

Monday, October 29 – Executive Session

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

Welcome and Introductions

Larry Kotchman and Mike Granger – Welcome and Thanks for this critical time to go through these important issues.

Review NRCG BOD Task Assignment Memo

- Acknowledge it came out late; received in May. Fire Season began right afterwards.
- Well thought out; BOD appreciates the direction.
- Memo represents one of the first that the WFAA have issued to the BOD.
 - Conversation regarding how to have better agency administrator involvement during establishment of standardized processes.

Incident Management Team Succession Planning

IMT Succession Plan Template with Key Modernization Questions

- Tasking – IMT Succession Planning – discussed Turman’s draft IMT Succession plan.
 - Represents one view of what one should look like.
- Issue has not yet been taken up as a group by the board due to time.
 - Group discussion on the following points:
 - Issues not only filling teams, but also positions within the agency.
 - Looking at the amount of time it takes to obtain these higher level positions.
 - Need to expand the pool from which recruitment occurs.
 - There is an ever increasing amount of people (plan recommends two people per position). The amount of people has increased as we continue to ask them to do more over time. (Teams have increased in size historically.)
 - Need to start thinking about if current team composition model is sustainable.
 - Number of people that are available to participate on teams is dropping daily.
 - Discussed possibility of providing a framework for those coming in, as to how agencies can assist these individuals with success; agency administrators can have a presence and be involved.
 - BOD is looking to the WFAA for clear definition of what are the expectations of a succession plan, so that the BOD may then sit down with the IC committee.
 - Noted that all BOD members perform as collateral duties; time becomes an element.
 - Suggestion of a Draft Team exercise proposed.
 - Group discussion on worthiness of exercise; however, caution expressed not to re-write the 310-1 but rather apply it to a team.
 - WFAA Question: BOD is in a position to evaluate each team; how can the WFAA assist with getting this done?
 - **BOD needs to identify and Action Item and accomplish.**
 - Envision a short write up summary of each team’s gaps.
 - WFAAs emphasized that a simplified needs analysis is critical; must find some way to motivate this action.
 - Group discussion on the following points:
 - Same issues surfacing - lacking in finance, plans, etc. – are there other agencies and pools to recruit from?

- Important to note that historically in the NR – team commitments were based on two assignments per year. This is no longer the normal. Teams are continually asked to extend and mobilize to additional incidents.
- BOD noted that WFAA can really become involved associating names to those shortage positions.
 - WFAA Question: Has this name matching to critical needs positions for the teams occurred in the past?
 - BOD consensus - not in earnest.
 - BOD proposed identification of key gaps and WFAA assistance to match names with those critical needs positions.
- Group discussion on inherent link between succession planning and speed to competency.
- WFAA Question: Does the group want to look at both short term and long term approaches to achieve this?
 - Group Discussion involving identifying obvious barriers to obtaining positions, shortages, and potential names of qualified individuals.
- Discussed the need to look at both what a team does and does not need to arrive with.
 - Important to note that the the ask of teams has increased historically. (Run the community stuff; strike team of WFDSS, etc.)
- Tasking for the BOD - Critical needs assessments for each team; identify gaps; crosswalks, qualified individuals, and obvious barriers to obtaining qualifications.
- Important to note: Eastern Area is no longer allowing participation on other teams without all their needs being met first.
 - This will impact our teams directly this year.
 - A couple of years ago there was an interest for cooperation from this region that was not embraced by our region.

Strategies for Increasing Team Support Including Process for Agency Administrator Involvement

- WFAAs – idea of long term modernization approach, inclusive of strategic thinking, will also need to be looked at; recognized that there is a need for ownership.
 - Group discussion on the following points:
 - FEMA is offering some assistance for next spring; would like to encourage interaction with the BOD.
 - Remote concept discussed – some of the positions and some of the units may not have to be on site with the teams. .
 - Some of those long term fixes will require top down direction.
 - BOD noted that in reference to modernization; have implemented some of this in the Northern Rockies. Change is difficult and there is resistance that is encountered. BOD is fairly progressive about change.
 - Basic model is not going to work moving into the future.
 - Basic framework that needs to be changed is outside the scope of influence. Is anyone talking about wholesale changes to the basic framework? These are all collateral duties that have historically worked; however, not functioning in today's workload.
 - Discussed positions dedicated to IMTs.
 - Noted that this is where NIMO origins began.

