

NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP
79th MEETING MINUTES
October 2000

The 79th meeting of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group was held in Shenandoah National Park, Luray, Virginia, October 11-12, 2000.

Members attending: Don Artley, Chair, Montana Division of Forestry
Roger Erb, Vice Chair, Fish and Wildlife Service
Rick Gale, National Park Service
Jim Hull, NASF, Texas Forest Service
Harry Croft, Forest Service
Dave Cleaves, Forest Service Research
Hugh Wood, U. S. Fire Administration
Jim Stires, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Don Motanic, Intertribal Timber Council
Jim Stumpf, Executive Secretary

Guests attending: October 11, 2000

Bob Praytor, Marine Corps, Camp Pendelton
Kevin King, Headquarters, Marine Corps
Bill Downs, BIA
John Skeels, ROSS Program
Barry Mathias, IRM Program Lead
Neal Hitchcock, Ross Program
Al Hyde, Brookings Institute
Tory Majors, IBMWT
Mike Funston, IRMWT
Connie Rudd, Shenandoah National Park
Alice Forbes, Chair FEWT
and the Fire Equipment Working Team
Dom Smith, State Forester CT

October 12, 2000

Barry Mathias, IRM Program Lead
Mike Funston, IRMWT

1. **SUBJECT:** Approval of 78th meeting minutes.

DISCUSSION: The final 78th meeting minutes were mailed to members after NWCG and Working Team review and acceptance.

MOTION: Accept minutes as corrected and mailed.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

2. **SUBJECT:** Comments from the Chair.

DISCUSSION: Review agenda, changes and schedule presented.

3. **SUBJECT:** *Where Have All The Fire Fighters Gone*, Al Hyde, Brookings Institute

DISCUSSION: The project is approaching completion but the Institute is still receiving surveys from the agencies. It appears evident that fire fighters want to be heard in the survey results. 600 surveys from the Forest Service (55% survey response) have been received. The National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs are responding well, but not many responses have been received from the Bureau of Land Management. The cut-off date for Interior Agencies is the end of October. The final report will be completed by the end of November with a presentation at the 80th NWCG Meeting in San Antonio, Texas. Brookings is pleased with survey results from all agencies. Al Hyde reviewed the information and data from Forest Service responses and verified the data received. Final cut-off for questionnaires to be included in the final report will be November 15, two weeks after the October 31 deadline. No additional Forest Service questionnaires will be added to the data base.

4. **SUBJECT:** ROSS Update

DISCUSSION: Application testing of the program was initiated at the contractor's worksite in mid-summer with field testing planned in the Rocky Mountain Area this winter. Hardware platforms at the National Information Technology Center are in place and being maintained.

Continued planning efforts of ROSS are focused on training and the implementation preparation. Once initiated, it is expected that the roll out will take at least a year. Training products will include:

- on-line help and tutorials
- user manuals in both printed and electronic format
- quick reference guide
- formalized classroom training courses.

Additional efforts will focus on evaluation and update of current dispatcher and other training that includes resource ordering as a part of the curriculum.

5. **SUBJECT:** Department of Defense (DoD) membership into NWCG

DISCUSSION: DoD formed a Wildland Fire Management Policy Working Group that in 1995. This group is composed of installation level fire and natural resource personnel from all services. DoD provides stewardship to about 25 million acres with significant environmental, wildfire and natural resource issues. Additionally, there are about 12,000 fire fighters that could be used for the suppression efforts once trained to the NWCG standards. The Army and Air Force seem to have the biggest concern about NWCG membership of the Services because of the potential conflict with the Director of Military Support (DOMS) Program. The working group's recommendation included seeking NWCG membership, adoption of the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, and the creation of a position at NIFC.

6. **SUBJECT:** National Interagency Information Technology support strategy

DISCUSSION: A task group has been formed to define issues, determine scope, develop alternatives and determine short/long term strategies. The task group has made a recommendation to the IRMWT that concludes contracting the ROSS (Resource Ordering and Status System) support for at least a 1-year trial period as approved at the June IRM-Working Team meeting. This will give the task group time to investigate the issues, evaluate a mixture of contracted and force account support resources, and to establish realistic measures of cost and performance. Based on the findings during the trial period the IRMWT will recommend a preferred strategy to provide ROSS (and other future) interagency application support.

