



# NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP

Memorandum

November 12, 1998

To: NWCG Members, Working Team/Advisory Group Chairs

From: Jim Stumpf, Executive Secretary

Subject: 73rd Meeting Minutes

Attached are the minutes from our meeting held September 30 - October 1, 1998, in Yellowstone National Park. Comments received have been incorporated in these minutes.

Also included (for primary members) is a "clean" version of the FEWT charter. The document sent with our November 9 memo contained some electronic glitches.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need clarification.

*Jim Stumpf*

Attachments:  
Meeting Minutes  
Mnemonics Recommendation  
FEWT Charter

**NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP**  
**73rd MEETING MINUTES**  
**September 1998**

The 73rd meeting of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group was held in Yellowstone National Park, Mammoth, Montana, September 30 to October 1, 1998.

*Members attending:* Don Artley, Chair, Montana Division of Forestry  
Roger Erb, Vice Chair, Fish and Wildlife Service  
Rick Gale, National Park Service  
Jim Glenn, Bureau of Land Management  
(for Les Rosenkrance)  
Harry Croft, Forest Service  
Bill Sommers, Forest Service Research  
Steve Haglund, Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Jim Hull, NASF, Texas Forest Service  
Jim Stumpf, Executive Secretary

*Guests Attending:*                    September 30, 1998

Jim Smalley, NFPA (Associate Member)  
Tom Minnich, USFA (Associate Member)  
Don Motanic, Intertribal Timber Council  
John Skeels, USFS, ROSS Project Manager  
George Martin, TWT, Forest Service  
Bill Leenhouts, FUWT, Fish and Wildlife Service  
Mike Funston, IRMWT, Forest Service  
Arch Wells, BIA  
Dr. Darrell Herd, USGS  
Tory Majors, IBMWT, Forest Service  
Suz Rittenhouse, Forest Service  
John Fort, Florida Prescribed Fire Training Center

October 1, 1998:

Jim Smalley, NFPA (Associate Member)  
Tom Minnich, USFA (Associate Member)  
Bill Leenhouts, FUWT  
Arch Wells, BIA  
Don Motanic, Intertribal Timber Council

**SUBJECT:** Approval of minutes from the 72nd NWCG meeting.

**DISCUSSION:** The final 72nd meeting minutes were mailed after member review and acceptance.

**SECONDED AND CARRIED.**

**SUBJECT:** Forest Service Fire Director.

**DISCUSSION:** Harry Croft told NWCG that Jose Cruz from California had been selected as the new Fire and Aviation Management Director for the Forest Service. Jose is in transit and moving to the Washington, D.C., area; he should be in place by early November. Jose will be the NWCG representative for the Forest Service.

**SUBJECT:** Wildland Fire and Air Quality Modeling and Data System.

**DISCUSSION:** The Fire Use Working Team supported plan development. EPA is tied in with modeling and implementation of the plan. Need to determine the role of NWCG with both budget and staffing. We need to be sure that an interdisciplinary team is working on the total project (\$8,775,000 to implement 16 of the top 45 fire program element strategies). How will NWCG be involved with implementation of this plan? This and other big ticket items are somewhat overwhelming. It may be premature to lock into the project at this time; perhaps a continued awareness is what is needed. The other alternative is, should this project be handed off to the agencies? This project will become more important with agencies' increased prescribed burning. The Forest Service is filling an Air Quality position; perhaps for the time being, this person could continue shepherding the project. Some of the recommendations in the report may need to be deferred or sent on to other research activities. The consensus was not to provide another Working Team under NWCG.

**MOTION:** 1) Accept the report *Wildland Fire and Air Quality, Modeling and Data Systems-National Strategic Plan*. 2) Have FUWT continue to monitor status of the plan and keep NWCG advised of progress on the action items.

**SECONDED AND CARRIED.**

**SUBJECT:** IRM Program Lead.

**DISCUSSION:** Barry Mathias has been selected as Program Lead for the IRM position at the Fire Center. We are able to obligate moving costs to FY98.

**SUBJECT:** Fire time accounting.

**DISCUSSION:** Tory Majors, IBMWT, discussed the CA-USFS proposal. There are some gaps in the CA proposal. At this time there are some holes in the program that have been discussed with the CA-USFS. Recommend not supporting at this time until program requirements have been cleared up. The IBMWT will help identify those data systems and elements needed in reporting. The IBMWT will continue to follow up on the program and report back at a later time. The final proposal should include work done by the ROSS project. The proposed project needs to support an incident in all aspects, not just a portion of the entire job. The IBMWT will have a full strategic plan for implementation of this proposal by the end of FY 1999.

