



NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP

Memorandum

March 10, 1999

To: NWCG Members, Working Team Chairs

From: Executive Secretary

Subject: 74th Meeting Minutes

Attached are the corrected minutes of the 74th NWCG meeting, January 26-27, 1999, based on comments and suggestions received.

I have also attached the following:

1. Updated Geographic Area Coordinating Group roster
2. February 12, 1999, Rocky Mountain Coordinating Group meeting minutes
3. 1998 NWCG Safety Gram

Please contact me if you if have any questions.

Jim Stumpf

Attachments

**NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP
74th MEETING MINUTES
January 1999**

The 74th meeting of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group was held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, January 26 and 27, 1999.

Members attending: Don Artley, Chair, Montana Division of Forestry
Rick Gale, National Park Service
Ed Shepard, Bureau of Land Management
Harry Croft, Forest Service
Bill Sommers, Forest Service Research
Steve Haglund, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Jim Hull, NASF, Texas Forest Service
Don Motanic, Intertribal Timber Council
Jim Stumpf, Executive Secretary

Guests Attending: January 26, 1999

John Waconda, BIA, Southwest Training Academy
Jerome McDonald, USFS, Southwest Training Academy
Jim Smalley, NFPA
Mike Funston, IRMWT, Forest Service
Karen Forbes, FEMA
Tom Minnich, USFA
Bob Leaverton, IOSWT
Barry Mathias, IRM Program Manager
Jim Campbell, NOAA
Andrea Wojtasek, USFS
Willie Begay, BIA

January 27, 1999

Jim Smalley, NFPA
Pat Durland, WUIWT
Tom Minnich, USFA
Neal Hitchcock, ROSS Project
Mike Funston, IRMWT
Willie Begay, BIA

SUBJECT: Approval of minutes from the 73rd NWCG meeting.

DISCUSSION: The final 73rd meeting minutes were mailed after member review and acceptance.

MOTION: Accept minutes as mailed.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

SUBJECT: NWCG membership criteria.

DISCUSSION: NWCG was formed by original charter in 1976. The original membership included the leadership of fire programs. Working Teams/Advisory Groups were formed to assist in the completion of staff work but there is only a murky criteria set up for the Advisory Groups. Fire Weather (because Weather Service is not an NWCG member), Fire Danger Rating (predominately USFS-dominated) at Wildland Urban Interface Group (coordinated between NFPA, State Foresters, and other municipal groups) were the original AG's. There appear to be some funding issues between the groups designated but that should not be a major problem. Other funding sources may exist for WTs.

Some of the members that sit at the NWCG table today are not the same as specifically designated; i.e., USFS does not have a Fire Director, nor does BLM. Forest Service Fire and Atmospheric Sciences no longer exists. When the NWCG participant is not the Director, a letter delegating full authority to the participant should be provided NWCG.

MOTION: All permanent standing groups chartered by NWCG would be classified as Working Teams.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

MOTION: A group that is put together for a specific task should be chartered for a specific mission and task with a closing date that could be made by NWCG. Advisory and/or Task Groups would be short-term and be formed with a sunset date.

MOTION: Executive Secretary peruse NWCG Charter and make proposal on what needs to be cleaned up on the Charter documents. Presentation at June meeting.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

SUBJECT: Expand NWCG membership to include Intertribal Timber Council.

DISCUSSION: It should be advantageous to have tribal representation with NWCG. The Intertribal Timber Council provides direct tribal representation while BIA

represents the government interest in the tribe. Both sides of the Native American entity are now covered.

MOTION: Accept ITTC as full member.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

SUBJECT: 310-1 update.

DISCUSSION: This update is coming along and is on schedule for completion, with the exception of a few positions. There are some minor conflicts between some WTs on a few positions such as Fire Behavior Analyst, Prescribed Fire Analyst, Ignition Specialist, Helicopter Manager, Initial Attack Helitack, CWN Copter Module Leader, etc.

