

NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP
82nd MEETING MINUTES
October 2001

The 82nd meeting of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group was held in Bar Harbor, Maine, October 24-25, 2001.

Members attending: Don Artley, Chair, Montana Division of Forestry
Roger Erb, Vice Chair, Fish and Wildlife Service
Rick Gale, National Park Service
Bob Krepps, NASF, Missouri Department of Conservation
Jerry Williams, Forest Service
Dave Cleaves, Forest Service Research
Hugh Wood, U. S. Fire Administration
Jim Stires, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Don Motanic, Intertribal Timber Council
Larry Hamilton, Bureau of Land Management
Gary Morgan, FCOG, Australia
Jim Stumpf, Executive Secretary

Guests attending: October 24, 2001

Wayne Mitchell, FWWT
Gary Machlis, NPS
Cheryl Maddox, Forest Service
John Gould, SAFENET
Barry Mathias, IRM
Bruce Suenram, IAWF
Joe Mazzeo, NPS
Paul Head, NPS
Pete Norkeveck, WFIWT
Alan Caldwell, International Association of Fire Chiefs
Sue Vap, NPS

October 25, 2001

Logan Lee, TWT
Bill Leenhouts, FUWT
Wayne Mitchell, FWWT
Barry Mathais, IRM
Bruce Suenram, IAWF
Sue Vap, NPS

1. **SUBJECT:** Approval of 81st meeting minutes.

DISCUSSION: The final 81st 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:** Social science and its effect on fire management.

DISCUSSION: The final report *Burning Questions, A Social Science Research Plan for Federal Wildland Fire Management* was presented for acceptance and approval. The plan covers a wide range of topics and questions related to the human dimensions of wildland fire management. Both the beneficial and harmful effects of wildland fire are considered. The plan includes research in the social sciences of anthropology, economics, geography, psychology, political science and sociology, and interdisciplinary fields of research.

The key elements of the plan are based on three principles: 1) Policy analysis that identifies the kinds of social science research mandated and recommended by relevant Federal law, regulation and policy. 2) Literature review that describes research relevant to the human dimensions of wildland fire and identifies knowledge gaps in the literature. 3) Needs assessment derived from workshops held around the country that included social and biophysical scientists, fire and resource managers at the Federal and State levels, local community leaders, stakeholder groups and interested citizens.

Jim Stumpf will ensure the executive summary gets placed on the website. Dave Cleaves and Rick Gale will develop a public roll-out plan and implementation plan for NWCG follow-up action. NPS will handle distribution of the final document.

MOTION: Accept the report as presented and approve \$15,000 for the printing of 3000 copies of the publication *Burning Questions, A Social Science Research Plan for Federal Wildland Fire Management*.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

3. **SUBJECT:** Federal Fire and Safety Team (SAFENET).

DISCUSSION: SAFENET is a near miss reporting project as a result of the Tri-data study. The program was first rolled out in the summer of 2000. The program design is two-fold. First, it provides a forum for firefighters to display problems encountered on the job. The second purpose provides the firefighter an opportunity to review areas of previous problems reported by others. Problems that are presented to SAFENET are reviewed, and specific names and places identified are removed from the reporting. A

problem occurred this summer from a news reporter reviewing SAFENET and giving a partial, one-sided report on one of the SAFENET reports. There are no disclaimers on the website, but it is suggested some sort of disclaimer be added that would identify that the information contained is raw material based on opinion and is not necessarily factual. SAFENET will add this information to the overview SAFENET statement.

A task group is putting information from SAFENET reports into a lessons learned file that can be used for training in the future. Currently, the program is being used by the Federal fire agencies. The SAFENET group would like to offer States the opportunity to participate in 2002. Don Artley, NASF will ensure that each state provides John Gould with a contact person. In FY 2002 the program will provide an 800 telephone number that will enhance reporting of safety issues.

No further SAFENET bulletins will be issued until the program develops alternatives to problems and issues that are identified by all agencies. The SAFENET program will become a program under SHWT of NWCG. Alternatives will be presented to NWCG at the winter 2002 meeting.

4. SUBJECT: FCOG update.

DISCUSSION: There are several areas of mutual concern between NWCG and FCOG. These require continued work and include: NIIMS/AIIMS review, legalities of resource sharing, common ICS role development training, watch-outs, effectiveness of foam, NWCG/CIFF - FCOG. We will continue to work with the FCOG group on these areas of concern.