**SUBJECT:** IRMWT membership.

**DISCUSSION:** The WT would like to add a fire research member to the Team. This will fill a vacant position left by Jim Saveland. It is the responsibility of the WT Chair to fill positions.

**SUBJECT:** IRMWT technical standards.

**DISCUSSION:** Recommend software applications for NWCG. The Windows 3.1 system should not be used or supported past January 1999. Windows 3.1 is not supported by Microsoft, nor is it adaptable for 2000 conversion.

**MOTION:** Approve the recommendation to delete use of Windows 3.1 after January 1999.

**SUBJECT:** Position mnemonics.

**DISCUSSION:** As a follow-up to the 72nd meeting and previous correspondence, the IRMWT is providing the attached recommendations for updating the mnemonics system for fire qualifications and State and local level mnemonics.

**MOTION:** Adopt recommendations presented by IRMWT, with the additional caution not to use four-letter mnemonics that would be offensive.

**SUBJECT:** NWCG web page.

**DISCUSSION:** Work on the home page is not completed; they believe there are ways to simplify access to it. Current structure can be simplified, but the WT is not ready to make recommendations at this time. There are advantages in providing optimum information on the public area. Currently there are three web site portions: 1) public access available to all, currently unlimited; 2) semi-protected that will require password,

and 3) password protected, work in progress.

**MOTION:** Provide two locations for information on the web site: 1) A public area that will provide information such as meeting minutes, general NWCG information, changing standards, etc. The public side of the home page will be predominately for fire users, but we will not be able to preclude the general public from access as well. 2) A password protected area for work in progress for NWCG and all Working Teams. It was recommended that Working Teams take extra care in development of minutes so they are readable and accurate before being placed on the web site.

**SECONDED AND CARRIED.**

**SUBJECT:** ROSS project.

**DISCUSSION:** Approved to continue with the project by the Department of Agriculture so the project can proceed, and continue with any contract work that may be needed. Forest Service will need to do the approval, but this should occur now that Departmental approval has been received. Three validation sessions are planned for this year to improve feedback and information output on the ROSS project. MIRPS and the ROSS project will be combined and provided as a part of ROSS Work Plan. A pilot implementation program of the Dispatch Emergency Messaging System will be started in February 1999 at NICC and two adjacent geographical areas. ROSS will look toward full implementation of messaging by July 1999. Current staffing is at 39 percent, which is about 15 positions. The expectation from other agencies is still unknown. The ROSS project will need assistance from all other partner agencies in time, FTEs, and financial commitment. Agencies need to provide a briefing within themselves. This can be done by NWCG members, or John Skeels will assist. Agencies need to exhibit support for the ROSS project within their organization.

**SUBJECT:** NIFSIP/IFIRS projects.

**DISCUSSION:** A draft charter, which had not been reviewed by IRMWT members, was presented for information. This was an action item from the 72nd meeting, and needs more refinement prior to further consideration. The project was originally chartered by the FFALC and sanctioned by NWCG. The need still exists to have one system for statistical gathering of fire information. IRMWT believes this system has a great deal of potential and that NWCG should move forward. The IRMWT will move forward with the charter; there will be a need for support and funding of this project, as well as with the ROSS project. Defer this discussion pending NWCG review of the entire spectrum of projects in an effort to provide priorities.

**SUBJECT:** Prescribed Fire Training Centers.

**DISCUSSION:** FUWT and TWT have further discussed where we should go with this proposal. It does not appear to either Working Team that this issue is a role of NWCG to try and deal with local prescribed fire training. They have also looked at other criteria that should be reviewed in determining the need for an informal assessment. This assessment was sent out to personnel from several agencies, but provided inconclusive data. The Wildland Fire Safety Awareness Study (recommendation #11) is to determine personnel and training needs for all agencies. Perhaps this would be a way to assess needs across the board.

**MOTION:** NWCG recognizes that prescribed fire centers are a key factor in accelerated agency personnel development to address agency wildland and prescribed fire treatment goals and objectives; that prescribed fire training and experience needs be incorporated into a strategic assessment of personnel needs in the Wildland Fire Safety Awareness Study, and that the assessment be implemented by individual agencies or coordinated by the FFALC for individual agencies as soon as possible. The process presented by the Wildland Fire Safety Awareness Study of moving from the lowest to the national level appears sound. This strategic assessment should evaluate all available options (not just fixed cost facilities [centers]), for hands-on prescribed fire training, including levels of training and experience currently provided and anticipated to be needed, additional training standards needed, and funding options and sources.

