

NORTHERN ROCKIES MULTI-AGENCY COORDINATING GROUP

Appendix A

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INTRODUCTION AND MISSION

The purpose of the Northern Rockies Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (GMAC) is to provide an interagency forum to prioritize incidents and efficiently allocate or reallocate critical resources during periods of high resource demand and shortages.

To meet this purpose, the GMAC group will:

- Develop criteria and set priorities for geographic area incidents to meet incident management objectives.
- Direct, control, allocate, and reallocate critical resources among or between zones and/or incident management organizations to meet geographic area priorities.
- Ensure resource allocation supports critical incident management objectives. This may not align strictly with incident priority—being the highest priority incident does not guarantee receiving all available resources.

In addition, when convened, the GMAC group may:

- Assist with State and federal disaster response
- Provide information to agency administrators
- Identify and resolve issues common to all parties

The GMAC Group is activated at Northern Rockies Preparedness Level (PL) 4 or above or when wildland fire activities are affecting multiple Zones and there is competition for critical incident resources. There may also be a need to activate GMAC when the National Fire Preparedness Level is at 5, enabling Geographic Area response to requests/direction from the National MAC Group. Northern Rockies PL definitions can be found on the Northern Rockies Coordination Center (NRCC) website.

MEMBERSHIP

Northern Rockies Coordinating Group (NRCG) members serve as the GMAC for the Northern Rockies. GMAC group members are authorized, through a delegation from their respective agency administrators, to commit their agency to actions agreed upon during GMAC Group deliberations. Such a delegation of authority shall be in writing by their respective agency administrators and shall specify any limits to this authority.

Agency representation of the GMAC Group reflects the members of NRCG. A current listing of the NRCG Members can be found on the NRCG website.

Department of Interior: United States Wildland Fire Service	Idaho Department of Lands
Montana County Fire Wardens Association	Montana Disaster and Emergency Services
Montana Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation	Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association
Montana State Fire Chiefs' Association	North Dakota Forest Service
	US Forest Service

Agencies may choose to designate others as their GMAC group representative, either as a primary or as an alternate. The alternate should have the same agency status, background, and skills as the individuals they are replacing. They must also be delegated the same authority as the primary GMAC group member.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR ACTIVATING THE GMAC GROUP

During periods of normal fire activity, the Northern Rockies Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization, and the Delegation of Authorities from NRCG provides direction to the manager of the Northern Rockies Coordination Center (NRCC) and Northern Rockies Operations Officer on the movement of resources between agencies and units to support wildfire suppression needs and maintain response capabilities within the Geographic Area.

Similarly, State mobilization plans provide direction to agency managers for movement of state resources and maintenance of statewide response capability when there is little competition for resources and priorities may be established relatively easily.

With activation of the GMAC Group, the Northern Rockies Coordination Center Manager will contact the designated agency representatives listed in the Northern Rockies Standards for Resource Mobilization. If designated individuals are not available, the Manager will contact the appropriate agency administrator through the agency fire program manager and request that a GMAC Group member be provided. In addition, Agency Administrators and Fire Management officers will be notified via email that GMAC activation has occurred.

When the decision is made to activate the GMAC Group, the next decision is whether to conduct GMAC business through conference calls and web briefings or in person with face-to-face meetings. A variety of options are available depending on the situation. The need and frequency of GMAC calls or meetings will be determined on the first call and as part of each subsequent GMAC agenda.

