



Northern Rockies Coordinating Group

Federal, State, and Local Government Agencies Working Together in Emergency Response Management

Board of Directors Conference Call – Meeting Notes

Tuesday, January 16, 2024

Participants

Board Members: Rich Cowger (Chair), Bryce Rogers (Vice Chair), Paul Cerda, Tate Fischer, Matt Hall, Ryan Melin, Patrick Lonergan, Dennis Strange, Aaron Thompson, Darron Williams, Josh Harvey, Craig Glazier

Deputies and Others: Kyrsten Brinkley (Facilitator), Karly DeMars (Co-Facilitator), Corey Buhl, Cory Calnan, Tara Dana, Charlie Gorman, Jason Jarrett, Jeni Jeresek, Jordan McKnight, Chad Pickering, Melissa Wegner

Purpose: *Welcome and a reminder that this is a public meeting for the purpose of conducting government business.*

Standing Reports

- NWCG/NMAC Update (Aitor Bidaburu) – No report
- CGAC Report Out (Craig Glazier) – No report, CGAC is meeting this week.
- NRCG Operations (Corey Buhl)
 - Gave update on status of the IMT recruitment process. To date, there have been around 110 applications received.
 - Corey and NRCC are working with NICC to figure out why there are no Northern Rockies IMT in the national rotation
- NRCC Update (Kate Holsapple) – Please see emailed report out. No additional information shared.
- Dispatch Improvement Tasking Update (Craig Glazier)
 - Dan O'Brien is back working as the lead for the task group. He is working to get up to speed on what the task group accomplishments and taskings. The group will be meeting in January.
 - There was discussion from the Board of Directors to get a memo out to give an update on the status of the work group tasking and their recommendations. Once Rich receives the talking points from Molly Ryan, current task group lead, he will draft a memo with the intent of distributing by the end of the month.
- NRCG Committee Updates:
 - Dispatch Committee – no report
 - Operations Committee – Tate Fischer reported that the Operations Committee has fully transitioned their chair to Jordan McKnight and Nate Rogers as vice-chair. The committee plans to meet in March in Helena. They will be reviewing taskings (both internal and from BOD). They will also be assessing the mid-level leadership pool and reviewing the NRCG memo from 2020-08 regarding Heavy Equipment Taskforce oversight.

Old Business

- *Informational* | NRCC Center Manager & NR Operations Delegation of Authority and Expectations – Status Update
 - Update: Rich reported they are close to signature and will be meeting with Kate and Corey soon.
- *Informational* | IMT Recognition Tasking Update (Aaron Thompson)
 - Update: NRCG and NRCC will be working to re-establish the current recognition program



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- *Informational* | Agency Inputs to NRCG Financial Plan
 - Update: Jeni Jeresek reported that she will have the draft plan available for review by the end of the month.
- *Decisional* | Recommendation for Dispatch Study (Craig Glazier)
 - Craig addressed the board and asked they make decisions on the following items:
 - 1) Propose to consolidate two low complexity dispatch centers (Bitterroot and Kootenai).
 - a. Decision: All board members are in favor of this consolidation.
 - 2) Consolidation of centers in North Idaho (Grangeville and Coeur d'Alene).
 - a. No decision at this time; more analysis requested from the Task Group
 - 3) Consolidation of Great Falls / Helena centers
 - a. No decision at this time; more analysis requested from the Task Group
 - The Board would like the Dispatch Improvement Task Group to have proposals for item #2 and #3 prior to the April NRCG BOD meeting – (Deadline: April 1, 2024).

New Business – There was no new business.

Review of Action Items (Rich Cowger) – no change to action items.

*The next scheduled NRCG Executive Board Meeting will be **February 21, 2024.***

*The next NRCG Monthly Meeting will be **March 19, 2024.***



Northern Rockies Coordinating Group

Federal, State, and Local Government Agencies Working Together in Emergency Response Management

Board of Directors Conference Call – Meeting Notes

Tuesday, March 19, 2024

Participants

Board Members: Rich Cowger (Chair), Bryce Rogers (Vice Chair), Paul Cerda, Tate Fischer, Ryan Melin, Darron Williams, Josh Harvey, Craig Glazier

Deputies and Others: Kyrsten Brinkley (Facilitator), Karly DeMars (Co-Facilitator), Corey Buhl, Cory Calnan, Tara Dana, Charlie Gorman, Jeni Jeresek, Jordan McKnight, Chad Pickering, Melissa Wegner, Martin Adell, Heath Estey, Kate Holsapple, Chris Johnson, Dan Rose, Dan O'Brien, Shawn Pearson

Purpose: *Welcome and a reminder that this is a public meeting for the purpose of conducting government business.*

Standing Reports

- NWCG/NMAC Update (Aitor Bidaburu) – No report
- CGAC Report Out (Craig Glazier)
 - Establishing standardized preparedness levels
 - Standardized alignment between priority training programs, sent to and out to all CGAC for final review; due 01 April
- NRCG Operations (Corey Buhl)
 - OPS Committee meeting this week, discussing national proposal for rapid extraction modules
 - Heavy Equipment Task Force Supervision
 - Invitation to review National Forest/Pre-Season Readiness- happy to meet
- NRCC Update (Kate Holsapple) –
 - Aircraft Dispatch Policy Rescinded; back to 2022 Policy
 - Smoke forecasts have started
 - IMT Rosters, Beau will send summary when last two rosters received
 - MOB Guide out
 - Finalize RIST OPS Plan, out around 01-05 April

Committee Updates

- Mitigation/Education (Cory Calnan)
 - Committee meeting in April and will report put at Spring Meeting
- IC Committee (Paul Cerda)
 - IMT/OPS standards for MAC and call out sent out, comments due back 27 March
 - IC expectations letter drafted
 - Review and approved charter
 - Include T-3 teams in the rotation
 - Needs analysis
 - Supports the awards and recognition
 - Discussed ordering teams for prescribed burns

Old Business

- *Decisional* | NRCG Communication Updates (Cory Glazier)
 - *Each agency has its own OPS/Duty Officer (DO)*
 - *Tier 3/IA centers work through agency OPS/DO to reduce the number of phone calls/communication when busy*
 - *Parallel the system with NRCC and NR OPS*



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- *Go through local DO then to Cory*
- *Consensus: Passed*
- **Decisional | NRCG Dispatch Communications Plan**
 - *Looking at staffing organizations and position descriptions at agencies*
 - *Researching what a dispatch center looks like to develop baseline specifications for an interagency center*
 - *Looking at hardware and software specifications for an interagency center to address IT infrastructure needs and meet capabilities*
 - *Possible to have desktop support shifting from an admin space to an EOC*
 - *Will share a one-pager and FAQ's*
 - *Consensus: Passed*
- **Decisional | NRCG Charter Review (Tate Fischer)**
 - *Move forward based on Agency Administrators admin. changes*
- **Informational | IMT Recognition Tasking Update (Karly DeMars/Aaron Thompson)**
 - *Nothing further, continue to use established process*
- **Informational | NRCG Financial Plan (Jeni Jeresek)**
 - *Same amount of funds as last year*
 - *Full representation to approve moving forward*
- **Decisional | Recommendation for Dispatch Study (Craig Glazier)**
 - *Craig addressed the board and asked they make decisions on the following items:*
 - 1) *Propose to consolidate two low complexity dispatch centers (Bitterroot and Kootenai).*
 - a. *Decision: All board members are in favor of this consolidation.*
 - 2) *Consolidation of centers in North Idaho (Grangeville and Coeur d'Alene).*
 - a. *No decision at this time; more analysis requested from the Task Group*
 - 3) *Consolidation of Great Falls / Helena centers*
 - a. *No decision at this time; more analysis requested from the Task Group*
 - *The Board would like the Dispatch Improvement Task Group to have proposals for item #2 and #3 prior to the April NRCG BOD meeting – (Deadline: April 1, 2024).*

New Business –

- *Request for agenda items for the April meeting in Missoula, due NLT Friday, 29 March*
- *Committee Report Out forms have been sent out, due back NLT Tuesday, 02 April*

Review of Action Items

- #3- NRCG Charter Update: Complete*
- #5- IMT Recognition: Complete*
- #13- Agency Inputs to NRCG Financial Plan: Complete*

*The next NRCG Meeting will be **during the spring meeting, time/location TBD***



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Board of Directors Spring In Person – Meeting Notes

Wednesday, April 10, 2024

Participants

Board Members: Rich Cowger (Chair), Bryce Rogers (Vice Chair), Tate Fischer, Josh Harvey, Aaron Thompson, Matt Hall, Brett Lloyd, Steve Holton

Deputies and Others: Kyrsten Brinkley (Facilitator), Corey Buhl, Martin Adell, Kate Holsapple, Claire Smith, Hunter Knorr, Adriane Beck, Molly Ryan

Purpose: *Welcome and a reminder that this is a public meeting for the purpose of conducting government business.*

Standing Reports

- NWCG/NMAC
 - Crew and aircraft count similar to last year
 - Canada will probably request assistance again
 - Hot Shot crews well staffed and staggered
 - Jump bases staffed well
 - National resources staffed well
 - Initial Attack short by 40%, Engine Captain numbers down,
 - May have travel issues due to waiting for new vehicles
 - National shared resources in good shape
- CGAC Report Out
 - IDRG priority training list working through input from the Coordination Center
 - Holly Carr hired as the second Center Manager
 - Looking for a Logistics Coordinator
 - Facility still working well, unknown how new internet will be implemented, currently using a Star Link provided by Adriane Beck
 - The question was asked about where the COOP is located and what progress has been made on the furniture project. Both will be taken over by Holly
 - Some discussion regarding a recent gunman in the building; it was stated that the building was not unlocked, and that active shooter training was provided
 - Concerns about the webpage- NRCG documents for posting can be sent to Kate Holsapple, but there is no capacity for major changes right now. The major overhaul is not ready to go yet. Kate will be working with the CIO going forward. It was brought up that a transition to FireNet may be more advantageous
- NRCG Operations
 - Do crews need NRCG/OPS Communication Charter to be recognized: no, need to self govern with advice from the NRCG Board. Invited groups are represented by the Zone Chair and are held under the Communication Charter
 - Heavy Equipment Task Force Supervision
 - Suggestion for NRCG vote; rescind the Task Force Leader Policy Memo, bring back the Heavy Equipment Boss Policy; not Task Books
 - Recognized that HETFs originally required Crew Bosses to be present



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- Recognized: Logging specialists with fire experience could be a Heavy Equipment Boss SME for fire
- Recognized: not enough Task Force Leaders. Heavy Equipment bosses are supervising, not TF Leaders
- Recognized: NRCG acted on a recommendation from the OPS Committee in the past with a TFLD requirement
- Former vote recognized that a senior boss can only supervise one type of equipment- can a Heavy Equipment Boss manage a Heavy Equipment Task Force?
- Recognized: BOD can not create policies that are less restrictive than NRCG policies
- The Great Basin and Northwest Regional have policies similar to ours
- Tate Fischer, Bryan [REDACTED], and Jordan McKnight will work together to find any existing documentation for the H/E Supervisor by an H/E Crew Boss, then create a new document for NRCG to present focusing on the 1:1 ratio
- The Operations Committee supports rescinding the old policy, asking Beau and Ryan to write a new policy, then publish
 - Operations Committee Chair has the original document
- NRCC Update (Kate Holsapple) –
 - Aircraft Dispatch Policy Rescinded; back to 2022 Policy (confirmed)
- Dispatch Improvement Tasking Update
 - QUESTIONS:
 - Is the tasking clear? Does it need to be repurposed? Do the current taskings match the needs and the leaders intent- tactical vs strategic?
 - This has been a long term plan to consolidate centers from the beginning
 - Do we need to start over with new tasking for the Phase 2 group? Do we need to repurpose the Phase 2 Task Group, or keep the NRCG BOD as the oversight group?
 - Support- fresh task and end state and make the Phase 2 Group more advisory
 - Do we need to go to local centers or ask them to bring input to us?
 - Last bullet point: allow local SME/dispatch groups to form teams to work locally
 - Support to keep the work as local as possible to be efficient
 - Every level has input for dispatch- accountability is needed for both long term and short term decisions
 - What are the desired abilities of the dispatch centers for the NRCG?
 - Do the dispatch centers have a solution?
 - What are the priorities/what is needed in the Agencies?
 - How do we provide continuity when agencies act independently of one another?
 - Do we need to change the cost structure?
 - Depends on who needs what- DNRC needs a general idea regarding required capabilities prior to moving- who is responsible for developing this guidance
 - We need to know what we are looking at so we know what to ask for
 - OBSERVATIONS
 - Standardization
 - Is standardization something we can work toward? 1 per Zone?



