



NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP

Memorandum

July 30, 1999

To: NWCG Members, Working Team Chairs

From: Jim Stumpf, Executive Secretary

Subject: 75th Meeting Minutes

Following are final minutes of the 75th NWCG meeting held June 8-9, 1999.

Comments, changes and suggestions have been included.

Attachment

NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP
75th MEETING MINUTES
June 1999

The 75th meeting of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group was held in Seattle, Washington, June 8-9, 1999.

Members attending: Don Artley, Chair, Montana Division of Forestry
Roger Erb, Vice Chair, Fish and Wildlife Service
Rick Gale, National Park Service
Ed Shepard, Bureau of Land Management
Harry Croft, Forest Service
Dave Cleaves, Forest Service Research
Steve Haglund, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Jim Hull, NASF, Texas Forest Service
Don Montanic, Intertribal Timber Council
Jim Stumpf, Executive Secretary

Associate Members: Jim Smalley, National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
Tom Minnich, U. S. Fire Administration (USFA)

Guests attending: June 8, 1999

Cal Gale, Southeast Geographic Area
Mike Funston, IRMWT, Forest Service
Barry Mathias, IRM Program Manager
Steve Holder, SAFE Program Manager
Jim Stires, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Gerry Day, Fire Weather Working Team
Lindon Wiebe, Forest Service
Mike Gomez, Department of the Interior,
Redmond Training Center
George Martin, Training Working Team
Dan Francis, CDF, Training Working Team
Neal Hitchcock, ROSS Project
John Skeels, IRM Working Team

June 9, 1999

Mike Funston, IRMWT
Cal Gale, Southeast Geographic Area
Barry Mathias, IRM Program Manager
Jim Stires, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Lindon Wiebe, Forest Service
Mike Gomez, Department of the Interior,

Redmond Training Center
Neal Hitchcock, ROSS Project
John Skeels, IRM Working Team
Gerry Day, Fire Weather Working Team
Al Hyde, Brookings Institute
Dennis Pendleton, Forest Service
Tory Majors, IBMWT
Steve Jenkins, Narrow Band Radio Group
Dave Bunnell, Fire Use WT/Fire Education Working Team

SUBJECT: Approval of 74th meeting minutes.

DISCUSSION: The final 74th meeting minutes were mailed to members after NWCG and Working Team review and acceptance.

MOTION: Accept minutes as mailed.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

SUBJECT: SAFE Project (Steve Holder, Project Manager).

DISCUSSION: Safety in the Fire Environment (SAFE) is the project adopted to implement activities from actions identified by the TriData Report. This interagency working team, led by Steve, is designed for the implementation of identified actions. The group will develop and implement a mechanism for an accident or close-call incident (safety) reporting system. They will also work on a tracking mechanism to ensure that the 200+ TriData recommendations are completed. The Communications Plan that was developed to get information out needs to be modified to ensure recommendations and accomplishments outlined in the report are sent to the field. To date, the existing information dissemination flow has not worked.

SAFE is an initiative designed to sunset in approximately 4 years. The intent is to modify the culture of firefighters across the country to improve safety on wildland fires.

State/cooperator working relationships will continue to be important in the process. Steve will work with State Foresters and Geographic Area Coordinating Groups to include cooperator input and involvement.

Steve is interested in feedback on all safety activities; his telephone is (208) 387-5174, E-mail (steve_holder@nps.gov), website (www.nifc.gov/safe).

SUBJECT: Type II crew standards.

DISCUSSION: Incident Operations Standards Working Team (IOSWT) recommends one Crew Boss and two fully qualified Squad Bosses for type II crew minimums. These are minimum standards, and any specific crew or agency can elect to increase standards to meet specific needs. These standards may also assist in establishing a stepping stone from Firefighter II to Squad Boss and may make Crew Representative availability easier, with better control on individual crews.

MOTION: Refer this back to the IOSWT to provide an analysis of the entire crew issue to include: crew configuration, standards, typing, composition, specialty crews, overhead, etc.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

SUBJECT: Standards for long and short teams.

DISCUSSION: Currently there appear to be none of the Type I or II Teams that meet the current national standards. This assignment did not make it to the IOSWT for review at their last meeting. A review and recommendation is needed.

MOTION: Tabled and sent to the IOSWT for action. We would like their review on existing Type I and II short and long team standards and configuration. Recommend any changes that may be needed for a revised minimum Type I and II team standard.

SUBJECT: IOSWT charter.

DISCUSSION: The Working Team presented a charter with some minor modifications in the number of people on the committee. NWCG reviewed it and recommended that the Team make a few more modifications, specifically those dealing with gender.

