

NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP
80th MEETING MINUTES
January 2001

The 80th meeting of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group was held in San Antonio, Texas, January 30-31, 2001.

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
Dennis Pendleton for Harry Croft, Forest Service
Dave Cleaves, Forest Service Research
John Cochran for Hugh Wood, U. S. Fire Administration
Jim Stires, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Don Motanic, Intertribal Timber Council
Larry Hamilton, Bureau of Land Management
Jim Stumpf, Executive Secretary

Guests attending: January 30, 2001

Bob Praytor, Marine Corps, Camp Pendleton
Al Jeffrey, Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Council
Barry Mathias, IRM Program Lead
Shari Shetler, IRMWT
Al Hyde, Brookings Institute
Tory Majors, IBMWT
Alice Forbes, FEWT
Logan Lee, TWT
Debb Epps, TWT
John Bell, Forest Service
Judy Crosby, BLM-IRM
Al Borup, NPS-IRM
Allen Deitz, BLM-IRM
Gary Curcio, FDWT
Paul Schlobaum, FDWT
Russ Gripp, FDWT
Bill Terry, TWT
John Gould, SHWT
Cynthia Foster, Texas Forest Service
Doug Anderson, FDWT
Will Brimberry, IQCS
Sandy Tripp, Forest Service

January 31, 2001

Barry Mathias, IRM Program Lead
Bob Praytor, Marine Corps, Camp Pendleton
Al Jeffrey, Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Council
Shari Shetler, IRMWT
Will Brimberry, IQCS
Tory Majors, IBMWT
Sandy Tripp, Forest Service
Alice Forbes, FEWT

1. **SUBJECT:** Approval of 79th meeting minutes.

DISCUSSION: The final 79th 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:** Program Management Office, IRM

DISCUSSION: The IRM Project Management group began from the IRM Strategy development that outlined IRM needs for the interagency community. The need for a common Interagency system will provide cost savings by avoiding duplication in data use and application. The Project Management Office is the infrastructure to provide interagency guidance in development of applications. The PMO team has developed a vision/mission statement. These provide four focus areas:

1. Project management for the general coordination and oversight of the PMO
2. Data Architect includes the organization of the data used by the interagency fire community.
3. Application Architect provides consistency in the application of all interagency IRM applications.
4. Repository management provides a location for the storage of all materials developed for the varying electronic and data applications applied.

3. SUBJECT: Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Center (CIFFC)

DISCUSSION: Al Jeffrey provided an update of the Canadian fire activities. Generally, Canada had a below average fire season. He reported an overall good experience from Canadians who worked in the United States during the 2000 fire season. Canada has an extensive air tanker and helicopter fleet that are used for suppression. They are consistently working to keep aircraft current. CIFFC considers there is an average \$40 million saving annually is sharing resources throughout the country and with the United States. Canada has agreed formally to adopt NIIMS/ICS and would like to solicit help from the IOSWT in direction for implementation. CIFFC has proposed a joint meeting between NWCG and their organization in the Fall 2002 or Winter (January) 2003. They would like to meet in Boise so their members could see the United States operation there and for ease of travel for the Canadians. This was agreed to and scheduled for January 28 to 30, 2003.

4. SUBJECT: Contracting Task Group

DISCUSSION: A national contract for crews, engines and tenders is being adopted. The contract is modeled after the crew contract used in Oregon by the State and Forest Service. There appears to be a DOI group working on a similar project under the National Fire Plan. All efforts need to be combined rather than continuing to working on parallel tasks. The NWCG Contracting Task Group needs to work with DOI and other contracting groups to operate and develop one solution to integrate the actions of all groups.

5. SUBJECT: Incident Qualification and Certification System (IQCS) Charter

DISCUSSION: The IQCS is designed to provide one consistent system for tracking personnel fire qualifications. Currently the states are using a different system that meets their needs. There was concern expressed by NWCG that we may be looking into a Cadillac version of a software program when that may not be needed. There was also a concern that once a contract was awarded there would be no stopping future developments. Check points could be designed that would control expanded developments. In a follow up discussion with some additional staff work, the IRMWT presented additional clarifying information that addressed some of the concerns from NWCG.