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- Standardized organizations work very well,
- Potential for pushback
- We have a draft of the Rocky Mountain Org Chart as an example
 - There is an Org Chart in the 2022 briefing paper
- A financial plan template for high complexity would be helpful
- Any organizational structure will need to recognize the staffing challenges
 - Recognized: Federal Human Resources is a hindrance, hiring should start locally. Decline in staffing noted when hiring went to a Federal level, large dispatch centers were the start of the decline- huge loss of personal touch
- The Dispatch Working Group will work with the Dispatch Committee to get going
- Ask the Task Group to work with NICC to formulate a document listing needs/suggestions/recommendations

Committee Updates

- Mitigation/Education (Matt Hall)
 - Jennifer Russell will be the new Chair; Beth Hill the Vice-Chair, both for a two year assignment
 - Lots of inter-agency cooperation happening, even at the Zone level
 - Would like to steer the committee toward a training needs analysis
 - Use of local Zone prevention teams before calling on national resources encouraged
 - GAC wide collaboration to get messaging out to communities via many avenues- gas station TV, etc.
 - Restriction/Closure Plan up to date on NRCC website
 - Resources for restriction/closure information in North Dakota, Montana and Idaho:
 - northdakotaresponse.gov
 - idahofireinfo.com
 - mtfireinfo.org
- IC Committee
 - Each Team has a hole in Communications, but better staffing across the board
 - Discussion regarding the staffing problem and whether or not the message is getting to the AA level- lots of competing priorities
 - Staffing issues very well known at the BLM and DNRC level
 - Interest from individuals is there, but there is a lack of support from their employers
 - Better explanation of the process may help to the newer AA's- the collateral duty model is not sustainable
 - Transitioning leadership has diluted the knowledge of the need
 - Is the direction to participate getting to the ground level?
 - Possibly ask for an audience with the respective AA's?
 - Possibly send representatives to Fire Councils, BLM, DNRC, etc to discuss the need
 - What is the incentive to participate at the local level?
 - Who has the skills but is not in the system? How can we streamline the process to capture individuals with the skills but may not know how to get into the system?
 - Can we incentivize participation?



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- Possibly recognize the supervisors and agencies that allowed impactful participation
- Recognize the agency as well
- Target groups who already possess like skill sets: DOD, National Guard
- Many restrictions in place
 - Limited number of deployments
 - No recognition
 - Incentive pay? Step increases?
- Recognized: 2001 Jacobs report a good argument that sets precedent for a stand alone team
- At a GAC level, the primary mission is the Team
- Possibly commit to a team/job becomes ancillary then help ID gaps that need to be worked on that year
- Business-written report returned
- Dispatch
 - Claire Smith incoming Chair, Hailey Schilling Vice Chair
 - Dispatch Committee members: need more agency representation
 - Workshop: 07-09 May, virtual. Will alternate in person and virtual every other year
 - At 60% staffing, all dispatch centers have some level of vacancies in key positions
 - Involved in Phase 2 Committee
 - Internet: old computers- none getting replaced with adequate storage and speed
 - Need to run 4-6 monitors apiece, bought and installed new graphics cards, but this slowed the computers greatly
 - IT support provided by FS CIO
 - Fiber optics are in the building, but not in their spaces
 - There was much discussion about elevating this issue professionally and appropriately to get addressed
 - Update Rich Cowger's document citing 8 distinct taskings becomes the guiding document. Once updated, Claire can help identify solutions and issues
 - Document should be updated and scrubbed ensure that it meets intent; then given to Molly as the guiding document
 - Goal is to be done within the year
 - Scrubbed, reframed and updated document due by May meeting
 - Document should include the task and end state; BOD should be the primary guiding group
- Dispatch Task Group: Molly, Dan, Cory; anyone else?
 - Secondary guidance to the BOD
 - Dan's group will work with the Task Group
- Matt will share a platform to get a shared document out or input from all
- Much support to push FireNet as a communication platform
- Operations-written report returned
 - Cory Calnan will be the Dispatch Committee Liaison
 - Support for the IC Committee to take on the 420-520 Leadership Courses/Prioritization Process



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- Training
 - NRTC not including BLM on emails, needs to involve the training Committee
 - Identified needs for:
 - gap analysis of needs for training and instructors
 - which courses to hold
 - improved interagency training
 - identify which courses could not be filled this year
 - increased agency lead participation
 - possibly push for NRCG agency leads to serve on various committees to give a vision to the Training Center regarding our needs

Zone Updates

- North Idaho- Aviation lost 2 Type 2 rotor and replacement rotor, June-September due to changes in contracts, good staffing, Type 2 IA crew and a good reserve/fully staffed resources, Type 3 team ready to go this year, possibly able to travel
- Southwest Montana- none provided
- Northwest Montana- none provided
- Central Montana- none provided
- South Central Montana-sent in
- East Zone-sent in

Old Business

- *Informational* | NRCG Dispatch Communications Plan and Recommendation for Dispatch Study- see Dispatch Committee Update
- *Informational* | Confirmation of Aircraft Dispatch Procedures back to 2022 Policy- Confirmed
- *Decisional* | Team Approval/Recruitment/Application Process, Action Item #8
 - 2023 recruitment: 724 total applicants
 - Rosters have been approved and gaps identified
 - May have a roaming Comms for all teams
 - Planning/Logs/OPS strong, a couple of teams only have one Finance- no depth
 - About 12 individuals are on more than one team
 - Discussion around explaining the pool concept and improving recruitment
 - Paul Roos has retired, Rich Cowger transitioning into his position
 - Roster approval passed
 - Discussion around the trainees needing to come in front of the Board
 - Voting on 4 IC candidates tabled to the May meeting during the Executive Session
- *Informational* | Ad Hoc Team Protocols, Action Item #9
- *Informational* | IMT Recognition Tasking Update
- *Decisional* | NR Operations Division Delegation of Authority Position Delegation, Action Item #11 (Corey Buhl) Delegation approved by Board as presented for Chair signature

New Business –

- Spring MAC Exercise



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- Spring MAC Exercise: TBD by this group, probably in June, tie in with Board meetings
- MAC Duty Officer calendar
 - MAC Duty Officer calendar: weekly rotations
- Incident Commander Committee meets with Board
 - Supporting recruitment efforts
 - Current Team status' reviewed

Review of Action Items

- #3- NRCG Charter Update: Complete
- #5- IMT Recognition: Complete
- #13- Agency Inputs to NRCG Financial Plan: Complete

The next NRCG Meeting will be 21 May 2024 at 1000, virtual via Teams



Northern Rockies Coordinating Group

Federal, State, and Local Government Agencies Working Together in Emergency Response Management

Board of Directors Conference Call –NOTES

Tuesday, May 21, 2024

Participants

Board Members: Rich Cowger (Chair), Bryce Rogers (Vice Chair), Craig Glazier, Jason Jarrett, Matt Hall, Patrick Lonergan, Aaron Thompson, Tate Fischer, Heath Estey, Ryan Melin

Deputies and Others: Corey Buhl, Robert Feeley, Melissa Wegner, Mark Wilson, Karly DeMars, Tara Dana

Purpose: *Welcome and a reminder that this is a public meeting for the purpose of conducting government business.*

Standing Reports

- NWCG/NMAC Update (Aitor Bidaburu) – no report
- CGAC Report Out (Craig Glazier)
 - Standardized Preparedness Levels, Priority Trainee Program recommendation
- NRCG Operations (Corey Buhl)
 - Resource requests for prescribed fire are winding down in NR; Idaho Panhandle IHC to MN; will likely see increased requests for IHCs to Canada (three NR IHC's available nationally)
- NRCC Update (Kate Holsapple)
 - Public Wi-Fi available at NRCC, costs will be less than anticipated. MAC DO calendar is active – please reach out to Kate with availability (one week blocks); MAC exercise pending; seven-day staffing begins June 2 for NRCC; looking to fill two detailer positions.
 - NRTC does not have the public Wi-Fi yet; huge thank you to MT DES and MT DNRC for use of Starlink (shared by Melissa Wegner)
 - BLM National Preparedness Review will take place Sunday, June 16, 2024
- NRCG Committee Updates:
 - Operations Committee: draft S420/S520; HEQB sent to Rich for signature; will share draft memo with NRCG prior to approval.

Old Business

- Dispatch Improvement Tasking Update
 - *Document shared via email*
 - Action Items:
 - Approve Document – set deadline for edits and approval
 - Matt will send out latest version of document with USFS edits
 - **Approval/final product: June 18, 2024**
 - Identify Workgroup (Action Item 2)
 - Is the Coordinator Position still needed? It was suggested that once the tasking document is finalized, we ask the task group if they need assistance from the position. Another thought for the position would be to have this position work as a project team leader to coordinate between committees and agencies.
 - Proposal – final decision on position in July 2024
 - Agency Administrators request for consolidated plan – what's been done, what

decisions need to be made?

- Agency Representatives
 - North Dakota: Hunter Noor, Ryan Melin (alternate)

New Business

- **DECISIONAL** | Approval of IC Trainee applicants
 - *Follow-up with ICs to approve the trainees; then bring it back to the group – will vote via email consensus. Research emailed by 5/31, email by June 3.*
- **DECISIONAL** | Approval of Administrative Support Position
 - Unanimous approval – if it can be added into the financial plan to show financial contribution? Yes, coordinating group agreed.