MOTION: Recommend that the 520/620 faculty clarify potential conflict of positions and develop recommendations to resolve the conflict. State Forester perspective needs to be included in the decision process and should receive appropriate input through the State personnel on the 520 faculty. Rick Gale will provide the lead on the issues.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

SUBJECT: Joint Geographic Area Coordination Group/NWCG meeting.

DISCUSSION: It is probably advantageous to periodically meet with the GACGs to maintain a balance of information. Five of the GACGs have responded to NWCG that there is a need for a meeting. Some of the subjects that could be included are: 310-1, Fire Weather Forecasting, the continuing role of Federal firefighters, and lines of communication between GACG and NWCG. If the meeting is to be productive, it seems like a limited attendance is desirable with the primary NWCG members and one representative from each GACG in attendance. The Tri-Data Study recommends a stronger link between GACGs and NWCG. Inviting GACG chairs or a single representative to participate at an extended NWCG meeting may be a workable alternative to bring national issues forward for discussion.

MOTION: NWCG Chair will invite GACGs to the June NWCG meeting to determine future relationships with NWCG. This GACG/NWCG meeting will be a day extension to the normal NWCG meeting planned for June to accommodate the NWCG/GACG joint meeting.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

SUBJECT: Training Working Team request to delay June presentation.

DISCUSSION: We had agreed that one of the Working Teams would be highlighted at our meetings to discuss their activity to give NWCG a better idea of the team's activities for budget, priorities, etc. The TWT has a conflict with their proposed June presentation. The presentation is designed to have a representative and not necessarily the entire team. Harry Croft will contact the TWT Chair to clarify what is needed. Suggest we invite Wildland Fire Education Working Team to make a fall presentation, winter meeting Safety and Health Working Team. NWCG Liaisons will contact their Working Teams to confirm their presentations.

SUBJECT: TWT letters.

DISCUSSION: NWCG has received two separate letters from the TWT that we feel are for information. The exact intent is confusing. Harry Croft, NWCG Liaison to the TWT, will clarify this correspondence.

SUBJECT: Fire Weather Working Team Liaison.

DISCUSSION: We need to replace the retired Mary Jo Lavin as the liaison to this Team. Don Montanic, ITTC, volunteered.

MOTION: Accept Don's offer to be the Liaison to the FWWT.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

SUBJECT: Congressional Fire Service Institute letter regarding the Fire Weather Service.

DISCUSSION: Harry Croft did some follow-up with the CFSI on the issuance of this letter. CFSI will send this letter forward from one of their members rather than under CFSI. The letter will be sent to John J. Kelly, Assistant NOAA Director.

SUBJECT: Sector Boss responsibilities.

DISCUSSION: The IOSWT has completed the project as directed.

SUBJECT: Fire Weather Service Action Plan.

DISCUSSION: Jim Campbell, Assistant Director of NOAA, spoke to NWCG regarding the Weather Service. The Weather Service's mission is to provide warnings and forecasts for the protection of life and property, to include fire weather. The Weather Service will provide 24-hour fire weather forecasts available throughout the year specifically trained in fire weather forecasting. Next-generation ATMU will be available

in the spring of 1999. The NOAA Action Plan is complete and has been widely distributed. This plan outlines the activities for fire weather commitment from the Fire Weather Service. The Weather Service plans to fully implement this plan during the next couple of years. Our role should be that of monitoring and holding the Fire Weather Service accountable for the plan implementation, including the quality of weather forecasting.

SUBJECT: Federal Emergency Management Agency floor cost determination

DISCUSSION: FEMA fire costs have increased dramatically in the 90s. FEMA is looking for better ways to deal with the increasing costs of suppression and public assistance. About 75% of the requests for federal assistance are approved by FEMA based on their evaluation factors. The cost share is 70% Federal - 30% States, but FEMA is recommending a 75% - 25% split. FEMA would like NWCG to assist in the development of a new floor cost formula to be used for reimbursement. FEMA is developing a new updated Fire Assistance Handbook with changes in criteria for federal assistance.

Don Artley will provide follow-up to FEMA with their request to provide input to the revisions of the floor costs.