- During lower levels of activity, the GMAC Group may only want to stay engaged via conference calls two or three times per week. This may be done when the level of fire activity is high but routine, allowing for heightened situational awareness.
- Consider designating one member as the Acting GMAC Rep, either by individual volunteering or being appointed by the GMAC Group, spreading the responsibility for filling this role among the entire group.
- The group may find it useful to start with conference calls but periodically come together for face-to-face meetings as the situation escalates or start with a face-to-face meeting and then disperse again and conduct business via conference call once it becomes more static or routine.
- During periods of high levels of fire activity GMAC Group members are urged to travel to Missoula to participate in face-to-face meetings. Face-to-face meetings are very useful for dealing with the volume of interagency business, information flow, and problem-solving necessary to strategically manage the situation and deal with the issues that are created by the elevated fire occurrence.
- Any agency that believes a higher level of GMAC engagement is needed should contact the NRCG Chair or Acting GMAC Representative and request that a conference call be held to discuss the appropriate level of engagement.
- When it is determined that activity and coordination levels require the group to meet face to face, a GMAC coordinator will be ordered. The NRCG Facilitator will fill this role based on availability.

ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES

LEGISLATORS and ADMINISTRATORS

Individual	Preparedness Levels 1-3	Preparedness Levels 4 – 5
Governor	Works within legislative processes to fund essential state and local programs.	• Declares state emergencies/disasters • Approves FEMA Declaration requests through State Forestry • Requests Presidential disasters through Disaster and Emergency Services (DES) • Approves State-wide closures • Approves use of National Guard, declaration required • Implements Fire Mobilization Plan (moves structural resources) through State Forestry
Tribal Leaders/County Commissioners/Mayors	Establish liaison with key partners.	• Mobilize county/local resources to support closure/evacuation needs. • Assign Agency Administrators working with fire departments, sheriff's departments, etc. • Declares a tribal/county/city emergency and/or requests Governor to declare State emergency
Geographic Area Fire Executives (Regional Forester, Geographic Area Fire Chief, State Forester, and GMACO level)	Support Zone and unit activities for preparedness initial attack.	• Reconcile political issues at state/federal levels • Approve prioritization criteria for collection of responses to NR GMAC • Approve geographic area protection objectives • Delegates decision making to NR GMAC (for above) • Coordinate closures and restrictions • Reference Resource Allocation Table
Zone Level Agency Administrator (Forest Supervisor, Area Manager, Tribal and County Commissioner level)	Work with interagency partners for preparedness/initial attack preseason agreements and processes.	• Reconcile political issues at local levels (county, forest, area, etc.) • Delegate authorities and oversees activities of ACs and IMTs (where 2 or more jurisdictions involved, unified command) • Maintains open files of communications of NR GMAC, Zone MAC • Reference Resource Allocation Table • Incident complexity analysis and WFDSS
Unit Level Agency Administrator (District Ranger, Unit Manager, Fire District Trustee)	Assure fire preparedness/initial attack activities and fire management plans are completed.	• Reconcile political issues at local community level • Incident complexity analysis and WFDSS

Table 1: Legislator and Administrator Responsibilities

COMMAND and CONTROL

Individual	Preparedness Levels 1-3	Preparedness Levels 4 – 5
Area Command	None	• Prioritize based on GA MAC objectives for 2 or more IMT's • Coordinate with all governmental entities • Allocates resources between incidents • Reconciles issues between 2 or more agency administrators • Respond to GA needs for redistribution of resources • If appropriate, ensure that all IMT's operate with common strategy.
IMT (CIMT, III)	Activated as necessary with little competition.	• Implement specific strategy and tactics to meet agency administrator objectives for appropriate management response for incident(s) and other delegated responsibilities. • Establish and prioritize criteria for redistribution of resources within GA.

Table 2: Command and Control Responsibilities

COORDINATION

Individual	Preparedness Levels 1-3	Preparedness Levels 4 – 5
GMAC (e.g., Geographic Area Fire Director, Geographic Area Fire Chief, State Fire Manager, President Fire Wardens Association)	Not usually active but should ensure processes are established and understood.	• Establish and prioritize criteria for allocation of resources • Establish protection objectives • Establish the need for additional training • Establish reallocation controls when 2 or more area commands are assigned, and multiple zones are affected • Maintains open lines of communication with Zone MACs, AAs • Assess need for Geographic Area Prevention Team • Assess need for Geographic Area Public Information Team • Reference resource allocation table
Zone MACs (e.g., Forest FMO, Area Fire Manager, County Fire Warden)	Not usually active but should ensure processes are established and understood.	• Same as above/different in scope. • Serve Agency Administrator needs for coordination for fire management coordination issues within the Zone. • Ensure that GA MAC criteria and objectives are carried out at Zone level. • Monitor and ensure initial attack capability • Assess need for Zone level prevention team • Assess need for Zone level Public Information Unit • Reference resource allocation table