Review of Action Items (Rich Cowger)

Next Meeting: June 18, 2024 – 10 AM Mountain



Northern Rockies Coordinating Group

Federal, State, and Local Government Agencies Working Together in Emergency Response Management

Board of Directors Conference Call – Meeting Notes

Tuesday, June 18, 2024

Participants

Board Members: Rich Cowger, Bryce Rogers, Matt Hall, Patrick Lonergan, Tate Fischer, Brett Lloyd, Paul Cerda

Deputies and Others: Jeni Jeresek, Kate Holsapple, Melissa Wegner, Martin Adell, Cory Calnan, Nate Rogers, Adriane Beck, Rachel Ferrell (notetaker)

Purpose: *Welcome and a reminder that this is a public meeting for the purpose of conducting government business.*

Standing Reports

- NWCG/NMAC: no report
- CGAC (Kate): not much activity, shared standard report outs.
- NRCG Update: Kate Holsapple
 - Sent some jumpers to the southwest and Alaska. Over the weekend multiple areas moved to Preparedness level 2. Ruidoso, New Mexico has had infrastructure loss, power loss and structure loss with evacuations effective.
 - Office refresh-new paint, took old corkboards down and will be getting ready to hang smart boards and projectors.
 - Updated to 7-day staffing with detailer starting Sunday. Two jobs have multiple excellent candidates and looking to fill those positions.
 - Suggested instead of having a call with zone chairs, to maybe move to Microsoft form and use for intel report to NICC as well as use in briefings. Zones would still be invited to bring in items if necessary. Looking for thoughts and suggestions on this idea.

Old Business

- DECISION | Dispatch Improvement Tasking Update
 - Will try to summarize and provide current status of the document and form up action items.
 - Put effort into the process and will see the actions items as well as the dispatch improvement task group projects.
 - Identified current decisions and status of the improvement projects with needing work in the east zone. Trying to provide structure but open to edits and updates if there are any.
 - Request to have this out sooner rather than later.
 - There are zones that have the improvement process and some that do not, so will try to get more of a description that there is not one decision.
 - There are a few job postings with the coordination consolidation. These will be separate from center managers and will focus on the consolidation.
 - Four-month trial period so we will know how this is going by the fall.
 - NRCG requested to move to vote on proceeding with the improvement tasking document. All NRCG board members present were in favor – none opposed.
 - Will add a standing agenda item to have the report out of the dispatch improvement tasking status to the monthly board meetings.
- Approval of IC Trainee applicants – will propose a new date in the next week to get together for an executive session. Rich will send out a doodle poll to find a date/time for further conversation.

- MAC Exercise – will reschedule for Spring 2025
- NRCG Operations Plan – signatures are needed for this plan. It will be sent back out for remaining signatures.

New Business

- DISCUSSION | Training MOU Contractor Process Review
 - Background: an issue has come from contractor-provided training. There are concerns over one of the MOU holders and would like to audit the training records. What would the process be for the ok to be given to do an audit?
 - Current process is to consult zone training representative and the agency that hosts the contractor, in conjunction with Melissa Wegner. NRTC is trying to develop a consolidated process for audits, so it doesn't feel like one vendor is being singled out.

Round Robin / Additional Comments

- Kudos to Dan Borsum for the wildfire outlook update at the Montana Governor's fire briefing.
- FYI: Yellowstone aviation will not be qualified due to some vacancies and will be a regular helitack crew. Montana helitack is staffing the Grand Canyon short haul ship. (Paul Cerda)

Review of Action Items (Rich Cowger)

Next Meeting: July 16, 2024 – 10 AM Mountain



Northern Rockies Coordinating Group

Federal, State, and Local Government Agencies Working Together in Emergency Response Management

Board of Directors Monthly Meeting – NOTES

Tuesday, July 16, 2024

MS Teams Conference Call

Participants

Board Members: Rich Cowger (Chair), Bryce Rogers (Vice Chair), Paul Cerda, Tate Fisher, Craig Glazier, Matt Hall, Brett Lloyd, Ryan Melin, Darron Williams, Heath Estey, Patrick Lonergan

Deputies and Others: Corey Buhl, Kate Holsapple, Craig Howells (BLM), Robert Feeley, Tamara Kolar, Jeni Jeresek, Mike Mooney, Chad Pickering, , Matt Young, Charlie Gorman, Tara Dana, Marty Mitzkus, Melissa Wegner, Karly DeMars (Facilitator)

Purpose: *Welcome and a reminder that this is a public meeting for the purpose of conducting government business.*

Standing Reports

- NWCG/NMAC Update (Aitor Bidaburu) – No report
- CGAC Report Out (Craig Glazier) – Combined CGAC/NMAC Meeting (Kate Holsapple) – notes have been sent to BOD
- NRCG Operations (Corey Buhl) – Catching up with coordination of fires we have within the geographic area. We are being successful at getting some fills from NMAC on crews; helicopters and crews continue to be in shortage, there are no engines available nationally. Current fires include:
 - Deadman – Eastern Montana – doing well, 3-4 days would be able to release
 - Horse Gulch – 85% confidence in ISAP strategy
 - Miller Creek – NRT5 was just ordered.
- NRCC Update (Kate Holsapple) – Great Basin and South Ops increased to PL 4 ; SW/NW/NR elevated PL3. Preparedness level for NR will be discussed in new business.
- Dispatch Improvement Tasking Update (Matt Hall)
 - Formalized briefing paper via memo which has been signed and sent out
 - Glazier: NR Dispatch Committee has a proposal for potential organizational chart recommendation for dispatch centers. Dan O'Brien has been assisting the effort but has taken another position and is no longer available. NRCG will consider the need of having a project lead for this tasking.
- NRCG Committee Updates:
 - Mitigation/Education/Prevention Committee (Matt Hall)
 - Committee met this spring and had a productive meeting. The meeting theme was many new faces in agencies relative to fire information and prevention. The committee is pursuing an interagency prevention effort.
 - Restrictions and Closure plan has been updated
 - IC Committee (Paul Cerda)
 - Starlinks have been working well. Committee sent proposal for \$500 for a dream machine, which allows additional capacity for logging in and using Starlink.
 - Charter Approval – sent to Chair (will need to be on next meeting)

Old Business

- UPDATE | Approval of IC Trainee applicant (Rich Cowger)
 - Executive Conference call did not occur, with board consensus topic will be moved to fall meeting for further discussion and decision
- UPDATE | Training MOU Audit (Rich Cowger)
 - Contracting Group is conducting an audit. Contractor has been notified and will be audited soon. Contractor has confirmed receipt of audit notification.
- ACTION ITEM | GMAC Calendar Sign Up (Rich Cowger, Kate Holsapple)
 - July 17-21: Bryce Rogers
 - July 22-27: Craig Glazier
 - July 28- August 3: Matt Hall

New Business

- REPORT | Billy Creek Fire Closeout (Rich Cowger)
 - Attended virtually. Not a long duration incident. Team 1 did a good presentation for ISAP and provided local unit a great product.
- ACTION ITEM | Mailing List Review
 - Karly will be emailing the NRCG members to get updates to the mailing list. The calendar invite will be updated accordingly.
- PL Levels in NR (Kate/Corey)
 - Right before the call, we were hovering just below PL4 in Northern Rockies
 - Kate shared daily outputs for PL level tracking.
 - Corey reported NR holding at PL3 but is headed to PL4 based on indices. Could move towards PL4 by weeks end. IMT commitment is putting us over the threshold. Operational resource commitments are very high.
 - NRCG Board supports NRCC with notifications and going to next preparedness level (does not need NRCG approval)
 - At PL 4, we will need to activate MAC and develop frequency.
 - ACTION ITEM: GMAC Plan is posted on NRCG website. Will need to be updated for 2025.

Review of Action Items (Rich Cowger) – action item log was reviewed and updated.

Next Meeting: August 20, 2024 – 10 AM Mountain



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Board of Directors Conference Call – Meeting Notes

Tuesday, August 20, 2024

Participants

Board Members: Rich Cowger (Chair), Darron Williams, Dennis Strange, Tate Fischer, Josh Harvey, Brett Lloyd, Matt Hall, Steve Holton, Paul Cerda, Patrick Lonergan

Deputies and Others: Bob Jones, Craig Howells, Cory Calnan, Chad Pickering, Corey Buhl, Kate Holsapple, Charlie Gorman, Tara Dana, Jeni Jeresek, Anthony Krause, Jordan McKnight, Melissa Wegner, Karly DeMars

Standing Reports

- NWCG/NMAC Update (Aitor Bidaburu) – *Aitor was unable to attend but sent information prior to meeting.*
 - NMAC vetting memo to rescind Phase 2 Flight Duty Restrictions very soon, 8/20 or 8/21.
 - CIMT availability continues to improve prompting reestablishment of national rotation CIMTs tentatively Monday 8/26. Team coordinators will update NICC overhead web site at the appropriate time.
- CGAC Report Out (Craig Glazier) – NMAC/CGAC meetings set up for this summer have specifically been looking for representation from each GA Coordinating Group Chairs. Meeting conversations have revolved around CIM feedback, specifically regarding roster negotiation, seven-day unavailability, and national rotation/equitability of rotation. NWGA has already given feedback to NMAC regarding how IMTs are being allocated. There has also been some feedback received regarding days off for dispatch staff.
 - Discussion – NRCG agrees that we need to come together and give some feedback to the process.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Chair will reach out to NMAC Rep regarding timeline for feedback so we can schedule discussion meetings with NRCG and IC committee.
 - Chad Pickering shared the dates for the FMB/NWCG AAR, which will be held October 16-17 in Boise – invites will go far and wide.
 - August 14, 2024 NMAC/CGAG notes are attached to these meeting notes.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** NRCG needs to ensure we have representation on each NMAC/CGAC Call if the Chair or Craig Glazier are unable to attend.
- NRCG Operations (Corey Buhl)
 - Reiterated updates sent in by Aitor:
 - CIM going back to established GA rotation. NRCC will work to get our IMTs back into the established GA rotation.
 - Looking at getting more resources in GACC, Friday/Saturday could be a challenging day for fire behavior/activity in NR
- NRCC Update (Kate Holsapple)
 - Current preparedness level of 2 but will continue weekly GACC briefings at 1000 hours. Lots of initial attack response in our local dispatch centers. NRCC staffing is back to normal including maintaining coverage and days off.
- Dispatch Improvement Tasking Update (Matt Hall)
 - Since the original tasking of the memo distribution has been complete, Matt is unsure of

the next steps. NRCG will need to figure out the next steps.

- ACTION ITEM: Matt Hall, Rich Cowger, Craig Glazier and Karly DeMars will work together to establish the next steps.
- NRCG Committee Updates:
 - Dispatch Committee (Craig Glazier) – no update
 - Operations Committee (Tate Fischer) – nothing to report

Old Business

- None

New Business

- DECISION | Approval of IC Committee Charter (request from Paul Cerda)
 - Group consensus to postpone decision until September meeting to allow for NRCG members to review and comment. A shareable version will be posted in the NRCG Teams site.
- DECISION | Dispatch Organization Proposal (Craig Glazier) - *Postponed to September Meeting*
- DECISION | Approval of 2024 NR Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization (Kate Holsapple)
 - All agencies unanimously supported the Chair signing the document. DES requested one change to page 42 regarding the POC being titled Response Bureau Chief rather than Agency Administrator due to internal delegations of authority.
 - Kate/Karly will finalize the approval for Rich Cowger's signature.
- REPORT | Incident Closeouts
 - Currently posted in NRCG Firenet Team – Corey/Karly will ensure we have all evaluations filed appropriately.
- Other Discussion/Topics
 - Fall In-person Meeting will take place the week of November 4, 2024. Logistics/location details are TBD.