SUBJECT: FY 1999 final budget approval and distribution.

DISCUSSION: FY99 budget is up approximately 20% from FY98, but this is within the budget ceiling agreed to by NWCG. Budgets received from the agencies stayed the same as FY98; therefore, it is considered that we maintain the ceiling of \$907,100. Because of non-approval of the anticipated FS budget, they will be cutting \$55,000 from their contribution. This will require a modification of projects for this FY. NWCG Liaisons will contact each of the Working Teams with projects to determine if projects can be deferred to FY 2000.

MOTION: Approve the current budget less the \$55,000 contribution from the Forest Service. Working Team liaisons will contact their respective Working Team Chairs to determine if they have uncommitted budget that they could revert without serious consequences. Liaisons will pass on this information to the NWCG Chair, who will work with the Executive Secretary to identify the \$55,000 to cut from the budget.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

SUBJECT: Criteria for Working Team budget requests - FY 2000.

DISCUSSION: Consider budget level submissions that would include three tiers, low level (20% under current year), equal funding to the current year and a high level budget (20% above current year). The NWCG budget does not consider in kind or agency costs that are added to the total costs of a project and may never be shown as

100% of the NWCG costs. Several of the WTs take the majority of the budget and should develop a long-term (3-5 year) strategic plan to support their request for budget. Gale, Shepard, and Croft will develop budget advice for NWCG approval at the June 1999 meeting. The WTs will be asked for input. The FY 2000 budget cycle will be modified for WT input after the June NWCG meeting. WT Liaisons will contact Chairs emphasizing the importance of their input. This input is due to Ed Shepard, BLM-NIFC, by May 1, 1999. Based on the input to the FY 2000 budget, advice will be sent to WT Chairs by mid-summer. Budget requests will be sent to the Executive Secretary by September 1, 1999, for consideration at the NWCG October meeting.

SUBJECT: Southwest Fire Use Training Academy.

DISCUSSION: The Southwest Fire Use Training Academy is a new interagency program blending classroom training and field experience in prescribed and wildland fire use. The first training was conducted in fall 1998 and is 8 to 10 weeks in length. There are two classes planned for FY99. The core curriculum includes: S-244, Field Observer, Rx-230/S-234, Ignition Operations, Rx-300, Prescribed Fire Implementation, and Rx-340, Introduction to Fire Effects. Each session may include changes or a different curriculum. Cost per participant is about \$3,000, predominantly for per diem.

SUBJECT: Type II Crew standards.

DISCUSSION: Recommend that the minimum standards for the overhead with a Type II crew will have one Qualified Single Resource Boss and two qualified Squad Bosses. This is basically a restatement of the existing 410-1 standards. Pass this on to the IOSWT for follow-up action.

SUBJECT: Fire Prevention Team training.

DISCUSSION: The Wildland Fire Education Working Team is willing to take the lead on this program, currently under an ad hoc group of the Wildland Urban Interface Working Team. The training has started out as a pilot project and has been highly effective. Passing the course on to the WFEWT will aid in the institutionalization of the training. Cost of the training program for contract instructors and facilities is between \$15,000 to \$20,000. This course may be best placed at NARTC or NIFC for delivery and maintenance. This is probably not an NWCG action. Rick Gale made contact with NARTC and passed the proposal on to them. John Roberts, Director at NARTC, will work with the Wildland Urban Interface Working Team to transition the prevention training to NARTC.

SUBJECT: Future meeting dates and locations.

DISCUSSION: June 8-9, 1999 (0800-1700) NWCG, June 10 meeting with GACGs; FFALC will meet in the afternoon of June 7, suggested location - Seattle, WA.

October 19-20, 1999 (0800-1700) in Boston at NFPA Headquarters - FFALC will meet on the morning of October 21, 1999.

SUBJECT: Wildland/Urban Interface Working Team presentation.

