

## Wednesday, February 21 – Team Selections

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This is a public meeting for the purpose of conducting government business.

The intent of the NRCG is to try to allow as many people as possible to participate on the NR team they have been recruited to or working with, except where there needs to be some movement in positions to help support teams that may be short of critical positions.

Due to a reduction in the number of teams in the NR, there may be additional shifting of personnel to fill out the remaining teams. The Incident Commanders will still be selecting their respective teams.

After the IC's have selected their teams, the board will review the overall selections with the primary focus of identifying any staffing gaps or issues that individual teams may have.

Finally, the ICs and the NRCG Board will work together to provide the best staffing possible, across all teams, to the benefit of the Northern Rockies.

### Agency Administrators Conference Call Update – Paul Santavy

Team selection process was reviewed and discussion on training and retention occurred. A written succession plan was also discussed and scheduled for later in the week. Inquiry into if there is already a model out there will also be made. Board needs to be able to articulate succession plan expectations. **(Granger)**

Discussion on the larger question of Team Succession occurred, (i.e. – not enough agency people coming into replace members, relying heavily on ADs, etc.) What do we do? **(Morris)**

Also noted was that term length for succession planning was key; another IC may have a different vision after 3 years. **(Rick Cowger)** In addition, depth planning was identified as key; especially in core command and general staff positions. **(Ralph Rau)**

Succession plan needs to key in on specific go / no go positions that are needed to stand up a team. **(Paul Santavy)**

Succession plan is a vision into the future to ensure that we will have the capabilities that will be needed to stand up teams in the near future. **(Mike Granger)**

Succession plan will provide structure; however, will not solve all issues. It will be a vehicle to keep moving forward. **(Ralph Rau)**

The Agency Administrators received a pre-season predictive service briefing and briefly discussed leaders intent without too many changes identified. A commitment to attend the April Team meeting was made. As a group, the Agency Administrators largely feel the board is going in the correct direction, changing the organization to build better relationships across the fire community. Liaisons and implementation of standard procedures were also acknowledged.

Group discussion on whether to invite a representative from the counties to participate on Agency Administrator Conferences calls occurred. Paul Santavy will relay the discussion to the Agency Administrators group.

Group discussion on Individual Red Card Committees occurred. Concerns around qualifications that are not approved, and never making it to the agency administrators were expressed. (**Mike Granger**) An example of a DIVS (T) that performed a job well and had a complete task book; however, the FMO at home unit still required a specific number of mobilizations before they would qualify the individual was put forth. A need for agencies to recognize recommendations of Final Task book approval was also expressed; along with discussion on a challenge for expediency to competency.

There is a need to observe caution in order to avoid reverting to the old someone knows someone” system; multiple assignments assists with this assessment. (**Greg Morris**) Where to draw the line requires a careful balance.

Additional group discussion on importance to demonstrate and express, as a board, to the Agency Administrators need for “Speed to Competency”. Importance of being candid on evaluations and assessing qualifications of each individual were addressed, along with a need to discuss with the ICs and have them to relay it down to the command and general staff.

Group acknowledged that there is an extremely delicate political environment and expressed a need to address all abilities for IC qualifications as representatives. Group agreed that there is a need for alignment and agreement in advance of approaching potential new ICs.

- Question of “how do we vet out of area IC (T)s?” arose. Identified particularly were those from other GACCs and the Washington office.
- It was agreed that there needs to be a process identified and implemented.

Recognition was given that the new IC approval process was just begun last fall. Group discussion continued. Question arose as to having individuals outside of Northern Rockies GACC as ICs of Northern Rockies teams. Need to identify if NRCG would accept this and, if so, to establish a vetting process as well. Group agreed it was a good discussion to bring up to the Agency Administrators. Are they ready to step into that position? What would be the expectations after training assignments? What is the role of the Agency Administrators to the board and are they accountable for other agencies individuals brought into the GACC? (**Paul Santavy**) How would it be dealt with it if a removal and/or an IC issue were to occur for an out of area IC? Should the expectation that out of area ICs would only be acceptable as Trainees in the NRG be put forth up front? (**Judy Heintzs**) Should it be a “case-by-case” scenario? (**Rick Cowger**) Is this endeavor supporting a “Band-Aid” type infrastructure – to keep teams going? (**Mike Granger**) The real question is the accountability chain in sustainability for the teams. (**Paul Santavy**) Once an individual within the GACC becomes qualified – would they be placed immediately with a current team or place them into a future succession plan? AD deputies cannot be the primary IC. If an IC can’t go, and the team has an AD deputy, the team has to stand down – that is the reality this year. Poncin, Hutton and one other are available for a short term bench, for depth this season. One of the tools in building that bench depth needs to be increasing applicant depth; looking outside the GACC. Should Job Share of the IC position be considered? (**Rick Cowger**) Group agreed there is a need to develop an IC vetting process; to include ICs outside the GACC. Ralph Rau volunteered to assist. Question: If there is a fully qualified IC outside the GACC; why do we not accept that as “fully vetted”? (**Paul Santavy**) Scope and “within your chain” in the Northern Rockies discussed; important to know how do the Agency Administrators feel about that. (**Ralph Rau**) Should there be a National Conversation about this? (**Ralph Rau**) **ACTION ITEM - Paul will discuss with the Agency Administrators group and those resulting**

conversations will provide direction for development of an IC vetting process; potentially including ICs outside the GACC. Ralph Rau, Mike Granger and Craig Goodell will then begin working on a plan.

## Team Liaisons Updates

(see attachment)

Jake Ganieany - with Connell's team; will be working together more in the future. Ken Schmid - with Thompson's team; need to relay and define relationship. Dan Warthin - with Team 5, Sampson's team. JT (Wensman) – with Team 7 (Almas). Concerns over perception that teams that are doing well in recruiting will have those efforts overshadowed by the board and that recruitment re-distributed across the GACC to other teams. This year all applied to an “open” format in the Team Applications process; currently assessing the good of the whole for this issue (**Ralph Rau**) Clear message articulated from the board to the ICs would address this issue. (**Mike Granger**) Mike Granger – with Turman's team. Working on first building block for succession plan for command and general staff; will be getting together and assessing.

