



ROCKY MOUNTAIN COORDINATING GROUP

Bureau of Indian Affairs (Southwest, Rocky Mountain and Great Plains Regions)
Bureau of Land Management (Colorado and Wyoming)
Fish and Wildlife Service (Mountain/Prairie Region)
Forest Service (Rocky Mountain Region)
National Park Service (Intermountain and Midwest Regions)
State Agencies in Colorado, Wyoming, South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas

Minutes of Fall Meeting October 18-19, 2011 Lander, Wyoming

In Attendance:

Facilitator Jim Fletcher
Business Manager Brooke Malcolm

Members

Bob Jones (**Acting Chair**)
Jeff Fedrizzi
Ron Graham
Mike Harvey (for Rich Homann)
Blair Dunn (for Joe Lowe)
Dave Carter
Ken Kerr
Cal Pino
Jim McMahon – via Telephone (for Mike Davin)
Mark Boche

Guests

Dave Niemi (NPS) – via Telephone
Dave Lucas – via Telephone
Mark Giacoletto – via Telephone
Joe Alexander – via telephone

Unavailable

Joe Lowe
Rich Homann
Ross Hauck
Don Westover
Dan Smith
Bill Ott

1. Incident Business Committee

- Discussion revisited issue of splitting the Rocky-Basin Incident Business Committee into two committees.
- Both Rocky Mountain Coordinating Group and Great Basin Coordinating Group will be discussing this issue at their Winter Meetings. The Incident Business Committee will meet in February after the coordinating groups' decision(s) on moving forward.
- Concern was voiced that the proposal to split the committee should have come through the agency representative(s) to the coordinating groups, not from the committee itself as it did.

Tasking: Carter proposed that RMCG write a memo to GBCG addressing the following issues:

1. The recommendation to split the committee should not have originated with the committee.
2. The agencies involved did not present this proposal.
3. The committee should remain intact.

Tasked to: Jones

Status: Proposal accepted with due date by next GBCG meeting in 2 weeks. A draft memo is due by Oct. 28.

2. Consensus Model

- Discussion regarding RMCG Consensus Model and the definition and use of “blocks”.
- It was agreed that clarification was needed on wording in adopted Consensus Model, including the proper use of blocks and other forms of dissent.
- Members agreed that it is important to preserve the Consensus Model, as it promotes healthy discussion and cooperation among all participants.
- Members also agreed that the improper use of blocks and failure to come to consensus has led to unnecessary elevation of issues to the Executive Coordinating Group, diminishing RMCG’s perceived ability to handle issues appropriately.

Tasking: Jones proposed that examples of appropriate use of blocks be drafted, and that wording in the Consensus Model be refined to clarify meeting rules and resolve incongruities in the document.

Tasked to: Jones, Kerr, Carter, Dunn

Status: Consensus Model was amended to reflect the agreed-upon definition and proper usage of a “block,” voting majority requirements, and the mechanism to utilize Robert’s Rules of Order in meetings. New version of Consensus Model emailed to all RMCG members.

3. Executive Conference Call Discussion

- Summary of the Executive conference call included consensus by executives to refer issue back to RMCG for selection of the ICT1 trainee position.
- Executives also recommended that RMA Type 2 teams remain status-quo for the upcoming fire season.
 - Included was a request that RMCG review current IMT2 rotation and examine the feasibility of a zone team concept in the future. RMCG was asked to supply the Executive Group with a recommendation regarding zone teams by May 2012 for decision by June 1 for the 2013 fire season. (Outstanding tasking since last year.)
- Participants identified the following areas of inquiry (*responsible party(ies) next to each item*):
 - Definition of potential zones, based upon response times and distributions of qualified personnel to fill team positions. (*Dunn, Lowe, Kerr, Hutton, Jones*)
 - Solicitation of input on zone team concept (pros & cons) from areas using zone teams: Northern Rockies Area (*Davin*), Southwest Area (*Pino*), Minnesota (*Fletcher*).
 - Review RMCG Succession Plan, NWCG Succession Plan (updated), and Operations Committee Succession Planning documents to determine fit and feasibility of zone teams (*All Members*).
 - Assess the number of Type 3 IMTs in RMA and their locations and configurations (*All Members*).