**SECONDED AND CARRIED.**

**SUBJECT:** Length of fire assignment.

**DISCUSSION:** The SHWT cannot make a recommendation at this time due to lack of available data. The Forest Service is reviewing other actions associated with their agency. The Wildland Fire Safety Awareness Study includes similar recommendations. Continued work is needed before a final recommendation can be made. SHWT can see that the length of shift issue is discussed at the April 1999 Wildland Firefighter Safety and Health Conference in Missoula.

**MOTION:** The SHWT will address firefighter safety and health issues, including length of assignment, at the planned April 1999 Wildland Firefighter Safety and Health Conference in Missoula. The conference will provide background information and an opportunity to consider length of assignment standards.

**SECONDED AND CARRIED.**

**SUBJECT:** Review the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Management Policy - Implementation Procedure Reference Guide.

**DISCUSSION:** This document has been reviewed and appropriate agency logos provided. The document is at the Government Printing Office and should be distributed within the next 6 to 8 weeks.

**SUBJECT:** Working Team/Advisory Group storage needs.

**DISCUSSION:** Input has been received from most of the Working Teams/Advisory Groups regarding storage of files at the National Interagency Fire Center. A total of 30 drawers (six 5-drawer cabinets) will be needed. Roger Erb and Jim Glenn will follow up to provide a specific location for the files. The Executive Secretary will send a letter to the Working Teams outlining storage procedures.

**SUBJECT:** USGS mapping systems.

**DISCUSSION:** USGS is proposing the use of satellite imagery to detect fires. It is their goal to detect fires less than 2 acres within 5 minutes with a 90 percent degree of accuracy. Tests accomplished have detected fires at less than 1/4 acre most of the time.

State-of-the-art satellite imagery produces one picture every 10 seconds, which may provide a needed detection service. They need to have a mechanism to include all Federal, State and local levels of detection. At this time there may not be an alternative that will provide this mechanism to State and local units. Federal detection information could go through the National Interagency Fire Center. The Forest Service State and private representative or the NIFC/NASF liaison would be logical contacts.

**SUBJECT:** Wildland Fire Training and Qualification System beyond 2000.

**DISCUSSION:** George Martin, TWT Chair, discussed the paper distributed to NWCG members in June 1998. TWT recommends that once final course updates are completed in FY 2001, there will be a need to develop or modify course work to maintain a level of currency. TWT recommendations include:

- 1) NWCG support the TWT, IOSWT and FUWT in implementing actions that will rectify existing problems with inadequately trained and qualified personnel, and problems that may jeopardize continued acceptance of the Wildland Fire Training and Qualification System.
- 2) Provide for organization, staffing and funding of a training development function to support the Wildland Fire Training and Qualification System.
- 3) Provide specific goals and direction regarding the future of the interagency fire

program.

- 4) Participate in an oversight agency or group to manage the evolution of the ICS and facilitate its implementation.

TWT is approaching the end of all initial course development. NWCG will need to make a decision on continued funding for the 2001 budget year to ensure a continuing course development and course revisions will be maintained in the future.

It is recommended that using the publication *Wildland Fire Training and Qualification System Beyond 2000* keep the training modification, updates, new course development and the potential to use skills that exist between NARTC and NIFC Training Development in future updates as discussion topics for forthcoming NWCG meetings and the NWCG futuring meeting. NWCG invites and would like to highlight the TWT at the June 9-10, 1999, meeting. We would like a complete presentation on project status, budget alternatives, training development, etc.

**SUBJECT:** NWS Director Kelly response, NWCG reply.

**DISCUSSION:** Don Artley had sent correspondence to Director Kelly regarding concerns about reduction of services from fire weather forecasters. NWCG received a favorable response that appeared to be supportive from Director Kelly. The FWWT drafted a letter to be sent to Director Kelly. The draft was discussed, and some revisions were deemed necessary. Chair Don Artley will make modifications and send the response to Director Kelly. Two additional points were raised: 1) A new Liaison will be appointed to the FWWT at the January 1999 NWCG meeting, and 2) Harry Croft will draft a letter for Congressman Weldon's signature from the Congressional Fire Service Institute in support of fire weather forecasting.