Next Meeting: September 17, 2024 – 10 AM Mountain

End meeting for Executive Session – *Postponed to September Meeting*



Northern Rockies Coordinating Group

Federal, State, and Local Government Agencies Working Together in Emergency Response Management

Monthly Conference Call – Meeting Notes Tuesday, September 17, 2024

Participants

Board Members:

✓	BIA – Great Plains	Heath Estey	✓	Idaho Department of Lands	Josh Harvey
✓	BIA – Rocky Mountain	Bryce Rogers	✓	North Dakota Forest Service	Ryan Melin, Hunter Noor
✓	BIA – Northwest Region	Darron Williams	✓	Montana DNRC	Matt Hall
✓	BLM – Montana/Dakotas	Aaron Thompson	✓	Montana County Fire Wardens	Patrick Loneragan, Adriene Beck
✓	BLM – Idaho	Dennis Strange	✓	Montana DES	Brett Lloyd
✓	NPS – Intermountain Region	Paul Cerda	✓	Montana Sheriff's & Peace Officers	Steve Holton, Jason Jarrett
✓	USFS – Region 1	Craig Glazier	✓	Montana Fire Chiefs Association	Rich Cowger, Chair
✓	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	Tate Fischer	✓	Facilitator	Karly DeMars

Deputies and Others: Cory Calnan, Tara Dana, Charlie Gorman, Kate Holsapple, Jeni Jeresek, Robert Jones, Hunter Noor, Chad Pickering, Greg Poncin, Melissa Wegner, Mark Wilson

Standing Reports

- **NWCG/NMAC Update** (Aitor Bidaburu) – No report, unavailable
- **CGAC Report Out** (Craig Glazier) – In person meeting will take place in January 2025 and will be hosted by either Region 3 or 5, more details to come. Nationally, much of the country is busy with fire activity but many areas have also been getting precipitation. Upcoming CIMT AAR (discussion notes below) was also talked about.
- **NRCC Operations** (Chad Pickering for Corey Buhl) – three NR CIMTs are out on assignment, Team 2 (WY), Team 6 (PNW), Team 5 (MT); Team 3 – looking to roster September 24. NR IHCs – many are mobilized but plan offboarding for most IHCs in early October. NR T2IA crews are timing out and will also be offboarding early October. Helicopters have been moved out of the GACC, still holding some within NR for the time being.
- **NRCC Update** (Kate Holsapple) – IA activity has been reduced, resulting in a preparedness level of 2 effective Sunday, September 15 at noon. Watching weather coming though for potential move to PL1. Last GA briefing will take place tomorrow at 1000. Rebekah McCormick (Predictive Services Meteorologist) last work day is Thursday, September 19. Detailer Jenny Taylor will be at NRCC until October 19. Chelsea Cough starts on Monday, September 23.
- **NRCG Committee Updates:**
 - **Training Committee (Dennis Strange)** – Committee last met April/May and does not meet very often – information flow is a little start and stop. The committee will be looking at communication strategies and will ramp up communication for this committee. There is a lot of interest from committee members to engage but would like some more direction from NRCG. There is currently no priority trainee program but will look at how that is working to offer direction, if needed. Zone training leads are engaged. Committee chair is a two-year seat. Operations guide for training committee will need NRCG to review and approve. For NRCG, if there are things for the training committee that we can task them with, please let Dennis know. Question: Has the needs analysis been done to determine classes for the fall/winter? Each zone puts forth what they would like to see, but nothing definitive has been coordinated. Melissa Wegner shared that the BIA Training Specialist position is out on the street and is being advertised now in USAJobs – duty location in Billings, MT.

- **Fire Business Committee (Aaron Thompson)** – NR IBC had third quarter call, Susanne reached out – no issues or concerns. Very motivated group that meets consistently – communicates well and frequently. Preparing for fall meeting and will share more at the fall NRCG meeting.

Old Business

- **DECISION | Approval of IC Committee Charter** Paul Cerda gave an overview of the proposed edits and comments received to the IC Committee Charter. After brief discussion, all voting agencies approved the IC Committee Charter with updates to the training approval process. The charter will be sent to Chair for signature and disseminated appropriately.
- **UPDATE | National CIM AAR Representation** for meeting October 16-17, 2024, in Boise. The following representatives were identified during the meeting:
 - NRCG Chair: Rich Cowger
 - IC NR Rep: Brent Olsen
 - IC NR Rep (Vice Chair): Mike Behrens
 - Type 3 IC: Shane Martin
 - NR Operations/Center Manager/IMT Coordinator: Beau Richardson
 - Agency Reps (as requested by individual agencies): Craig Glazier, Tate Fischer
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Chair will schedule a NR CIM AAR meeting and/or email correspondence with the representatives above to address any internal/NR concerns prior to the meeting.
- **UPDATE | CGAC Representation**
The group discussed that NRCG needs to ensure we have representation on each NMAC/CGAC call if the Chair or appointed representative, Craig Glazier, are unable to attend. Corey Buhl, Kate Holsapple and Bryce Rogers are listed as alternates to attend. The Coordinating Group Chair will be attending more frequently. Rich, Craig, Kate and Corey, Bryce Rogers. Feedback to NMAC/CGAC – the calls often were not scheduled in advance, so it was difficult to ensure NR had representation due to no warning of upcoming meetings.
- **UPDATE | Dispatch Improvement Tasking**
No update, the NRCG task group was unable to meet. Matt Hall will be taking the lead to coordinate and schedule any upcoming meetings. The NRCG tasking memo (2024-008) will be reshared with the meeting minutes. Discussion: Is the task group with AAs still meeting? No, they have not been meeting. By November, there will be a decision made on location and number of centers. Still looking at Eastern Zone.

New Business

- **DISCUSSION / UPDATE | Dispatch Organization Proposal** (Craig Glazier)
 - **Background:** The Dispatch Committee put forward a proposal to rank the NR dispatch centers at a certain complexity level, with the ranking being either High and Very High. Eastern MT was not included in the action as they did not respond to the information request. The following centers are ranked as follows: Dillon – high, Coeur d'Alene – very high, Kalispell – high, Missoula – very high. The group also developed organization charts to outline positions for each high and very high center. The organizations are large and many facilities could not currently house the proposed organizations. The GS levels listed in the organization chart would need to be reclassified, which is beyond the scope and authority of NRCG. Many considerations will need to be discussed further.
 - **Discussion:** What can we do to get Eastern Montana Zone moving forward? Suggestions include tying the Dispatch Organization Proposal and the Dispatch Improvement tasking together so we aren't tracking two different concurrent efforts. BIA shared that they plan to move the Rocky Boy and Fort Belknap fourth-tier centers to Lewistown Dispatch. Other suggestions include using the interagency/NRCG Representatives to restart the conversations and process. Some barriers include the inability to identify basic financial plans and the inability to meet deadlines. Committees and interagency partners aren't getting timely information.

- Recommendations: DNRC recommends a modified effort for the action plan, including setting deadlines and expectations. NRCG needs to come out with one recommendation to the geographic area regarding dispatch organizations and improvements.
 - ACTION ITEM: Matt Hall will coordinate a meeting between agencies in Eastern Montana Zone to re-invigorate the process (BIA, BLM, State, USFS, FWS).
- **DISCUSSION & DECISION | Team Recruitment Process for 2025**
 - Discussion: NRCC would like direction on how we move forward with the recruitment process. The IMT Coordinator, Beau Richardson, is on days off, but Kate Holsapple will meet with him this week to request an updated opinion on IMT recruitment process for 2025. Ideally, we would like to get the IC Solicitation out prior to the Fall NRCG Meeting (November).
 - ACTION ITEM: Move topic to next month and invite Beau to give an update/recommendation. Beau could also get an email out prior with an update regarding ideas for team recruitment.
 - ACTION ITEM: Canvas current Incident Commanders and Deputies to see who may be looking to move out of their role. Assigned to IC Committee Liaison?
 - ACTION ITEM: NRCG to provide direction on how we move forward with the recruitment process. One suggestion is to update the NRCG Team Plan/SOG: https://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/dispatch/overhead/2023-SOG-NRCG-Team-Plan_FINAL.pdf
- **DISCUSSION | Staggering IMT Recruitment Plan**
 - ACTION ITEM: Ask Beau Richardson to recommend a) if teams need to stagger recruitment applications, b) if so, which teams should re-apply, c) Which IMT's should stagger. NRCG/NRCC will then update the NRCG Team Plan. Will request a report out at the October NRCG monthly meeting.
- **DISCUSSION | NR Sponsored Type 3 Teams**
 - ACTION ITEM: Move topic to October meeting for updates/suggestions from NRCC IMT Coordinator on how we are going to support/recruit for Type 3 teams. Update NRCG Team Plan/SOG to reflect direction for NR Sponsored Type 3 teams.
- **DISCUSSION | Review of Team Evaluations**
 - Most of the CIMT evaluations are in the NRCG Firenet filing system. Kate is working on getting any that are missing into the file. We need to send all evaluations to Jesse Bender (no due date).
 - ACTION ITEM: Update the NRCG Team Plan/SOG to outline the process for reviewing and sharing evaluations.
- **UPDATE | Fall NRCG Meeting – Week of November 4, 2024**
 - Location: Missoula, MT
 - Tentative Meeting Dates: Tuesday, November 5 – Thursday, November 7, 2024
 - Logistics: Karly is working on meeting location and agenda times – more to come in the next week.
 - Agenda topics – please send to Rich and Karly with any pre-reading materials.
- **OTHER NEW BUSINESS**
 - **THANK YOU CERTIFICATES**: Discussed status of thank you for supervisors that support IMT participation. Have we developed options to query supervisors of employees to send out certificates to thank supervisors? NRCG needs to be a cheerleader for folks that can support IMTs and need to ensure positive and frequent communication thanking responders for doing what they are doing.
 - ACTION ITEM: Kate will ask Beau to query supervisor information from application packages.
 - **NR IMT Statistics**:
 - Total IMT Assignments: 21
 - Days Committed: 238

Next Meeting: October 15, 2024 – 10 AM Mountain



Northern Rockies Coordinating Group

Federal, State, and Local Government Agencies Working Together in Emergency Response Management

Monthly Conference Call – Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, October 15, 2024

Participants

Coordinating Group Members:

	BIA – Great Plains	Heath Estey		Idaho Department of Lands	Josh Harvey
X	BIA – Rocky Mountain	Bryce Rogers		North Dakota Forest Service	Ryan Melin
X	BIA – Northwest Region	Darron Williams		Montana DNRC	Matt Hall
X	BLM – Montana/Dakotas	Aaron Thompson		Montana County Fire Wardens	Patrick Lonergan
X	BLM – Idaho	Dennis Strange		Montana DES	Brett Lloyd
X	NPS – Intermountain Region	Paul Cerda		Montana Sheriff's & Peace Officers	Steve Holton
	USFS – Region 1	Craig Glazier	X	Montana Fire Chiefs Association	Rich Cowger
X	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	Tate Fischer	X	Facilitator	Karly DeMars

Deputies and Others: Kate Holsapple (NRCC), Jason Jarrett (MT Sheriff's & Peace Officers), Charlie Gorman (DES), Corey Buhl (NR Ops), Jeni Jeresek (USFS), Cory Calnan (MT DNRC), Chad Pickering (USFS), Tara Dana (USFS), Adriane Beck (MT County Fire Wardens), Melissa Wegner (USFS), Robert Jones (BIA)

Standing Reports

- **NWCG/NMAC Update** (Aitor Bidaburu) – no report/update
- **CGAC Updates** – nothing to report, last meeting was a quick round robin
- **NRCC Operations** (Corey Buhl) – Widespread resource shortage nationally. Some geographic areas are combining several teams to make one ad hoc team. In NR – one new start near Helmsville, MT – the Nevada Lake is reported as a prescribed fire that got away from resources and is reported at over 300 acres. Northern Rockies has been able to support the new start with ground resources, crews and aircraft. Billings Airtanker base closes today. The Meridian fire on the Beaverhead-Deer Lodge NF became more active over the weekend.
- **NRCC Update** (Kate Holsapple) – National preparedness level 5, Northern Rockies PL 3 due to predicted weather. Hoping predicted weather this week will allow us to go to PL2. Staff is switching gears to meeting/AAR season. Dispatch issues – local centers ability to staff surrounding NRG aircraft extensions. This will be a topic of post-season discussions. NRCC staffing updates: Jenny Taylor (detailed aircraft dispatcher), last day Friday on detail. NRCC has two vacant positions: 1) vice H. Page, Aircraft Dispatcher position (USFS, should be on next fire hire outreach) and 2) vice R. McCormick, Meteorologist (FWS, working out details to advertise).
- **NRCG Committee Updates:** none – *all committees will report out at November meeting*
 - Report template was sent out weeks ago to zone and committee chairs, with a due date of October 25. Committee and zone chairs can either submit their written report or meet with the coordinating group in November at their fall meeting. A reminder email will be sent this week.

Reminders

- CIM AAR participation and representation to in person meeting – Oct. 16-17, 2024, Boise
 - NRCG Chair: Rich Cowger
 - IC NR Rep: Brent Olsen
 - IC NR Rep (Vice Chair): Mike Behrens
 - Type 3 IC: Shane Martin

- NR Operations/Center Manager/IMT Coordinator: Beau Richardson
- Agency Rep: Craig Glazier (USFS), Craig Howells (BLM), Darron Williams (BIA)
- Reminder to leverage local government contacts to make change

Old Business

- **DISCUSSION** | IC and IMT Recruitment Plan – Coordinating Group, Kate Holsapple
 - FYI – link to NRCG IMT Standard Operating Guide
https://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/dispatch/overhead/2023-SOG-NRCG-Team-Plan_FINAL.pdf
 - IC committee wants conversation and dialog with the NRCG coordinating group regarding this topic. A time will be schedule at the fall meeting in November between the IC committee and NRCG.
 - Recommendation – maintain the three-year application schedule for all teams – easier for messaging, in between only recruit new members. Makes roster management cleaner. Recruitment for all teams would occur in 2025/26. Would allow to balance teams a little better if all reapply in the same year.
 - Beau recognizes that he is new – was going to take time this week to speak with counterparts in Boise to get new ideas.
 - Questions:
 - Are there any ICs that are going to step down? Response: not that anyone has heard.
 - ACTION ITEMS FOR NOVEMBER MEETING:
 - Establish date for IC recruitment applications. Set a long standing date for applications and IC recruitment
 - Establish date to get recruitment out for individual positions on IMTs. Set a long standing date for applications and IC recruitment
 - Update NR IMT SOP document
 - IC/IC trainee approval process
 - Discuss health of NR IMTs. Is there any discussion from teams on downsizing? Can we maintain?
 - Kudos to Beau for all of his work this year.
- **UPDATE** | November NRCG Meeting – Logistics, Agenda Items
 - Logistics – Hotel Booking – Due by October 14
 - Room block is at the Residence Inn Downtown
 - Meeting Room is at AC Hotel (on same block as Residence Inn)
 - Schedule (Tentative)
 - Tuesday, November 5 – General Session (report outs, general audience)
 - Wednesday, November 6 – NRCG Executive Session
 - Thursday, November 7 (am) – NRCG/WFAA Executive Session
 - We will have work session time scheduled to discuss and dive into topics.
 - Agenda topics due October 17
 - Time with IC committee
 - Zone/committee reports are due Oct. 25 – Karly will send a reminder email to the chairs

New Business

- **DISCUSSION** | Team Availability
 - Might continue to be slim to fill a team
 - Team 2 may be available – will know more on Thursday, October 17.
 - Need to look at national rotation and how can NR balance better so we can be more available. How are we going to fix that into the future? There was a need in NR and we couldn't stand up our own CIM/Type 3 for early spring and late fall response needs.
- Governor and Senator Letters to USFS
 - Encourage a united front on responses to inquiries

Next Meeting: November 5-7, 2024, Missoula, MT



Northern Rockies Coordinating Group

Federal, State, and Local Government Agencies Working Together in Emergency Response Management

2024 NRCG Fall Meeting Notes

Tuesday, November 5, 2024 – *General Session*

Participants

Coordinating Group Members:

X	BIA – Great Plains	Heath Estey (Virtual)	X	Idaho Department of Lands	Josh Harvey (Virtual)
X	BIA – Rocky Mountain	Bryce Rogers		North Dakota Forest Service	Ryan Melin
	BIA – Northwest Region	Darron Williams	X	Montana DNRC	Matt Hall
X	BLM – Montana/Dakotas	Aaron Thompson	X	Montana County Fire Wardens	Patrick Lonergan
X	BLM – Idaho	Dennis Strange	X	Montana DES	Brett Lloyd
	NPS – Intermountain Region	Paul Cerda		Montana Sheriff's & Peace Officers	Steve Holton
X	USFS – Region 1	Craig Glazier (Virtual)	X	Montana Fire Chiefs Association	Rich Cowger (Virtual)
X	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	Tate Fischer	X	Facilitator	Karly DeMars

Deputies and Others: Aaron Bucholz (North Dakota Forest Service); Jason Jarrett (MT Sheriff's & Peace Officers); Chad Pickering (USFS); Corey Buhl (NR Operations); Kate Holsapple (NRCC); Aitor Bidaburu (NMAC/NWCG); Haley Schelin (Dispatch Committee); Tammy Stevens (Training Committee); Mark Wilson (Southwest Zone); Rick Connell (Northwest Zone); Nate Rogers (Operations Committee); Jeremiah Miller (North Idaho Zone); Jeni Jeresek (USFS); Amber Honsaker (Incident Business Committee)

NMAC, National Update / Report - Aitor Bidaburu, NR NMAC Liaison | The 2024 fire season was challenging, with nearly 100 days at PL5 and frequent shortages of teams, despite NMAC's access to 44 teams. A total of 144 CIM assignments covered 163 incidents, with Type 3 teams stepping up to manage CIM-level complexity. Teams were deployed for 1,855 days, averaging 3.5 assignments each. The CIM After-Action Review (AAR), well-attended by all GACCs and facilitated by contractors, highlighted key issues NMAC is addressing. Leadership updates included NWCG's discussions on sunseting Type 1 IC positions and addressing confusion between incident typing and position qualifications, with potential nomenclature changes to clarify roles. No roadmap exists yet for future CIM developments, but efforts are focused on improving GA-level team flexibility and addressing rotation inconsistencies with advisory group input.

NRCC Fall Report and Volume of Business Report - Kate Holsapple, NRCC Center Manager | The NRCC Fall report and Volume of Business report highlight a season that went well overall, with no major issues but identified areas for improvement. Despite fewer fires and reduced acreage in NR, resource demands remain high, leading to quick depletion during increasingly busy time periods. The in-person GMAC Rep. position was invaluable – would like to continue this practice at PL3 or even a little earlier. Local pressures vary, with some units proactive and others unable to support staged resources due to staffing challenges, particularly in the BIA, which relies heavily on severity funding but lacks key overhead positions. Prescribed fire and suppression repair workloads strain dispatch and coordination systems, with limited local staffing necessitating external team support. NMAC's prioritization of repair work was rated lower, reflecting broader challenges in managing incident complexity and resource allocation trends.

NR Operations Fall Report - Corey Buhl, NR Operations | NRCC and Operations received strong positive feedback, particularly for Kate and her staff's exceptional customer service and staffing. While some NMAC decisions worked well, others need adjustment to better support field operations, requiring more flexibility and potentially new

ways of operating at the Geographic level. Key issues discussed included aviation challenges such as detection gaps, dispatch capacity, and communication disconnects between aviators and dispatchers, prompting consideration of an aviation committee. Coordination with contractors and resource availability also needs improvement. Plans are underway to streamline the NR IC call template and enhance national standardization. Acknowledgment of successes and consistent messaging around resource allocation, especially for crews, remain priorities. Coordination at high PL levels and ongoing communication improvements will be essential moving forward.

Communications Advanced Team Proposal - Vance Andersen, NIFC Telecommunications | Vance Andersen proposed a system to enhance communication setup prior to IMT arrivals by establishing a dedicated communications team (ComAT) under NRCC. This approach would provide structure, preposition cache equipment, and bridge gaps during team transitions, while offering significant training opportunities. Recruitment, particularly within NR, is a key challenge, with potential strategies including focusing on local non-traveling personnel and engaging host agencies to develop skills. Positive feedback from NRCG and meeting participants supports this initiative, but questions remain about the increased shortages of the COML position and the integration of rover COMTs. To advance, a taskforce will explore implementation, with Vance offering support and Kate coordinating inquiries. The NRCG will consider endorsing this approach, leveraging local government for recruitment, and refining expectations. A handout regarding the Communications Advanced Team is included in these notes.

NRCG Financial Plan – Financial Review - Jeni Jeresek, USFS Budget Analyst | Jeni provided an overview of the financial review/plan spreadsheet, noting the need for adjustments and plans to send a draft for agency updates. The group reached a consensus to retain the current model, which has been modernized. A final review is scheduled for February, including grants and agreements. Jeni is available for one-on-one assistance as needed.

Northern Rockies Training Center Update - Scott Suko, Training Specialist | NRTC is nearly fully staffed, with Dana Carpentier being hired as the new Training Specialist and Bobby Cooper selected for the BIA position in Billings. Due to budget constraints, nine courses were transitioned to virtual delivery, with 11 remaining in-person, including M581 and S300. The course schedule is posted on the Wildland Fire Learning Portal and updated routinely. Priority trainee operations continue under 2021 guidelines, while CGAC is tasked with creating a consistent priority trainee program. Efforts to secure interagency WiFi at NRTC are ongoing, with a backup plan to use Starlink. Course selection is based on a rotation, local requests, and monthly meetings with training officers. Limited capacity for M581 (30 students/year) remains a challenge, but DNRC and BLM offered support to expand options. A needs analysis is being discussed for better alignment of zone and GACC-level priorities.