The Australasian Fire Authority Council is hosting the Third International Wildland Fire Conference October 4-8, 2003, in Sydney, Australia. They have extended an invitation for NWCG to hold their fall 2003 meeting in conjunction with this conference

5. SUBJECT: Standards for Wildland Fire Investigators.

DISCUSSION: The Wildland Fire Investigation Working Team (WFIWT) would like to move ahead on the proposed standards as presented at the June 2001 NWCG meeting. Peer review of the standards has been completed. Many comments were received, and all have been addressed by the Team in the final standards. Position Task Books are near completion, and a total of three training courses is proposed. The WFIWT is working closely with the Training Working Team (TWT) and Training Specialists at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) on course development. Additional work needed includes a field guide, checklist and a desk reference document to refresh the user with all specific investigative references.

Physical fitness standards for investigators are also recommended. Basically, most of the activities in fire investigation require low or no physical requirements because the actual work that would be accomplished is off-scene, after the actual suppression activities have taken place. The WT wants to develop an implementation strategy to better meet standards across the country for all agencies. Some of these strategies may include missions and considerations to homeland security.

MOTION: Accept the WFIWT investigator standards presented to NWCG in June 2001.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

6. SUBJECT: International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC).

DISCUSSION: The International Association of Fire Chiefs has asked NWCG to consider formal/informal relationship between NWCG/IFC. IAFC could provide a link to fire departments in the United States on those wildland fire issues that might affect fire departments. The wildland/urban interface issue is a growing concern for IAFC members.

The IAFC was formed 128 years ago to establish a standard for fire hose and threads. Members are Fire Chiefs throughout the United States. IAFC is managed by a 16-person elected board with committees and task forces to carry out their work. They are formed in three departmental areas within their organizational structure:

- 1) Professional development - conferences
- 2) Communications - internal and external
- 3) Government relations - testimony on the Hill and lobbyist activities

Alan Caldwell, IAFC, will be added to the mailing list so they can be better informed of NWCG activities.

7. SUBJECT: Use of fire prevention teams.

DISCUSSION: The Wildland Fire Education Working Team (WFEWT) will present a full package on this issue at the January 2002 meeting. No new information is available at this time.

8. SUBJECT: Use and management of Type I Incident Management Teams.

DISCUSSION: The Incident Operations Standards Working Team (IOSWT) would like to make a formal presentation on this issue at the January 2002 NWCG meeting. No new information is available at this time.

9. SUBJECT: Coast Guard qualified Information Officers.

DISCUSSION: The Coast Guard will be sending their people through the 310-1 qualifications to meet NWCG standards.

10. SUBJECT: Incident Management System (IMS) Consortium/Incident Command Systems (ICS) Interface.

DISCUSSION: The IOSWT wants to continue its participation with the IMS consortium. An IMS WT representative has participated in the IOSWT meeting. This should help to make this IMS/ICS interface activity work. Keeping abreast of activities in both groups should aid in a closer working relationship between the two groups.

11. SUBJECT: Helicopter Crew Member Position Task Book.

DISCUSSION: The modification suggested by the Pacific Northwest Geographic Area has been changed. Don Artley will send a letter to the PNWGA confirming the modification.

12. SUBJECT: Non-Arduous Helicopter Manager Position

DISCUSSION: The use of non-arduous helicopter manager positions has been ongoing for the past couple of fire seasons due to the lack or availability of helicopter managers having arduous fitness levels. The Incident Operations Standards Working Team (IOSWT), in conjunction with the Helicopter Operations Steering Committee, developed standards for a non-arduous helicopter manager position. This would establish two helicopter manager positions in the qualifications system. The IOSWT also recommended training and currency requirements to be placed in the qualifications publication 310-1.

MOTION: Accept the IOSWT recommendations.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

13. SUBJECT: Pilot project proposal for trainee use.

DISCUSSION: This is an Eastern Area proposal that suggests a minimum 10% increase in overhead dispatched to fires be sent as trainees. This may better help increase the pool of qualified personnel available. This has been discussed with the coordinators at NIFC and it is believed that some additional alternatives could be explored. Follow up at the 83rd meeting with options/alternatives to enhance the use of trainees on fires.