Table 3: Coordination Responsibilities

GMAC Group and Representative responsibilities

The GMAC group is not responsible for command and control of incidents, strategy, or tactics used by incident resources. The group should strive to operate at a strategic level and, as a GMAC group, focus on prioritization and allocation of resources.

Prior to activation:

- Develops and updates the NRCG Operating Guide, including all appendices.
- Conducts preseason exercises to familiarize participants with GMAC processes.
- Determines need for and, if necessary, activates the GMAC and determines GMAC Group operating location.

During activation:

- Establishes priorities for allocation of resources between incidents within the Geographic Area.
- Identifies and resolves issues common to all parties.
- Brings information to the table on internal agency situations, needs, and concerns for consideration by the GMAC group in their prioritization process.
- Develop procedures to implement National MAC decisions.
- Allocates/reallocates resources due to shortages within the system.
- Initiates special actions to alleviate resource shortages to meet anticipated demands. Keeps agency administrators informed of the situation and of GMAC decisions.
- Keeps cooperating partners (e.g., state fire marshal, state emergency management, National Guard, neighboring states, landowner interest groups) informed of the situation and of GMAC decisions.
- Maintains a dialog with the Incident Unit Agency Administrators.
- Maintains coordination with neighboring Geographic Area MACs as the situation warrants.

Decisions will be made by consensus of the GMAC members.

After activation:

- Conduct an after-action review with all GMAC members to glean lessons learned and to hone operating procedures.
- Capture notes and action items to be completed during winter months by NRCG members.

Acting GMAC Representative

During periods of elevated, but not extreme, fire activity, GMAC members may choose not to convene formally to conduct GMAC business. In those situations, it is extremely helpful to the group that at least one GMAC member be in place at the NRCC to represent and act on behalf of all the others. A variety of GMAC issues typically arise daily but do not require the need to consult the entire GMAC group. However, if no GMAC members are present, these issues require the Operations Officer or NRCC manager to handle, which is not always their role and distracts them from their focus of supporting incidents. If the acting GMAC Rep is not physically present at the NRCC they miss out on much of the interaction and information flow that one gets through multiple daily interactions with NRCC and Aerial Fire Depot staff. Designating one member as the Acting GMAC Rep, either by an individual volunteering or being appointed by the GMAC Group, rotating on a weekly basis, will spread the responsibility among the entire group.

Duties of the Acting GMAC Rep position:

- Fills the on-site role.
- Takes care of GMAC business such as:
- Point of contact for all other GMAC members for information and issue resolution
- Arranges for distribution of public information from the GMAC group.

- Is sensitive to political issues, resolving them when possible or referring them to the appropriate party.
- Acts as a conduit between NRCC Manager, NR Operations and NMAC when needed.
- Represents the GMAC on National conference calls and/or national meetings as needed.
- Signs documents and decisions as the Acting GMAC Rep. when needed (especially useful for items for which a quick turnaround is necessary)
- As the representative of other agencies, notifies or consults with respective agency members on issues, either individually or collectively
- Has the experience of knowing when issues need to be bumped up to the full GMAC for decision or when further engagement is necessary
- Ensures that GMAC is represented on IMT or international resource in-briefs and closeouts on behalf of the entire GMAC Group as appropriate.
- Supervises GMAC Coordinator.

GMAC group members will take turns filling this role on a rotating basis, with a period of overlap at each end between the incoming and outgoing representative. It is important to have consistency with the Acting GMAC Representative. A pre-season calendar will be established in May of each year to ensure acting GMAC representatives are available and in place. The NRCG Facilitator will coordinate the calendar scheduling.