MOTION: Accept the motion from IOSWT to modify and approve the amended charter. Rick Gale, Liaison, will get this back to the IOSWT Chair for modification. Once modified, the Executive Secretary will obtain appropriate approval and make distribution.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

SUBJECT: Fire suppression/prescribed fire position combinations.

DISCUSSION: The recommendation from IOSWT is to conform with the current draft of 310-1 used during this year. Defer further decision on this topic until after current draft comments are received and resolved. The IOSWT will make a recommendation based on results of field input of the draft 310-1.

SUBJECT: Strike teams from NICC requests.

DISCUSSION: Defer action on this until 310-1 is reviewed and is closer to finalization.

SUBJECT: Length of fire assignments.

DISCUSSION: No new action or recommendations from SHWT. There does not seem to be a basis for change. The Team is considering a multi-year study to thoroughly analyze the issues. The original recommendation from the TriData study was to lower fire assignment length from 21 to 14 days. Current guidelines allow for 14-21 assignments. This may be more of a management issue than a safety issue. Statistically, there are about only 2% of annual fires that exceed the 14-day length of assignment.

MOTION: Form an Ad Hoc Group to develop a Crew/Personnel Management paper on the management of people on fire assignment length. Ed Shepard will chair this Ad Hoc Group and provide a recommendation for the 76th meeting. Ed will try and have a draft available to agencies for input by August 1. We feel we should look at 14 days unless there are compelling reasons to expand this.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

SUBJECT: National training for non-agency employees.

DISCUSSION: The State of Indiana is requesting assistance on this issue. The National Advanced Resource Technology Center (NARTC) has stated that non-agency employees are not permitted to attend courses at their facility. If the State needs to have a private contractor attend advanced training (S-590 course) at NARTC, the State should sponsor the attendee for consideration. Harry Croft will do some research within the Forest Service to see if there is a way this public/private relationship can be accomplished. Follow up at the 76th meeting.

SUBJECT: Training Working Team presentation.

DISCUSSION: Course cycle (10 years) was established for training, and this cycle is drawing to a conclusion. The final course development will be complete in 2000; at the same time, the revision process will also begin to update courses developed earlier in the cycle. This program of course revision was established because of duplication among some of the training courses between the Firescope area and the remainder of the ICS implementation areas. There wasn't a logical progression from one course to the other. There was lack of skills training for all agencies, and what existed was not meeting user needs. There were too many modification demands on the instructors teaching ICS and fire training courses.

The performance-based training system was developed after 1990. Performance-based training reduced the number of hours of required classroom training by close to 500 hours. This consisted of a new curriculum to include the "I" (Incident Command System) and "S" (Fire Suppression Skills) courses, job aids and task books. The complete second generation set of task books will be completed by the end of the year.

The development and training changes included several problems, but the recommendation for staffing in one area funded from the top was recommended and implemented. The total cost of NWCG funds and contributed agency funding for training development in the first 10-year cycle has been about \$6.5 million. The California Department of Forestry and many other States are using the ICS Training Curriculum.

The curriculum development and update need to continue because of continual changes in policies and laws, human factors, training methodology and determination of lack of skills. The report "Beyond 2000" distributed by the TWT was sent to NWCG members to outline the long-term commitment and recommended changes needed for training currency.

2000 to 2002 budget proposal is at the 100% and 80% level for consideration. There may need to be some changes in staffing and/or budget if there are funding limitations to be considered in the future. The TWT will be meeting in August to finalize their long-term budgetary commitments.

There are probably three issues that need to be resolved by NWCG and the TWT, including:

1. Evaluation of current training programs and the overall system needs to be completed before the TWT can make any recommendation on where to take courses.
2. Bring State agencies on board. Currently there is a perception by the TWT that States are lagging about 5 years behind in their training.
3. Studies such as TriData, Brookings Institute and others may dramatically change the overall training curriculum.

Based on potential budget shortfalls for FY 2000, we need to move cautiously on proposals for long-term commitment to the NWCG budget. It is recommended that the vacant or pending training developer positions at NIFC remain so until we have a better understanding of budget stability.

SUBJECT: Multi-hazard Mitigation Council.

DISCUSSION: The Council has invited NWCG to join their organization as dues-paying members. The Mitigation Council is funded by the National Institute of Building Sciences. Rather than NWCG being a member, the Wildland Urban Interface Working Team may want to consider maintaining a liaison with this group. Chair will send our negative response.

SUBJECT: ROSS project update.