14. SUBJECT: Aviation Use Committee.

DISCUSSION: The group has met and will present a draft report at the January 2002 NWCG meeting. Dave Mihalic is the Chair of this Committee. It appears there are some dual standards between the Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide (IHOG) and other qualifications found in ICS-310-1.

15. SUBJECT: 410-1, Fireline Handbook.

DISCUSSION: The second draft of this handbook has been completed. Chapter one deals with safety. They have also worked out a chapter dealing with Urban Interface. The IOSWT has reviewed the Thirtymile Fire report to ensure there is no conflict with the 410-1. The IOSWT hopes to have this updated Fireline Handbook available for field distribution by the 2002 season.

16. SUBJECT: WFEWT membership.

DISCUSSION: Three replacement members are needed on this Working Team. NWCG members were asked to see if they could help identify some of the members needed. These include an Agency Administrator, Eastern/Southern State representative, and a Fish and Wildlife Service representative. Members should get back to the Chair of the Working Team with names.

17. SUBJECT: Minimum crew standards for national mobilization.

DISCUSSION: The IOSWT proposed minimum crew standards. They are proposing a Type I, Type II with Initial Action capability and Type II crews. There was a suggestion to modify the language to indicate crew cohesiveness. Safety and Health Working Team (SHWT) and Leadership Task Group should look at past fires and determine if crew cohesiveness or lack of cohesiveness has exhibited indicators of increased risks/hazards on fires.

MOTIONS: 1) Adopt the minimum crew standards; 2) Task the SHWT to look at past fires and training courses in the Human Dimension and Followership and Leadership courses to determine applicability and consideration into crew cohesiveness.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

18. SUBJECT: Wildland Fire Safety Awareness recommendations.

DISCUSSION: No action to report at this time. Letters have been sent to affected WT Chairs that had actions, asking for their input to conclude items that need completion. TWT has made the only response to date.

19. SUBJECT: PMS Working Team Chair.

DISCUSSION: Mike Benscoter has volunteered to Chair the PMSWT.

MOTION: Accept the recommendation for Mike Benscoter to Chair PMSWT.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

20. SUBJECT: Fire Preparedness Planning.

DISCUSSION: The project to develop a national Preparedness Planning System was presented to NWCG in June 2001 and has since received JFSP funding to develop a proposal for system development/research. This project has high potential for future IRM impacts/implications so formal liaison with the NWCG IRMWT is needed. Jim Stires should ensure that Gerry Day established formal on-going liaison with the IRMWT Chair, Shari Shetler.

21. SUBJECT: Interagency Incident Base Automation Task Group.

DISCUSSION: The Task Group has begun the project but has not completed the work, nor are they prepared to make a recommendation. They will have a completed report December 15, 2001, and will make a final recommendation to NWCG at the January 2002 NWCG meeting.

22. SUBJECT: IQCS update.

DISCUSSION: The project is in the contracting phase for design. There have been six vendor responses. The current Project Manager has accepted a new job. The position will be re-filled. The project is on schedule per the IQCS charter.

23. SUBJECT: National Fire Plan Reporting System (NFPRS).

DISCUSSION: An effort to develop an automated National Fire Plan Reporting system for the Forest Service and Department of the Interior agencies is under way. The system will be used to report program results to congress, Office of Management and Budget and the Departments. To date work in FS and DOI has been under taken independently so coordination and uniform reporting is suspect. Greater coordination is needed and that may be best achieved by rolling the project under the auspices of NWCG.

24. SUBJECT: Supervisory dispatch qualifications.

DISCUSSION: The information and request for this modification has not been brought to the TWT. The TWT will review this and communicate their recommendations to NWCG at the January 2002 meeting.

25. SUBJECT: FY 2002 budget.

DISCUSSION: Approve the budget with the increase of \$15,000 for the *Burning Question, A Social Science Research Plan for Federal Wildland Fire Management* publication. This will make the total FY 2002 commitment \$936,500.

MOTION: Accept the budget as amended.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

26. SUBJECT: Leadership Task Group - membership/charter.

DISCUSSION: The membership of the proposed group includes an Agency Administrator and members from all Federal agencies. The only missing member is from the States. Don Artley should have this position filled in the next few weeks.