GMAC Group Working Guidelines When Physically Activated

Routine meetings should begin promptly at predetermined times. Meetings should last no longer than two (2) hours. Adequate coordination/information sharing should take place prior to the meeting to ensure issues are clearly and concisely described. Individuals presenting issues for discussion and resolution by the GMAC Group will submit topics on the daily zone update form, describing the issue in advance of the scheduled meeting.

Follow-Up Responsibilities:

- The assigned GMAC Rep or supporting staff member is responsible for tracking assigned actions or deferred decisions to completion and notifying the entire group of status as appropriate.

PRIORITIZATION

GMAC will develop a strategic intent that prioritization decisions are directly aligned with. Geographic Area priorities are established each evening for the next 24-hour period to give the NRCC guidance on where to assign or draw down scarce resources. When priority decisions are distributed, they also inform zone dispatch offices, Incident Management Organizations, the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC), national agency offices, and the public of the current priorities.

Method of prioritization

- Initial prioritization is done by the Intelligence Coordinator, Operations Officer, and NRCC Manager, and may include GMAC members if present, using the prioritization criteria list.
- Initial attack fires are always the highest priority and will not be prioritized by GMAC.
    - Extended attack fires will generally be prioritized after a 24-hour initial attack period (unless containment appears so imminent that it should be maintained as an initial attack fire).
    - Zone input on priority of fires in their zones will be considered in Geographic Area prioritization.
    - Area Command will prioritize fires within their area of responsibility and will be prioritized once along with the other fires.
    - Critical “Management Action Points”, values at risk and/or strategic objectives that require

resource allocation may be prioritized along with other incidents.

- Prioritization is presented to and validated or adjusted by the NR GMAC.
    - It is essential that agency representatives bring intelligence on considerations to adjust the prioritization.
    - Decisions and rationale for prioritization will be documented daily and these written decisions archived in annual records of GMAC activity.

Priority Setting

Prioritization Criteria List

1. Values at Risk
    a. Communities
    b. Infrastructure
    c. Commercial
    d. Structures
    e. Historic and Cultural Resources
    f. Natural Resources
2. Probability of Success
    a. Meeting Incident Objectives
    b. Expected Fire Behavior
    c. Resource Availability

Note: Priorities are set for the next 24-hour period primarily using the Risk Management Assistance (RMA) Dashboard. ICS-209's and IC calls will be used to evaluate social, political and economic impacts, cultural resources, incident objective attainment, containment/completion, and critical resource needs.

Prioritization Criteria List

GOAL: Incident Prioritization

ELEMENTS:

Threats to Communities, Infrastructure, Commercial, Historical and Cultural Resources, Structures (Primary Residences, Secondary Residences, and outbuildings), Natural Resource Values and Probability of Success.

- High: There is direct and immediate threat (within 24 hours) to the priority in question from the incident due to location, uncontrolled line, or highly erratic fire behavior.
- Moderate: There is a potential threat (within 48 hours) to the priority in question from the incident.
- Low: There is low (40% or less) threat to the priority in question from the incident.

The threat of fire will potentially adversely impact forest, range and grasslands, wildlife, T & E species, sage grouse habitat, recreational, and/or view sheds, etc.

- High: There is a potential (80% or greater) of significant unacceptable resource damage.
- Moderate: There is a moderate potential (40% or greater) of several resource values being unacceptably impacted.
- Low: The impacts to the resource are within acceptable limits.

Considers the Local/State/National or International significance for social, political, or economic impacts not considered elsewhere for incident prioritization. Resources that are not represented in Commercial or Natural Resources should be considered here.

- High: State/National/International interests have or will generate significant attention or controversy.

Heightened media coverage at State, National or International level. State/National/International impacts to recreation (fishing, hunting, loss of jobs and tourism).
- Moderate: Localized controversy with potential to attract wider interests. Media coverage tends to be local or regional in scope. Localized impacts to recreation (fishing, hunting, loss of jobs and tourism).
- Low: No controversy. Little media interest or sensitive media relationships. There are few impacts to recreation and tourism.