DISCUSSION: The group started in 1987 to provide advice and information to agencies, industry and the public on wildland interface issues. Chartered by NWCG as an Advisory Group in 1995. Long-term vision statement has been developed which provides guidance to the Team. The majority of the information and products generated by the Working Team is on their website <http://www.firewise.org>. Budget for FY99 is about \$400,000, including a small amount of support which comes from partners such as Home Depot, insurance industry, etc. The support from partners provides for printing, distribution opportunities and a small amount of project funding. The Working Team made an outstanding presentation of its current and long-term activities.

SUBJECT: Review actions on NWCG Mission from the December meeting

DISCUSSION: The group reviewed the work on the mission, vision statements and NWCG beliefs from the December meeting. Following is the final product of each:

THE VISION STATEMENT

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group provides leadership for a seamless response to wildland fire across the nation.

BELIEFS:

We believe effective wildland fire management is achieved when:

- ◆ Firefighter and public safety is the first priority in all fire management activities.
- ◆ Individuals are held accountable for all their actions.
- ◆ Shared leadership and mutual trust and assistance exist among all wildland fire organizations, regardless of jurisdictional boundaries.
- ◆ Economy, efficiency, and quality is evident in all activities.
- ◆ Public trust is maintained through quality service and the wise efficient use of funds.
- ◆ Public responsibility is realized through active partnerships.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group is to provide leadership in establishing and maintaining consistent nationwide policies, standards and procedures for wildland fire management.

MOTION: Accept the Vision Statement and Beliefs as amended. The Mission Statement was approved in Seattle in December.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

SUBJECT: NWCG Action Plan.

DISCUSSION: The draft completed in December needs some additional staff work before acceptance. A work group consisting of Roger Erb, Bill Sommers and Don Montanic will complete this staff work for presentation to NWCG at its June 1999 meeting.

SUBJECT: Clarify business practices.

DISCUSSION: Defer to June meeting.

SUBJECT: Strategic plan to develop fire operations people.

DISCUSSION: Development of fire personnel is the responsibility of the agencies and there may not be much we can accomplish from an NWCG standpoint. Several contributing and aggravating factors were discussed. Rick Gale presented a problem paper outlining decreasing fire forces. Alternatives for resolution were presented and briefly discussed. BLM is working on an allocation of forces project which is basically a needs assessment to address this problem. States are working toward a common data base so they can accomplish a needs assessment to determine where they are. GACGs need to be involved to become part of the solution. Agencies should develop data so we can better analyze the problem.

MOTION: Appoint a task group to identify how to proceed with the problem. Review BLM, BIA and other activities ongoing in this process. Identify how we should proceed. Another task group could be formed to develop how best to proceed on the recommendations above. Rick Gale will follow up. Rick requests a list of potential people from all agencies who may be included. This can be retirees and employees. The group will be called the Capability Analysis Task Group.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

SUBJECT: Long vs. Short Incident Management Teams.

DISCUSSION: It is suggested that we review the current long IM Teams being used. There must be an end to the number of people who are being committed. The current practices seem too rigid and do not provide the capability for management to order what is needed. The system exists to make orders through the national system to order a long or a short team.

MOTION: IOSWT review the current Incident Management short and long term standards and configuration, and recommend national standards.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

SUBJECT: NWCG meeting preparation.

DISCUSSION: Preparation for the NWCG meetings was discussed. A minimum of 2 weeks is needed for securing audio visual equipment needed by presenters at NWCG meetings. In addition, any decision documents or decisions that will be needed by NWCG need to be included in the final mailing to NWCG.

SUBJECT: ROSS Project update.

DISCUSSION: The project is proceeding well. Many of the products available are on the website that explains general progress to date. They are estimating the award of a contract for follow-up work this spring. More than 65 briefings have been given throughout the country, and a video outlining the ROSS Project is available for interested persons. The project is organized and on schedule to have the program completed.

SUBJECT: Mnemonics.

DISCUSSION: IRMWT will be sending another memo to the field on agency mnemonics. Neal Hitchcock will continue working with the IOSWT for conclusion.

SUBJECT: Identify strategy for incident automation.

