



Northern Rockies Coordinating Group

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

Monthly Conference Call – Meeting NOTES

Tuesday, February 18, 2025

Participants

Coordinating Group Members:

	BIA – Great Plains	Heath Estey	x	Idaho Department of Lands	Josh Harvey
x	BIA – Rocky Mountain	Bryce Rogers	x	North Dakota Forest Service	Ryan Melin
x	BIA – Northwest Region	Darron Williams	x	Montana DNRC	Matt Hall
x	BLM – Montana/Dakotas	Aaron Thompson		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: Chris Pileski (MT-DNRC), Wendy Warren (BLM), Kate Holsapple (NRCC), Jeni Jeresek (USFS), Beau Richardson (USFS), Charlie Gorman, Adriane Beck (Montana Co. Fire Wardens)

Standing Reports

- **NWCG/NMAC Update** (Aitor Bidaburu) – unavailable to attend, nothing new to share.
- **CGAC Report Out** (Dennis Strange/Corey Buhl)
 - The notes from the January in-person CGAC meeting have not been released, and no firm decisions have been made regarding team rotation and sizes. A special working group recommended that geographic areas and coordinating groups manage their own team sizes, shifting the workload management responsibility to NRCG. NMAC expects NRCG to ensure teams are available and properly utilized, as the national rotation has reverted to a running list without workload considerations.
 - CGAC is working on rewriting its charter, with Brian Achziger leading the task alongside Corey Buhl and Dennis Strange.
 - Regarding shoulder season rotation, there is ongoing uncertainty as NRCG awaits NMAC guidance. **ACTION ITEM:** A subgroup has been assigned to develop an SOP to clarify expectations and to create an accessible dashboard for tracking team availability. Subgroup will include Dennis Strange, Patrick Lonergan, Bryce Rogers, Beau Richardson and Karly DeMars (facilitation)
 - NMAC is reviewing and updating the PL4/5 request form to improve situational awareness. There is no national consensus on IMT positions, highlighting the need for NRCG to ensure oversight of health and well-being. The NR Operations position remains an anomaly, with GAs heavily relying on NMAC for IMT request decisions. NMAC is also clarifying the appropriate use of CIMTs for fire suppression repair in the national mobilization guide. Lastly, there are no updates on ICAP.
- **NRCC Operations** (Corey Buhl) – no update
- **NRCC Update** (Kate Holsapple)
 - Kate Holsapple provided the NRCC update, noting that the Delegation of Authority has been submitted, with a final sentence needing review by the group—Karly will send it on Bryce's behalf. Activity levels remain minimal across the GACC. IMT recruitment is ongoing, with IC selections in progress and upcoming meetings with ICs on team selections.
 - Functional areas have completed 2024 statistics, which will be posted soon; efforts are needed to spread awareness of the Communications Advanced Team interest, which has received six responses.

- Corey is working on MAC plan edits, and key dates include the April 1 deadline for NR Mobilization Standards change requests and the NR Dispatch Workshop scheduled for the week of April 28. There is a question of whether NRCG needs to attend the workshop. They could if someone is available to attend.
- **NRCG Committee Updates:**
 - Training Committee (Dennis Strange) – ongoing focus is spring training, some clean up things from last face to face meeting.
 - Business Committee (Aaron Thompson) – IBC remains active, meets monthly. Preparing for spring meeting, which will be March 18-19 in Missoula. Busy updating spring training and business documents