**SUBJECT:** Fire shelter standards.

**DISCUSSION:** There are two parts to the identification of standards - design and performance. Performance standards have become the largest problem and appear to be a matter of priorities in the development of standards. Harry Croft, Forest Service, will work with Missoula Technology and Development Center to see if we can complete these standards.

**SUBJECT:** Review of weather stations, weather network position and proposal paper.

**DISCUSSION:** Fire activity this summer and fall delayed completion of the draft position paper. Gerry Day, FWWT Chair, has asked that this issue be deferred to the January 1999 meeting.



**SUBJECT:** Prescribed Fire Training Centers.

**DISCUSSION:** John Fort, Florida Prescribed Fire Training Center, provided an overview of the work being done there. Their program gives confidence in burning and training to people attending. It appears their program is effective; it is one of several alternatives available. The recommendations made by the Fire Use and Training Working Teams earlier in these minutes remain applicable.

**SUBJECT:** Intertribal Timber Council.

**DISCUSSION:** The ITC is an association (networking group) of over 70 tribes throughout the United States. The Council began as an exclusive timber group, but has expanded to include increased use of fire on Native American lands. One of the recommendations from the current ITC symposium was to request full membership in NWCG. They do not want to be involved through a committee as a liaison. They plan to develop correspondence to NWCG requesting full membership, including their fair contribution to this membership.

**SUBJECT:** NFPA report.

**DISCUSSION:** Two new standards are out - NFPA 295, *Standard for Wildfire Control* and NFPA 1141, *Standard for Fire Protection in Planned Building Groups*. Two new standards are being tasked on wildland fire foams. A new revised standard 1977 *Fire Protective Clothing* will soon be issued. *Wildfire News and Notes* is intended to be distributed in the next few weeks. The fourth *Wildfire News and Notes* will be issued only via the FireWise web site.

**SUBJECT:** Should NWCG have another meeting with the Geographic Area Coordinating Groups?

**DISCUSSION:** We originally met with the GAGCs about 18 months ago and if we are to meet periodically, we need to determine if we want to meet in the spring of 1999. Because of timing and the role of NWCG, this meeting should be informational rather than directional/policy making. Don Artley will contact the GAGCs and attempt to determine if there is a need for a meeting, and what topics should be covered. From the NWCG point of view there doesn't appear to be a strong push for the meeting, but a couple of suggestions would be: allocation of resources, prescribed fire training, and implementation of the new Fire Policy. The date tentatively suggested is January 28, 1999, which would add one day to the previously scheduled NWCG meeting on January 26 and 27.

**SUBJECT:** Highlighting Working Teams at NWCG meetings.

**DISCUSSION:** We may not need to do this at each meeting, but when this is done we need to make sure we highlight specific teams to learn of their activities. We suggest inviting the Wildland Urban Interface Advisory Group to make a presentation at the January 1999 meeting to completely cover ongoing and planned actions. The Training Working Team will be invited to the June 1999 meeting. Liaisons should discuss this concept with their respective teams.

**SUBJECT:** U. S. Fire Administration activities.

**DISCUSSION:** NWCG correspondence sent to James Lee Witt, FEMA, has not been answered. The Fire Administration is still interested in being a full member, including payment of their share. It is agreed that during an introductory meeting between the new Forest Service Fire Director and FEMA that Jose Cruz could discuss the concern directly with FEMA. We would like to have a follow-up discussion at the January 1999 meeting.

The Blue Ribbon Panel report is due to the FEMA Director on October 1, 1998. The panel is composed of broad agency people (IAFC, NFPA, Fire Council, etc.). There was no representation from the wildland fire community, nor were there any Government or specific fire departments involved. Overall, the Fire Administration budget has been declining, but the personnel ceiling remains steady.

**SUBJECT:** Fireline Handbook.

**DISCUSSION:** After review, the IOSWT agreed that the only chapter needing revision was Chapter 5, Safety. The updated chapter will be sent with the existing handbooks that are purchased through the Publications Management System. All agencies and publication systems will be notified of this change so that books may be supplemented.

**SUBJECT:** IOSWT.

**DISCUSSION:** Rodger Voice is retiring from BLM and has been replaced by another BLM representative. Bob Leaverton, Deputy Forest Supervisor from Sante Fe National Forest, has been recommended as the new IOSWT Chair.