- Revisit the all-hazard response and its implications for qualifications and liability (*All Members*).
- Examine the authorities for all-hazard responses by federal personnel and teams (seek direction from *Lucas, Derringer, Tomlin, Page*).
- Further coordination and integration with existing all-hazard teams in RMA, specifically Type 3 teams.
- Determine the true expectations of the Team C (or Great Plains Zone Team) all-hazard response.
- Review documents prepared by Incident Business Committee for federal response to all-hazard incidents (documents to be distributed to all members by *Kerr via Malcolm*).
- Revisit elevation of issue to NWCG for national direction. Follow-up on NMAC/GMAC agenda item (*Carter*).

Tasking: To conduct background investigation and research into the feasibility of zone teams in the RMA, and present findings and recommendation(s) to the Executive Group by May 2012.

Tasked to: Jones (*see above for additional individual taskings*)

Status: *Further discussion will be included in the Winter Meeting agenda. Recommendation(s) due to Executive Group by May 2012.*

4. IC Selection

- After review of the Executive Group conference call, participating members agreed upon the following:
 - Maintain status quo configuration for all teams for the coming fire season.
 - Choose ICs and trainees for the next rotation.
 - Examine the configuration of Type 2 teams in the RMA, and make a recommendation to the executives by May 2012.
 - Review the selection process for ICs, including the need to incorporate interviews into the RMCG selection process.
- It was agreed that speculation regarding the prospective retirement of IC applicants should not be a basis for consideration.
- Selection of Bill Hahnenberg as Type 1 IC was made during the October 6 RMCG Conference Call.
 - Rationale: Highly qualified applicant, depth of experience.
- Participating members discussed the following in consideration of the applicants for Type 1 IC trainee:
 - Blume has six years of experience as a Type 2 IC, including busy fire seasons, and has more experience than the other candidate, Pechota.
 - Blume has completed 520, and Pechota has not.
 - Pechota has more recent experience, whereas Blume has not been involved as an IC as recently.
 - Discussion around the possibility that by getting Blume qualified more quickly, there is a higher likelihood that both Pechota and Blume will be in the running for Type 1 IC in future years.

Proposal: McMahill proposed that Blume be appointed Type1 IC trainee.

Result: Consensus was reached with Dunn and Boche declaring reservations.

- Selection of the Type 2 IC positions included the following discussion:
 - Pechota's preference is not to accept the IC position for Team C, but rather to stay with Team B. His preference might lead him to decline an appointment to Team C.
 - Pechota's appointment to Team C might create problems with the distribution of his staff at home unit to be able to fill team positions and respond to incidents at home.
 - The all-hazard component of Team C's responsibility complicates the selection process for IC and other team members. Further, the Team C IC has been requested by the State of South Dakota to reside within the Great Plains Zone.
 - The lack of availability of other qualified personnel in GPZ to fill Incident Commander positions may be a point of compromise on that stipulation until more candidates are qualified within the zone.
 - The compatibility of IC selections with the succession strategy was discussed at length, particularly concerning the role of priority trainees in the upcoming rotation.
 - The need for a deputy on Team C was discussed, with emphasis on continuity of command for all-hazard and fire response.

Proposal: Fedrizzi proposed the following:

Team C IC: Todd Pechota

Team C Deputy IC: Joe Lowe

Team C IC Trainee: Shane Delgrosso

Result: It was agreed that there needed to be a contingency in case Pechota declined Team C appointment. Boche requested the opportunity to consult with Pechota for his input before a decision was made. Such consultation was conducted during recess, and Pechota confirmed the speculation that his preferences were (1) Type 1 IC trainee, and (2) Team B IC, although his application indicated the reverse. Further, he would decline an appointment to Team C. His rationale for refusal included: (a) his established commitment to Team B, (b) an appointment to Team C would strip his home unit of personnel to respond to a fire at home, and (c) being IC of Team C would complicate his acting as FMO on his home unit's fire. **Proposal was returned to the floor for further discussion and adjustment.**

- Discussion turned to other configurations of ICs, trainees and deputies, including:
 - Team C IC outside South Dakota.
 - Rotation of Team C IC to include Lowe.
 - Rotation of Priority Trainees to speed qualification of future successors.
 - Rotation of Deputy ICs to share coverage for all three Type 2 teams.
 - Possibility of continued emphasis on Type 1 IC trainee Pechota receiving assignments to speed his qualification.
- Consensus was reached for the following configurations of Type 2 Team Incident Commanders:

- **Team A IC Todd Richardson**
 - Rationale: Breadth & depth of experience, current IC, operational performance.
- **Team B IC Todd Pechota**
 - Rationale: Current rotation, Operations Committee recommendation, depth of experience as Type 2 IC, on path to Type 1, primary candidate for future Type 1 opportunities (intent of succession plan), local agency fire management needs.
- **Team C IC Joe Lowe**
 - Rationale: Local agency fire management needs, satisfies needs of South Dakota State/GPZ, exception to sunset rule in Mob Guide (year-to-year appointment pending certification of priority trainee), coordination with GPZ, Operations Committee, and RMCG.
- **DEPUTY ICs: Mike Frary
Mark Hatcher**

Deputies will rotate among the three teams, with a concerted effort to assign a deputy each time a team is mobilized. Special priority will be given to assigning a deputy to Team B to allow Pechota to accept Type 1 IC trainee assignments inside and outside of the Geographic Area. RMACC (Bartter/Fletcher) will coordinate rotations for deputies.

- **Type 2 IC (t): Operations Committee Priority Order Adopted**
 1. **Shane Delgrosso**
Delgrosso will be the priority to replace Lowe on Team C once fully qualified, in line with succession strategy.
 2. **Chuck Russell**
 3. **Mark Giacoletto**
 4. **Rob Powell**
 5. **Shane Greer**
 6. **Don Whittemore**
 7. **Dave Carter**
 8. **Dan Dallas**

Type 2 IC trainees will continue to be assigned to any IMT2 dispatched according to this priority order throughout the season in order to speed completion of task books.

- Discussion turned to determining the best method for aiding succession strategy by speeding the qualification of trainee ICs.
 - “Freelancing” trainees in and out of the area was discussed at length. Consensus was reached to support trainees on **any** assignment that will further completion of their task books, provided that needs within the RMA are met first.
 - This point was further discussed with regard to Boche’s letter of endorsement for trainees seeking assignments outside the RMA. It was agreed that this letter was not in violation of RMCG policy, as none of the endorsees was selected for a team position in the RMA.

Tasking: To further succession strategy by supporting maximum trainee exposure for priority trainees until qualified.

Tasked to: Boche
Status: Will work with Eastern Area to partner on trainee placements outside the RMA, with reciprocal placements offered to EA resources whenever possible.

- Members agreed to the following:
 - Type 2 IC trainees on the priority list may apply for IC trainee positions outside the Geographic Area if not selected for a position in the RMA.
 - The priority trainee list will be followed for all open IC trainee requests from inside and outside the RMA.
 - Name requests will be honored for IC trainees from inside and outside the Geographic Area, including “fishing” and assignments pre-arranged by the trainees.
 - The priority trainee list is not a rotation; trainees will be sent out in that order until they receive full qualification.
- Team C roster approval process will adhere to the following:
 - Great Plains Zone will develop Team C roster and present to Operations Committee at same time as other team rosters are presented.
 - Operations Committee will complete the roster, filling open positions from the applicant pool.
 - Operations Committee will present completed roster to RMCG for approval.

Tasking: Edit RMA Mobilization Guide direction on team roster approval process to reflect the above-referenced process. This wording was intended to be reflected in the 2011 Mob Guide, but edits were never made.

Tasked To: Fletcher

Status: Due to be entered with other Mob Guide edits for publication in the 2012 Mob Guide.

5. Examination of Type 2 Team Configuration

- South Dakota reaffirmed the state’s preference to have three zone teams in the RMA for purposes of equity among teams.
- The zone team concept being in the minority nationally, feasibility of its adoption in the RMA needs to be examined, including its relationship to the succession strategy in place.
- Pino clarified that use of zone teams in Southwest Area is primarily due to geographic constraints, and is successful partially because there are qualified personnel to support the team rosters.
- Discussion included the need to look at the distribution of team-qualified personnel in the RMA to determine likelihood that the area could support three zone teams.
- The role of Type 3 teams in filling the role of zone teams was discussed, with emphasis on focusing efforts toward developing resources for Type 1 and Type 2 positions from Type 3 organizations, in line with succession strategy.

Proposal: Boche proposed that future team IC selection process include an opportunity for RMCG to interview candidates as part of the decision process.