NRK Fall Update – Anthony Krause, Cache Manager | The NRK Fall Update highlighted successful outcomes from a national hiring event, with eight new hires and position upgrades contributing to strong staffing levels. NRK provided significant support to other GACCs. Challenges include heavy water handling slowing operations and ongoing shipping issues, which have been mitigated by subcontractors and CDL-trained staff. The future of the cache system raises concerns about the financial viability of contracting and the impact of losing ADs. Expanding year-round facilities and resources for refurbishment is necessary, as NRK can refurbish hoses internally at \$2.50 each compared to \$19 through contractors. Vehicle replacements are in progress, and Ray Hawley has been introduced as an assistant. Notably, there were no accidents or injuries reported.

NRCG COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Training Committee – Dennis Strange, Matt Heisler, Tammy Stevens** | The training committee operating with many collateral duty training officers. Recent updates include posting NRTC 390/420 courses based on zone representatives' input to ensure coverage across the NR. The training committee reviewed the charter, last updated in 2019, and proposed changes such as updating 420/520 references, replacing "BOD" with "coordinating group," clarifying the geographic area prioritization and needs assessment processes, and better outlining training rotations with other GACCs. The committee is fulfilling its current directives but seeks clearer guidance if changes are needed. The revised charter will be sent to the NRCG Chair by December 2024. Tammy

Stevens will become the new chair of the committee and expressed appreciation to Matt Heisler for his leadership the past two years.

- **Prevention & Education Committee – Matt Hall** | The Prevention & Education Committee, chaired by Jennifer Russell (IDL), has not met recently but plans to hold a meeting on December 2-4, 2024. The agenda includes conducting an AAR on restrictions and closures, with a full report from committee will take place at the December NRCG meeting.
- **Business Committee – Aaron Thompson, Amber Honsaker** | Susan Dowler was thanked for her leadership as chair, with Amber set to assume the role at the start of the year. Key topics discussed included the need for S260/261 courses for single resources, emphasizing the importance of ensuring all required personnel complete the training. Issues with RIST Expanded Dispatch were noted, particularly around communication, with NRCC and the Business Committee planning to address feedback directly with RIST.
 - *CONSENSUS DECISION:* NRCG approved a 12-hour minimum standard for NRGAs prepositioned resources, which will be added to the mob and business guides.
- **Operations Committee – Tate Fischer, Nate Rogers, Chad Pickering** | The Operations Committee expressed gratitude to Nate for serving as vice chair and Chad for his contributions while Jordan McKnight is on a detail. Key updates included transferring S420/520 responsibilities to the IC Committee and issuing a memo to rescind heavy equipment taskforce memo. The committee revised its charter, clarifying voting and non-voting roles, added a non-voting Operations Section Chief (CIMT, with an option for Type 3), and requested the IC Committee handle operations chief selection to the operations committee. Other changes included removing "BOD" references and "incident" from the mission statement. The committee is seeking new taskings, and consensus was reached to send the updated charter to the NRCG Chair for signature after final edits.
- **Dispatch Committee – Haley Schelin** | The Dispatch Committee, chaired by Claire Smith with Haley Schelin as vice chair, was able to put on the 2024 spring dispatch workshop and is now planning the next virtual workshop for April 2025. Key priorities include dispatch complexity analysis, consolidation meetings, and addressing NRGAs aircraft extension taskings and RIST feedback. The outdated Dispatch Committee website is undergoing modernization under FS CIO. The committee is updating its charter, reviewing its membership structure, and addressing why it is referred to as a steering committee. Additional tasks include following up on the 0456 wildland firefighter series/dispatchers and supporting dispatch improvement initiatives. NR has submitted three nominations for the dispatch academy.
- **IC Committee – Brent Olsen** | The IC Committee, chaired by Brent Olsen with Mike Behrens as vice chair, noted that all NR CIMT and ICT3 teams received three assignments this year, though gaps remain, especially on Team 5 and in COML positions. The committee charter was signed in September, with plans to upload it to the NRCG webpage. Nominations for L480, S420, and S520 were successful. Key issues include input on national rotation, IC retirements post-2025 reducing the likelihood of maintaining five teams, and determining the optimal number of teams for the NR. The committee discussed incentivizing IMT participation, standardizing CIMT qualifications, confirming NR trainee processes, and addressing evaluation feedback requested by NMAC. Taskings include selecting an Operations Section Chief for the Operations Committee, refining IC and trainee selections, and exploring financial incentives. Additional priorities are enhancing the awards process, supporting in-person team meetings, and reviewing feedback on Starlink use by four teams. Acknowledgment was given to Beau Richardson for exceptional leadership and contributions toward NR IMT Coordination.

NRCG ZONE REPORTS

- **North Dakota Zone – Aaron Bucholz** | Aaron provided an update on North Dakota's fire season, which included a brief spring season and a late fall season starting in late September. The fall season saw significant mutual aid requests, including an October event with high winds leading to over 120,000 acres burned in one operational period, breaking records set in 2021. North Dakota FS has filled all positions, and the next Fire Council meeting is scheduled for December 10.

- **Eastern Montana Zone – Tate Fischer |** The fall zone meeting was well attended, focusing on charter updates and redrafting the mini-MAC functions. The group will be addressing the East Zone Dispatch improvement tasking and will provide recommendations for NRCG. The group is also discussed reducing redundancy in resource allocation and reporting efforts. An electronic form was introduced to streamline agency requests, but challenges persist in integrating zone feedback into the prioritization system, particularly with three dispatch centers managing one airtanker and multiple orders. The need for a clearer prioritization process was emphasized, along with collaboration with the East Zone to refine workflows and reduce duplication.
- **Central Montana Zone – Rich Cowger |** No report
- **South Central Montana Zone – Patrick Lonergan |** Nothing to report outside of written report provided. There will be a change in chair mid-November 2024. The new chair has not been identified.
- **Southwest Montana – Mark Wilson |** The Southwest Zone reported active fire activity from mid-July to mid-September, with weekly calls, daily prioritization, and a prevention team engaged throughout the summer. Efforts were made to maintain initial attack surge resources. The zone is working on updating its charter and a sub-geographic plan, though the new template has posed challenges. A fall zone meeting has not occurred yet due to ongoing fire activity. Dispatch consolidation discussions are ongoing, with plans to address the Missoula Dispatch location by winter 2025/26.
- **Northwest Montana – Rick Connell, Matt Hall |** The zone experienced a slower fire season with no large fires and only one IMT3 deployment in Glacier. Canadian partners expressed gratitude for U.S. support. Key challenges included aligning fire danger ratings, preparedness levels, staffing, and timing of restrictions for consistency. The Plains Dispatch Unit will relocate to Missoula starting February 1, 2025, and discussions are ongoing about the KDC/KIC merger, with KIC already equipped to communicate with Kootenai repeaters. There are no current taskings, though significant effort is directed toward resource coordination and internal collaboration.
- **North Idaho – Jeremiah Miller, Josh Harvey |** North Idaho had an active fire season, particularly in Grangeville, with several Type 3 incidents extending into August. The Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) provided a strong example of CIM functioning effectively and being appropriately scaled. As part of the interagency consolidation process, Melanie Roose was selected as Center Manager for the combined Coeur d'Alene and Grangeville Dispatch Centers (at Coeur d'Alene). Efforts are underway to update the board of directors' charters and communication processes, though challenges remain, such as limited radio communication between Grangeville and Coeur d'Alene, which lies outside the NIZ Coordinating Group's purview. Work continues on updates to the FDOP and run cards, with a target completion date of 2027. Feedback on zone intent and the MAC worksheet was positive, with the process deemed effective.

Approval of Committee Charters

- Training Committee – once proposed changes are made, the Training Committee will send the updated charter to NRCG Chair for approval. NRCG gave consensus approval, with edits.
- Operations Committee - once proposed changes are made, the Operations Committee will send the updated charter to NRCG Chair for approval. NRCG gave consensus approval, with edits.

CIMT & IMT3 Review/Update | The review of CIMT and IMT3 operations highlighted successes and challenges. While the first year of national CIM implementation showed progress, issues remain, such as the lack of guidance from NMAC, confusion around mobilization metrics, and inconsistent application of minimum standards for CIM. Concerns include gaps in customer service, team skillsets, and coordination of team availability, as well as unpreparedness of Agency Administrators (AAs) and limited buy-in. Team health disparities and the effectiveness of the 44-person team model were also questioned. NRCG should continue encouraging NR teams to share resources, focus on fire strategy, and spread assignments across the season were noted as priorities. Successes included Beau Richardson's strong performance as coordinator, while challenges included NMAC pulling prepositioned teams and misalignment on out-

of-GACC deployments. Calls for more transparent evaluation processes and better engagement with CGAC were emphasized to address these concerns and improve overall effectiveness.

Upcoming Meeting Dates | Facilitator will send calendar invitations to NRCG members for the following dates:

- Monthly Meetings – 3rd Tuesday of each month. Meeting invitation will be updated to reflect approved participant list and will be sent using FireNet.
- Spring NRCG Meeting: 1st week of April with IMT Meetings – April 7-11, 2025
- Fall NRCG Meeting: November 3-7, 2025

--End of Notes for General Session--

Meeting Handout materials attached.