MOTION: Approve the charter for the IQCS as presented by the IRMWT

SECONDED AND CARRIED

6. **SUBJECT:** Incident (work zone)signing

DISCUSSION: Much of the signing used during fires does not meet current Department of Transportation standards or do the job of directing and controlling of traffic movement. Improper signing can be a contributing factor for traffic safety and efficiency of traffic flow issues. There is a need to coordinate and develop a liaison with the public road authorities during fire activity. The Ground Support Unit training needs to include specific information on signing. The Fire Equipment Working Team (FEWT) and San Dimas Development Center have taken the lead on this and will have signing with instructions available in caches for the 2001 fire season.

7. **SUBJECT:** *Where Have all the Firefighters Gone?*, Al Hyde, Brooking Institute

DISCUSSION: This is the final report on the information and study provided by Brookings to the study on *Where Have all the Firefighters Gone?*. Brookings received a 40% to 65% response from agencies on the survey. Forty five percent of respondents provided additional written comments. A standard set of demographic information exists to make good geographical breakdowns by agencies. Distribution of the final report will be made to NWCG members from the Executive Secretary. Final survey data and miscellaneous material will be stored with the PMO Repository Manager. Electronic agency data will be sent to the Agency fire heads.

8. **SUBJECT:** Safety and Health Working Team issues, follow up with OSHA

DISCUSSION: The SHWT is reviewing this issue and will provide follow up information on OSHA liaison at their winter meeting. A report to NWCG will be made at June 2001 NWCG meeting.

9. **SUBJECT:** Safety Alert System

DISCUSSION: A Web-based data system to develop safety notifications that will be mailed to a list of subscribers is operational. Only two to three people per agency are authorized to add issues to the list, but everyone can access the safety information from the web. The categories of the alert system include Warning, Watch, Advisory and Bulletin.

MOTION: SHWT should continue their work with the Safety Alert System as another mechanism to provide safety information to the field.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

10. SUBJECT: Texas Interagency Coordination Center

DISCUSSION: Coordinates dispatch of resources for Texas Forest Service, six National Forests, five National Park units, seventeen Fish and Wildlife Service units, and one Bureau of Indian Affairs unit. Texas uses its Department of Criminal Justice and National Guard resources for suppression activities. During the 2000 fire season Texas experienced 2800 fires for 240,000 acres and saved \$130 million in damage to homes. The urban/interface loss to structures was \$2 million. Seven hundred engines, dozers and overhead was mobilized in 2000 for use in Texas and to support other requests in the United States.

11. SUBJECT: Fire Danger Working Team

DISCUSSION: The Fire Danger Working Team (FDWT) provided an overview of teams activities and a vision of where its energy should be in the future. They want to have people use and trust the Fire Danger Rating System in local analysis of fire severity predictions. The system needs to be user friendly and meet the field needs. The FDWT works closely with the Fire Weather WT in development of standards for weather stations.

The presentation provided by the FDWT was complete and provided NWCG with added insight to the effort this team is making for interagency activities and support.

12. SUBJECT: Training Working Team (TWT) recommendations

DISCUSSION: The TWT provided follow up information on two issues from the 79th meeting. 1) Staffing pattern for the next five years. 2) The introduction of leadership into the fire training curriculum. Item 2 will be carried over to June 2001 to allow for additional staff work on the issue.

A recommendation with alternatives for future staffing was made. The general agreement was that these positions (five total) were needed to continue with the development and course delivery efforts, but the positions should be funded by the agencies represented, not NWCG. The following positions, by agency, will be added to the training staff at NIFC during FY 2001 in response to the TWT supplemental 2001 request:

1. Distance Learning Leader (new position) - BLM
2. Editorial Assistant - FWS
3. Editorial Assistant - FS
4. Training Specialist - NPS
5. Training Specialist - FS

13. SUBJECT: Length of fire assignments

DISCUSSION: The Incident Operations Standards WT (IOSWT) and Missoula Development Center are looking into the various aspects of length of assignments. Tri-data has also submitted a proposal to do a further study regarding length of assignments. The IOSWT has done their task in analyzing this and providing recommendations. The Missoula Technological Development Center should continue with their efforts in the shift length analysis for future consideration.