Result: Discussion around proposal included dissent from Pino on the grounds that the Operations Committee's recommendations should be followed, lest their work in making recommendations be nullified. Boche's rephrasing of the proposal included a suggestion that RMCG adhere to the Operations Committee's recommendations, using interviews to fine-tune selections. Jones added that the Executive Group did suggest that interviews could improve the selection process and prevent future elevations on similar issues. A straw vote revealed Carter's agreement with reservation that any addition of interviews in the process should be as an optional measure, at the discretion of RMCG. Pino dissented, citing previous objection. Boche agreed, with the reservation that he felt interviews would assist in getting to know the candidates better. All other members agreed. **Proposal withdrawn and rephrased.**

Proposal (Rephrased): Carter proposed that the IC recruitment announcement and Mob Guide include verbiage prepared by Dunn: "In addition to the current selection process the RMCG may utilize interviews at the request of a RMCG member for Incident Commanders."

Result: Consensus was reached. Boche and Pino declared reservations, all other members supported. The new verbiage will be added to the 2012 Mob Guide and future IC recruitment literature.

6. Operations Committee Report-Out

- RMA team member selection will be conducted January 4-5 during the Operations Committee's Winter Meeting at RMACC.
 - Selection process will remain hard copy this year while the reliability of the electronic system is tested. Plans are to move to the electronic system beginning in 2013.
- The announcement of team ICs will be sent out October 20 after the Committee conference call.
- Application deadline for team positions has been extended to November 15 due to the delay in IC selection.
- Question was raised regarding RMA Mob Guide, Page 37, Line 28: "Team narrative of actions on the incident during period of assignment, including daily and cumulative cost summaries." Hermanson inquired if the Operations Committee or the Finance Section should be responsible for compiling incident cost data.
 - It was reaffirmed that the Incident Commanders should be providing all records to the RMA Coordinator after each incident.
 - RMACC (RMCG Business Manager & Fletcher) will be responsible for archiving records as received, as well as forwarding to Operations Committee.

Proposal: Strike "Operations Committee Chairperson" from Line 26-27 and allowing the Operations Committee to enforce the submission of documents to the RMA Coordinator.

Result: Consensus was reached with all parties agreeing. 2012 Mob Guide will reflect the new wording.

- Hermanson expressed his deep satisfaction with the Platte Canyon IHC, which is attempting to receive certification as a Hotshot Crew.
 - Reviews of the crew's performance have been distributed.
 - Hamrick has served as a tremendous mentor and leader for the crew.
 - Most administrative issues preventing certification have been addressed, and progress toward that end has been good.
- Hermanson questioned whether team selection process in Mob Guide, Page 38, Lines 28-34 is being followed.
 - Exception may need to be made for Team C in order to be able to fill all positions, due to the zone nature of the team. These exceptions can be made within the parameters currently listed in the Mob Guide.
 - Enforcement of the "Sunset Rule" will continue, except as noted in the Mob Guide for positions that do not have qualified successors available. In those cases, the prescription in the Mob Guide to allow "sunset" members to reapply for 1-3 year terms will be honored.
 - Further discussion on the edits needed to the Mob Guide regarding the team roster approval process reaffirmed the previous proposal.
- Selection criteria for the teams will include the following:
 - Agency resources first, then cooperator, then AD.
 - Resources from within Geographic Area before outside it.
 - Emphasis on diverse representation of all agencies on each team.
 - Operations Committee will be working from the Succession Planning documents presented by Scott Sugg in Albuquerque. This document is awaiting edits from Bill Ott to make it more specific to the RMA.
- Operations Committee is up to date on RMCG taskings:
 - Zone Concept Subcommittee is awaiting direction from RMCG. Hermanson requested an Issue Paper from RMCG to task to Operations Committee. This matter will be addressed at RMCG Winter Meeting, and may not be tasked to the Operations Committee.
 - Priority Trainee Rotation completed.
 - Succession Planning will be addressed by RMCG further at the Winter Meeting.
- A fixed-wing aviation refresher has been planned within the RMA (tentatively) in February 2012. More details to come.
 - Boche raised the issue of travel restrictions currently being imposed on federal agencies, and requested the support of RMCG to encourage attendance at this type of training (and other valuable training) necessary for certification of key positions and functions.
- Hermanson requested definition of "shoulder seasons" in Mob Guide for clarification on ability of team members to accept out-of-Area assignments in off season.