Handout – Communications Advanced Team – Vance Andersen

Communications Advanced Teams (CAT)

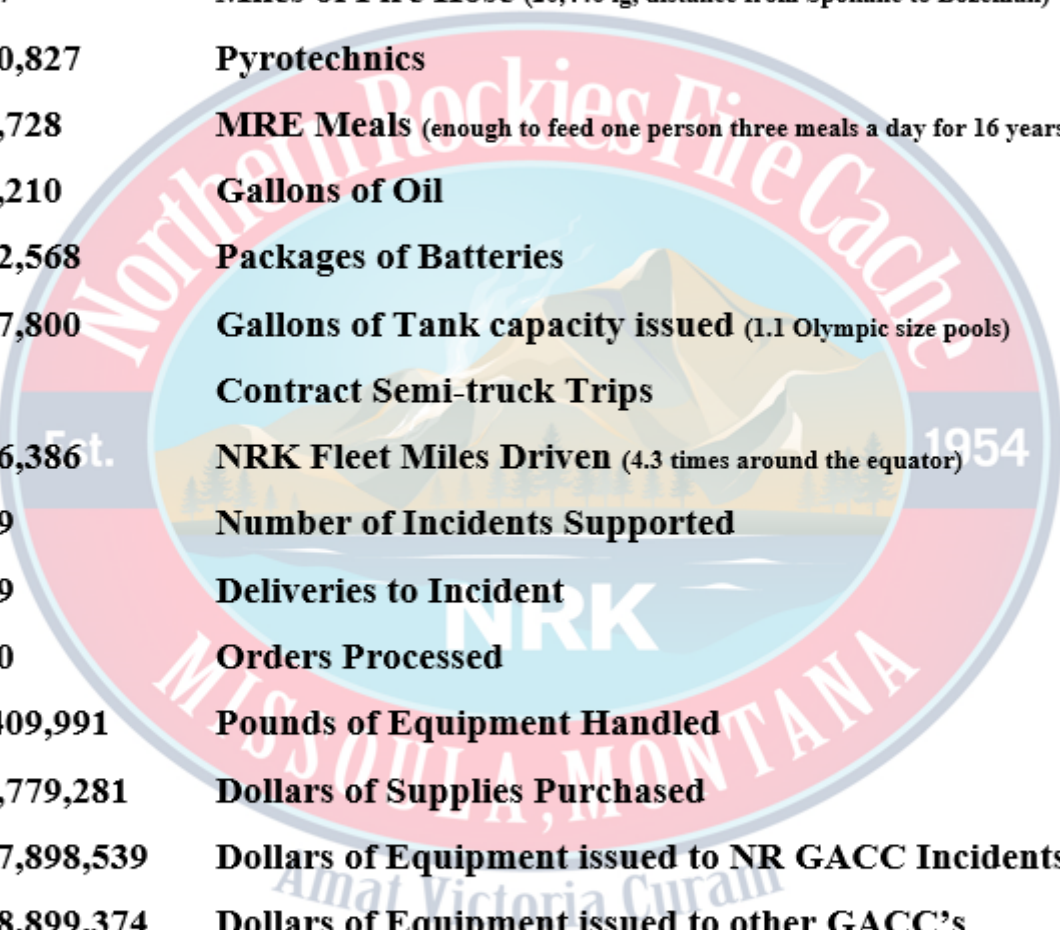
The CAT team is ordered by NRCC on a NRCC resource order. CAT teams are assembled from a list of qualified individuals which is compiled preseason and are deployed upon the ordering of an Incident Management Team. Ideal configuration of a team comprises of 1 COMT and a trainee. It is preferable to also include a member who is COML qualified. The CAT is responsible for the initial setup of the Communications Unit on large fires and can be utilized to provide necessary communications support until replacements arrive with the team or soon after. Their primary concern is the setup of the Communications Starter Kit (04390) although they can be utilized in the deployment of additional repeaters if other resources are not available to do so. The CAT Teams work for NRCC and will be assigned and reassigned at NRCC's discretion.

What is needed?

Have 2 COML Individuals (CAT Coordinators) identified who are gracious enough to help NRCC with maintaining a list of CAT members annually and their general availability. This really helps as NRCC would too busy to really keep tabs on all of them. IROC availability isn't too applicable, as the program is designed for short term assignments, etc.

- We also build all the CAT folks cell #'s into a WildCAD Text List. When we get an order for an IMT, it's part of our process to send a WildCAD text to everyone saying we need COMTs for a CAT assignment and to call one of our CAT Coordinators if they are available for a CAT assignment.

NORTHERN ROCKIES FIRE CACHE 2024



The logo is a circular emblem with a pink outer ring containing the text "Northern Rockies Fire Cache" at the top and "MISSOULA, MONTANA" at the bottom. Inside the ring is a blue circle with a mountain range illustration. Text within the blue circle includes "Est. 1954" on the right, "NRK" in large white letters in the center, and "Alma Victoria Curran" in a script font at the bottom.

31,362	Hose Fittings
516	Pumps
387	Miles of Fire Hose (20,446 lg, distance from Spokane to Bozeman)
130,827	Pyrotechnics
16,728	MRE Meals (enough to feed one person three meals a day for 16 years)
11,210	Gallons of Oil
332,568	Packages of Batteries
727,800	Gallons of Tank capacity issued (1.1 Olympic size pools)
58	Contract Semi-truck Trips
106,386	NRK Fleet Miles Driven (4.3 times around the equator)
159	Number of Incidents Supported
319	Deliveries to Incident
410	Orders Processed
2,409,991	Pounds of Equipment Handled
\$1,779,281	Dollars of Supplies Purchased
\$17,898,539	Dollars of Equipment issued to NR GACC Incidents
\$18,899,374	Dollars of Equipment issued to other GACC's
\$14,461,523	Dollars of Items Returned and Refurbished
\$53,038,717	Dollars of Equipment Issued/Returned
ZERO	Number of Accidents or Injuries NRK

"You will not find it difficult to prove that battles, campaigns, and even wars have been won or lost primarily because of logistics." – **General Dwight D. Eisenhower**



Northern Rockies Coordinating Group

Federal, State, and Local Government Agencies Working Together in Emergency Response Management

Monthly Conference Call – Meeting Notes

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Participants

Coordinating Group Members:

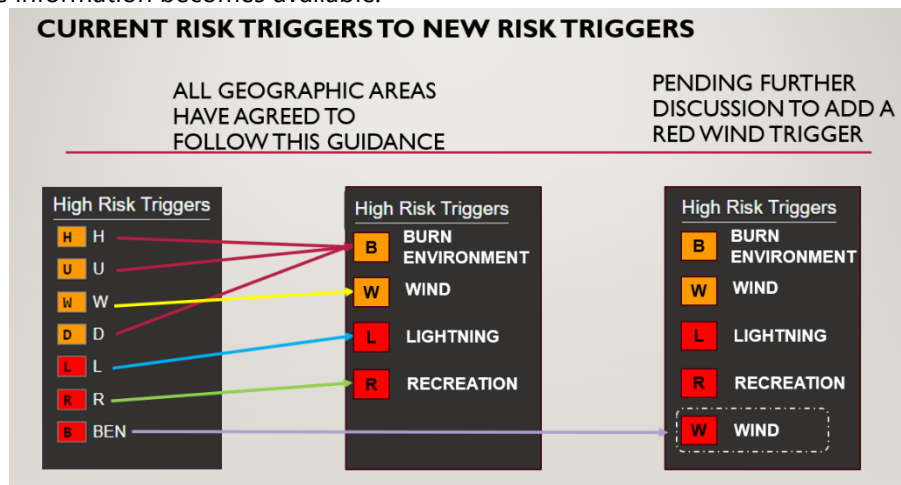
	BIA – Great Plains	Heath Estey	X	Idaho Department of Lands	Josh Harvey
X	BIA – Rocky Mountain	Bryce Rogers		North Dakota Forest Service	Ryan Melin
	BIA – Northwest Region	Darron Williams	X	Montana DNRC	Matt Hall
X	BLM – Montana/Dakotas	Aaron Thompson	X	Montana County Fire Wardens	Patrick Lonergan
X	BLM – Idaho	Dennis Strange	X	Montana DES	Brett Lloyd
X	NPS – Intermountain Region	Paul Cerda	X	Montana Sheriff's & Peace Officers	Steve Holton
X	USFS – Region 1	Craig Glazier	X	Montana Fire Chiefs Association	Rich Cowger
X	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	Tate Fischer	X	Facilitator	Karly DeMars

Deputies and Others: Aitor Bidaburu, Billy Phillips (RIST), Corey Buhl, Kate Holsapple, Morganne Lehr (RIST), Hunter Noor (North Dakota), Brian Webber, Melissa Wegner, Tammy Stevens (Training Committee Chair)

Standing Reports

- **NWCG/NMAC Update** (Aitor Bidaburu) – NMAC/CGAC will meet in person week of January 28, 2025 in Boise. Nationally, we have a very busy and active IWDG group who is meeting the same week on 1/29-1/30/2025 and has broad representation – but may be looking at updating the representative makeup. PSOG group – looking at NMAC to ask CGAC for group tasking. NCCM looking at developing similar criteria for preparedness levels across the GACC. Other taskings – NMAC has asked IWDG to look at CIM team configuration – continuation of tasking. Increasing incident support capacity – ongoing and potential expansion. NWCG Executive Board - Type 1 and Type 2 qualifications will continue through 2025 and will be discontinued January 1, 2026. Does not change anything addressed from CIM AAR; just extends the qualification for one year. NWCG all chairs meeting week of February 18 – virtual meeting to navigate the IPTM process. NMAC membership – some changes – new NPS representative (Chuck Russell). Ongoing normal change going forward with upcoming retirements.
 - NMAC memos sent to NRCG prior to meeting.
- **CGAC Report Out** (Craig Glazier, Dennis Strange) –
 - CGAC main effort is working on new national rotation effort. Face to face meeting in January to have a proposal for NMAC approval at that meeting. As a working group, they have met several times to address the tasking. Would walk in with a draft proposal at the end of January. Quick turnaround for use in 2025.
 - Revisit discussion regarding alternate representation: At one point we talked about having Corey Buhl listed as part of the CGAC report out and/or back up with Dennis couldn't attend. Corey is already in alternate attendee to the meeting.
- **NRCC Operations** (Corey Buhl) – Working on taskings from November meetings, nothing significant to report – but are on target to meet deadlines. IMT announcements are out (as of 12/16/2024) – due back 1/31/2025. One observation – not being primary on CGAC; might be some cross over between CGAC and IWDG and confusion on who is doing what in which committee.

- **NRCC Update** (Kate Holsapple) – Working on taskings from November meeting.
 - Minimal fire activity – one 900-acre fire south of Miles City two weeks ago. Resource orders – one per day on average for name requested overhead.
 - IMT and IC recruitment went out. Application link is up on website, too.
 - Focusing on seven-day product for predictive services, including going from seven high risk triggers down to five and adjusting colors (graphic is below). Should expect to see more yellow days for a longer period. Dan Borsum is heavily involved in this effort. Will be updating and communicating as more information becomes available.



- Flying 8/9/11 aircraft coordinator (USFS position).
 - Holly/Jay/Kate met with SW on Communications Advance Team – once we know we are ordering teams, we'd just make a call to POC for the Comm Advance Team – names will be requested on a NR RO. Stressed that we develop program and have a solid communications POC that has the ability communicate and coordinate the effort.
 - From fall National Coordinators Meeting – reminder from applications IRWIN and Unit IDs – with consolidations – takes months to get new unit IDs – takes time to get that organized and through the system. There is a consolidation checklist on what needs to be done when – this is a national effort coming out.
 - Minimal staffing for next couple of weeks – back to normal staffing January 6, 2025. Rich will be reaching out to Kate regarding upcoming legislative activities.
- **NRCC Committee Updates:**
 - **Mitigation/Education Committee (Matt Hall, NRCC Committee Liaison):**
 - Transitioned to a new chair (Jennifer Russell was chair). Beth Hill will be the chair for the next two years. Vice chair is currently Kevin Weaver but Kevin is looking to find another BIA representative for the position. Big thank you to Jennifer Russell for pulling things together for the committee and for being the chairperson.
 - One effort moving forward is the coordinated regional fire prevention messaging through gas station TV. The group had great success in 2024 and are looking forward to 2025 messaging.
 - There are currently no formal NRCC tasking for the committee, so self-taskings include:
 - 1) Fire Origin and Cause determination with changes to InFORM, can see real time O&C – right now we have a large amount of fire causes that are undetermined. Looking to increase training and to ensure agencies are building INVF capacity. Trying to increase capabilities and reduce the number of UTF orders for INVF.
 - 2) Developing a large event tool kit – looking to address events that have fireworks or large amounts of people,
 - 3) Working on structure/property wildfire assessment survey – updating home ignition zone and developing materials/updates materials.