DISCUSSION: The Lockheed Martin contractor is working to assist the project in the Denver area. ROSS continues to provide subject matter experts (SME) to work with the contractor as needed. The ROSS website (www.nwcg.gov/ross) is up and operational, and they continue to make updates. The project is meeting their time lines and has three more segments to complete. The MIRPS project is being used and tested in Denver, and is being used by the contractor in completion of the ROSS project.

SUBJECT: IRM-PRO Infrastructure organization.

DISCUSSION: Three additional positions may be required in order for the infrastructure project to be successful. Cost projections to implement three additional positions for the organization are \$400,000 to \$500,000. The Forest Service will fund two of these positions for the organization. NWCG prefers to have funding for specific positions from agencies rather than adding positions to the NWCG budget for the implementation. Interior agencies are willing to fund the third position needed. Barry Mathias, Program Manager, will continue to be funded by NWCG. No further action is required by NWCG at this time.

MOTION: Approve alternative 2, as amended, to have the Forest Service provide two and Interior agencies provide one position to meet the Infrastructure organization.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

SUBJECT: Update on changes in the National Weather Service Action Plan.

DISCUSSION: The Weather Service tracking implementation for the modernization was discussed. At this time, it appears that the Western Weather Service Region is at 42%, Texas area at 19%, the Midwest is at 71%, and the East Coast is at 14% compliance with their plan. The Working Team is identifying circuit breakers where their monitoring information and concern will be peaked. The role of this monitoring of the Weather Service needs to include Dispatchers, Fire Behavior Analysts, FMOs, etc.

Weather station network analysis will be started by the committee. There may be too many stations currently in use, and not all of the stations may be in the correct location.

At times the maintenance cost for weather stations may not be spent where it is needed. The cost to the Government for installation and the first year of operation of a weather station can vary from \$12,400 to \$13,900. The estimate does not include the HUB of weather information in Kansas City, operational costs, lost data and costs of duplication of stations when the data is not shared.

The FWWT has established a Spot Forecast Task Group to determine spot forecast needs and to develop a draft form and process to be used for the review. This will be brought back for approval at a later date. The FWWT would like field review and feedback on the Spot Forecast Form and procedures. Don Artley will send the request to the GACGs for distribution and comment. Gerry Day will provide a copy to agency heads for distribution within the agencies.

House Resolution 1553 is the National Weather Service and Related Agencies Authorization Act of 1999. The bill appears to provide some changes in the NWS Organic Act. This has passed the House and has been referred to the Senate for committee action.

Weather Station Standards is another process the Team is working on. They have proposed a draft of these standards, and would like field input before they finalize these standards.

SUBJECT: NFPA 1000 may identify possible conflict with NFPA and NWCG Standards.

DISCUSSION: The 1995 Standard has a section that reads that the Certifying entity shall not provide the developed standards. The current certification among member agencies is by the agencies, not NWCG. This does not seem to be a problem, but correspondence from NWCG would assist NFPA in clarification of the Standard. Don Artley will follow up.

SUBJECT: Working Team Liaison.

DISCUSSION: Currently there is no tenure for NWCG members who serve as Liaisons with the various Working Teams. In some cases, the Working Team may defer to the Liaison for decisions and ideas which may or may not be correct. Changing the NWCG Liaison periodically may provide different perspective to the Teams. This topic will be included under the business practices ad hoc group headed by Harry Croft.

SUBJECT: Working Team sponsorship of national meetings.

DISCUSSION: It appears there may be some groups that are sponsoring interagency meetings, i.e., the TWT (National Fire Behavior Workshop). These meetings are expensive, and have questionable results and objectives. This sponsorship should be included under the sponsoring WT budget and annual work plan, and will be approved

within the budget process for NWCG. If the meeting is not approved through this process the meeting will need to be sponsored by one of the agencies.

SUBJECT: Overhead mnemonics change.

DISCUSSION: There is a standing work group in Boise (NICC) to review any proposed changes for the mnemonics. There will be one annual meeting of this group, which will include representation from the IOSWT and TWT. No further action is needed.

SUBJECT: Review charter for the Fire Behavior Advisory Committee.

DISCUSSION: This will be an Advisory Group responsible to the TWT. We suggest that this become the Fire Behavior Training Advisory Group. No action is needed by NWCG.

SUBJECT: Recommendations from the National Interagency Fire Behavior Workshop.

DISCUSSION: The National Interagency Fire Behavior Workshop was held earlier this year. It appears this group was working on behalf of the TWT, and the request for response should be returned to the TWT for action. Dave Cleaves will follow up with research personnel involved in the meeting to determine where these recommendations should be sent. Dave will report back at the October meeting.