- Group discussion on higher level involvement needed for long term modernization fixes.
- Noted that this same topic came up in Great Basin.
 - Paid team positions were discussed and who would champion idea.
- Area Command is also looking at not being able to staff viable teams in the near future.
 - Flexibility will be the key to the future.
- Evolving incident management was discussed at CGAC and currently a committee has been established to explore.
 - Issue is being discussed at a national level. Including breaking down those barriers to recruitment.
- Concern expressed on continuing to treat each position on a team as highly specialized and requiring a tremendous amount of experience.
 - May need to reassess.
 - Speaks more to speed to competency.
- WFAA's Question: Are there any modernization ideas or techniques that the WFAAs could assist with here in the Northern Rockies?
 - Position Pool concept discussed – make a team when needed.
 - Discussed NWCG qualifications being a true bottleneck to increasing recruitment pools from non-traditional areas.
 - Needs to be addressed both ways – two pronged approach; from top up and BOD down.
 - WFAAs – this is something that the WFAA group needs to add to their list of To Dos – modernization and strategy into the future.
 - 310-1 and pathways to qualification.
- WFAA Question: On Speed to Competency Memo – is it worthwhile putting together an issue paper, framing the problem - so that it can be presented at higher level agency meetings? In order to facilitate the WFAA being effective at going up through the chain for direction?
 - Group discussion on the following points:
 - Running the system on a collateral duties model when we have gone from a fire season to a fire year, is not sustainable.
- WFAA Question: Do we need an issue paper honestly addressing both pros and cons? (Example: Team cohesion as a tradeoff.)
 - Group discussion – Writing an issue paper is going to be a challenge; however, worthy of taking on.
 - Could really help draw some more intentional work from some other entities that could be beneficial.
 - There is a need to come up with some ideas as to what a model looks like to put into this issue paper.
 - Needs to be Interagency.
 - Need to welcome all in who want to come in – collateral duty folks still have a purpose; however, also include designated IMT positions. Important that they are integrated.
 - Needs to continue on with the conversation for 310-1 alternate pathways to competency to recognize these non-traditional recruitment pools.
 - Need to clarify if talking about fire only or inclusive of all hazard.
 - Would like to see alternatives presented instead of designing the perfect system.
 - Discussed differences in what is desired by agency.
 - Discussed the need for stronger type 3 teams?
 - Group discussion on who is the right group to work on this issue that it is

agreed needs to move forward.

- What is the right level?
 - Issue is national; targeting it to the right area to land would be critical.
 - WFAA Question: Looking at Speed to Competency memo – would it be appropriate to put something like that together?
- BOD emphasis placed on not underestimating the power of a letter from the WFAA to the other entities. Strength in unified WFAA power to tip this discussion into action.
- Need exists to frame up the issue and provide awareness at higher levels.
- Need exists to flush out the issues; identify the facts.
- WFAAs - Expressing some ideas as to what a model might look like would have value; perhaps doable by January.
- BOD discussed value in sending representative to CGAC with this.
- Group discussion on the idea of contracting IMTs and other different ideas.
 - There would be pros and cons to each idea. (Example: Who would administer the contract?)
- WFAAs - propose essential components for what a solution could look like without definition of exact – define critical success factors.
 - Group discussion on the following points:
 - How do we keep people engaged and supporting them to continue with the teams.
 - How are the agencies taking care of the ADs? (One in five team members is an AD.)
 - WFAA Question on time frames:
 - Team Succession plan should include a three year outlook.
 - Accomplishment of long term should look more towards next fall.