7. **SUBJECT:** Status of U.S. Fire Administration course curriculum

DISCUSSION: The intent of the courses is to develop an ICS awareness for structural fire fighters. This is only an awareness or cross-walk program and they hope to encourage the use of NWCG ICS training. There are no additional concerns or issues on this subject.

8. **SUBJECT:** National Prevention Teams

DISCUSSION: Who provides the oversight and training for personnel to be on one of the teams? There really isn't much information available that provides oversight. Perhaps portions of the questions should be tasked to Wts, i.e.; training issues could go the TWT and qualifications to the IOSWT. Pat Durland seems to be the lead on this and can provide an update on the national effort for Fire Prevention Teams. Erb will contact Durland.

9. **SUBJECT:** Fire Equipment Working Team (FEWT) report

DISCUSSION: FEWT was one of the first working teams established by NWCG. The charter identifies work on all aspects of fire equipment between states and federal

agencies. They identify equipment needs, fire chemicals and future needs for equipment and equipment standardization. There are three sub groups; NFES for cache standards, Engine sub-committee, and Foam sub-committee. Two international liaisons occur with Canada, New Zealand/Australia to share information and techniques for equipment use on an international basis.

Quick connect vs. threaded couplings has been reviewed in a written survey involving federal and state agencies. It appears that a conversion to quick connect hose fittings would be advantageous in improved efficiency and performance. The cost to make this conversion by retrofitting existing inventories is approximately \$2,460,000. There would be a transitional period where adapters would have to be carried by engines and within the caches. FEWT recommends converting fittings and hose threads to a quarter turn quick connect coupling.

Motion: Accept the recommendation from FEWT to convert to the quarter turn quick connect couplings.

Seconded and carried

A representative from Florida made a presentation of wildfire activity comparison between 1998 and 2000 based on their lessons learned from the 1998 fire season and the implementation of corrections has shown a reduction of acres burned while the number of fires remains fairly constant at about 5,000 fires annually. The areas where they reported improvements are in incident management, resource availability, air resources, safety, and technology.

Foam effectiveness is being reviewed on an international basis to resolve the total effectiveness issues. Previous effectiveness information was determined at the advice of the manufacturers and has not always been verified by actual use. Toxicity to fish in foam appears to be higher than retardants. There are currently nine foam products available for use throughout the United States but they are determining that water temperature, ph., etc. are determining factors on effective and efficient foam use.

GSA procurement for fire equipment is done through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Forest Service and Interior agencies. GAS sold about \$45,000,000 worth of fire equipment during the 2000 fire season. They ship from GSA within three hours after receipt of an order for fire emergencies. Generally, GSA sales products are 25% under the retail prices.

10. SUBJECT: NASF Cost Containment Study

DISCUSSION: Study was commissioned after the 1998 fire season in Texas. Costs appear to be the result of managerial problems. Their study findings include identification of the following problem areas:

- A lack of corporate will to change
- Citizens, politicians, administrators and the media have no concept of reality
- Fostering a costly fire suppression environment
- A failure to prepare
- No one is accountable

- Unprecedented levels of fuel accumulation
- Weak oversight of Incident Management Teams by Agency Administrators.

The report has been well received by State Foresters and their staffs throughout the country.

11. SUBJECT: Role Clarification for short and long-term costs and processes for IRM activities, potential projects, priorities and long-term buy-in.

DISCUSSION: Projects need to be initiated through a business leader in conjunction with the IRMWT. Terminology needs to be standardized between roles and projects. The roles between NWCG, the IRM Project Lead and the IRMWT were discussed for introduction to new projects and coordination with on-going projects. The NWCG Liaison to the IRMWT will have the final say in project approvals when recommended by the IRMWT and the Project Manager. Business Manager issues or Project Team Leader comments, ideas etc. need to be cleared through the IRMWT.