SUBJECT: NWCG Action Plan review and update.

DISCUSSION: The results of the work group were distributed for review and comment to NWCG. The Action Plan is the result of the NWCG futuring meeting that was held in December 1998. We appear to be well on our way for completing item 1, Business Practices, and need to consider where we should take this to conclusion. Provide follow-through on this action at our fall meeting and beyond, if necessary. Consider full-day action for this and Business Practices at the fall meeting. Bobbie Antonich (NPS) will be the facilitator for our full-day work session on October 19, 1999.

SUBJECT: NASF Fire Cost Study.

DISCUSSION: Cost for suppression of fires will be reviewed as a result of past large fire costs. A cost study was done in 1994, and the information generated from this study will be used during the current study. NASF has initiated a study of fire suppression costs in cooperation with the Forest Service to make on-the-ground reviews of fires that occur this year to begin to get a handle on costs and various triggers that might alert management that fire costs may be excessive.

SUBJECT: NWCG charter revision.

DISCUSSION: On a recommendation from Bill Sommers at our last meeting, we have taken the charter and supplements, and combined all into one document for possible modification. Some of the membership in NWCG has changed over the years, and we have had additional members included in NWCG. Comments from members should be sent to the Executive Secretary for finalization at the fall 1999 meeting.

SUBJECT: Business Practices.

DISCUSSION: Defer to October 1999.

SUBJECT: Budget criteria for Team submission for FY 2000.

DISCUSSION: During FY 2000 a basic flat-line budget request based on the approved level for FY99 will be submitted by September 15, 1999. In addition to the flat line, a 20% reduction budget will be submitted. Budgeting will be based on the NWCG Vision and goals, to include safety as the first priority. Projects and the associated budget will be submitted by priority.

In the long term, budgeting (FY 2001 and beyond) will follow these guidelines:

1. A draft plan, including budget and 3-year plan, will be submitted to the Executive Secretary by December 1.
2. If the Working Team Operational Plan and budget is going to involve major expenditures, the Working Team Chair will make a presentation regarding this plan proposal to NWCG at their January meeting.
3. NWCG will review and tentatively approve the Working Team plan and budget at the June meeting.
4. In October, NWCG will make final approval of the budget proposals based on approved agency allocations.

The budget process will be included in the final business practices plan for NWCG. Ed Shepard will prepare the letter of transmission for WTs on FY 2000 budget requirements.

SUBJECT: Future of workforce issues - Al Hyde, Brookings Institute.

DISCUSSION: The Brookings Institute study (Strategic Thinking Process) started approximately one year ago. Their charter will provide an analysis of workforce management and strategic thinking for determining or recommending the status of the

fire workforce in the future. A workforce demographics project, "Where have all of the firefighters gone," is another project proposed for Brookings. This will include the following:

1. Conduct a survey to analyze what the problems are in terms of workforce age, etc. Currently no specific hard data exists.
2. Conduct an additional survey to determine what will it take for people to willingly participate in fire suppression (pay, condition of hire, etc.).

It is felt the demographic survey needs to be conducted so we have a basis to go on to attempt to answer these questions. The Forest Service and National Park Service are willing to fund this survey, and have asked for a firm quote from Brookings. Other agencies are invited to join in funding the survey if they wish.

SUBJECT: Incident Business Advisor Guide.

DISCUSSION: The Incident Business Advisor is a modification and re-definition of the Comptroller position that has been used on wildland fires for a number of years. The position modification has been reviewed by the IOSWT and Forest Service personnel. Comments have been included in the final product. The position is designed to be a staff support element to the Incident Commander to advise on expenses, financial concerns and considerations. This will not be an ICS position, but a person to work with the Agency Administrator and IC. IBMWT should proceed with the implementation of this position as identified and designed.

SUBJECT: Incident Base Automation charter.

DISCUSSION: The IBMWT has developed an Ad Hoc Group to analyze the needs, problems and shortfalls in Interagency Incident Base Automation. They have developed a charter to help guide them in specific information on what automation needs to take place on an incident. The project is divided into five separate phases. Each phase builds upon the previous phase, but stands on its own in terms of budget requirements and agency involvement. The estimated cost of the project is \$3,000,000. Total costs will be refined with pre-phase one, which is the development of a life cycle plan that will contain a detailed breakdown of all phases for the plan. NWCG would like to see this proposal as part of the FY 2001 budget.

SUBJECT: IBMWT charter.

DISCUSSION: The Team presented an updated charter for approval. They requested assistance in finding a couple of additional Team members, one from the Eastern States and the other from FEMA. Jim Hull will provide an Eastern States representative, and Tom Minnich will help to locate a FEMA representative.