Charter responsibilities include seven distinct parts, to include review of existing leadership curriculum and training. They are going to deal with different delivery methods in the development of the training. The curricula will be structured to start at the beginning and have a natural progression as employees develop into more complex work activities.

The priority for the task group in FY 2002 includes development of new courses, validation of proposed TWT actions, and the existing curriculum review will take advantage of existing materials from all sources.

27. SUBJECT: Data Administration Working Group (DAWG).

DISCUSSION: A concept paper was presented for review and consideration. The group would like an informal working group to act as the approving body for NWCG data standards. The DAWG will be chartered under the IRMWT. Membership will be comprised of a representative from each of the existing Working Teams.

The DAWG should develop a charter and obtain review comments from other WTs before proceeding. This will aid in the WT buy-in process. The DAWG will be responsible to the IRMWT, which will approve the charter after all WTs and NWCG review.

28. SUBJECT: Fire Use Working Team.

DISCUSSION: The Team was first formed in 1977 as the Prescribed Fire and Fire Effects Working Team. The title and mission was changed to Fire Use in 1997 to better reflect new terminology. The FUWT works in concert with WFEWT, TWT, and IOSWT in the development of training and fire use qualifications and educational programs.

29. SUBJECT: Create a Geographic Area Advisory Group.

DISCUSSION: The current By-laws and Operating Procedures do not permit NWCG to establish Advisory or other groups. To better form other groups, a modification in the NWCG By-laws needs to be made.

Once changes are approved in the NWCG By-laws, we can develop a Geographic Area Advisory Group. The group will be comprised of members from each of the nine geographic areas. The members on this group should probably not be the Chair of the GACG since this responsibility turns over annually. The NWCG Chair will be the permanent liaison to this group.

MOTIONS: 1) Accept the new By-law change. 2) Form a Geographic Area Advisory Group.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

30. SUBJECT: Annual Reports.

DISCUSSION: Several of the Working Teams' Annual Reports were received late by NWCG. The NWCG By-laws and Operating Principles outline that these reports reflect budget expenditures and Team accomplishments. Two concerns were expressed by NWCG and may require NWCG liaison follow-up with the Teams. First, not all reports were submitted in a timely manner. Secondly, not all of the reports articulated what the Teams' accomplishments were and how budget expenditures were made.

31. SUBJECT: NWCG's role in establishing and implementing pre-fire management planning standards.

DISCUSSION: The traditional role of NWCG has been to establish uniform operational fire management standards. Should/can Federal and State fire management agencies agree on strategic and tactical pre-fire management planning standards? Several State and Federal agencies have developed agency specific positions and training courses, while others are looking to NWCG for interagency standards and/or training support. Should the FUWT begin working on the interagency fire use planning positions, task books, and training courses?

At this time, NWCG feels that we should agree on strategic and tactical pre-fire planning standards. The FUWT is tasked with beginning to develop interagency fire use and prescribed fire training courses and positions, and also with developing an alternative to the task book approach to measuring competencies.

32. SUBJECT: Form a task group for fire policy implementation.

DISCUSSION: Develop an implementation strategy for all agencies to use for the 2001 Fire Policy implementation. Jerry Williams and Larry Hamilton will be liaison between this task group and NWCG. Agencies are asked to provide candidates to this group. We need to have a good mix of people such as national and regional fire management personnel, agency administrators, natural resource personnel, etc. States will play an active role in this task force. Names will be provided to Larry or Jerry in early November.

MOTION: Establish a special task group Establish a special task force to develop a strategy for implementation of the 2001 federal fire policy to be complete by the end of CY 2002.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

33. SUBJECT: Review NIIMS/AIIMS.

DISCUSSION: Form a task group under the IOSWT to review NIIMS and AIIMS to look at both systems and make recommendations on potential modifications based on our knowledge of dealing with the systems for close to 30 years. Rick Gale will pass our intent on to the WT to form the group to ensure a good cross section of personnel, including agency administrators, IMT members, etc.

MOTION: Ask the IOSWT to charter a task group, in conjunction with FCOG, to jointly review both ICS and AIIMS to determine if changes are needed to better serve wildland fire management.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

34. SUBJECT: Transitions.

DISCUSSION: NWCG needs to lead the efforts to mitigate threats during fire transition in two high risk areas: 1) the transition phase in suppression activities between initial attack and large incident management, and 2) during long duration, landscape scale fire use events.

