for singing the letter
- Consortia events
    - Burning issues workshop recordings
        - Lake States Fire Consortium and MI Fire Council
        - Fire history, fire councils, adapting prescribed fire under COVID
        - http://lakestatesfiresci.net/BurningIssuesWorkshop2021_02_02_21.html
    - Fueling collaboration recordings
        - https://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/webinars/fueling/
- Virtual demonstration site
    - http://www.tposfirescience.org/sites/

- Northeast Regional Prescribed Fire Council Coordinating Group (NERPFCCG) Regional Effort Update – John Schwingel
    - Addressing biggest barriers to prescribed fire councils in the NE region
    - Fill out the Survey to identify priorities and biggest barriers
        - https://uwmadison.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_57kHxyWbM51F2ui?Q_DL=sdOgPJ4xrCbnmDy_57kHxyWbM51F2ui_MLRP_cHoIgBAUKhlogse&Q_CHL=email -OR- https://uwmadison.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_57kHxyWbM51F2ui
    - Next forum dates:
        - May 19th 2021
        - September 15th 2021
        - November 17th 2021
- Getting More Fire on the Ground in 2021 and Beyond (round table)
    - Burn boss certification/Training at leadership level
        - Alternative approaches
        - Hard to get folks interested and take on responsibility
        - In order to get more fire on the ground, need more fire leaders
        - Host more trainings if NWCG certified, and if not certified, help facilitate training to build a wider base
            - NWCG lead instructor and additional subject matter experts

        - Encourage interaction between other fire professionals of different skill levels, backgrounds, and organizations
    - Live fire training imperative
    - *Reach out to Kara Yedinak (Forest Products Lab) to facilitate folks getting their own training rolling*
        - Modeling platforms
        - Webinar or workshop
        - WPFC could sponsor
- Adjourn 12:00 PM