Incident Commander and Team Selection Process Including IMT Operation Guide and NRCG BOD Liaison Role

- Reviewed of history behind this item and associated comments.
- Noted that this should only be utilized for the T1 and T2 ICs.
- Important to emphasize the need for each agency to enforce their own qualification process prior to application to the board.
- Ready to move forward with; only in need of final editing.
- Mike DeGrosky – like the approach. Three potential changes:
 1. Individual should have both line officer and supervisor endorsement.
 2. Having individuals outside the GACC re-apply annually is unnecessary; suggest striking that language.
 3. IC's, alternates and deputy's language should be added.
- Ken Schmid – only concern is how this may impact Speed to Competency.
 - Mike Granger – Provides for due diligence and gives the BOA and Agency Administrators ability to increase awareness and involvement.
 - Ralph Rau - Part was to develop a consistent and measurable recruitment strategy.

Speed to Competency Memo

- Acknowledged came out a bit late; would like to have prior to the team meeting.
- Group discussed systemic problem – individuals hesitant to sign people off with fewer assignments.
 - Even with each element completed.
- Memo was well written; need to continue to encourage message.
- BOD would like to see the memo reissued each spring.
- Group acknowledged that there are valid incidents where individuals may have everything signed; however, have not gone outside the local area.
- Group discussion emphasized importance on meeting the criteria.
- WFAAs discussed the new section that was included on this subject in the Leader's Intent letter.
- WFAAs – acknowledged that leaders in the room need to actively work towards this goal.
- Group discussion on Red Card Committees challenges:
 - Incomplete documentation.
 - System as designed is not working very well because people do not know how to use it.
 - Discussion on loss of a performance based system.
 - Needs to be addressed at IMT Meeting.
- Group discussion on whether or not agencies were following up on their own internal processes.
 - Interagency Line officers were to be included in getting a copy of this letter.
 - Each agency has its own process. Letter advises of the expectations.
- Concern expressed over experience with individual not being certified due to mentor being from another agency.
 - Happened twice this last year.
- Noted that one piece could use help from the line with is when individuals have signed on for one position; however, would not be able to perform at a higher qualification.
 - Part of respect is being truthful; evaluators need to be honest and somebody needs to have that conversation.
- Group discussion on if a GACC effort is needed to re-tread individuals on how the Position Task Book system works.
 - More appropriate for a presentation at the IMT meeting.

Follow Up on Orientation Framework for Incident Commanders Outside the Geographic Area

Team Expectation Letter

- Are there other issues or key points that need to be captured or identified from the 2018 season?
 - Group Discussion – no other items need to be identified.

Leader's Intent for Incident Management Teams

- Added some new sections and language.
- Presentation at IMT meeting went and was well received.
- Want to have a letter that is pertinent to the times – for tomorrow, may look at:
 - Positive workplace inclusion
 - Risk assessment inclusion

Bin Items

Facilitating the IMT Meeting

- Recommendation that BOD will take a more hands on approach to IMT Meeting Facilitation this next year.
- Recommendation for BOD to take a steering committee approach.

Tuesday, October 30 – Executive Session

Bin Items Review

- WFAAs – Issue / Concept paper from yesterday
 - Paul Santavy and Jon Raby volunteered to write a draft.
 - Goal is to have it completed and ready to go by January.
 - First draft will be completed and to Diane Mann-Klager by the end of November.
- Tasking Assignments Memo – Incoming ICs from outside the Geographic Area
 - This already exists and is updated annually.

MAC activation and NR Strategic Intent for Allocation of Resources

- Strategic Intent went out on August 16th this year.
 - Is there anything that should be included for next year?
- DNRC was very satisfied with both the level and timing of engagement with the WFAA group. Overall timeline from this season went smoothly.
- BLM – took the lessons learned from 2017 and applied them in 2018 with overall good success.
- Noted that the BOD believe it to be critical that the WFAAs communicate down the chain when the MAC is activated.
- BOD Question: Were the WFAA satisfied with the process?
 - WFAA consensus – yes; also began weekly conference calls that were helpful with good participation from the Agency Administrators.
- USFS – believe all did a really good, intentional job of standing up the MAC. Also, believe communications overall went well. Appreciated the engagement of both the WFAA and the BOD overall.
- WFAA USFS – believe it made a difference with our agency; did have a lot of good lessons from 2017.
 - Challenge is to keep the good practices going. Important to keep in mind as moving forward; especially if increased activity becomes more routine.
- BOD noted that diligence in MAC Plan revisions have led to improved practices.
 - Plan will be updated annually.
- Thank you to the BOD and WFAA for all their efforts and initiative.