## Team Staffing

### Federal Retirement System has changed

Folks will be limited under the FERS system with financial guidelines and social security caps. This will affect how many times they can mobilize. Generally speaking, after two mobilizations, agency folks tend to drop off the rosters due to work commitments. Group identified this as a compounding Issue

### General Review of Team Rosters - Judy Heintz

Rosters as a whole looking well; there are some out of area individuals and some ADs. There were multiple DIVS (T)s left over post selection. Approximately 569 applicants this year. Over 120 applicants were for DIVS positions; another substantial amount were for operations positions. Group discussion on 420 class. Discussed need to include non-operations positions in the class (i.e. finance trainee). These types of positions will be key to keep teams viable. Question: What is the overall knowledge spread across the teams? (**Ralph Rau**) Goicoechea's team is strong; Turman's team is strong; Fry's team weaker (Fry is very honest in this respect). There is not much on the depth bench for additional assistance. Also, not much left in the alternate pool. Each team has their own personal list of individuals they can call, when in need. Question: How much of those lists are comprised of individuals from other teams? (**Ralph Rau**) For the most part, these are not composed of primaries – but they do share individuals back in forth on these lists. Are we getting into a situation similar to last year? (**Ralph Rau**) Potentially, If after the third mobilization. It could be an issue. There are approximately 62 individuals from Out of GACC on this year's rosters. This is approximately the same number as in previous years. 24 of the Out of GACC individuals are ADs. There are approximately 103 total ADs. There are some Trainees coming up; however, they are not in Finance or in other key support positions. There has been no discussion of capability or potential of establishing another standing, Type 3 team. Ken Parks shared that his board are not excited about having so many of their number move up; however, they were willing to let them take shadow assignments. Group discussion about utilization as a shadow assignment for a section that might be in need of bolstering. Noted there may be an untapped resource for Type 3 teams – some of the FEMA teams could possibly work together and provided additional people coming into the system. (**Craig Goodell**) The Wildland Fire Management Team is robust.

## Individual Review of Team Rosters – Judy Heintz

Group discussed need to know if 520 candidates are on rosters; agreed can ask Melissa tomorrow. Discussed several aspects of new succession plan process reference current trainees on rosters. Discussed succession planning, vetting process and position task book issuance. Succession planning must be in agreement and accordance with Agency sign off. **ACTION ITEM - Will formalize a process and in the future; all individuals will then go through this process.** Discussed if a decision was made prior by NRCG as to Wildland Fire Management Team standard configuration? 24 or 26 individual roster was previously discussed - per final IMT Summit Team Plan – refs NMG Chapter 20 – chart link: [https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/teams/imt\\_configuration.pdf](https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/teams/imt_configuration.pdf)

## Finalize Team Selections with ICs

NRCG board addressed the group about concerns expressed earlier ([see above](#)). Emphasized was that the board had a few questions and was seeking clarification from the ICs. The board discussed the importance of ensuring that they are both looking at the needs of the individual teams and at supporting teams in our region as a whole. (**Mike Granger**)

- Mike Almas
  - Board posed question on SOF2 ADs on team
  - Inquired on agency individual from applicant pool, from CA (**Charles Frank**), that has not been picked up yet
    - Challenging to take someone in a command and general staff position with no firsthand knowledge of the individual from another GACC (**Mike Almas**)
  - NRCG wants to look at the whole of utilizing qualified agency resources, on a National level
    - Expectation of the board is that Teams will have individual assignment evaluations and an end of the season evaluation; operating at a high level of performance on every assignment. In order to achieve that, team cohesion is a key factor. Maintaining a roster under the circumstances from last season, with limited resources after multiple rolls, is challenging. ADs and relationships are a critical element to managing this team cohesion. More concerned with shortage of support positions of team infrastructure. (**Bob Fry**)
      - Team Succession is a concern for all – when a qualified, agency individual is on the applicant pool list, from any area, – it is a responsibility to Team Succession on a national level to explore those options
      - Historically, Northern Rockies has only gone through the in GACC agency applicant pool to be picked up (**Judy Heintz**)
      - Out of Area resources that participated on teams historical have freelanced with the team and have gone through evaluation as to whether a good resource for that team cohesion.
        - Question: Does that support the national effort to increase team succession planning?
        - With declining budgets and hiring limitations – efforts should be made to inquire about the individuals, no matter what area they are from. (**Ralph Rau**)
    - LSC2 agency individual (**Fleer**) is not the lead, but has limited availability at times. AD has been proven as a good, dependable resource (**Mike Almas**)
    - How do you feel about your team and what can NRCG do to help? (**Ken Schmid**)
      - Fairly deep team compared to past rosters; have in most cases a plan for most of

- the AD positions on the team. May take a few years to get there. **(Mike Almas)**
  - Request to look at roster and identify any potential or future ICs and submit to the board
    - have come up with a list of this from yesterday's IC meeting and will be submitting to the board **(Mike Almas)**
  - Emphasized that the process for out of area individuals includes getting agreement from the individuals home GACC before the roster is finalized **(Judy Heintz)**
  - Concern expressed on FSC2 – no trainee in the works; the two that are there are on their second year into retirement **(Mike Almas)**
- Rick Connell
  - Did pick up an agency BIA for SOF2. Individual also applied to be an IC – any insight from the board as to his status? **(Rick Connell)**
    - The board did not yet discuss those IC applications that came in after the deadline **(Mike Granger)**
  - There was one individual picked for multiple positions on three teams; have resolved this issue amongst the teams already **(Rick Connell)**
  - SOF2 is the weakest; have been making calls the last few weeks. Do have two or three folks potentially coming on as trainees this year **(Rick Connell)**
    - Suggestion to inquire about agency Out of GACC applicants **(Ralph Rau)**
- Mike Goicoechea
  - Concern expressed reference a lot of individuals retiring by the summer or fall. Not sure if there are enough coming in to replace them; also do not have a good gauge on those that are retiring if they are going to be heavily into being ADs. **(Mike Goicoechea)**
    - Are you finding that FERS retirees are affecting this? **(Greg Morris)**
      - Depends on the type of position – command and general staff yes; other support positions may get more mobilizations before hitting the cap **(Mike Goicoechea)**
    - Question: Operations trainees – are they close to being signed off? **(Mike Granger)**
      - One is close to retirement also – need to check status of PTB **(Mike Goicoechea)**
      - Couple are close to being signed off; also PSC2 (T)s **(Mike Goicoechea)**
      - Confident going in; however, holes appear to be developing in Safety **(Mike Goicoechea)**
    - Have heard agency issues regarding who and how we sign up ADs – will get with Ralph on this **(Mike Goicoechea)**
    - How many did you acquire from the Type 2 teams? **(Mike Granger)**
      - Will have to go back and research – one for sure; there are a few more. However, there is a reluctance that does exist; it would be beneficial if the individuals knew they had the upward support of the board **(Mike Goicoechea)**
- Doug Turman
  - Question on Deputy: If Doug could not go out, who would take the team? **(Mike Granger)**
    - In region – it would be Wally Bennett; Out of Region – not identified at this time
  - ADs in SOF and PSC but trainees in the works **(Doug Turman)**
  - One individual is interested in becoming Type 1 IC **(Doug Turman)**
  - Question – How do you feel about your succession planning? **(Ken Schmid)**
    - Logistics section needs some assistance **(Doug Turman)**
  - Question: How many are going from Type 2 to Type 1?
    - Not many; resistance exists **(Doug Turman)**