12. SUBJECT: Business Plan for Incident Base Automation

DISCUSSION: The absence of a national interagency incident based automation system and policy led to the NWCG Incident Business Practices Working Team being tasked by the NWCG to look at the requirements for incident base automation. The first attempt at addressing incident base automation took place with an Ad hoc committee being established with the task of completing an analysis and developing an Incident Base Automation survey in January 1999. The Working Team found that additional information was required and another survey was developed and distributed to the interagency wildland fire community.

Based on the information found the IBPWT is requesting short term support from NWCG and all cooperators during FY 01 to establish a task group to collaborate, review, and evaluate our current business practices at emergency incident situations surrounding the use of ISUITE, INCINET, and ICECAP to determine the feasibility of blending these systems into one, or incorporating parts of any of the applications into one to establish one system that meets user needs on an interim basis, or in doing the review make a determination that none of them can meet our interim needs to the fullest extent possible without a large investment. Dependent upon the outcome of the review, the task group would make a recommendation to the IBPWT for implementation during the FY2001 and FY2002 season.

The incident business automation community has gone forward with developing and implementing software to meet their immediate needs. This Team feels that these efforts should be consolidated since no system that meets national interagency IBA needs has been successfully implemented. The Interagency Incident Automation Project charter developed in May 1999, identified five phases. To date the efforts of this Team have completed Phase I and II on schedule.

After evaluation of the survey, our short term and long term recommendations lead us to conclude that a process review is definitely needed prior to funding any system(s) or creating a new system(s) for all functional areas at an incident and that

minimum modification of existing systems may occur during the interim to meet the automation needs in the present environment.

Motion: Accept the recommendation from the IBPWT to establish a task group to evaluate existing software and make a recommendation as to which (if any) we should accept and use as a short-term solution.

Seconded and carried

13. SUBJECT: GACG/Agency input to FWWT recommendations

DISCUSSION: This reflects the discussion and presentation made by the FWWT at the Seattle NWCG meeting. The proposal received only acceptable comments and has the concurrence of the FDRWT. FWWT will develop and complete a weather station network analysis which identifies the network needed to meet wildland fire management requirements. It is important that the FDRWT be involved with this analysis. Target completion is Fall 2001. The FWWT is requested to provide a written update to NWCG by the January 2001 meeting. The NWCG is also interested in getting an update on the "circuit breakers" or the progress of the NWS monitoring plan.

14. SUBJECT: FWWT NFDRS Weather Station Standards

DISCUSSION: The FWWT made recommendations in May 2000 on the implementation of the weather station standards. The standard has had review by GACGs and the FDRWT.

a)The recommendation is to adopt the Weather Station Standards as submitted

Motion: Approve NFDRS Weather Station Standards as submitted

Seconded and carried

b) Transition to a network characterized by automation stations with solar radiation sensors which transmit data via the GOES satellite. NWCG supports and encourages member agencies to proceed with procurement and installation through life cycle management.

c) Establish a weather station maintenance program. Tasked the FWWT to put a group together to develop options on how a maintenance program may be implemented. We recommend that this be completed by the Fall 2001 NWCG meeting

15. SUBJECT: Qualification issues with ROSS and IQCS

DISCUSSION: There are issues of concern from the March 24, 2000 letter on issues with ROSS and IQCS. Two potential options were provided that dispatchers may take regarding qualification issues. The September 12, 2000 letter seemed to be somewhat different on the same issue. It appears that neither letter passed through the IQCS Business Committee for concurrence and recommendation. The need for ROSS and incident qualification system(s) to interface so that qualified incident management personnel can be dispatched via the ROSS system was discussed. NWCG directs the two project teams to work with the NWCG PMO and IRMWT to develop a solution to ensure that ROSS does not present a barrier to dispatching qualified personnel to incidents. We would like to have the consolidated recommendation from the Business Committees by January 2001.

16. SUBJECT: Narrowband radio communication correspondence

DISCUSSION: The draft letter has received staff review from agencies at NIFC. Suggest tabling the issue on digital/analog conversions to January 2001 we would like to have a revisited draft for review.