MOTION: Approve the charter as verbally amended. Tory will make changes and submit final charter for approval.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

SUBJECT: Narrow Band Radio Group update.

DISCUSSION: The group was formed about a year ago to review and advise NWCG on changes in communication systems. During their primary meeting the group provided four recommendations:

1. Use analog wide-band radios through 1999.
2. Any agency that converts to digital radios will convert to multi-mode radio configurations.
3. Radios in National Caches will be used in wide-band radio frequencies.
4. Aviation communications will be in wide-band mode.

The narrow-band conversion is a result of Congressional action to develop and make more frequencies available. Government agencies using radios have been mandated to convert to a digital system; States and other Federal cooperators have no mandate for this conversion. There are currently no hand-held radios that meet the fire requirements for Department of the Interior.

SUBJECT: Education strategy.

DISCUSSION: One of the recommendations from the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy was to develop and implement a strategic plan that educates the general public and agency personnel about the role of fire. When this educational strategy is fully implemented, it will:

1. Assure better public understanding of and advocacy for wildland fire management.
2. Assure a consistent fire role and fire use message for all agency decision makers and the general public.
3. Assure agencies can better accomplish their individual missions relative to fire management because behavioral and attitudinal obstacles have been removed.

The consensus is that NWCG should stay involved with this product through participation with the Fire Education and Fire Use Working Teams. There may be other areas that could be used to assist in the funding needed to effectively complete or enhance the public message development.

SUBJECT: Australia/New Zealand trip.

DISCUSSION: Harry, Rick and Ed briefed NWCG on their recent trip to these countries. There was some discussion if there would be benefits in having a joint

meeting with Australian counterparts. Rick agreed to follow up and, if appropriate, to participate in their fall meeting. Roger Erb would be the designated representative.

SUBJECT: Joint GACG meeting.

DISCUSSION: A final agenda was drafted for the joint meeting conducted with the GACG representatives. These minutes will be sent separately, based on the meeting outcome.

SUBJECT: Next NWCG meeting.

DISCUSSION: 76th meeting October 19-21, 1999, (19th will be NWCG work session only); Working Team presentations will be on the 20th; decision from NWCG on WT requests and proposals will be made on 21st. The meeting will be in the Boston area, hosted by NFPA with a Wildland Fire Education Working Team presentation.

77th meeting January 11-12, 2000, San Diego, California - Safety and Health Working Team.

78th meeting May 24-25, 2000, Denver, Colorado - (Rick Gale for meeting setup) - IOSWT.

SUBJECT: Meeting critique.

1. Briefings from entities, i.e., SAFE, ROSS, etc., may not need to be done at every meeting.
2. Executive Secretary and WT Liaisons need to screen agenda items a little more carefully. WTs to include a synopsis of topic if it is a topic presented; if it is a work item, report accomplishment - synopsis not necessary.
3. Schedule at least ½ day executive session at each meeting.

75th NWCG MEETING SUMMARY AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

Issue	Action	Responsibility	Accomplishment Date	Status
Type II crew standards	IOSWT to provide an analysis of the entire crew issue to include: crew configuration, standards, typing, composition, specialty crews, overhead, etc.	Rick Gale, IOSWT	October 1999	Steve Haglund to draft an issue paper for NWCG Chair to transmit to IOSWT Chair
Charter review/changes	Review existing NWCG charter and recommend possible changes	Executive Secretary	October 1999	
Standards for long and short teams	Review existing Type I and II short and long team standards and configuration	Rick Gale, IOSWT	October 1999	
IOSWT charter	Complete recommended modifications and submit for approval	IOSWT	October 1999	to IOSWT 6/12/99
Length of fire assignments	Develop an Ad Hoc Group to develop a Crew/Personnel Management paper on the management of people on fire assignment length	Ed Shepard	October 1999	
Multi-hazard Mitigation Council	Send a letter to this group not accepting membership	Don Artley	October 1999	
Incident Base Automation charter	Provide a total budget and project proposal as part of the FY 2001 budget	IBMWT	December 1999	
Budget criteria for FY 2000	Complete the development of budget submissions and criteria	Ed Shepard	August 1999	
Wildland Fire Education Working Team	Provide presentation to NWCG at 76th meeting	Working Team Chair, Rick Gale	October 1999	
NWCG Action Plan	Complete review and update of NWCG Action Plan	Don Artley, Roger Erb and Harry Croft	October 1999	
Complete Business Practices project	Carry over from 74th meeting	Harry Croft	October 1999	