- Question: Why is individual doing OSC2 first before moving to ICT2? (Craig Goodell)
  - His PTB is done; only needs one mobilization - can open an ICT2 PTB now (**Doug Turman**)
- Joe Sampson
  - Made some progress on the SOF front
  - PIO has been steady
  - Do have a few folks on alternates list with good individuals that could help out other teams
  - New Liaison officer this year
  - Four Ops Chiefs – shared position; last year hardly had one
  - Finance is a potential hole; currently filled with individual who is available for two weeks only; but do have someone interested to train
    - One AD is looking for a sponsor
  - PSC both are ADs
  - RESL may change; Out of GACC agency individual interested
  - Fire Behavior is becoming a hole; do have a few trainees identified
  - Biggest change is to logistics section - do have some Out of GACC participants that are not allowed to roster; however, they do participate
  - Question: Operation plan says will field 26 individuals on the team – what is your short team roster? (**Mike Granger**)
    - Need to find that out – inconsistency with National Mob Guide and NR Mob Guide (**Joe Sampson**)
    - Can you provide us with a 26 individual member roster per IMT summit roster? (**Mike Granger**)
      - Yes (**Joe Sampson**)
    - PTRCs on alternate list – any chance they will step up to Unit leader? (**Kathy Pipkin**)
      - Yes – that is in the works (**Joe Sampson**)
      - Would like to look at utilizing PTRC individuals that require day jobs that cannot accept a full fire assignment mobilization; using these individuals during traditional day job hours (**Rick Connell**)
      - This discussion came up at CGAC – last year there were two remote situation and decision support centers. Tasks have been issued to study these. There is a desire to explore these non-traditional support options – please submit any ideas (**Mike Granger**)
  - Type 2 team differences discussed – often comes down to delegation differences for WFMT
    - One reason not completely endorsing the 26 individuals roster (**Joe Sampson**)
- Bob Fry
  - Received resources from team that was stood down
  - Command and general staff need to have ownership over those sections, for as much as possible
  - FSC hurdle; PSC section was thin
  - In a good state for first mobilization of the season; middle of the season when people return to work commitments may be more challenging
  - One individual potential future IC
  - Thank you for coming back to support the NRGAs as an IC. If it comes to the point where you cannot fill this team and need to stand down – please do not hesitate to advise that it has reached that point. Is there anything that the board can do to facilitate this team? (**Mike Granger**)
    - Will advise if anything arises; no additional needs at this time (**Bob Fry**)

- BIN ITEM – Mike Granger will talk about [ICAP Future](#)
- John Thompson
  - Caveat with this list is that it was only built out of ICAP
  - DIVS that is AD - highly dependable, retired, and last year always had a trainee with him. Highly skilled in heavy equipment usage; does have some current minor health issue. Good resource for training less experienced. Do have two DIVS (T) on the roster this year as well.
  - Planning wise – will be looking for a replacement for current, as current has a desire to move up to Type 1. Need for two PSC2 on every mobilization due to realities of incidents.
  - No Situation Unit Leader this year; do have an individual willing to go on mobilizations.
  - No Facilities Unit Leader; do have a trainee that is close and qualified individuals in other areas
  - Not weak in FSC; have several that did not apply in ICAP
  - Potential future IC interest from one individual; however, firefighter retirement may be a decision driver for them (*John Thompson*)

## Discussion on Team Selections

All Northern Rockies agency resources, except DIVS (T), have been placed with a team. ICs have list and board recommends bringing those out of area agency individuals in on a mobilization for vetting process. Board requests to be provided with candid evaluations for individuals. If there are individuals that ICs want further information on, Board members could possibly ask counterparts in other regions for further details. Succession Planning is everyone's responsibility – all need to contribute to make it a successful process and facilitate getting individuals interested in participation.

## NRCG and IC General Discussion Topics

The group discussed the fact that there are three to four current ICs that will not be here in the next couple of years and that there are currently not any trainees in the works. Recruitment and support positions continued to be identified as items of concern.