Communications Coverage for the Wildfire Season in the Northern Rockies

- At least two news releases were issued during the season.
- WFAA expressed desire that this topic be included in all of our discussions consistently.
- BOD noted that improvements have been made; however, still a work in progress.
 - Continues to be a struggle to maintain adequate coverage.
- WFAAs noted that when we write news releases, there is a need to keep in mind entirety of area that the Northern Rockies covers; including all states involved and not just the area experiencing incidents at that time.
- WFAA Question: Where exactly are the struggles?
 - Discussed timing of PIO function activation and questions of who the PIO works for between NRCG or NRCC.
 - BOD needs to discuss specifics of each of these further.
 - There is a need to work on execution.
 - WFAAs would like support from the BOD that the PIO is a function of the NRCG, instead of the NRCC or the MAC.
 - Need exists to increase the resource pool; too few people currently.
 - Discussed what is appropriate to go through a PIO and what can be handled by individuals that are not a fully qualified PIO.
 - Key is to establish what is appropriate to go through a fully qualified PIO and what can be handled in another way.
 - Discussed rotation - works well; would like to see it continue with a larger resource pool.
 - Communication plan is approximately 90% complete.
 - Discussed critical not miss the opportunity to communicate with the public; important to function as a team in public perception.
 - Group discussed attempting to have some regular messages drafted in advance and ready to pull out of a tool box.
 - This, combined with less agency specific editing, would increase timeliness of messaging.
 - Action Item for the BOD - regular messages drafted in advance and ready to pull out of a tool box
 - Action Item for BOD – clarification of who the PIO is working for – NRCG, NRCC, MAC
 - Craig Goodell supervising this function is a possibility
 - Rotation by Agency may be an idea to explore.
 - Discussion around if an agency is simply thin on that resource? NPS is currently in this situation.
 - USFS BOD – endorse the idea; however, have also struggled to find this resource as well.
 - A set coverage schedule for the rotation would assist with this. Can work remote for the majority of the time.
 - Group discussed how this could be a deliberate, target involvement where the WFAA could engage to provide this support.
 - BOD notated that it is important that individuals tapped have knowledge of fire policy.
 - Discussion on how this speaks back to what is appropriate for the PIO to answer and what regular items can be answered by the staff.
 - Action Item BOD – Request Letter of Support from IDL regarding PIO Assistance
- WFAA Question: Is there any additional messaging for the WFAA that should be included on the

regular messages that would be drafted in advance?

- Discussion on Interagency messaging and how it all works with resource allocation and smoke.
- Discussed need to ensure not duplicating public messaging of teams and forest.
 - Need to emphasize what the NRCG and MAC are doing and what is going on in the Northern Rockies.
 - Should be focused on resource allocation and multiagency coordination functions.
 - Messaging should come out of what truly are the roles of the board.

BIA/Tribal Resources Office of Workers Compensation program and Indian Health Services

- Briefing Paper discussed.
- Memo came about due to BIA/Tribal resources that were on a fire and there were questions on where they should be treated for care.
- Sensitivity issue
 - Not all individuals are covered under IHS.
 - Some individuals do have their own care as well; in addition, individuals can also forgo certain types of care – their choice.
- Action Item BOD - Good Topic for the Team Meeting; will be put on agenda for team meeting.
 - Medical and Finance emphasis will be placed at team meeting.

Northern Rockies Wildfire Agency Administrators Charter and Chair Rotation Schedule

- Added some language regarding specifics of chair rotation.
- Group discussion on question that remains on membership regarding Montana Association of Counties as a member.
 - Concerns were expressed that, if invited, a valued, local jurisdiction partners like this would that open the door to elected officials as well.
 - Historically, this has been a function of the line officers to maintain these daily relationships.
 - BOD clarification of proposal that MTCO serve in a line officer capacity for the three already represented on the BOD.
 - Suggestion was made to have them serve in an ex-officio (line officer) role; would increase successfulness of initiatives that are put forth.
 - WFAA Question: Would like to address if this should only be Montana or include Idaho counterpart as well?
 - Group discussion center around idea of a separate issue.
 - This one speaks to the current make up of NRCG.
 - The other speaks to the need to address future make up of NRCG.
 - USFS BOD – have had conversations with partners and cooperators and concerns from non-federal agencies have been expressed about a perceived Montana centric focus and having a say in decision making.
 - There needs to be some thoughtful work put in on how can strike a better balance.
 - Important for our partner relationships; speaks to cohesive strategy.

- Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association BOD – as the representative, it is a responsibility to bring this information to all those asking questions.
 - Would encourage those inquiring to call and increase communication with the existing liaison.
 - WFAAs noted that there is no tribal representation as well.
 - Group discussion over concern that with being all inclusive; more that add to the group, the more it increases the workload of the collateral duties.
 - Services are being provided to all; want any future discussion on group membership inclusion to be deliberate and ensure that it would be value added.
 - WFAA USFS – important to recognize that these are two separate issues.
 - With the charter, one of the purposes is to provide some administrative structure as to how group functions.
 - Need exists to take a step back and take a look at what the group is all about in order to make these decisions.
 - Reviewed the language in the draft, as it is written now - need representation from each of the member states and land management agencies.
 - Recognize that this leaves out tribes and others.
 - Is there some benefit to have the discussion of if we were starting from scratch, is that how the group membership makeup should be? This answer would then lead to the question of if a change is needed.
 - BOD emphasized that NRCG membership alterations should be done in a collaborative environment and conducted with an outside facilitation.
 - WFAA USFS – perhaps should take some time to review and assess the language in the charter for a later decision.
 - Montana State Fire Chiefs’ Association BOD – need exists to ensure conduit back to the ground. MTCO inclusion in a line officer, ex-officio role would provide for this conduit.
 - WFAA DNRC – Motion to adopt this WFAA charter as it is with the current state agency language; with the intent to review further inclusion at a later time.
 - Montana County Fire Wardens Association BOD – would like to emphasize that DNRC does not have exclusive fire jurisdiction in Montana; it is concurrent.
- Draft issues identified and discussed:
 - Line officer responsibilities language not consistent with those named in draft.
 - Draft starts off identifying jurisdictions and then switches to State Agency terminology.
 - First sentence under purpose – suggestion to change “regional” to “Geographical” and change for NPS language to reflect “Intermountain”.
 - WFAA – amendment suggestion:
 - Have a formal designated deputy or alternate chair.
 - Suggestion to add language as a line item in section five, first sentence; add a “C” sub-section to explain the vice-chair.
 - WFAA DNRC – Motion to adopt this WFAA charter as it is with the current state agency language and including the suggested amendment regarding the vice-chair language; with the intent to review further membership inclusion at a later time.
 - Motion carried and approved. Charter will be updated and distributed for signature.

WFLC Leader's Intent on a Positive Workplace Environment Letter

- May be an area of emphasis for next year's Leader's Intent Letter.
- WFAA Question: Is there any specific intent that Northern Rockies WFAA would want to take with this?
 - Action Item BOD- ensure compatibility and crosswalk with what has already been addressed in other documents.
 - WFAA USFS – some strengthening, alignment and reinforcement would be helpful.
 - IDL counterpart letter had a line reference “expected professionalism” that was worded well.
 - One of the elements that is new to the forest service is Bystander Training. Will be willing to share; if interested, please let Jane Darnell know.