MOTION: Accept the IOSWT recommendation for the 14-day assignment limit, excluding travel. There can be an exception based on Agency Administrator/Incident Commander approval. There is also an R & R exception during National preparedness level 5. The changes are very minor from what was included in the National Mobilization Guide in 2000 and should be included in the 2001 Mobilization Guide contingent on Forest Service Union concurrence. No contract work will be needed from Tri-data.

SECONDED AND CARRIED

14. SUBJECT: Crew standards

DISCUSSION: The IOSWT recommends maintaining the two types of crews currently used. Basically, this will not change the current crew typing standards. The IOSWT also clarified the standards for using Type II crews for initial attack. This information needs to appear in the National Mobilization Guide. NWCG members need to make certain that the information is disseminated within their agencies.

MOTION: Adopt the recommendations and proposed crew standards as proposed by the IOSWT. Final approval is contingent upon Forest Service union approval.

SECONDED AND CARRIED

15. SUBJECT: Clarification on Initial attack standards

DISCUSSION: NWCG has completed the recommendation and clarifying points. This information on initial attack standards should be placed in the front portion of the 310-1. Rick Gale will communicate this information to the IOSWT for action.

16. SUBJECT: Wildland Fire Prevention Teams

DISCUSSION: These teams are used in many areas to supplement fire prevention work forces. There doesn't appear to be any ownership or guidance provided for the use of these teams.

MOTION: Task the Wildland Fire Education Working Team (WFEWT) to work with Pat Durland, BLM, to develop all aspects for the use, qualifications and standards for fire prevention teams.

SECONDED AND CARRIED

17. SUBJECT: Qualification issues with ROSS and IQCS

DISCUSSION: The recently approved IQCS Charter has removed any potential barriers or problems. No further action is necessary.

18. SUBJECT: Integrated Fire Management System

DISCUSSION: The Integrated Fire Management System (IFMS) has not been funded and at this time appears to be a non-issue.

19. SUBJECT: Quick connect, quarter turn couplings.

DISCUSSION: The California Department of Forestry and California Office of Emergency Services have addressed their concerns over the decision for federal agencies to convert to the quick connect. Their general concerns include the initial costs and potential safety concerns in using non-compatible hose fittings. The FEWT analysis shows an overall cost reduction in the new couplings and increased efficiency. There are no safety concerns expressed by FEWT. On the recommendation of FEWT we will continue the conversion to the new couplings. An Implementation Plan will be developed and have wide distribution to all agencies that explains all aspects of the conversion process. FEWT will develop an Implementation Plan for NWCG concurrence at our June meeting.

20. SUBJECT: Analog/digital conversions

DISCUSSION: We had asked that a letter be prepared to send to the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior expressing our concern on the Narrow Band Conversion. The letter needs to be sent and will be circulated to NWCG representatives for a final review. Jim Stumpf will prepare the final letter for Don Artley's signature and sending.

21. SUBJECT: Use and Management of Type 1 Teams

DISCUSSION: The IOSWT has met with several Incident Management Teams, but they need to do some follow up on their recommendations. We will wait for the IOSWT staff work to be completed

22. SUBJECT: FCOG/NWCG agreement

DISCUSSION: No action was taken on this. We will carry this over to the June meeting. Dennis Pendleton will follow up with Harry Croft.

23. SUBJECT: NWCG/GACG joint meeting

DISCUSSION: The planning for the June 2001 joint meeting is in process. The Pacific Northwest Coordinating Group (PNCG) is anxious to provide the host role for the joint meeting. No specific location has been designated at this time. The joint meeting (NWCG/GACG) will be June 7, 2001. The GACGs will meet independently on the 6th to discuss similar problems and ways they feel NWCG can assist. Don asked for general and specific agenda items. Some that should be included may be: Crew contracting, predictive services and research needs, meteorological observation concerns, business management issues, and National Fire Plan issues. Working Teams will also be asked for their input on issues to be brought forward (input to Don Artley by mid-April), the morning agenda should be somewhat structured with the afternoon reserved for GACG input and issues.