The NRCG message regarding medical being moved under safety was discussed. Concern was expressed that the issue was not consistent with current direction. It was identified that the IMS program has extreme costs associated with it, in addition to logistical strain required to maintain the program out of the resources we have. (*Ralph Rau*)

- Push to shift as much into contracting as possible
- Contracting capacity and plan are there
- It was a Line Officer decision that medical program should be in Safety
- Forest Service is also partnering with the National Park Service on change that is being piloted by another region this year (*Ralph Rau*)

The group also discussed differences in opinions on structure protection in relation to the Agency Administrators. Suggestions for improvement included:

- Upfront expectations that are prioritized when a team mobilizes to an incident
- Re-evaluation to see if everyone is on the same page as far expectation definitions

It was noted that there may be different emphasis; however, the Structure Protection guidelines are issued each year. (*Mike Granger*)

- Montana and Idaho Cooperative agreements spell that out as well
  - If there are items that are not identified in those – then clarification is needed. Requested examples from the ICs. (*Mike Granger*)
    - Discussion that it seems to be more of an interpretation of policy

- Want the Agency Administrators to take it back for focus on consistency

Last season saw quite a few revolving Agency Administrators; concerns expressed over consistency issue as fire evolves. Group discussion included the following:

- Strategic Risk verses Tactical Risk due to tactical adjustments related to risk aversion
- Suggestion made that a way to address risk aversion is with a strong trust relationship
- Different perception of what risk is referenced in “risk aversion” terminology
  - Concern expressed over process consistency
  - Question posed if this is the new normal to accept within the fire community or is this an educational component to address with Agency Administrators.

It was noted that internal risk discussions exist at high levels within agencies.

- A lot of work is going into bringing up the skill set of the Agency Administrators
- There is value in spending time around units, participating and developing that trust
- It was noted that the RMAC group would like to come and talk to the board. It would be good to arrange to have the ICs there to develop that feedback on the expectations.
- One of the things that the Forest Service needs to address is provincialism between forests.
  - There is a need to get all to think about the GACC as a whole. (**Ralph Rau**)

The R6 differed risk paper was also discussed. It was agreed that the ICs do not feel it represents the Northern Rockies region.

- Request placed for specific points from the letter to support this statement (**Ralph Rau**)
  - Suggested tasking to the IC Committee with a timeline prior to the Team Meeting for an Aviation white paper reference Agency Administrator involvement in Tactics
    - Almas is the representative to the Aviation Committee – perhaps that is where it should reside?
    - May not be an issue for other agencies; but may be useful for all to understand

The issue of building Incident Management Teams and not Incident Management Organizations was discussed. It was noted that the application process created workload and uncertainty. In addition, ICAP allowed for duplicate selection of same individuals across multiple teams. The ICs would like to provide input into recruiting and the application process. It was noted that the Team Plan came from IMT Summit and it is approved and in place. (**Mike Granger**) For clarification, the Board required that everyone apply this year but in future years team members will only have to apply every three years, per the Team Plan (Judy Heintz read the “Tenure” section from team plan that was approved.)

At CGAC they talked about ICAP and the need for it to go in a different direction. (**Mike Granger**) A committee was put together to provide nationwide support (instead of support from just one GACC) and is gathering input for improvement of the system. The proposal is that it goes back through NWCG, which means it will need to go through WFIT; and this process will take quite some time. For next year, Northern Rockies will go back to the prior way of applying and opening the applicant pool procedures in ICAP. Judy Heintz coordinates this process.

The group discussed the fact that the Agency Administrators would like a written succession plan. The Board will be working on this and requesting input for this project. The Board has requested elements from the Agency Administrators group that they would like to see in this plan. The

General discussion reference the CGAC clarification request for 209 accomplishment reporting also took place.



Team meetings and awards were also the subject of discussion. Kathy Pipkin will brief Craig Goodell on the process and associated forms. He will work with the ICs. The timeframe for awards is usually two weeks.

Team Meetings – at one point they were held as individual teams. How effective are the group meetings? Where is the greater value? (**Mike Granger**) Individual team meetings may be hard to justify the funds. Sessions at the group meetings for the most recent meetings have been getting progressively better. (**Joe Sampson**) Would like to see more “Team Time” for the teams. (**Doug Turman**)

## Thursday, February 22

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### Predictive Services Briefing – Mike Richmond

(See attachment for Predictive Service Briefing)

Will be issuing a revision to include the recent Northeast area snowfall event. Question: Central MT normally gets Chinooks; however, have not received any... for RX purposes, do you see this continuing? (**Mike Granger**) Models do see a change at end of next week – snow cover should start coming off the latter part of March. (**Mike Richmond**) Question: Flooding potential? Should be fairly slow and steady snow melt (**Mike Richmond**) Season estimate at this point in time - Higher than normal potential west of the divide due to ENSO-neutral and La Nina conditions that exist this year

### NRCC Spring Report – Kathy Pipkin

Continuing to support Southern Area with suppression and prescribed burn activities. Second Meteorologist, BLM position, will be filled - Coleen Haskell; on board April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Pam Jolly on Detail to Program Support Specialist position; will be outreaching to backfill behind her. Will be outreaching a detail for a fire analyst. Will be discussing the need for a PIO and how to best meet this need. Completing normal spring work; working on the Northern Rockies Mobilization Guide updates. Will be including the demobilization guidelines this year. Hoping to publish earlier this year. (**Kathy Pipkin**)

### National Report – Aitor Bidaburu

Discussion items fall into three main categories:

#### **NWCG**

- Had an all chairs meeting last week that was well attended
- Group has come far with capabilities in sharing information
  - Dedicated position for Web site
  - Dedicated publication specialists
  - Undergoing a big overhaul on naming conventions and 508 compliancy
  - There is a new mailing list capability; automatically receive all new publications and operational documents for particular committees
    - Encourages all to take advantage of this new feature

#### **NIFC External Affairs**

- Received a one page document that should be posted on the website soon that identifies four main goals:
  - Firefighter and public safety
  - Wildfire behavior contingency on weather and fuels

- Partnerships at the local level
- Unauthorized use of Unmanned Aircraft

#### NMAC

- Works with the leadership of the CGAC group on a lot of items
  - Buying Team report out – from Buying Team Task group
    - Model of one BUYT, for one or a couple of incidents, will not sustain for the future
  - Work that CGAC has done with the Type 3 teams
    - The October 2018 deadline for Qualifications will not be extended
    - In reference to having flexibility on boundaries
      - Local area versus GACC area, etc. – this has been referred to the Coordination Dispatch Committee
  - Recruitment going on for Area Command Teams – due March 16<sup>th</sup>
  - The NICC – there is going to be a major turnover in the leadership at NICC
    - Center Manger is retiring
    - Two deputies are moving into other jobs
  - FMB – Federal Fire Directors group
    - Predictive Services Review – has completed Phase 1, and into Phase 2. Task team is led by Dan O’Brian. It is an ongoing effort; first review since Predictive Services was established 15 years ago
    - Expecting FMB to issue a memo on this in the next few days

