

**Minutes: Pine Rockland Working Group**  
IFAS Tropical Research and Education Center, Homestead  
Jan. 12, 2005, 9:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

34 participants from TNC, U. of VT, IRC, Ecostudies Institute, Everglades NP, FIU, SERC, Miami-Dade DERM, Miami-Dade Parks NAM, USGS, Fairchild TBG

The mission of the Pine Rockland Working Group (PRWG) is; “to maintain and restore the pine rockland natural community, associated species, fire and other natural processes upon which they all depend.”

General description and goals; “A collaborative, interdisciplinary, international effort, the PRWG will increase basic understanding of the ecosystem and appropriate management practices by identifying, obtaining support for and communicating the results of new research and coordinated monitoring efforts. It will build appreciation for the pine rocklands among all sectors of the community in order to gain support for conservation and sustainable management practices and to ensure safe interactions between people and the flammable forest. And it will forge mutually beneficial relationships between resource managers to help them accomplish their individual goals.

Vision Statement; “The members of the PRWG envision a future in which the pine rocklands of today are all still with us at the turn of the next century, but in better condition, and with a constituency of supporters in South Florida and the Bahamas to help keep them that way into the future.”

**Outreach Committee (Joy Klein, chair)**

Translation of S. Florida Interagency Fire Council brochure and creation of written Creole language education materials are dropped from consideration. Creole radio and video spots will be pursued but funding is required. Roger Hammers summary of pine rocklands should be translated into Spanish.

Miami-Dade Co. pine rockland/fire education materials are available online at [http://www.miamidade.gov/derm/plants/prescribed\\_fire.asp](http://www.miamidade.gov/derm/plants/prescribed_fire.asp)

Joy has access to lots of Pine Rockland Field Guides. Free for educational purposes. \$3 for resale.

Outreach committee will work on revising and/or deploying existing educational displays.

A media package and plan should be developed for proactive use (e.g. prior to wildfire season or Rx fire). TNC marketing specialists can help if lead time is given.

A pine rockland “mascot” was suggested to help with outreach efforts.

USGS webmaster is willing to post anything the group wants within reason. Currently the info about the 2004 Workshop and PRWG minutes are the only things posted. Links to agency and organization websites can be added, documents can be linked (e.g. Bahamas assessment) and participant contact info can be included. Anything is possible.

WUI issues in Miami got attention during 2004 wildfire season so now may be a good time to engage decision makers. The Miami-Dade District 3 Fire Chief may be ready to get on board with firewise efforts.

### **Symposium Committee (Sonya Thompson, new chair)**

The group seemed to like the idea of a three-day session for the next symposium to be conducted in winter 2006 with a potential follow-up workshop in the Bahamas. Draft schedule;

- Wed. – Field trips on mainland
- Thrs. - Presentations on new science and management issues  
Evening social/poster session/dinner
- Fri. - A.M. Concurrent workshops
  1. outreach session for decision makers, media etc.
  2. "how to" basic monitoring workshop based on recommendations of science committee
  3. other workshop(s)?P.M. Travel to Bahamas
- Sat. - Field trip and workshop on fire management planning on Abaco or Andros
- Sun - Field trip and workshop on fire management planning

Estimated cost for the U.S. portion of the event is \$5,000. PRWG members are encouraged to seek funding from their agency or organization. SERC, TNC, and Everglades have indicated willingness to try to contribute to this cost. Joe O'Brien may be able to assist with travel costs for out of town participants. No firm commitments have been made yet. A small grant (<\$1000) from the Florida Native Plant Soc. could be an option.

IFAS conference facility in Homestead holds 180 and Joy Klein may be able to reserve it free of charge. Rooms for break-out sessions are available and AV equipment is built in.

### **Science Committee (Jim Snyder, chair)**

Joe O'Brien will be conducting BMP review as part of a Joint Fire Science Program effort. Bibliography from this effort will be the beginning of pine rockland annotated bib.

Committee will id common monitoring practices and propose standard basic monitoring for all sites. Please send description of each group's current monitoring practices to Jim Snyder.

Will start to focus on identifying research priorities and funding source list.

Encyclopedia of Southern Fire Science is available from National Interagency Fire Center.  
<http://www.forestryencyclopedia.net/Encyclopedia/Fire%20Science>

### **Organizational Committee (Chris Bergh, Keith Bradley new chair?)**

One outcome of the National Fire Plan will be analysis of "landscape scale" fire issues and fire management capacity needs. S. Florida federal and other public lands will be included in the "S. Florida Planning Unit." This is likely to require federal agencies to share resources and other non-federal players are highly encouraged to join in if they have a fire budget of \$25K/year or more. The goal is to have this focus on wildfire suppression first and on prescribed burning by the 2009 federal fiscal year. FDOF is already in the mix.

Pursuant to a fire management agreement between FDOF and US Dept of Interior, "Annual Operating Plans" must be created between Everglades National Park and FDOF and the Keys National Wildlife Refuges and FDOF. It may be useful to merge the Annual Operating Plans for the two federal parties and FDOF.

The Greater Okefenokee Association of Landowners is a good model of cooperative fire management. Bob Panko will obtain a copy of their agreement circulate to committee members.

## **Presentations and Discussion**

Pine Rockland Best Management Practices - Joe O'Brien will be conducting BMP review as part of a Joint Fire Science Program effort. He will be contacting fuels managers about which management practices work and which do not. Joe hopes to make use of the existing pine rockland working group to move this project forward. The project is slated to be complete in summer 2006. For more information contact Joe at [jjobrien@fs.fed.us](mailto:jjobrien@fs.fed.us)

New Pine Rockland Conservation Initiatives at the Institute for Regional Conservation - Keith Bradley described status of pine rocklands in Miami-Dade County plus ongoing and upcoming IRC activities including inventory and monitoring of plant species and private lands restoration and management. For more information contact Keith at [linum@bellsouth.net](mailto:linum@bellsouth.net)

Prescribed Fire Training, Demonstration and Research Project in the Bahamas - Chris Bergh reviewed the successful, first of its kind effort conducted in October 2004 on Abaco. The Nature Conservancy-led training involved 40 participants (20 full trainees) who conducted two small burns. Fire effects research was initiated by Joe O'Brien from USFS. For more information on training and operations contact Chris at [cbergh@tnc.org](mailto:cbergh@tnc.org). For more info on the research contact Joe at [jjobrien@fs.fed.us](mailto:jjobrien@fs.fed.us).

Defining "Maintenance" Fire Management of Pine Rocklands in Everglades National Park - Dave Loveland presented ENP's conceptual plans for maintenance burning based on a normal distribution centered on 3-year fire return interval. This will include primarily wet season, but some dry season, fires. A copy of the maps and tables presented will be circulated with these minutes. Contact Dave at [dave\\_loveland@nps.gov](mailto:dave_loveland@nps.gov).

**Next meeting will be June 15, 2005 in Homestead. The morning will be set aside for committees to meet and the full group will meet in the afternoon.**

P.S. Almost forgot. Heather Sherman, a skilled photographer and trained fire crew member, wants to assist fire suppression and/or prescribed burners by taking photographs. She can be reached at [hsherman@prodigy.net](mailto:hsherman@prodigy.net) or 954 926 2358.