Northern Rockies Coordinating Group

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

Monthly Conference Call – Meeting Notes
Tuesday, September 15, 2026 – 10:00 AM MDT

Participants

Coordinating Group Members:

X	DOI – U.S. Wildland Fire Service	Aaron Thompson	X	Montana County Fire Wardens	Adriane Beck
X	USFS – Region 1	Craig Glazier		Montana DES	Brett Lloyd
X	Idaho Department of Lands	Josh Harvey		Montana Sheriff's & Peace Officers	Steve Holton
X	North Dakota Forest Service	Ryan Melin	X	Montana Fire Chiefs Association	Rich Cowger
	Montana DNRC	Matt Hall	X	Facilitator	Karly DeMars

Other participants: Kate Holsapple (NRCC), Cory Calnan (Montana DNRC), Dave Williams (USFS), Beau Richardson (USFS), Morganne Lehr (Backup Facilitator)

Welcome / Opening Remarks | Ryan Melin, Chair

Standing Reports

- **NWCG/NMAC Update** (Aitor Bidaburu) – No update.
- **NR Operations / Associate NMAC Representation** - Dave Williams reported on the Davis Coulee Fire, approximately 15,000 acres and wind-driven, with support from the Lewis and Clark IHC. Overall activity remains relatively quiet, with some Forest Service units considering prescribed fire this week.
- **NRCC Update** - Kate Holsapple reported that NRCC is looking to transition to five-day staffing.
- **NRCG Committee Updates**
    - Training Committee Updates – no update.
    - Business Committee (Aaron Thompson) – nothing to report.

Unfinished Business

- **UPDATE |** iCAP Feedback for Northern Rockies | Beau Richardson / Kate Holsapple -- Northern Rockies representatives participated in application testing and provided limited feedback. Overall, iCAP appears capable of supporting IMT recruitment and roster development. Geographic areas can establish recruitment emphasis periods, allowing the Northern Rockies to retain its traditional December–January recruitment timeframe for IMT members.

New Business

- **UPDATE / DECISION** | NRCG – Incident Commander and IMT Recruitment Timeline | Beau Richardson / Kate Holsapple
    - NRCG reviewed recruitment timelines and how to incorporate applicants from the additional Type 3 IC recruitment conducted earlier this summer. Historically, the Northern Rockies has recruited across all teams and positions on an annual basis in October for new ICs and December/January for team members. The updated iCAP platform will remain open for general applications, but NRCG will need to communicate that recruitment and approval occurs during a specific time period. iCAP will not be used for Incident Commander applications.
        - **DECISION** The updated iCAP platform will remain open for general applications, but NRCG will communicate that recruitment and approval occurs during a specific time period. iCAP will not be used for Incident Commander applications. (IC recruitment will take place in

October, approval in November; Member recruitment will take place in December/January, approval in February).
    - New Incident Commander recruitment is planned for October 5–30, 2026 (existing approved IC primary/deputies and trainees are still valid and do not need to reapply). Information from the June Type 3 recruitment will be used to recruit for an additional Type 3 team, including selection of a new primary Type 3 IC and additional deputy, alternate, and trainee depth at the Complex and Type 3 levels. IC applicant approval will take place during Fall NRCG meeting in November.
        - In the future, the Operations Committee may be used to conduct initial IC application review and bring recommendations forward.
    - New Team member recruitment is anticipated from early/mid-December through the end of January. Recruitment messaging should clearly communicate that these are new/additional positions intended to increase roster depth.
    - **DECISION:** Northern Rockies applicants will be selected for one team/one position, although iCAP may technically allow applications to multiple teams and positions.

- **DISCUSSION / ACTION PLAN |** NRCG Zone Validity Review and Action Plan
    - NRCG will evaluate the 2026 zone structure to determine what is working, what is not, how zones are being used, and whether current functions remain appropriate. Discussion noted potential disconnects among dispatch boundaries, intelligence, training, and Zone MAC functions. The review will include input from coordination centers regarding the value and function of zones and consider incorporating zones into a spring GMAC exercise.
    - **ACTION ITEM:** Cory Calnan, Ryan Melin, and Karly DeMars will begin the review process; an initial meeting will be scheduled this week. Report outs will occur at the fall meeting.

- **DISCUSSION / ACTION PLAN |** NRCG Committee Charter Review – Action Plan
    - NRCG discussed committee membership, representation, and function considering the U.S. Wildland Fire Service transition. Current representation may not be equitable or aligned with the committees and functions agency's support. The proposed review will consider appropriate WFS representation and whether committee membership should better reflect functional expertise.
    - **ACTION ITEM:** Establish a small task group to review committee membership and functions. Identified participants include Dave Williams, Craig Howells, Scott Schuster, Cory Calnan, Jeremiah Miller and Karly DeMars (notes/facilitation). Hunter Noor will potentially represent NDFS and Rich Cowger or Adriane Beck are available for local government representation.

- **DECISION |** NRCG Committee Membership Direction
    - In response to the Incident Business Committee request, NRCG supported moving toward a lead WFS voting member rather than retaining multiple legacy DOI voting members. A lead Fire Business representative is anticipated this fall.

- **DISCUSSION |** IMT Evaluation Review – 2026 IMT Evals (Firenet Team)
    - NRCG discussed feedback regarding Agency Administrator (AA) engagement with IMTs. Concerns included overly formal or operationally involved AA direction that can slow incident decision-making, while members also noted positive experiences with AAs and recognized that concerns may originate from other supporting personnel, including fire staff and dispatch.
    - The group also noted challenges associated with AA transitions during assignments; one example involved eight AA transitions during a two-week assignment.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 20, 2026