Effectiveness of attaining incident objectives taking into consideration terrain, fuel type, fire conditions, forecasted weather and current resources assigned to support the objectives.
- Low: Objectives are difficult to achieve. Incident is very resistant to control, multiple IMT rotations will occur.
- Moderate: Objectives are moderately difficult to achieve but progress is being made, containment or completion has increased, and acreage growth is decreasing.
- High: Objectives are easy to achieve.

Containment or completion of objectives would be met within specified timeframes. Containment or completion at an earlier date is beneficial during high activity periods and would result in earlier resource reassignment opportunities to supplement Initial Attack or to assist other incidents.
- < 48 hrs. or long-term management
- 15 -21 days
- 11 -14 days
- 6 - 10 days
- 3 - 5 days

Critical resources (Type 1-2/2IA crews, Type 1 or 2 helicopters, middle management DIVS, TFLD, HEQB, HMGB positions) needed within the next 24-48 hours.
- Yes
- Maybe
- No

Alternatives

If the RMA Dashboard is not available or fire activity warrants, priorities may be determined using the ICS 209's and IC Calls, following the priority criteria as stated in this document.

Resource Allocation

The decision to allocate resources to incidents is usually accomplished by weighing many factors including the numbers and types of resources needed, the incident's priority, projected fire behavior, resource availability, probability of success, etc. Orders will then be filled or UTF'd accordingly. While it is rare, it may be necessary for the GMAC group to reallocate resources by requesting or directing an incident give up resources so they may be moved to a higher priority fire. Other alternatives and negotiations should be explored first, and it should only be done when there are compelling reasons present and documented. However, ultimately the GMAC group does have the authority to reallocate resources.

Critical Resources Tracking

Products needed to support GMAC decisions regarding allocation/reallocation activities include:
- Critical Resource Needs
- IMT Glide Path
- Crew Glide Path

GMAC MEETINGS

The timeline and format of the GMAC meetings may vary depending upon activity and needs of the GMAC. Usually, GMAC operations will start by having conference calls and as activity increases, expand to face to face meetings. There are three types of meetings: General GMAC, Executive GMAC, and Incident Commander meetings. Incident Commander calls are formatted as information gathering by Operations, with opportunities for GMAC and GMAC support members to participate as needed. Meetings may be split to address GMAC group functions and general NRCG interagency coordination functions other than incident prioritization and resource allocation. The GMAC group will decide how to split the meetings and who will be responsible for facilitating each. It is important to understand the difference between GMAC and NRCG responsibilities and keep them separate.

If any significant issues arise, they need to be brought to the attention of the GMAC Coordinator prior to the meeting to facilitate discussion and ensure the issue is clearly stated. Participants include, in addition to designated GMAC Group members, zone MAC representatives, agency administrators, public affairs officers, aviation managers, communication system specialists and other supporting parties as may be appropriate.

General GMAC meetings

General GMAC meetings are formatted to serve as information sharing/gathering.

Topics may include:

- NMAC Update
- NR Operational Updates
- NR Resource Updates

Additional Topics as Requested may include:

- Predictive Services Update
- Contracting Update
- Incident Business Update
- Cache Update
- Aviation Update
- Safety Update
- Media/VIP update
- Other Issues/Concerns

Executive GMAC meetings

The GMAC executive meetings are attended by the Agency Representatives who have been delegated authority by the Agency Administrators to act as the members of the GMAC Group.

Executive meetings are formatted for GMAC discussion and decision making and are for the GMAC members and invited supporting specialists or agency representatives who are not a part of the GMAC Group itself. The focus will be on priority setting, gaining consensus on issue resolution and developing GMAC decision documents.