**MOTION:** Appoint Bob Leaverton Chair of IOSWT.

**SECONDED AND CARRIED.**

**SUBJECT:** Canadian coordinating meeting.

**DISCUSSION:** Les Rosenkrance is planning to represent NWCG at the Canadian meeting. It is important to continue contact with this group.

**SUBJECT:** Fire Equipment Working Team charter.

**DISCUSSION:** A revised charter was provided to clean up some of the problems with the existing charter. The revised charter offers some latitude and will permit FEWT to do their job.

**MOTION:** Accept the charter as amended.

**SECONDED AND CARRIED.**

**SUBJECT:** Mnemonics and responsibility.

**DISCUSSION:** The IOSWT should continue as the approving entity for position mnemonics. The physical work in making changes and modifications will remain with NIIC or the GAGCs. This will be for incident management positions and unit identifiers. We need to amend the direction to IOSWT that they are responsible for approval of new mnemonics. The National Interagency Incident Coordination group will continue to be the repository for mnemonics. Rick Gale will follow up with IOSWT and the Coordination Center.

**SUBJECT:** December visioning meeting.

**DISCUSSION:** We agreed to work on a long-term plan (vision) for NWCG for the next few years. The meeting will begin at 1300 hours on December 16 and close by 1700 hours on December 17, 1998. A facilitator from the National Park Service will assist. We would need to look at a Mission Statement; at success from NWCG, assumptions in the working environment and determining the outcome we would like to see; the relationship between NWCG and FFALC; appropriate level of agency participation and overall structure of NWCG, Working Teams, etc. We may want to review the products from previous long-term planning efforts in Phoenix (1991).

**SUBJECT:** Where do we want to take the IFIRS project?

**DISCUSSION:** Where do we want to put the work of the IFIRS in priorities with other projects such as ROSS, Wildland Fire Safety Awareness Study implementation, Prescribed Fire Training, Air Quality, etc.? Consensus is to defer the IFIRS project until resources and funding are available after implementation of the ROSS project. The ROSS project should remain first on the list of work to be completed, but there is still an

interest to complete the IFIRS project.

**SUBJECT:** National Advanced Resource Technology Center funding.

**DISCUSSION:** Currently the National Park Service contributes \$75,000 to NARTC. They are changing this contribution to a position and FTE to a “lessons learned” project manager position. This position will be charged with keeping current and past information up to date for the fire community. The position is also a recommendation from the Wildland Fire Safety Awareness Study.

**SUBJECT:** Election of NWCG officers.

**DISCUSSION:** The nominating committee met and provided their slate of officers recommended. They are Don Artley (Chair), State Forester, Montana, representing NASF, and Roger Erb (Vice Chair), Fish and Wildlife Service.

**MOTION:** Accept the nominating committee's recommendations.

**SECONDED AND CARRIED.**

**SUBJECT:** 74th NWCG meeting.

**DISCUSSION:** Scheduled for January 26-27, 1999, in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

### 73rd NWCG MEETING SUMMARY AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

Issue	Action	Responsibility	Accomplishment Date	Status
Wildland Fire and Air Quality Monitoring Plan	Monitor status and implementation of the plan.	Don Artley, FUWT	Ongoing	
NIFSIP/IFIRS Projects	Develop a proposal including the entire spectrum of IRMWT projects to be in a better position to evaluate alternatives.	Steve Haglund, IRMWT		
Length of fire assignments	Present recommendations based on input received from the April 1999 National Firefighter Safety Conference.	Jim Hull, SHWT	June 1999	
NIFC storage	Send letter to WTs outlining storage procedures.	Executive Secretary	February 1999	
Fire training beyond 2000	Provide presentation on training project status, budget alternatives, and development.	TWT	June 1999	
FWWT Liaison	Appoint a new Liaison to the FWWT.	Don Artley	January 1999	
Fire weather forecasting letter	Draft and send a letter to the CFSI in support of fire weather forecasting.  This group will make a "highlighted" presentation to NWCG on their status, future projects, etc.	Harry Croft, FS	December 1998	
Wildland Urban Interface Advisory Group presentation		Pat Durland	January 1999	
IOSWT Chair	Send letter to Don Leaverton appointing him as the new Chair.	Executive Secretary	November 1999	complete
FEWT Charter	Approve the charter based on recommended changes.	Roger Erb	January 1999	
Mnemonics	Follow up with IOSWT and National Coordination Center on implementation of changes in mnemonics.	Rick Gale	January 1999	