17. SUBJECT: FCOG/NWCG draft agreement

DISCUSSION: No action may be needed on an agreement between NWCG and FCOG. There may be a need to have a formal agreement between the countries but there may not be a need to do it with the groups. Denny Trusdale, Forest Service, will check with FCOG when he makes his trip there in October to find out if FCOG needs a formal agreement. At this time we will wait for further information before proceeding with a formal agreement between FCOG and NWCG.

18. SUBJECT: Integrated Fire Management System

DISCUSSION: California and Washington have an initiative to fund a fire management system program for \$10,000,000. The program was modeled after the ROSS program aimed at State and local fire organizations. The program appears to be redundant with existing systems and may not have a place in the current automation system. Suggest this system be followed up by the IRMWT to determine if this system will provide a service that is needed by the wildland fire community.

19. SUBJECT: Use and management of Type I teams

DISCUSSION: The IOSWT has been tasked with reviewing the Type I and Type II Teams and long and short team issues. Is the GACG level the appropriate management system for Type I Teams? There also seems to be some issues of Type II Teams standards and qualifications. A mentoring program for Type II teams may help to improve the depth and qualification of Type I Team personnel.

Motion: Form a task group (National Incident Commanders) with Agency Administrator participation to review the issues on Incident Management Team use and management, Rick Gale will be the NWCG Liaison. Don Artley will send a letter that outlines the duties and expectations of this task group.

Seconded and Carried:

20. SUBJECT: Working Team tasking

DISCUSSION: Based on decisions from the NWCG Executive Meeting the following tasks will be assigned:

- a) Three to five year staffing needs for training development based on BIA and other positions at NIFC. We would like a report from the TWT at our January meeting.
- b) Review length of fire assignment. The IOSWT will do the staff work and report to the January 2001 NWCG meeting.
- c) Determine if a protocol is needed for work with OSHA. SHWT responsibility.
- d) Development of ways to determine if the Fire Weather Service is providing the service agreed under their new organization. FWWT
- e) Form a task group Form a task group to review the use of aviation resources in wildland fire suppression. Don Artley will send a letter forming the group as soon as we get a commitment from the proposed chair
- f) Coordination of the development of leadership instruction and skills into the fire training curriculum. This is on-going with the TWT and should not need a new task designation.

21. SUBJECT: Red Cards

DISCUSSION: There is a question that who has the authority to issue an Incident Qualification Card. What standards exist to ensure that the card is appropriately issued by a valid representative? NWCG member agencies are the only entities that may approve a red card. Other agencies or groups (contractors) through written agreements may certify qualifications and issue an alternative form of documentation. Other agencies or groups (contractors) through written agreements may certify qualifications and issue an alternative form of documentation. The IOSWT has done some research to ensure this is correct. They have determined that the January 2000 version of the 310-1 makes it clear that the qualification standards are for national mobilization only. It also recognizes that local cooperating agencies can jointly define certification and qualification standards to be implemented locally. There is no need for the IOSWT to do anything further. If more clarity is necessary, it probably ought to be done on an agency to agency basis.

22. SUBJECT: PMSWT Charter

DISCUSSION: A draft PMS Procedure Guide and Charter was introduced for approval. Each existing working team will provide a member (liaison) to PMS who would make the actual team.

Motion: Accept the charter and procedures for approval

Seconded and carried

23. SUBJECT: NWCG By-laws and Operating Principles

DISCUSSION: The Principles are approved as amended. These will be finalized for Chair approval and distributed to the GACGs and Working Teams.

Motion: Accept the document as amended

Seconded and carried

24. SUBJECT: GACG/NWCG joint meeting

DISCUSSION: We will have a joint meeting with the GACGs at the site of our June 2001 meeting in Portland, Oregon. The meeting will be held June 7, 2001. Don Arlley will be working with the PNWCG Chair to coordinate the meeting and site location.

25. SUBJECT: USGS Hazard Support System

DISCUSSION: It appears that the Hazard Support System seems to have been terminated because of lack of funding. NASF has an interest in keeping the program alive and passed a unanimous resolution at their national meeting to that effect. There does not appear to be a great deal of interest expressed from Federal land management agencies. No further NWCG action at this time.