Topics include:

- Preparedness Level Validation
- Incident Prioritization
- Resource Allocation
- IMT In-brief/Out-brief schedule and report out

- Action Item Follow Up (if applicable)
- Agency Issues/Concerns

Incident Management Organization/Incident Commander Calls

IC Calls may be conducted whenever a CIMT is assigned within the NRGA. Significant Type 3 incidents may also be asked to join the call.

The intent for the daily call is to allow assigned IMTs to share important information with other IMTs, Intel Coordinators, Operations, predictive services and others on the call. This information will be used to inform decisions, establish priorities, and aid in creating a snapshot common operating picture for the day's operations in the NRGA.

Updates are to provide the following information for their respective incidents:

- Significant changes or updates since last 209.
- Critical Needs to achieve chosen strategy – What, when, duration needed, planned accomplishment.
- Critical values at risk - What are they, time/distance from fire impacts, severity of damage if impacted.
- Closures/evacuations/public safety concerns.
- Major risks to responders (Injuries or accidents).
- Political issues or concerns.
- Probability of success for strategy.
- Additional Items of Interest (in-brief, close out, community meetings…).
- Identify any available resources for reassignment or sharing.

COMMUNICATING GMAC DECISIONS

GMAC decision documents will be on Northern Rockies GMAC Group letterhead and signed by the GMAC Chair (same as NRCG Chair). GMAC decision documents will be posted internally within the NRCG file structure and maintained by the NRCG Facilitator or GMAC Coordinator (if activated) and distributed as necessary to agency heads, incident commanders or other individuals responsible for implementation. Northern Rockies Operations Officer will share pertinent decisions with the Northern Rockies NMAC Representative. A decision log is kept to quickly reference decisions by date.

All GMAC meeting agendas, notes, decisions and documents will be saved accordingly in the FireNet Team: NR_Coordinating Group under the NR_GMAC channel.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Requests

It is the intent of the GMAC that NR Operations and Business are conducted in full compliance with applicable laws and agency information release policies. As agency policy and applicable statutes vary by GMAC member organization and geographic location, any FOIA request from an individual, organization, or media outlet should be first directed to the agency with primary responsibility for hosting the records in question and processed in accordance with that agency's particular information release protocols. (e.g., information about actions taken on a particular wildfire should be directed to the agency having jurisdiction over the incident).

In some instances, such as a multi-jurisdictional incident and/or other complex incidents that may involve loss of life or other significant losses or liabilities, the Agency Administrators may elect to jointly review and process FOIA requests.

GMAC SUPPORT

The NR Operations Officer and NRCC Manager continue their role in managing day-to-day decisions to guide the geographic area's fire response. When GMAC is activated, there may be a need for additional support personnel, such as operations or aviation specialists, to gather information on items such as crew locations, aircraft assignments, resource days off and tour of duty schedule. This additional staff support during high fire activity levels allows the GMAC members to focus on strategic decision making as part of the GMAC as well as providing crucial leadership for their specific agency. The GMAC Support Group is coordinated by the GMAC Coordinator and will carefully define the role of the support person/group working in support of the GMACs mission.

GMAC members will work with the GMAC Coordinator to define the product or job that needs to be accomplished, determine the skill set needed, and order the appropriate resource.

The following are positions and responsibilities that are most consistently needed for GMAC support.

GMAC COORDINATOR (MCCO)

At any level of activity higher than just having conference calls to share information, a GMAC Coordinator may be used.

The main duties of the GMAC Coordinator are to provide leadership and facilitation, maintain a focus on the details of ensuring that the GMAC group functions in an organized manner, prepare and maintain an agenda and facilitate GMAC Group meetings, coordinate the additional support functions of the GMAC, ensure GMAC has the information needed to fill their role of prioritizing fires and allocating resources, documents GMAC decisions and ensures a permanent record is maintained.

Aviation Operations Specialists

Coordinates with the NR Operations Officer and NRCC Manager to evaluate intelligence information and make recommendations to the GMAC group on the placement and allocation of resources. Works with all agencies to implement GMAC decisions. Works with the agency operations leads, incidents, Aviation Safety Specialists, and field aviation units to provide aviation safety teams where needed.

