

Minutes: Pine Rockland Working Group

June 30, 2004, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. at IFAS Tropical Research and Education Center, Homestead FL

34 participants from TNC, UF-TREC, Everglades NP, National Key Deer Refuge, USF, FIU, Miami-Dade DERM, Miami-Dade Parks NAM, FDOF, USFWS, USGS, Fairchild TBG, UF-IFAS

Follow-up February 2004 Pine Rockland Fire Management and Ecology Workshop

1. Finalize a mission statement for the Pine Rockland Working Group (PRWG)

The group brainstormed and generated a list of mission concepts and gave Chris Bergh the go ahead to draft mission statement for review by the group. Bob Panko provided a very helpful draft. Please send your comments on the draft mission/vision statement below to Chris Bergh and he will bring a revised draft to the next meeting for final approval.

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

2. Identify measurable goals for the PRWG working group to pursue based on the action items proposed at the workshop

A. Enhance public outreach (see Outreach Committee in section 3):

Translation into languages other than English is primarily a Miami-Dade concern. Creole speakers typically read English so Creole audio media are a target. Joy Klein can call upon Creole translators for this. Spanish pamphlet is already done but it is complex. Joy recommends translating the S. Fla. Fire Council brochure into Spanish. **Joy will have draft Creole audio and fire council brochure translation by January and they will be in circulation by June 2005.**

All agencies should send copies of digital outreach materials and an inventory of hard copy outreach materials (with contact info for how to obtain them) to Chris Bergh by end of September 2004. These will be posted to the website by January 2005.

Firewise Communities education:

The materials are available in Spanish from Gary Lewis at FDOF. **Miami and Keys participants should get with Bob Rehr of FDOF to start discussion of a S. Fla.-specific Firewise brochure and develop a draft by January and have it in circulation by June 2005.** We should try to get Firewise concepts aired on local TV and other outlets if possible.

Workshops have proven hard to get off the ground in Miami-Dade and the Keys are due for another workshop in a year or so. Again, **Miami and Keys should get with Bob to start this process up again for implementation in 2006.**

Everglades NP outreach staff person, Alice Clarke, may be able to help reach a national audience via the WWW with the "pine rocklands are special message." Other group members may be able to link to this site.

- B. Plan ahead for another, better, workshop/symposium in 2006 (see Symposium Committee in section 3):

It was agreed that winter 2006 is good timing. **We need to work in advance to identify the overall budget. This will be discussed at the next meeting. Once a budget is id'ed we need to try to get funding into various agency budget plans this fiscal year, 2004/2005, for use in 2005/2006. Please start thinking now about what your agency or organization might be able to contribute.**

It was suggested that the 2006 event have some of the same elements of the 2004 event (i.e. updates on current research, management practices and identification of needs in these areas, plus field trips). **Some new proposed elements were a half or full day workshop on monitoring techniques and a focus on getting decision makers and other key people (e.g. politicians, county and city managers, talk show hosts, etc.) to a session geared towards their needs.**

The possibility of having the workshop in the Bahamas was discussed but it was determined that the cost would be prohibitive and that it might be best to have a pre or follow-up workshop/tour in the Bahamas on the weekend before or after the main event. **Chris Bergh will explore this with the Bahamian government and NGO's.**

- C. Create an annotated bibliography of relevant publications with Internet accessibility (see Science Committee in section 3):

The Joint Fire Science Program has solicited a request for a synthesis document on pine rockland BMP' s and this will lead to a thorough literature review and survey of managers. **Joe O'Brien may be able to provide the lit review in an annotated bib style that can be posted on the website.**

USGS will have an annotated bibliography with links to non-copyrighted materials when they are digitally available. **What is the time frame on this Jim Snyder?**

Fairchild maintains a Procite Database and may be able to be the central repository for hard copies. **Fairchild staff will check by September.**

- D. Coordinate fire effects/bio monitoring across sites and agencies (see Science Committee in section 3):

It was emphasized that monitoring itself is not "research" (i.e. no hypothesis, replications, etc.) but that if our various sites collect monitoring data on an agreed upon set of basic parameters we can learn a lot from one another and draw conclusions that are not possible with today's variable monitoring schemes. Proposed standard monitoring elements included abiotic factors (e.g. % crown scorch, scorch height, char height, soil/duff consumption...) invasive species (e.g. occurrence, % cover...), Threatened and Endangered species (e.g. occurrence, % cover...) and pine trees (fire induced mortality by size class...). It was suggested that monitoring should be based on goals (e.g. top-kill 50% of understory hardwoods).

The Science Committee will draft a proposed minimum monitoring scheme for review at the next meeting.

- E. Foster specific research projects (see Science Committee in section 3):
A status survey of biotic inventories for the pine rockland sites should be conducted.

A comprehensive fire history should be completed. Might this tie in to National Fire Plan Condition Classes?

A linkage between Mike Deuver's fire in the Everglades 2050 model should be made with planned hydrological alterations.

Fire effects on nutrient cycling should be explored.

Mechanical/manual pre-fire treatments and fire surrogate treatments should be planned and studied.

Fire effects on braken fern and other aggressive natives like *Trema micrantha* and Sumac should be addressed.

Any research should be fitted into the CERP to the degree possible.

Science committee will identify potential funding sources by September and priorities by next meeting.

- F. Enhance cooperation and resource sharing among participants (see Organizational Committee in section 3):

The Everglades Miami-Dade agreement is still in process.

The Lake Wales Ridge Ecosystem Working Group was proposed as a useful example of interagency cooperative efforts bounded by and MOU. **Chris Bergh will get a copy for review by the subcommittee.**

We might be able to use the "Annual Operating Plan" process rather than a formal MOU. There is already a three way AOP between Miami Dade, FDOF and ENP. And there is a two way between FDOF and the USFWS in the Keys.

Subcommittee will talk by September and have a game plan by January 2005.

3. Structure committees to accomplish a goal or group of the goals above.

The names below are from people who self selected at the meeting. Other PRWG participants who could not attend the June meeting are encouraged to join one or more groups if they have time to contribute. Contact Chris Bergh and the committee leader to join the dialogue.

The Outreach Committee will be led by Joy Klein and will include Jane Dozier, Tiffany Smith, Roberto Torres, Alison Higgins, Everglades NP interpretation staff (possibly Alice Clarke) and possibly someone from USFWS Keys refuges.

The Workshop/Symposium Committee will be led by Chris Bergh and will include Sonja Thompson and Dave Loveland.

The Science Committee will be led by Jim Snyder and will include Joy Klein, Brian Beckage, Gina Hernandez, Liz Struhar, Jenn Possley, Kristie Wendelberger, Chris Bergh and, hopefully Joe O'Brien and a soil scientist from TREC.

The Organizational Committee will be led by Chris Bergh and will include Sonja Thompson, Bob Panko, Gary Lewis, Joe Maguire, possibly the new FDOF District Manager and possibly someone from USFWS Keys refuges.

4. Develop a timeline for implementation of goals. Timelines are incorporated in section 2 above.

Review of the Draft Miami-Dade County Natural Areas Management Plan sections on pine rockland and ecotones resulted in lots of favorable comments and some constructive criticisms.

The field visit to TREC's 10-acre pine rockland patch resulted in a ton of discussion on invasive species and fire management and an offer from Miami-Dade to help TREC with a grant proposal.

The next meeting of the PRWG will be on January 12, 2005 at the TREC in Homestead.

Meanwhile, committee leaders will work with their committee members to make progress on goals identified in June.