24. SUBJECT: NWCG FY 2002 Budget

DISCUSSION: The budget proposals submitted by the working teams were reviewed. The following amendments have been made to the WT submission for budget items:

1. FEWT, delete the \$110,000 for FY 02 and subsequent years for equipment cache replacements. This is an agency need, not one from NWCG.
2. No specific budget changes were made, but it is felt that the FDWT may need to increase its budget based on the National Fire Plan and increased work in fire behavior and interactions with the FWWT, IOSWT, and TWT. No specific amount is considered and may have a 2003 or 2004 affect.
3. FWWT, no request was received from the working team but \$6,000 is added to cover State travel.
4. WFEWT, delete funds requested for all years for the NWCG website and NWCG Internet coordination. This is considered to be an IRMWT or PMO project.
5. IRMWT, delete the \$5,000 designated for Radio Narrowband Advisory Group. This is carried in the RNAG budget. Delete request for \$10,000 for Administrative Support. This support need should be accomplished by the team or agency members. Reduce NWCG website support to \$2,000 at the request of the IRMWT.
6. TWT budget was approved at the mid-level request without salaries.

MOTION: Approve FY 2002 budget as amended

SECONDED AND CARRIED

25. SUBJECT: Coast Guard/NWCG Information Officer compatibility

DISCUSSION: This action is tasked to a recommendation by the IOSWT and WFEWT's.

26. SUBJECT: Aviation Task Group

DISCUSSION: It is recommended that we move forward and continue with this task group to accomplish the issues outlined in the charter. Add a representative from the Office of Aviation Services to the group. Dave Mihalic, Superintendent of Yosemite National Park was recommended as Chair of the group. Jim Stires will continue as the NWCG Liaison.

MOTION: Continue with the task group study as outlined in the draft charter. The scope of work and draft charter will be forwarded to Chair Mihalic for consideration in the groups formation.

SECONDED AND CARRIED

27. SUBJECT: Add a representative from the Northeastern states to the TWT

DISCUSSION: The TWT has state representatives but predominantly from the west. It has been requested by the Northeastern states to the TWT

MOTION: Accept the motion to add a NE representative to the TWT.

SECONDED AND CARRIED

28. SUBJECT: Northern Rockies Coordinating Group (NRCG) correspondence on weather forecasters.

DISCUSSION: The NRCG shared concerns that as agencies hire fire weather forecasters to do job, the quality of NOAA Weather Service Forecasters will diminish. Hopefully, as this occurs, agency forecasters will be available to do the job and fill the voids left by the Weather Service modernization. Roger Erb will draft a response to the NRCG for the NWCG Chair signature.

29. SUBJECT: S-590 Fire Behavior Steering Committee members

DISCUSSION: The Chair of the S-590 Steering Committee has requested a western state representative be added to the committee. John See, State of Alaska, is available and will be named as the requested representative to the S-590 Steering Committee.

30. SUBJECT: National Fire Plan research

DISCUSSION: In the passage of the National Fire Plan there are funds identified for research for FY 2001. Some of this activity is under way. There is additional research funding identified for subsequent fiscal years in the Fire Plan. Dave Cleaves would like to canvas working teams to receive their input on research needs and review. Dave Cleaves will draft a letter for the chairs signature to the WT chairs requesting cooperation in identifying research projects. Dave Cleaves will report on results to the NWCG June 2001.

31. SUBJECT: 2000 Fire year publication

DISCUSSION: Finsky Publishing asked BLM for approval to publish a book about the 2000 year fire season. Finsky has agreed to an agency discounted rate for the purchase of books for agency needs. The books could be used as non-monetary awards or provided to agency offices. Are there any thoughts on the number of copies agencies would purchase? Some agencies have already made non-monetary awards for fire personnel who were on fires last year and may not be interested in mass purchase of this book at this time. Interested agencies provided input to Larry Hamilton on their needs.

32. SUBJECT: WT- Liaison roles

DISCUSSION: The NWCG Operating Plan requires that we review liaison assignments at the winter meeting. All Liaison-WTs were happy with the present structure, but there was a request from Larry Hamilton that he move to the TWT because of his interest in training. Harry Croft had no objections to the change. Larry Hamilton will be liaison with IBPWT and TWT. Harry Croft will do WFIWT and RNAG.

