

CHAT CAPTURE FROM JUNE 10, 2020 WEBINAR ON CERTIFIED PRESCRIBED BURN PROGRAMS

See the full report "Insights and Suggestions for Certified Prescribed Burn Manager Programs,"
Megan S. Matonis, Forest Stewards Guild (2020):

<http://www.conservationgateway.org/ConservationPractices/FireLandscapes/FireLearningNetwork/NetworkProducts/Pages/Certified-Rx-Burn-Mgr-Programs-2020.aspx>

The chat capture below has been arranged by conversational thread to the extent possible. For full context, view the recording of the webinar at: <https://tnc.box.com/s/v6o3h8d2ebdgd721k91jav288n27mpee>

Jacob McCarthy : Prior experience take into consideration wildland fire suppression experience?

Panelist John Saddler (FL) : Jacob, In Florida we do not take wildland fire experience into consideration for experience.

Jacob McCarthy : Funding for training course?

Report author Meg Matonis : Jacob--page 23 in the report has a table of course fees and pages 25-26 talk about the cost of developing and administering programs in several states, including some of the funding sources (or lack of funding sources)

Jacob McCarthy : Thank you Meg. See that as a possible problem for getting a certification program started in WY. Appreciate your presentation!

Meg Matonis : Also, in relation to Jacob's question on funding, several states mentioned this as a big issue for program administration--they were legally mandated to develop programs but were not given additional funding to do so. The program manager in Colorado estimated that it cost \$30,000 to develop the course, and the DNR in Minnesota estimated it would cost \$50,000 to develop a course if the state decides to develop a program. The CO Division of Fire Prevention and Control applied for a grant to subsidize the cost of program development.

Jacob McCarthy : Is there acreage limits that states hold burners to?

John Saddler: No Limits on acreage. However, our authorizations are limited to one-day.

Meg Matonis : Jacob, I didn't see any states with acreage limitations for certified burners. Colorado has different requirements for smoke permits on burns >5 acres in grass fuels and >10 acres in forest fuels, and North Carolina confers liability protection to private landowners that are not certified if their burns are less than 50 acres.

Tim Kirkpatrick : Why would you advise against live fire in training?

John Saddler: Live fire is great for the course, however, we found that over half of the days we scheduled were not good days to burn. Also by not having field days, you greatly increase your available locations to hold the course.

Peter Hoagland, NRCS PA : What percentage of these certified burners are implementing Farm Bill contracted burns with NRCS Financial Assistance on private lands?

Meg Matonis : Peter, I don't have any info on Farm Bill / NRCS funding as it relates to certification, but that's a good question

Panelist Greg Guess (OH): My understanding is that each state's NRCS office sets the standards for that state, including requirements for burn plans and vendors

Susan Parry : Greg G- We have qualifications set for TSPs through NRCS policy, but sometimes those that meet our requirements are not considered qualified to implement/oversee burns according to the state laws. Is OH using certified contractors to implement burns under NRCS programs as TSPs (Tech Service Providers)?

Greg Guess: Susan P - for Ohio at least, NRCS or FSA allows any state certified burn manager to implement burns under farm bill programs. If a landowner was going to be reimbursed for a burn plan, a TSP qualified to write plans would be required. In practice there are no TSP's that write burn plans so the burn manager ends up not getting reimbursed for the plan writing

Panelist Lenya Quinn-Davidson (CA): In California, NRCS has a more rigid set of standards and requires that an NWCG-qualified Type 2 Burn Boss to write plans and lead burns. We only have a few private contractors like that, so it's a big bottleneck for us here. I'm hopeful that NRCS will amend its state policy and accept the state certification, too.

Panelist Kara Karboski (WA): And to add to the NRCS conversation, while NRCS in WA currently does not have prescribed fire cost-share, we are working with them currently to re-establish that and hope we can tie in our certified burner program into the requirements

Carolyn Baldwin : In Kansas, NRCS allows landowners to burn their own land for conservation contract fulfillment without any training. In general, it's working well.

Carolyn Baldwin : NRCS is heavily involved in private lands burning in KS. Range conservationists will write up burn plans for individuals upon request. They are also involved in the joint agency classroom trainings held around the state each year. These are free to the landowner, last about 5 hours.

Susan Parry : Greg G- So, the TSP or manager can implement the burn but not write the plan? Per CA- BIG bottleneck for us, too. we accept state certification, but the state certification level is up to NWCG standards, so we are lacking people qualified in the state.

Greg Guess : Susan P - For Ohio at least, the bar to be qualified to write a burn plan as a TSP is higher than the state requirements to implement the burn.

- Jacob McCarthy : Is there a minimum of resources and training needed based on acreage and fuel type for certified burners to show in their burn plans?
- Meg Matonis : Also great questions--the task books in Colorado, Illinois, Kentucky, and Pennsylvania provide some guidance about burn complexity to become certified. Other states specify that people need to lead a certain number of burns or that they can just participate in a certain number of burns. I didn't see requirements in terms of burn complexity, size, or fuel type. Florida does specify that applicants need to conduct the Rx burns need in Florida
- Carolyn Baldwin : Are there any data that show that having a certification program results in greater safety/fewer escapes that end up in court?
- Marek Smith : Similar to Carolyn's question... is there data to suggest that goals around increased prescribed fire or improved access for practitioners have been realized in any of these states with CPBM programs?
- Meg Matonis : Carolyn--There are no comprehensive assessments of whether CPBM programs achieve intended outcomes. Yoder (2008) found greater numbers of escaped debris fires in states with CPBM programs; however, this study was based on data when only six states had certification programs. It is difficult to isolate the impact of a single factor on the prevalence of escaped prescribed burns, especially since escapes are relatively infrequent. A formal assessment of learning outcomes and changes in burner behaviors following certification is an important next step for developing new CPBM programs and refining existing programs.
- Meg Matonis : Here's a link to the paper by Jonathan Yoder (2008):
https://www.fs.fed.us/psw/publications/documents/psw_gtr208en/psw_gtr208en_639-650_yoder.pdf
- Jacob McCarthy : How did engaging Legislators occur to begin the process of drafting legislation?
- Kara Karboski : Hi Jacob! In relation to your question on engaging legislators...various Council members have engaged legislators over the years and developed relationships with them which has been crucial as well as engage with them through our TREX program and try to bring them out on field trips. That being said, The Nature Conservancy in Washington has been a very strong partner with legislative liaison staff that have helped lead these efforts with our legislature. Having partners who already have that skill is helpful.