Question: Timeline for fully qualified for Type 3 – confirming that the request for additional time was denied? (**Mike Granger**) Yes. (**Aitor Bidaburu**) Question: Dispatch area for internal movement for not fully qualified Type 3 was requested to be at the GACC level – was that sent to the Coordination Dispatch Committee? (**Mike Granger**) Yes; the exception for local dispatch area is only in effect until October 2018. (**Aitor Bidaburu**) NR is opposed to this; would like to go on record as opposed. (**Mike Granger**) Recommend that you express that to your Committee members. (**Aitor Bidaburu**) Three weeks ago at a state meeting we were told different. (**JT Wensman**) In Idaho’s case, it is in two separate GACCs. That is why it is important to define “local”. Flexibility in boundaries is still a discussion point. (**Aitor Bidaburu**) Names of representatives can be found on the website. (**Kathy Pipkin**) Montana has quite a lot of overlapping protection with Local and Rural – do not have the authority to mandate the training for these. (**John Monzie**) There are several Forests that reside in multiple dispatch zones – this would directly affect them. (**Greg Morris**) Committee may need to provide recommendations on retracting the language. (**Aitor Bidaburu**)

## Northern Rockies Operations Spring Report – Craig Goodell

Over the next couple of months will be attending zone meetings. Talked with Chris Smith from IHC committee, things are going well; no new news. Appreciative of the fire hire. Will be holding IHC meeting in conjunction with the IMT meetings in the spring. Watching what is going on in R3; La Nina years are typically dry, as is this year. With the R1/R3 agreement, can anticipate moving a lot of resources to R3. Looking to develop a pool of individuals to assist in the operations position to support additional workload as the season progresses. Working on building a MAC simulation; desire to include the Agency Administrators. Met with the ICs yesterday during their meeting. They are very much interested in changing the IC call from 1700 to the mornings – BIN ITEM. Requesting input on the history of this call timing. Will be looking at staffing the Miles City Jump base again as warranted.

## Northern Rockies Contracting Update – Tim Murphy

BLM and FS have all of their solicitations open; they close the mid-March. DNRC is still working on T2 crew. BLM has a new fire Contracting Officer; they have dropped the tents and office trailer solicitations; will now do these on ERRAs. Others are open. FS has the 3<sup>rd</sup> go around on skidders. FS has the 2<sup>nd</sup> go around on medical and will be including Idaho this year. This would also include South Idaho for a 450 mile radius. First time doing masticators and chippers; dropped short and coach busses for the workload. FS is again doing the heavy equipment task force. Significant changes this year; core will remain the same but adding 2<sup>nd</sup> transport and 3 optional pieces of equipment. Contract is for in GACC only. DNRC has the 2 type 2 crews – issue that federal contracting officer cannot sign the agreement unless it is competed and DNRC has a set price. This is still in progress. Had pre-proposal meetings with the vendors – no issues; good questions.

Shared about letter from American Logging Association (represents 33 states) – reference how logging industry assesses agency work. The letter somewhat misrepresents the processes that occur in R01; agencies may hear about this. There are differences in standard operating procedures across regions. The letter went to the Secretary level. Currently are in discussions with other regions on standardization of procedures.

Some contracted Type 2 crews in Oregon are putting pressure on Boise to recognize them as type 1. This will be discussed next week at a national meeting. Motivation may be that they see more work potential.

Working with Montana Logging Association to complete video work on heavy equipment video that will illustrate each piece of heavy equipment and explain the heavy equipment task force. Hope to have it completed by fall to use in multiple trainings. March 27<sup>th</sup> at U of M – there is a one day heavy equipment course; still room for students. Would like good participation. In addition, there will be three heavy equipment boss classes this spring.

Question: On IMS contract – what are you thinking on contract supply? (**Ralph Rau**) Last year in Montana, did a one year pilot test for multiple type resources. There were 5 companies that submitted under that solicitation. The Operations Committee is looking at what is really needed, as far as resources, at the incident. Conducted an AAR – lots of good input; sticking with 450 mile radius and lumping qualifications. Same is now being offered in Idaho; seeing more interest. Encouraging some of the ADs in the medical program to take a look at the contracting side.

## IT Update – Patrick Murphy

There was a heavy FS presence at the AFD; however, the interagency capacity was weaker. Received only one viable commercial offer to support with fiber optic. This would put all under one network and share printers, storage devices and such (was not possible last year). Would allow us to set up our own shared network and allow connectivity for all agencies. \$440 a month for 60 months; including install – at the end of 5 years, would be \$225 per month and can upgrade that speed as we see fit (larger seasons); \$12000 installation cost. Proposal would be for a cost share? (**Mike Granger**) Yes; BLM and DNRC are already out there paying for lower speed costs – interagency partners would benefit from the higher speeds. It would provide better connectivity to everyone out there and meet expansion and training needs (mobile devices). Any opposition to this proposal from Cost Share agreement? (**Mike Granger**) Would like to know agency percentage cost? (**John Monzie**) Do not have that figure at this time. (**Patrick Murphy**). Would like comparison figures for each agencies. (**Ken Schmid**)

**ACTION ITEM** - Patrick will get the information and work with Ryan to provide the information to the board before the next conference call.

Did not have good turnout on ITSS training; completing one on one training. With reduction in Teams this year; will be sending out a note on supplemental capacity to support with equipment. Looking at detailers for unfilled positions

Will be looking at procuring replacement servers for aging equipment. Cost can vary – approximately \$6000-\$7000 each; cost can be shared.