33. SUBJECT: Future meeting dates

DISCUSSION: June 5 and 6, 2001 in Portland, Oregon. Additionally, there will be a joint meeting with GACGs on June 7. October 23, 2001 NWCG Executive session, October 24 and 25 NWCG general meeting (FUWT will make presentation) Bar Harbor, Maine. January 15 to 17, 2002, New Orleans, (IBPWT will make presentation). Joint Canadian (CIFFC meeting), January 28 to 30, 2003 Boise, Idaho.

34. SUBJECT: The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Nature Conservancy have requested office space and representation at Fire Center in Boise.

DISCUSSION: Both agencies have made requests to locate personnel at the fire center. It is agreed that a FEMA representative should meet with the fire community to

determine the advantages/disadvantages in their representation at the Fire Center.

35. SUBJECT: New Chair needed for FDWT.

DISCUSSION: The FDWT Charter indicates the Chair Gary Curcio will be stepping down from that role. The WT and Liaison, Dave Cleaves, recommend that the current Vice Chair Paul Schlobohm, BLM, be made Chair and Doug Anderson, State of Minnesota, be appointed Vice Chair of the FDWT.

MOTION: Accept Dave Cleaves and the FDWT recommendation for the Chair and Vice Chair of the Working Team.

SECONDED AND CARRIED

80th NWCG MEETING SUMMARY AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

Issue	Action	Responsibility	Accomplishment Date
National Prevention Teams	Develop all aspects including use, qualification and standards of fire prevention teams.	WFEWT	June 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
SHWT and OSHA collaboration	Review the work of the working team and recommendation for increased protocols, liaison or collaboration with OSHA.	SHWT	June 2001
Narrowband radio communication	review amended letter on digital/analog conversions	Radio Narrow Band AG, Jim Stires	April 2001
FCOG/NWCG agreement	Determine need for a FCOG draft agreement based on Trusdale trip	Harry Croft	June 2001
Quick connect, quarter turn couplings	Review and improve an Implementation Plan for the quick connect coupling conversion.	FEWT	June 2001
Use and management of Type I teams	Form a task group of the IOSWT, National I.C.s and Agency Administrators for follow up	Rick Gale, Liaison	June 2001
Fire Weather Service circuit breakers	Development of ways to determine if the Fire Weather Service is providing the service agreed under their new organization.	FWWT, Don Montanic	June 2001
Aviation resource use	Adopt a task group to review the use of aviation resources in wildland fire suppression.	Jim Stires, Liaison	Report June 2001

Leadership instruction	Coordination of the development of leadership instruction and skills into the fire training curriculum.	TWT	June 2001
NWCG/GACG meeting	Agenda items should be provided to the NWCG Chair	NWCG Members and WT Chairs	April 15, 2001
Coast Guard/NWCG Information Officer compatibility	Accept Coast Guard qualified people to perform as an Information Officer on fire incidents.	FWEWT and IOSWT, Rick Gale	June 2001
NWCG Website	Assess needs and problems with NWCG Website	IRMWT, Jim Stires	June 2001
Fire behavior	Provide recommendations where and what fire behavior needs should be included within NWCG	FRWT, Dave Cleaves	October 2001
Research needs	Obtain input from WTs for the general and specific research needs for the next few years.	Dave Cleaves	June 2001, report to NWCG
NRCG Weather Service letter	A letter will be sent to the NRCG Chair with the NWCG response to their concerns.	Roger Erb	April 1, 2001
National Fire Plan research	Working Teams may have considerable research project proposals and ideas for research. We will canvas the WT for their ideas	Dave Cleaves (draft letter for Chair and provide follow-up report)	June 2001

EMERGING ISSUES			
Standards for non-government agencies	Development of standards for non-government agencies to participate on wildland fires and qualifications needed.	USFA, Hugh Wood	
NWCG/WT Joint meeting	Consider a joint meeting between NWCG and Chairs of all WT together in one place for a joint meeting.	NWCG Liaison	
Fire Research	How can research benefits assist NWCG and WTs do a better job	Dave Cleaves	