26. SUBJECT: Coast Guard/NWCG Cross Training

DISCUSSION: The Coast Guard and Public Affairs people from the Forest Service requested a way to accept Coast Guard qualified people to perform as an Information Officer on fire incidents. Suggest we task the PEWT to review this proposal and make a recommendation to NWCG.

Motion: Task this proposal to the PEWT and IOSWT to make a recommendation.

Seconded and Carried

27. SUBJECT: Budget FY 2001

DISCUSSION: The final budget with modifications is proposed at \$1,081,000.00

Motion: Accept the FY 2001 budget

Seconded and carried

28. SUBJECT: Future meetings

DISCUSSION: January 30-31, 2001 starting at 0800 on the 30th. The meeting will be held in San Antonio, Texas. FDRWT will make a working team presentation on January 30, 2001.

June 5-6, 2001 starting at 0800 on the 5th with a joint GACG meeting on the 7th in Portland. No Working Team will be asked to participate.

October 16, NWCG work session and two days October 17-18, 2001 for NWCG in Maine the Fire Use Working Team will be asked to make a presentation on October 17, 2001.

29. SUBJECT: Election of a new NWCG Chair

DISCUSSION: Jim Hull and Ron Dunton, nominating committee, discussed the platform for the election of a Chair for NWCG. They proposed the continued service of Don Artley, Chair, and Roger Erb, Vice Chair.

Motion: Accept the platform from the committee

Seconded and carried

30. SUBJECT: Establish an electronic link between the National Business Center (USDI) in Denver and the National Information Technology Center (USDA) in Kansas City.

DISCUSSION: A federal link would expedite the use of ROSS and communication between the Federal agencies. The CIO for both agencies have asked for a written request from the NWCG Chair to support this cross link between the two departments. The NWCG Chairs has sent this correspondence as requested.

79th NWCG MEETING SUMMARY AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

Issue	Action	Responsibility	Accomplishment Date
National Prevention Teams	Contact Pat Durland to determine the status of these teams	Roger Erb	January 2001
Weather station network analysis	Identify the network needed to meet wildland fire management requirements.	Don Montanic, FWWT	Fall 2001
Weather Station maintenance	Establish a weather station maintenance program.	Don Montanic, FWWT	Fall 2001
ROSS and IQCS	ROSS and incident qualification system(s) to interface so that qualified incident management personnel can be dispatched via the ROSS system.	NWCG PMO and IRMWT	January 2001
Narrowband radio communication	Review amended letter on digital/analog conversions	Radio Narrow Band AG, Jim Stires	January 2001
FCOG/NWCG agreement	Determine need for a FCOG draft agreement based on Trusdale trip	Harry Croft	January 2001
Integrated Fire Management System	CA and WA initiative to fund a fire management system program	IRMWT	Continuing
Use and management of Type I Teams	Form a task group of National I.C.s and Agency Administrators for follow up	Rick Gale, Liaison	January 2001
Working Team Tasking	Three to five year staffing needs for training development	TWT, Harry Croft	January 2001
	Review length of fire assignment	IOSWT, Rick Gale	January 2001
	Determine if a protocol is needed for work with OSHA	SHWT, Jim Hull	June 2001
	Development of ways the determine if the Fire Weather Service is providing the service agreed under their new organization.	FWWT, Don Montanic	June 2001
	Adopt a task group to review the use of aviation resources in wildland fire suppression.	Don Artley will send a letter setting this group up	Report June 2001
	Coordination of the development of leadership instruction and skills into the fire training curriculum.	TWT	On-going
GACG/NWCG joint meeting	Follow up with Chair PNWCG for location	Don Artley	January 2001

Coast Guard/NWCG Cross Training	Accept Coast Guard qualified people to perform as an Information Officer on fire incidents.	PEWT and IOSWT, Rick Gale	January 2001
EMERGING ISSUES:			
Standards for non- government agencies	Connection between USFA training and NWCG qualification system	USFA, Hugh Wood	
Fire Research	How does the NWCG influence the research agenda?	Dave Cleaves	