## NRTC Update / Trainee Priorities – Melissa Wegner

### NRTC

S-520 – changes NAFRI has implemented for this year; new Due Date is April 13<sup>th</sup>, only have one person currently. Question: Is there any way we can show the S-520 candidates on the team rosters? (**Mike Granger**) Absolutely. (**Melissa Wegner**) S-420 occurring May 14-18<sup>th</sup> in Missoula. Full with Northern Rockies individuals. Phillips has heard back from some, but not all ICs. Selections will be made after feedback is received. Workshops we are focusing on this year:

- Logistics – full; high interest
- Mobile GIS course – was a success; few in house but mostly remote. Proof of Concept was successful
- S-445 – at the end of March; will have simulations
- Finance suite being offered
- Two zones are picking up dispatch courses

### Priority Trainees

Developed a google form for the priority trainee application form; will be distributing today and open till April 20<sup>th</sup>. Encouraged ICs to send it out to their trainees. Priority Trainee lists will assist with mobilization during season. Will distribute count of trainees that were mobilized last year (**Melissa Wegner**)

## Leader's Intent for 2018 Incident Management Team Members – Mike Granger

Larry Kotchman and Mike Granger will compile for 2018, with input from all organizations. Currently are requesting input for issues to be identified and included. Who are we directing the leaders intent too? (**Ken Schmid**) It is directed to all from the ground up to Agency Administrators ordering the teams. (**Mike Granger**) Directed to all those involved in the firefighting efforts in Northern Rockies. It is a combination from the Board and the Agency Administrators. Input suggested for inclusion:

- Speed to Competency
- What the “new normal” is with Agency Administrators
- Emphasis need for team members

**ACTION ITEM** – All will review and submit input to Mike Granger and Larry Kotchman; draft will then be compiled and distributed

## Delegation of Authority for Operations and NRCC Manager – Ken Schmid

Delegations are issued annually (see attachment); are needed for prioritization of resources and incidents. Changes for this year include the following: largest change was number four Operations

Officer section; also added new language at PL 4 and 5; and removed word suppression. Number 10 on Kathy's contains similar verbiage changes. Changes in the MAC plan match this new verbiage. **(Mike Granger)** Proposal to Approve – any opposition? Noted for Operations Officer, number three - Coordinate response from the agencies – list the agencies for consistency **(Ralph Rau)** Question: Where are we going to keep priorities in writing? **(Greg Morris)** They are kept on shared NRCC drive in Intel folders; eventually will be in Pinyon. **(Kathy Pipkin)**

## MAC Plan Changes / Updates – Kathy Pipkin

Group discussion on revision submission procedures. I have quite a few items. **(Greg Morris)** All to submit input to Kathy Pipkin. Group was encouraged to look at primary mission versus language used. The following items were identified to be looked at closer:

- Introduction
- “Ensure” verbiage as pertaining to resources
- Page 5 – remove first bullet
- Page 17 – Cache language and identify which caches involved
  - Caches and prioritization clarification language needed
    - May look into archives for previous cache operating plan and how all the caches would operate together; possibly from early 2000s **(Mike Granger, Kathy Pipkin and Pam Jolly)**
- Page 27 - AAR Safety related – Safety Teams
  - Can we do a better job when we send these teams out?
  - Is there a better way of doing business?
  - Instead of multiple teams, perhaps one team that represents all topics?
- Clarification on Safety officer position referenced – NRCG member or FS Safety position or is it someone else? It has been done different ways in the past; would like clarification for consistency. Clarity for the intention in the MAC plan requested. Workload wise, FS has a full time job in that position **(Ralph Rau)** NRCG is funding part of that position – would support that position being that lead **(Ken Schmid)** Group agreed with above on FS position and clarification language will be added to the MAC plan.

**ACTION ITEM** - Would like new draft by Team Meetings; looking to approve final plan in May **(Mike Granger)**

## Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisory Interim Guidance – Kathy Pipkin

New guidance has been issued from NICC predictive services. GACCs will now be able to issue advisories without this additional approval step; have asked for Red Book reference where it says “this shall be done”. Addressed last year’s concerns for meeting all expectations from predictive services functional area, and not only just from the meteorological component. This hole became apparent during the 2017 season. Funding for staffing will be a part of how these predictive services positions are organized and supervised. Only two GACCs have key component of Fire Analyst. **(Ken Schmid)** Solution proposed to bring a detailer? **(Ralph Rau)** Position is on the organization chart; however, have not chosen to fill. GS-11, BIA position **(Greg Morris)** A detailer for this year, yes **(Craig Goodell)** 120 day detail; have funding left over from prior to filling BIA position; sufficient to cover position and travel.

## Contract Vehicle Inspection Site – Funding Support – Ralph Rau

Cannot sustain inspecting equipment at the Lolo. There is a need to construct a facility and propose cost share. 45% of contracted equipment is based out of Missoula; also does AFD inspections on rental cars

and busses. Was previously located in urban area at 14<sup>th</sup> & Catlin; many complaints. Temporarily has been moved to Fort Missoula; however, this is **only** a temporary solution. Have looked for alternate sites and explored lease options; however, did not work out. Have a piece of land west of Fire Cache Lane set aside that FS is paying about \$5000-\$6000 analysis on what it would cost to make the area functional in this capacity. FS engineers established and estimate that was \$250,000 to make the area functional.

**Proposal to cost share this need.** Supports multiple zones and ultimately, the entire GACC. Open to other suggestions on location; need an area the approximate size of a football field. Also needs a hard service and to meet other requirements. Another option would be to contract this location somewhere in Missoula. **(Tim Murphy)** Will need time to take back to Agencies for discussion. **(Mike Granger)** **Will need cost broken down by agency share.** Recommendation to have each agency look to see if other options are available. Question: Is this truly a NRCG issue? Each of us have our own areas that do this; albeit that the percentages may be different. Need some time to think about it before making a decision. **(Ken Schmid)** If it is decided it is not an NRCG issue; it will go back the Southwest Zone as an issue. **Board will take some time to consider this issue.**

## Proposal for Contract Support Position – Tim Murphy

Proposal to add a federal purchasing agent (GS 8/9) to the FS contracting workforce (cost share position). Workload has increased substantially; staffing has remained the same. Last three years – items have been overlooked due to workload (Example: >200 rental car claims). There is an additional IMS contracting workload. Purchasing Agent would meet the following:

- administrative contracting officer responsibilities and could pick up a lot of the claims process
- assist in training also
- be an administrative CO on Libby unit (get verbiage from Tim)
- ITEAMS responsibilities
- managing the evaluation system (3 ½ feet of evaluations this year)
- support to purchase for the cache
  - would relieve some of the work on the BLM and FS COs