7. Hole In The Wall/Team C Discussion

- Dunn provided legal perspective on RMCG discussion, including strong advice not to discuss the issue surrounding potential lawsuit or parties involved. All participating members were encouraged to consult with agency legal counsel regarding their involvement. Further warning was given that all discussion and documents used or generated from this meeting were potentially discoverable should a lawsuit be filed.
- Giacoletto & Joe Lowe were briefly teleconferenced, but were dismissed when it was determined that discussion regarding alleged conflict of interest should not take place.
- Concerns were raised by multiple members that RMCG was being prevented from dealing with an issue that should fall under the group's purview.
- Boche requested that the record show that this matter has been referred to the State of South Dakota. Additionally, the process for dealing with ethical conduct issues needs to begin with referral to the employing agency(ies) of the individuals involved **immediately**.

Proposal: Fedrizzi proposed that "perceived conflict of interest" verbiage be removed from the Mob Guide and ICT direction literature to prevent future instances like the one being experienced now.

Result: Members agreed that language regarding ethical conduct should be refined to ensure adherence and understanding by all parties. It was decided that the Operations Guide and Mob Guide should be edited to reflect this.

Tasking: To re-draft the language in the Operations Guide and RMA Mob Guide, Page 38, Line 3 to crystallize the process for ethics and conduct issue disposition.

Tasked to: Dunn

Status: Due by RMCG Winter Meeting for review by other members.

Tasking: Follow-up with Forest Service counsel to determine where the agency stands on the issue.

Tasked to: Boche

Status: Update and communication with other members when complete.

8. FAST Team Mobilization

- Fedrizzi expressed concern that there is no direction given in the Mob Guide regarding deployment of the FAST Team in the RMA.
- Suggestion was made to refer to other GACC Mob Guides for examples.

Tasking: Develop a product for the RMA Mob Guide regarding mobilization of FAST Teams, supported by issues and concerns, lessons learned, and any background information necessary to inform the Group.

Tasked to: Fletcher, Bartter, Fedrizzi, Graham

Status: Due for presentation at RMCG Winter Meeting.

9. DEM Representation at RMCG Meetings

- Members expressed interest in involving members of the emergency management agencies in the RMA (DEM, etc.) in discussion surrounding emergency response, all-hazard incidents, and incident management.
- Boche requested that RMCG obtain a national perspective, possibly from a report-out by Dan Smith.
 - Moving forward, RMCG can develop its vision for cooperation with DEM and others.
 - Cooperating agencies could then possibly be invited to a workshop and/or exercises to develop integrated response and planning.
- Further discussion will be entertained at Winter Meeting.

10. RMCG Calendar

- Concerns were expressed about the inconsistencies that exist from year to year in the selection of dates for RMCG meetings.
- It was emphasized that the Group's meetings need to be aligned with committee meetings and other schedules to ensure that efficient communication and report-outs are possible.

Tasking: To review and update RMCG calendars and Recurring Action Log to integrate schedules from other groups.

Tasked to: Malcolm, Fletcher

Status: Updates due for review by RMCG members as soon as practical, but no later than Winter Meeting.

11. Definition of "Shoulder Seasons"

- It was determined that the Type 2 team succession plan and priority trainee rotation previously agreed to will resolve much of the concern that teams will be available for mobilization during off-seasons when Type 2 teams are stood down.
- This matter was referred to the Operations Committee with a request for definitions of seasons (*Fedrizzi*).

12. Type 2 Rotation (Preparation for Winter Meeting)

- Members were encouraged to brainstorm about adjusting the rotation of Type 2 teams to more evenly distribute assignments. Further discussion slated for Winter Meeting agenda.
- It was noted that the Incident Commanders are already working with each other to resolve this issue.

13. RMCG Commitment

- Jones and others expressed concerns and issues surrounding the commitment that has been/needs to be made by RMCG members to the GACC, including:
 - Visibility & involvement of committee liaisons.
 - Participation and attendance of core members.
 - Coordination of schedules and calendars to maximize meeting time.
 - Follow-up and completion of taskings in a timely fashion.
 - Support of Team C mandatory with RMCG endorsement of the team.

- Commitment of RMCG to be represented at incidents, perform reviews, etc.
- Examination of the cost of doing business and exploration of possibilities to improve efficiency.
- Responsibilities of Chair in RMCG activities (NMAC meeting, etc.).
- Commitment from zone board liaisons to be more involved and visible.
- Communications between RMCG and Executive Group must be improved and unified.
- Responsibility of RMCG to take ownership of decisions and policies that it makes.
- Members were encouraged to share their thoughts and reaffirm their commitment to the Group and Rocky Mountain Area.