DISCUSSION: An Ad Hoc Group has been identified to do staff work to determine a strategy for Incident Base Automation. Judy Carvello and John Gebhard are co-chairing this work group. The charge of the group is to develop the strategy, analyze potential programs that exist, select, modify or develop a system, and implementation including maintenance, procurement, training, etc.

SUBJECT: Strategic IRMWT Priorities/Issues/Planning

DISCUSSION: The first cut of this information was discussed. Criteria was presented for ranking of projects including health and safety, congressional or NWCG mandates, duplication, scale, etc. The WT ranks its priority as follows:

1. Coordinating infrastructure
2. Resource ordering
3. Qualifications

4. Incident Based Automation
5. Fire occurrence
6. Environmental monitoring
7. Fire tools (BEHAVE, etc.)
8. ICBS (Incident Cache Business Software)
9. Aviation
10. Command, control, CAD

SUBJECT: IRM Program Manager role.

DISCUSSION: Barry Mathias, IRM Program Manager, is in place and is picking up the roles of his new job well. This is the manager position outlined in the IRM Business Plan approved by NWCG. The Business Plan also includes three support positions which were approved. Barry requested that he be permitted to classify these positions and fill them. The NWCG commitment was for top-end funding for the Program Manager. The three support positions would be contributed by other agencies. No specific decision was made on which agency would provide the position. NWCG would like to be kept informed on the status of filling the subordinate positions.

SUBJECT: EFF pay.

DISCUSSION: Bureau of Reclamation is making an effort to take charge of the EFF pay system. We have encouraged them to work with us to have a consistent system. Steve Haglund suggests that a letter outlining the agencies position to Bureau of Reclamation be sent from NWCG. Steve will draft this letter for the NWCG Chair follow up.

SUBJECT: Fire Weather Service concerns.

DISCUSSION: The Fire Weather Working Team has been working well on the resolution of Weather Service responsiveness. The Weather Service has discussed their updated programs and provided assurance of continuing service. Early indications are showing that not all of the Weather Service benchmarks have been consistently accomplished. The FWWT needs to continue monitoring the Weather Service Action plan implementation but should move on ahead to other weather issues.

74th NWCG MEETING SUMMARY AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

Issue	Action	Responsibility	Accomplishment Date	Status
Change classification from Advisory Groups to Working Teams	Notify all existing Advisory Groups other than Radio Communications that they are Working Teams	Assigned NWCG Liaisons	June 1999	
Charter review/changes	Review the existing charter for NWCG and recommend possible changes	Executive Secretary	June 1999	
Length of fire assignments	Present recommendations based on input received from the April 1999 National Firefighter Safety Conference	Jim Hull, SHWT	June 1999	
310-1 Update	Select a committee composed of the S-520/620 faculty to resolve differences in 310-1	Rick Gale	June 1999	to IOSWT 2/12/99
Fire training beyond 2000	Provide a presentation on training project status, budget alternatives, and development	TWT	June 1999	
Fire Weather Service Action Plan	Monitor implementation of the plan	FWWT, NWCG Members	June 1999	
Final FY 1999 budget	Complete the budget with the shortfall identified	Harry Croft	June 1999	
Budget criteria for FY 00	Complete the development of budget submissions and criteria	Harry Croft, Rick Gale, and Ed Shepard	June 1999	
Type II crew standards	Review the Forest Service recommendation and advise NWCG	Rick Gale, IOSWT	June 1999	
NWCG Action Plan	Complete the review and update of the NWCG Action Plan	Don Artley, Roger Erb and Bill Sommers	June 1999	
Clarify business practices Development of fire operations people Long vs. Short IMTs EFF Payment procedures	Carryover from 74th meeting Capability Analysis Task Group report Review current standards and make recommendations Bureau of Reclamation is making an effort to take charge of the EFF pay system.	Harry Croft Rick Gale Rick Gale, IOSWT Steve Haglund draft NWCG Position follow up action	June 1999 June 1999 June 1999 February 1999	Completed

\$55,000 budget shortage	NWCG WT liaisons determine from Chairs if there is uncommitted budget that could be turned back.	All WT liaisons Don Artley	June 1999	
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