No Contracting positions are currently part of the cost share agreement. Proposal is for a warrant authority position. Question: What would the supervisory structure be? **(Mike Granger)** Open to that – could fit under any of the individual agency contracting officers. Could not consider under BLM – must reduce positions by 2020. **(Ken Schmid)** FWS also took a reduction. **(Mike Granger)** DNRC is on a fixed income; also took a reduction. **(John Monzie)** Forest Service is in the same situation. **(Ralph Rau)** **Support for the position not possible at this time. Need is acknowledged and recognized.** Are there other things we are doing that we could stop, prioritize and put the emphasis on critical items? **(Ralph Rau)** Similar to an unfunded needs list. **(Ken Schmid)** What are the things that have been identified as needed items and be prepared to meet if funds become available? **Pam Jolly will consolidate the items that have been identified as needs and distribute.**

## Proposal for GACC GIS Position – Patrick Murphy / Matt Gibson

There is a need that exists for geospatial and mobile informational support. Much of this is coming down from the teams and there is a need for consistency. Would tie in with national standards for the GACC. Agency Administrators are asking for this information continuously; have struggled to stand up enough trained individuals on GIS. There are difficulties in obtaining training on this specialization for multiple individuals. Lacking on training and setting up workshops; lacking in understanding on needed hardware and lack of field support for teams and other users. Transfer of information from Team to Team did not go smoothly. **Proposal is for a GS 7/9/11 due to potential regional implications. Pam Jolly will search the archives for Anne RysSikora's white paper proposal from a few years back. Proposal will be placed on the**

unfunded needs list.

## Out-of-Area IMT Letter – Jake Ganieany / Anthony Krause

Requesting that a cache representative be added to Out of Area team in briefs, out briefs and team evaluations. Last season experienced some issues with some of the teams; want to ensure all are aware of how we do things in the Northern Rockies. Provides an accountability avenue. Reviewed that Area Command team seemed to be doing quite a few of the in briefings? (**Greg Morris**) Would be an issue for expectations. **Inclusion in the Northern Rockies Mobilization Guide discussed.**

## AFD Master Operating Plan Review – Ryan Patrick

Looking for discussion and decisions on a number of costs (**see attachment**). Highlighted line 45-53 as included items for discussion. Operating Plan Summary tab – discussed consolidated fair share percentages. On BLM and FWS – in your consolidate fair share – should line 17 transfer down to line 20? There is a difference. **Ryan will make that correction and redistribute.** Contribution and Fair Share tab discussed. Combined Data tab: IT – Dana and Murphy; workload for support - supports this addition as full time instead of half time. **Additions to proposal will be include on a future prioritization list – no decisions will be issued today.** (**Mike Granger**) Mary's position has really only been ½ of her time to the training center – other ½ was to BIA work. Group discussion on position. Medical Contract – providing out of FS budget; Fire is paying 40% of the medical contract. Part of that is taking care of own agency folks; a lot of the rest is for training and taking care of the interagency ADs. Office space – in the past have only asked for a small amount for water and garbage service. Trailers – provide interagency support.

Note: No cost share agreement for the Missoula Cache like there is for the Billings Cache. Perhaps that should be looked at. (**Greg Morris**) What does the board agree that should be part of the fair share? (**Greg Morris**) Spreadsheet shows a more accurate balance of what the Forest Service is actually paying. (Ken Schmid) State of MT – mobilizes National Guard, has a county coop program... all agencies probably have items that they could probably add to that list that has not been reflected prior. Good to acknowledge this; however, all agencies could contribute to this list. We could line item everything or go with our normal business approach. Discussed pay difference in FTE between state and federal. (**John Monzie**) Operating Plan Summary – those items that were reflected in yellow are accounted for in this summary? (**Mike Granger**) Yes (**Ryan Patrick**) State of ID cannot have an employee in another state. Difficult to potentially get some of these increases when agency sees it as money going to support another agency. Concern is that at some point when we ask for this money, it will be flat out denied. Doing what can be done to get what can be supported currently. If positions were based in Idaho, may have more support. (**JT Wensman**) Request to include receptionist position at NRCC from FWS. (**Mike Granger**) **Ryan will make that change.**

Question on BIA – FS is working on an agreement similar to BIA employee position at NRCC; BIA has questions – good for this year; however, real questions as to whether they will continue to support that position, if the current individual leaves. If that is the case, NRCG will need to look at other agency options and other avenues to fill. Unable to operate with only one training individual in there. Perhaps a training specialist (vacated by Risa) with specialized skills in RX fire and Fire Analyst - possibility for other six months for that individual in the summer? (**Judy Heintz**) Discussion on should it be shown as a full FTE. **Ryan will make corrections and send out as a final for review and eventually signatures. ACTION ITEM - may be future discussion for March Conference call.**

## Structure Protection Guidelines for 2018 – Patrick Lonergan

Few changes (**see attachment**) this year. Bigger discussion after listening to ICs yesterday – are the agency administrators and line officers educated on this? (**Greg Morris**) Group discussion on this topic occurred. Expectations letter may address this. (**Ken Schmid**) Leader's Intent section may need different verbiage. (**Ralph Rau**) It is a tool in the whole GACC tool box; flexibility to use all the tools is essential. (**John Monzie**) Without specific examples from the teams, it is difficult to address. (**John Monzie**) An example on pumps and home protection was presented. (**Mike Granger**) Sounds like it may be some agency specific issues with agency specific line officers. (**Ralph Rau**) **Group agreed to include or reference this letter in the Leader's Intent letter.** (**Mike Granger**) Original intent was to call attention to differences in suppression and protection and highlight ability for agency specific procedures. **Pam Jolly will move the definitions section to the top of the letter before final signature.**

## National Informational Service and Event GeoDatabases – Patrick Lonergan

Geospatial group is working on standards for Northern Rockies. There is a lot going on nationally as well. Recommend more than a white paper; recommend issuing an actual policy. Group discussion deferred till after the presentation.

