

Aviation Committee Telecon Notes – February 8, 2013

Committee Member Participants:

- Steve Sorensen (Chair)
- Chris Fallback (Vice Chair—newly confirmed)-WY State
- Jason Baldwin-BLM
- Bob Jones (RMCG Liaison)-BIA
- Dave Martin-BIA
- Jim Lawson-USFS
- Jane Lopez- CO State

Other Participants:

- Ken Kerr- BLM
- Kent Hamilton-USFS
- Glenn Bartter (USFS)

Agenda/Associated Outcomes

RMA Mobilization Guide Changes (Chapters 20/80): Grammar errors have been cleaned up, reference to AMD has been changed (back) to AOS, mailing address changed for ordering MTR/SUA airspace information. The aerial supervision table in Ch 20 will be updated based on current Aerial Supervision Guide.

--Jim Lawson will send Steve a few additional changes

--Draft will be sent back out for final coordination then forwarded to Debbie and Glenn

Suggestions For Replacement SD State rep and Committee Vice Chair: LaVerne Hermanson retired and the SD State rep committee position will remain open (status TBD).

--Steve agreed to remain as Chair for one more year and the Committee concurred, as required by the Charter

--Chris Fallback volunteered to become Vice Chair, which follows the succession guidance in the Charter

VLAT Lessons Learned/Pros&Cons/Considerations For Use (RMCG Tasker): The Committee discussed the VLAT Considerations/Lessons Learned paper put together by Jason and Steve with SME inputs from Rick Gicla. Steve brought up concerns that the paper should not contradict official guidance on the VLAT (i.e. the USFS VLAT Operating Plan) and the Committee agreed that nothing in the paper causes conflict. That said, some additional “cons” should include verbiage regarding payment, the actual contract (CWN, Exclusive Use, etc) which is still out for bid, and concerns that the vendor needs to take on the responsibility for becoming operational at whichever base it uses.

--Kent will supply additional verbiage and the paper will be coordinated back through the Committee

--Information will be included regarding VLAT base approvals and how long they're valid

--RMCG input from Ken—Bottom line is to educate the greater interagency community to preclude confusion and second guessing at the tactical level

Aerial Support Partnership (ASP): Jane Lopez presented a proposal by two private citizens who happen to both own aircraft and have been spurred to action by public concerns stemming from the Waldo Canyon fire. They basically propose to provide daily aerial recon of the Front Range during fire season...for a fee.

--Cause for concern: ASP is an unknown quantity when it comes to previous training, knowledge of fire behavior, knowledge of aerial supervision principles, etc. They may also wander over a fire that has already been reported and may already have aerial assets working the fire causing airspace conflicts. There could also be operational control issues, especially if ASP pilots are communicating with Dispatch. Finally, there are already plenty of general aviation flights in the Front Range which can and do report smokes

--Kent, Jason and Steve have agreed to meet with ASP to get a feel where they're coming from and to give them a better awareness for how the Government operates in regards to aviation and wildland fire

Status of SEAT Contracts:

CO—CO is planning on putting two SEATs on 120-day contracts for the period of 1 Apr-1 Oct, staggered to provide continuous service.

--Contracts are still out for bid, but should firm up by the end of Feb

WY—Not currently pursuing SEAT contracts, but decision is not final

Aviation Training: There had previously been questions regarding an S-372 class planned to be taught the week of 2 April at Riverton. With Chris now as lead and a good mix of interagency instructors, those concerns have been eased and the Committee concurred that the class should proceed.

--Recommendation has been communicated to the Training Committee (Kim Bang)

--Upcoming Courses

---Rocky Mountain ATGS Refresher—9-10 Apr (Grand Junction)

---Rocky Mountain SEAT Refresher—23-24 Apr (Cheyenne)

---RT-372 Helicopter Manager Workshop—19-21 Mar (Loveland)

Status of Kremmling SEAT Base: There are ongoing discussions regarding whether the equipment positioned in Kremmling might be better utilized elsewhere since SEAT use at that location has been non-existent for many years.

--Decision TBD