- Bryce shared that he'll work with Kevin Weaver to find a vice chair
 - Josh Harvey – IDL has developed quite a robust INVf program and they have learned that INVfs are not showing available nationally. Feel free to reach out to IDL to check on availability to develop a bigger pool of investigators. It's tough to pull a federal investigator in on a state case. If the agency has a lead investigator, then the team members can offer assistance to the effort. Can usually host 25-30 folks in the IDL sponsored courses. Josh will work with IDL to share more information on upcoming opportunities.
- **IC Committee:**
 - Patrick Lonergan is the new NRCG Liaison and has been working with Joe Sampson on IMT meeting. There has been a chance since the November NRCG meeting – as of now, there here will be no NR sponsored IMT meeting. C&G's will be getting together as needed and virtual.
 - NRCG discussion – the IC committee would provide a recommendation, not a final decision. Patrick will go back to IC group and talk with all of the ICs. USFS Region 1 has given direction for only C&G to attend in person IMT meetings.
- **Dispatch Improvement Updates:**
 - Action Item: Decision memo communicating dispatch organization - to include support for dispatch organization chart, rationale and complexity analysis (DD: December/January 2025)
 - Nothing has been done since our November Meeting. Tate Fischer did send out an updated informational memo on behalf of NRCG to the East Zone, which is now moving forward. And informational briefing sheet was shared, will move forward with implementation in January.
 - Craig will work with Karly to develop draft memo to communicate NRCG's support of the proposed dispatch organizations.
 - Aaron mentioned the opportunity to use a dispatch cost analysis tool that has been endorsed by dispatch community nationally. Reports are already built in IROC to show fair share costs.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Kate Holsapple will work on what the report for a center and will share back to NRCG.

Old Business / Action Items

- **DECISION** | Approval of Operations Committee Charter
 - No action at this time – NRCG did not receive the updated version charter. Once received, will send to Chair for signature.
- **INFORMATIONAL/UPDATE** | IMT (IC/DIC/IC-T) Recruitment / Applications Open
 - *Reminder:* Identification & Recruitment of new ICs; succession planning
 - For clarification, the IC trainees that applied in 2024 but the selection was incomplete – do they need to reapply. By consensus, NRCG request that they reapply in 2025 to be formally accepted.
- **INFORMATIONAL/UPDATE** | Letter to Supervisors Thanking them for their support of employees participating in IMTs (Chair). Rich is working on and will get out to get into format, done prior to end of year.

New Business

- **INFORMATIONAL** | RIST Report, 2024 Season Summary – Morganne Lehr, Billy Phillips
 - Shared presentation with Coordinating Group – covered 2024 (284 incidents, 1312 support requests)
 - In NR – majority of support goes to Type 3 incidents (133 incidents)
 - Successes: Full program management, RIST national SOPs, Pilot efforts (decision support and expanded dispatch); master interest list (65% USFS, 10% BLM, 7% state, 6% NPS, 12% Other)
 - Challenges: Hit RIST leadership capacity – need to continue to build depth.
 - Moving forward: build collaborative relationships; refine/development of functional areas (logistics, decision support, expanded dispatch, planning); training and recruitment
 - Questions/Comments – there is some discussion nationally from supervisors about employees never taking days off. RIST did have one specific issue with this – but was fixed as soon as it the

issue was daylighted. RIST tracks the days they work and how much work they are doing.

- **INFORMATIONAL / DECISIONAL** | Training MOU Proposal – Dennis Strange
 - Tammy Stevens, Brian Webber – Brian Webber shared a copy of the Training MOU that requires the zone training signatures for approval. Brian and Tammy recommend the approval process change to have the NRCG Chair sign, after the Zone Representative has recommended approval. Melissa Wegner shared context and background of the MOU form.
 - DECISION: By consensus, NRCG approves the change from Zone Representative approval signature to NRCG Chair signature. NR Contracting can move forward with updating their form letter and approval process.

Round Robin

- BLM: Thanked Rich Cowger for his service as the Chair. Thank you, Rich!

Next Meeting: January 21, 2025

For January Meeting:

- New Business – Informational – talk Incident Management Team recruitment and staffing support (Matt Hall) – hoping to round out what the roles/responsibility/ what are we trying to address.

Attachments

- NRCG Meeting Report Out Notes – Mitigation/Education Committee
- NMAC Correspondence
 - National Coordination Center Managers – Preparedness Level Automation
 - NMAC L2023-09: Tasking: Establishing Standard Criteria for FA Preparedness
 - NMAC L2024-13: Request for Support from the Predictive Services Oversight Group

FIRE PREVENTION & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Accomplishments:

- Interagency collaboration in GSTV (IDL, BLM, DNRC, USFS) (\$160k) resulted in very positive results.
Highlights:
 - 15% of 5M (750k) viewers could correctly identify the elements from the video that prevent a wildfire start along the roadside. This is a 68% increase from the control group who did not view the video.
 - 55% (2.75M) of viewers were likely to say they intend to visit the advertised website to learn more about fire prevention in the next 30 days
 - GSTV beat radio, TV, YouTube, and billboards and was only second to social media in ad recall. Of note, our GSTV ads were also broadcast to social media users who travelled within a Geo Fence around stations.
- Thanks to IDL (Jen Russell) for her leadership as Chair. New Chair is Beth Hill (ND Forest Service); BIA will provide vice-chair.

Current Project Status:

- FPEC is addressing the lack of available FINVs in the Northern Rockies. Zone reported a very high percentage of UTF orders in 2023 and 2024. IDL is providing FI-210 each spring. To build capacity, all agencies are available to send nominees.
- DNRC is taking the lead on Structure/Property Wildfire Risk Assessments training development for 2025. Home Assessment Training will take place in January 2025
- Expanding WPSAPS training for all zones and all interagency partners. WPSAPS is a spatial prevention planning, implementation, and reporting tool that is gaining traction across agencies across the country. Two forests and all tribes in MT are piloting WPSAPS currently (BIA mandated)
 - Contact christopher.johnson5@usda.gov or anna.m.henderson@usda.gov re: WPSAPS
- Given the expanded interagency staffing in Prevention, NRCG FPET will
 - Establish collaboration with new Prevention, Education, and Mitigation Specialists throughout the Region (USFS, BLM, and DNRC)
- FPEC is constructing a "Large Event E-Toolkit" that Zones can use to coordinate Prevention, Education, and Wildfire Risk Mitigation with large event coordinators of music festivals, Rainbow Gatherings, Crow Fair, etc. It will be stored on the FPEC FireNet Team site.

Status of Taskings:

- FPET Committee has no taskings from BRCG BOD at this time

Questions or Concerns to be discussed with the Board:

- High rates of UTF for FINV. FPEC membership seeking to build capacity in the region. IDL is assisting in providing training and a number of qualified Fire Wardens in Idaho that can potentially provide support to the region as we build capacity through recruitment and training. Any suggestions from the Board are welcome; FPEC can address Board suggestions in their Spring 2025 meeting.



Date: January 19, 2024

To: Chuck Russell, Chair Coordinating Group Advisory Council (CGAC)

From: National Coordination Center Managers (NCCM)

Topic: Preparedness Level Decision Automation

Currently most geographic areas have independently developed some level of automation to inform preparedness level decisions. These decision documents are currently in the form of spreadsheets and “plinko” charts. The recommendation is to develop a program that automates the collection of data used to inform preparedness level decisions by geographic areas. Data quality continues to be a challenge. CGAC and NCCM believe that some of the work that PSOG has presented would address some of these issues.

It is recommended that a national preparedness level decision support program be developed with the flexibility to be used by all levels of the coordination system.

Ray Crowe NCCM Chair

National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group

3833 South Development Avenue; Boise, ID 83705

NMAC Correspondence L2023-09

December 21, 2023

To: Coordinating Group Advisory Council

From: National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group

Subject: Tasking: Establishing Standard Criteria for Geographic Area Preparedness Levels

The Coordinating Group Advisory Council (CGAC) response to NMAC L2023-01: Tasking – Standardization of Geographic Area Procedures indicated that the current criteria used by Geographic Areas for determining Preparedness Levels (PL) were predominantly based on measures of activity, resource availability, and fire danger ratings/forecasts. The response also indicated an opportunity for further standardization through inclusion of criteria addressing natural disasters and prescribed fire resource commitment. The response also indicated potential to automate the process used to establish PL.

NMAC tasks CGAC to work with the National Coordination Center Managers (NCCM) and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's National Coordination System Committee (NCSC) and other subject matter experts to review its response from tasking L2023-01 and:

- Propose standard criteria for Geographic Area Preparedness Levels (PL) that could be adopted as a national standard.
- Propose methods to automate the process used to establish PL where applicable and appropriate and identify needs and/or barriers to implementation of an automated process.

CGAC is asked to provide recommendations which may be adopted by all geographic areas.

CGAC may form a task team to complete this work and is encouraged to include subject matter experts and interested parties from groups or agencies to ensure the recommendation is provided to NMAC to be considered for potential inclusion in the 2024 *National Mobilization Guide*.

Please provide a written response to the NMAC no later than February 1, 2024.

Jeff Arnberger
Chair, National Multi- Agency Coordinating Group

CC:
Jesse Bender, Incident Workforce Development Group Coordinator
Shane McDonald, Chair, National Wildfire Coordinating Group
Katie Wood, National Wildfire Coordinating Group Program Manager



National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group

3833 South Development Avenue; Boise, ID 83705

NMAC Correspondence L2024-13

December 16, 2024

To: Ed Christopher, Chair, Fire Management Board (FMB)
From: National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group
Subject: Request for Support from the Predictive Services Oversight Group

NMAC requests support from the Fire Management Board (FMB) for coordination with the Predictive Services Oversight Group (PSOG) in the development of standard criteria, business rules, and a methodology for Preparedness Level (PL) processes. Any automation program should include but not supersede a manual validation process. Establishment of criteria and processes will guide Geographic Areas (GA) who choose early adoptions of PL automation as a support tool.

Background: In 2023, NMAC tasked the Coordinating Group Advisory Council (CGAC) to establish standard criteria for GA PL determination, including methods to automate the process where applicable and to identify needs and/or barriers to implementation of an automated process. In response, CGAC provided criteria and recommended development of “a program that automates the collection of data used to inform preparedness level decisions by geographic areas... with the flexibility to be used by all levels of the coordination system.” NMAC supports this request. Please see the attached NMAC tasking and National Coordination Center Managers request to CGAC for additional information.

Please contact Brian Achziger, bachziger@blm.gov, with questions.

/s/ Dave Haston, Chair
National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group

Attachments: NMAC Correspondence L2023-09, Tasking: Establishing Standard Criteria for
Geographic Area Preparedness Levels
NCCM Letter, Preparedness Level Decision Automation