## Northern Rockies Data Standards White Paper – Remote Situation Unit Plans 2018 – Matt Gibson /Mark Slaten

### National Data Standards

Group tasked with trying to identify issues with last season's data accessibility issues (**see handout**). Push at the National level to store team data in one location. Few teams used it. Being pushed to use this season as a National Standard. Data needs to be updated very frequently. Uses application that will be demonstrated in a few minutes to gather data. Need to ensure all teams have this ability to utilize these applications and conform to this National Standard. **Plenty of people to support the teams; however, not distributed equitably. Can instruct and supply support.** **Group is proposing modification in the Northern Rockies for collecting data per the National Standard.** National Standard – example demonstrated: have to turn polygons either on or off. This allows no flexibility to look at individual ones. Group proposal adds flexibility to allow for quality control of certain features (and reduces capability for others to edit important fixed features). Handout has specifics. Demonstration of ESRI Collector (mobile friendly). System meets the NWCG standard, and exceeds it, with a method that is more familiar for our tools. Handout outlines both the process and the work flow. Working on balancing out who the leads will be. This also provides a redundancy, where if the National system goes down, there is a backup. **Within a week or so, will have the final out for the white paper (handout).** **Request to have board review by March Conference Call.** (**Mike Granger**) **Recommends policy be issued reference meeting this National Standard.** (**Patrick Lonergan**)

### Remote Situational Support

Was successful; for future could test true remote format (not located in Missoula). Opportunity to start rotating team Situation Unit Leads. Did meet with the NIROPS community and continuing to work with them to streamline data. This equals time saved for teams on the ground. Question: Can we try out true remote sit before the full MAC is engaged? (**Greg Morris**) Very doable - this was in the plan for last year; however, ran into issue of how to pay for it. Whose P-Number would be used? (**Mark Slaten**) Will look to Craig and Judy for coordination on this. (**Greg Morris**)



## UTV Guidance – Corey Buhl

Operations Committee has yet to meet. Will meet next week and come up with UTV Guidance.

## Private Resources Letter – John Monzie

Pam Jolly will check Year date on letter prior to final distribution. Thirty-four Engines went to support CA working for the insurance companies, which were also on our contracted resources lists. **(Judy Heintz)** Group consensus is that letter is acceptable in current format.

## Revisiting the Montana Statewide Cooperative Agreement – John Monzie

DNRC would like to start discussion on word changes to three or four provisions – not the whole agreement. Provisions in operations, specifically - 44,46,47,49. Group discussion on revising the agreement occurred. Is it possible to include these concerns in the annual operating plan instead? **(Ken Schmid)** Would agree that may be an option; will take that back. **(John Monzie)** Part of the issue is that if we open the agreement, it would have to go back through the legal department - which is at least a year timeframe. **(Greg Morris)** Would like to make that an agenda item for a future meeting. **(John Monzie)** FWS would also need to go through the same process, including legal. Would prefer the operating plan option. **(Mike Granger)** Specifics will determine if the issues can be handled with this option. This action is intended to be proactive in an evolving fire environment. Group is open to opening up the agreement; however, recommendation is to explore operating plan option. John Monzie will take this back to Mike DeGrosky. Request to review Operating Plan and provide draft language; if can be handled that way. John Monzie will take back to Mike DeGrosky and specifics will be sent out. Agenda Item for March Conference call.

## Bin Items

### Question on IC Call Time

Afternoon call is needed to assist with nightly prioritization. Looking at 0800 or 0830 for the earliest for call time revision. Conflict for Idaho due to time zone – anything before 0900 would be difficult. Concern for 1700 call timeframe is that it is right in the thick of burning time frame and ICs are not available for critical incident activities. AM calls would alleviate this and provide the best picture of what happened. Priorities are set on a 24 hour basis – this 24 hour definition would have to be altered. Concern on addressing critical resource needs for that day's timeframe. Would need to ensure 209s have accurate information in this respect. Would like to see a Pros and Cons list for prioritization of resources **(Greg Morris)** Can follow up on that. **(Craig Goodell)** Concern that it would set back resource prioritization **(Mike Granger)**.

View out there that it is the Operation person's job to bring that information to the MAC. **(Patrick Lonergan)** IC call was intended at higher PL levels to help the MAC set priorities. **(Greg Morris)** Not sure everyone is on the same page with "Who's call is it?" **(Patrick Lonergan)** Board can assist with getting all on the same page **(Mike Granger)**

Request if there is another business model, to have Craig Goodell bring it to the Board for review. **(Ralph Rau)** Discussed need to ensure it does not interfere with the Zone calls. Group is open to other business models; can try and see if it works. Great Basin (lower half of Idaho) – call is in the AM; Operation person brings that to the MAC **(JT Wensman)** **ACTION ITEM** - Request if there is another business model, have

Craig Goodell bring it to the Board for review – can try it out. Pam Jolly will update the Action Item list from this meeting.

#### **Review of IC Trainees That Applied After the Application Date**

Judy will send out summary of IC trainee late applicants. When is it appropriate to provide feedback to the individuals? (*Ralph Rau*) Initially or when application to team is made? Concern has been perception that if you get your IC signed off, that you will receive a team. At some point, would need to make application to the Board as potential IC. Need to be with our line officers, as a board, managing who should become an IC. Need to ensure sponsoring agency is supportive well in advance. Want Agency Administrators involved in this process with this new group of individuals. All need to be involved – ICs, Board and Agency Administrators; to address issues such as GS levels and if that is a factor for Agency Administrators. Group review of IC Trainee applicants. *Greg Morris* suggested the following be address in development of a process:

- Have the conversation with the line officer and identify “what support is there?”
- Does everyone understand what the obligation and long term commitment would be?

Should those items be incumbent upon the agency to do that? (*Ken Schmid*)

#### **Date for May meeting / MAC exercise**

- May 8-9<sup>th</sup> ; day and a half - first day exercise and then roll into business meeting. Report outs the next day. Pam Jolly will begin work on an agenda.
- Mike Granger will send Craig Goodell issues from previous after action review.

**ACTION ITEM** – Board involvement with Team meeting and Agency Administrators to be discussed on March conference call

**ACTION ITEM** – Discussed putting correspondence on website; Board will consider and address at a later time.