Crew Specialist

Coordinates with the NR Operations Officer and NRCC Manager to evaluate intelligence information and make recommendations to the GMAC group on the placement and allocation of resources. Works with all agencies to implement GMAC decisions. Maintains crew glidepath in an effort to avoid "cliffs"

Remote Incident Support Team (RIST)

RIST may be requested during periods of high fire activity to support the Northern Rockies Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC) or Multi-Agency Coordination Group (GMAC). RIST can be requested by the GACC or GMAC depending on needs. The purpose of RIST is to provide efficient, scalable remote/virtual incident support. Some of the frequently used RIST Functions include:

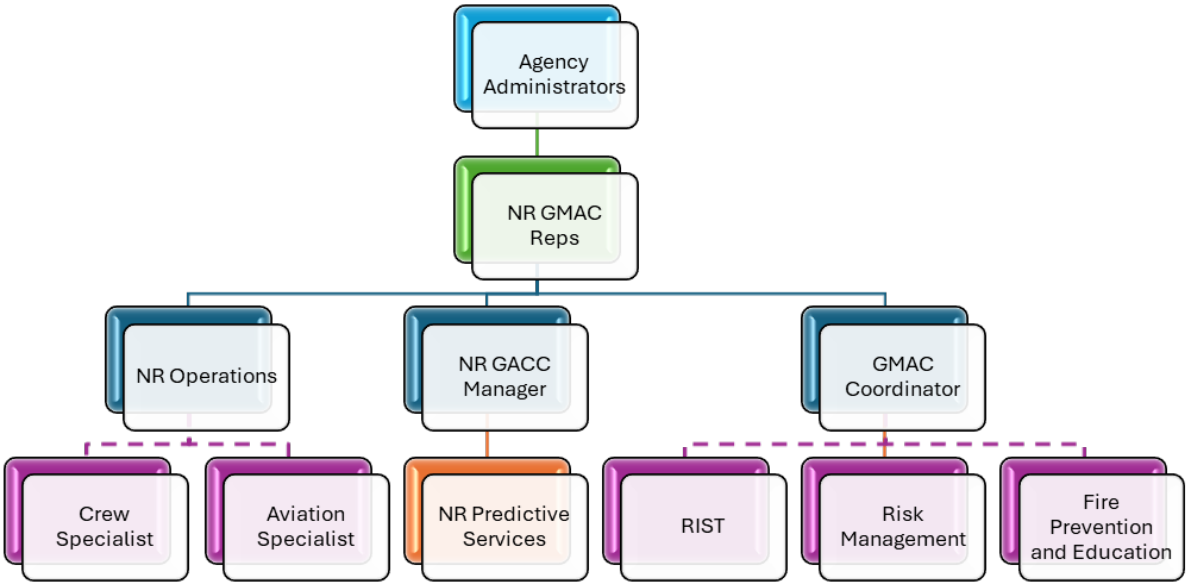
- Decision Support Team (DST)
    - Provide fire behavior updates
    - Provide fire behavior analysis and decision assistance for critical support
    - WFDSS Products
- Finance
    - Crew Time on the NRGA Support Code
- Public Information
- Plans

- GISS
- IR Coordination/Prioritization

Sample Northern Rockies Multi-Agency Coordination Organization

An example of a Multi-Agency Coordination Group Support Organization is listed below.

At a minimum, the core Northern Rockies Multi-Agency Coordination Group will consist of the designated GMAC Group members, the Northern Rockies Coordination Center Manager, the NR Operations Officer, and a GMAC Coordinator. The NR Predictive Services positions are full-time positions and are invited to meetings as appropriate. Crew specialists, aviation specialists, RIST, Risk Management and Fire Prevention and Education positions may be activated and invited if/when necessary.



Sample Geographic Multi-Agency Coordination Group Organization Chart