We would like to recommend the policies, performance elements, and requisite tools required to safely and effectively manage, supervise and lead personnel in these areas.

MOTION: Form a task group and have preliminary direction in place by the summer of 2002. Jerry Williams and Dave Cleaves will lead the effort.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

35. SUBJECT: Vice Chair.

DISCUSSION: The Chair of NWCG has appointed Jim Stires as Vice Chair, replacing Roger Erb effective January 4, 2002.

36. SUBJECT: NWCG nominating committee.

DISCUSSION: NWCG Chair and Vice Chair will serve as a nominating committee for NWCG Chair and Vice Chair for the NWCG election of officers for a 2-year term in May 2002.

37. SUBJECT: Wildland/Urban Interface Working Team (WUIWT).

DISCUSSION: Do we need to create a mitigation and education program? This is a DOI proposal and would be primarily a Department of the Interior group. There seem to be similar duties and responsibilities that are contained within the WUIWT. No action is taken on this from NWCG.

38. SUBJECT: Policy, procedures alignment.

DISCUSSION: Currently, there are some differences between the policies and procedures in the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. Where appropriate, we should strive to align the policies and procedures and publish these as a guide for other interested parties. In addition, we propose the development of a Code of Practice for fire management. The NPS will review a selection of FCOG member policy and procedures for identification of possible alignment with policy and procedures in the United States.

MOTION: Endorse a pilot project to discuss areas of possible policy and procedure alignment between NWCG and FCOG agencies.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

39. SUBJECT: Social science roll-out.

DISCUSSION: There appear to be two distinct parts of the social science roll-out:
1) Education and agency or departmental briefings. In addition, States and research organizations need to receive a briefing on the general content. There may be additional chances to disseminate information. Dave Cleaves will keep a record of these groups and will be the lead on this roll-out project. He will also assemble a group to brainstorm ideas for implementation. All members are encouraged to nominate folks to participate. 2) Implementation via the media. We need to take advantage of agency PAOs to assist in development of releases for the public. This issue will appear on the NWCG agenda for all future meetings.

40. SUBJECT: Future meetings.

DISCUSSION: January 16-17, 2002: New Orleans, Louisiana. IBPWT presentation with the 15th as a half day for a work group (hosted by BIA); FFALC will meet in the morning. May 21-23: TWT presentation; NWCG May 21-22, 2002; May 23 joint GACG meeting in Whitefish, Montana (hosted by Montana DNR). October 7-11, 2002 (tentative): Emmitsburg, Maryland (USFA host).

82ND NWCG MEETING SUMMARY AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

Issue	Action	Responsibility	Accomplishment Date
SAFENET alternatives	Develop alternatives to the current posting and use of SAFENET	John Gould/SHWT	January 2002
Trainee use on fires	Develop options for a systematic approach to expand the use of trainees on fires	Jim Stires Neal Hitchcock	January 2002
Aviation use	Present a draft report from Aviation Use Committee	Jim Stires Dave Mihalic	January 2002
Fire Prevention Teams	Present full package on Fire Prevention Teams	WFEWT	January 2002
Incident Management Teams	Presentation on Type I Incident Management Teams	IOSWT/Bob Leaverton	January 2002
Social science	Update report on the social science roll-out progress	Dave Cleaves	January 2002
WFEWT members	Need to identify agency administrator, State, and FWS member	NWCG members	January 2002
Interagency Incident Base Automaton	Final report from the Task Group developing recommendations	Tory Majors	January 2002
Supervisory Dispatch Qualifications	Present modifications and recommendations	TWT	January 2002
Fire policy implementation	Form a Task Group to implement fire policy strategy and execute this strategy; progress report	Larry Hamilton/Jerry Williams	January 2002
Transition concerns	Develop a Task Group to have preliminary transition direction in place	Jerry Williams	May 2002
NWCG Officers	Present a slate of officers for NWCG Chair and Vice Chair election for a 2-year term	Don Artley/Jim Stires	May 2002
NWCG/WT Liaison	Select NWCG Liaisons for all Working Teams	NWCG	January 2002
IBPWT	Team presentation on projects and accomplishment	Tory Majors, Chair IBPWT	January 2002