Old Business

- **DISCUSSION / UPDATE | Incident Management Team recruitment and staffing support** (Matt Hall)
 - Compiled input from everyone – working on job description. Matt will be moving forward with developing the position.
- **UPDATE | CIMT Roster Configuration Proposal – NRCG Feedback** (Bryce Rogers) – CIMT Roster configuration; went along with what ICs communicated to NMAC. Nothing additional to report.
- **UPDATE | Dispatch Organization Support Memo** (Craig Glazier, Bryce Rogers)
 - Bryce has signed the support memo – #2025_002. During the meeting, there was some discussion about not being consistent across NR dispatch world and concern over differing zone views on the GS-levels for critical dispatch positions
 - NRCG reiterated that all dispatch reorganization proposals need to be vetted through the NR Dispatch Committee. **ACTION ITEM:** Craig will encourage the group to get together soon.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Tate will make sure the East Zone Board gets the updated memo and will encourage them to consider the established organization with their planning efforts. Tate will also work reach out to the Dispatch Committee to increase communications with the East Zone.
- **REVIEW | NRCG Operating Plan Updates** (Karly DeMars)
 - Karly will accept changes and will send the updated draft to NRCG for review/approval at the March monthly meeting.

New Business

- **DISCUSSION | NRCG Financial Plan Discussion** (Jeni Jeresek)
 - Jeni gave a brief overview of the methodology and updates to the 2025 draft financial plan including an overview of agency fair share percentages; \$5M is the total contribution costs for 2025 (2024 contributed costs was \$4.6M); USFS added employee costs including adding Jeni (0.25 FTE) and Lindsey Gilman (0.25 FTE) and Andrea Colson.
 - NRCG requested another month to review the proposed plan and will discuss further at the March 2025 monthly meeting.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** For fall meeting, in-depth review and discussion of financial plan and line items.
- **UPDATE | Eastern Montana Zone Dispatch Improvement Update** (Wendy Warren – BLM Eastern Montana/Dakotas District Manager, Chris Pileski – MT-DNRC Eastern Land Office Area Manager) –
 - Chris Pileski provided background on the East Zone Dispatch Working Group, highlighting strong participation and representation in discussions. Key considerations included physical space limitations, IT infrastructure, and communication challenges. The consensus was to maintain the current three Tier 3 dispatch centers in the near term, with some BIA dispatch centers transitioning to Lewistown.
 - Discussions emphasized the need to vet the proposed staffing model and organizational structure through the Dispatch Steering Committee, noting a growing divide between western and eastern zones. **ACTION ITEM:** The East Zone has been tasked with presenting its recommendations to the NR Dispatch Committee, chaired by Claire Smith.
 - IT and radio infrastructure remain critical concerns, with Billings and Miles City operating on the USFS network while Lewistown uses BLM radio system. Progress is being made on PIV cards and background investigations to allow non-BLM employees access to the BLM network.

- Strategic planning efforts must address short-, mid-, and long-term needs, with a focus on infrastructure coordination with BLM. NRCG would like to East Zone to develop strategic plan for 15-years out regarding infrastructure and facility requirements. Workload remains the primary driver, with space constraints posing both short-term challenges and long-term limitations. Completing the TO is seen as a crucial step toward future success.
- The handout provided by Chris and Wendy outlines the East Zone's 5-year plan.
- **DISCUSSION | NR IMT / NRCG Spring Meeting- April 7-9, 2025**
 - The NR IMT / NRCG Spring Meeting is scheduled for April 7-9, 2025, with discussions focusing on travel restrictions, meeting logistics, and leadership intent. Various agencies face travel limitations—BIA requires all travel to be vetted, FWS has restrictions, while BLM and NPS have verbal approvals for mission-critical travel. **There is interest in moving the meeting to Billings, with a consensus to hold it in person.**
 - Key discussion points included defining the purpose of the meeting, ensuring leaders' intent is clear, and refining the agenda, which will include an IMT meeting, MAC exercise, and round-robin updates. Karly will send an email to develop the agenda (completed 2/21), and Patrick confirmed funding is available for a meeting venue.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Further clarification is needed on decision authority—whether the IC Committee or NRCG determines the necessity of IMT meetings. NRCG has been tasked with providing guidance to ICs, ensuring the correct planning entity is engaged, and outlining expectations for 2026 and beyond.
- **DISCUSSION | IMT Award Program Proposal** (IC Committee) – (Patrick Lonergan)
 - No update

Next Meeting: March 18, 2025