Medical Units Discussion

- Topic results from what was seen on the line in 2018.
- Requests for additional medical support on the incidents have been increasing drastically.
- Group discussion that this is another issue that needs to be addressed on multiple levels - agency, incident and IMT. Would like to see Anna Stall address the IMTs at the Team Meeting.
 - Action Item BOD – Discussion Item for Team Meetings.
- Discussion around over emphasis on level of care provided to the fireline; may not be needed as can be provided by local cooperators.
- Group discussion on appropriate level of care that is needed; relates to multiple issues including expenditures.
- WFAAs can support by emphasizing this is an appropriate care issue, not a cost driven issue.
 - (Example: Rapid Extraction Module utilization by out of area teams.)
- Discussion also on this being an insufficient resources issue.
 - Need to discuss expectation of WFAAs on level of care for individuals; resources such as paramedics, are limited.
 - Desire to avoid getting into a resource care prioritization position between incidents.
- WFAA consensus that expectations are to get back to a “what is available on the ground” already approach.
- Group additionally discussed some larger issues going on with the medical unit, including current inability to give out OTC medication.
- Utilization of local resources occurs; however, then have those locals performing in an unusual capacity from their daily responsibilities.
- Trend towards contracting of these resources is a contributing factor in use.
- WFAA USFS - need exists to engage and focus thinking around this issue.
 - WFAAs might also benefit from a similar input from the field discussion, similar to the action item above.
 - Need exists to wisely utilize local resources.
- WFAA and BOD consensus – desire is to get those who need medical attention off the line quickly and safely.
- Discussed items point to desired principles.
- Group discussion centered around decisions to place crews in areas based on the fact that there are paramedics on scene.
- Group discussed second conversation is - what is that adequate level of staffing?
 - Subjectiveness of this leads to variations based on individual perspective.
- WFAA consensus that the seriousness of this issue deserves some engagement from the WFAAs.

- WFAA discussion around having crossed into the two aspects:
 - Risk management and mitigation
 - Agency specific direction per incident.
 - More discussion is needed, in addition to presentation mentioned above. Need presentation from the risk management side.
- Group identified the need to involve the states; as they dictate a lot of what can and cannot be done in relation to medical.
- Group discussed this issue as two separate needs; current and future.
- Acknowledged that this issue is not unique to the Northern Rockies. Is being faced by multiple Geographical Areas.
- WFAAs identified targets to aim for:
 - Identify interagency values that the WFAAs could agree on for Leader's Intent letter
 - Communicate agreed upon principles clearly
- BOD expressed desire to come together as a joint group WFAA/NRCG BOD to flesh out before go to the Team Meetings with a product.
 - Group Discussion and consensus to meet the last week of February in Missoula, MT.
- USFS is undergoing a national medical direction; no timeline as of yet. Has potential to change how USFS is supporting within the GACC.
 - A lot is yet to be seen and much to stay on top of with this transition.
- BOD encouraged all to stay principal and philosophy based.
- BOD expressed need to utilize caution; as acceptance by the field may be challenging.
 - Need exists to ensure an informed decision.
- BOD identified the need to address where this action is stemming from; where is the pressure to order coming from?
 - Action Item BOD - Possible tasking to the IC Committee – Identify where the pressure is coming from and what are your ideas for the BOD to remedy these pressures? What are thoughts from ICs as to what expectations are to take care of the firefighters? What does "right" look like?
- Unrealistic expectation perception discussed that incidents will never have an injury or fatality.
 - Unrealistic, national topic that continues to be pushed.
- Mike Granger – Anna will prepare materials and plans to attend the February meeting.

NRCG Chair Rotation

- Reviewed past and current chair rotation.
- JT Wensman will attend CGAC for Mike DeGrosky second week of January.

NRCG – RMCG IMT Proposal

- Rocky Mountain Coordinating Group is also facing similar challenges with multiple team rolls; far more than in the past.
- Inquiry has been made to know if NRCG would consider putting Northern Rockies teams into a joint rotation – including both Type 1 and Type 2 teams.
- This would not include combining the Coordination Groups; for the IMTs only.
- USFS BOD – Question: Just went through this with the northeast area and experienced pushback.
 - What makes it different this time?
 - Would like to see this thoroughly thought through. Experienced some relationship degradation from the previous experience.

- Clarified that inquiry was to maintain separate teams.
- WFAA Question: Has anyone looked at the stats as to what that would do to the number of average rolls? Has the net effect been looked at?
 - No. Idea has not been floated with the ICs either.
- Group discussion on worthiness of looking at every alternative.
- USFS BOD Question: Would this be a mutual rotation?
 - Yes; a single rotation.
- Single rotation may prevent re-occurrence of past events.
- BLM BOD – have been in communication with one IC; expressed a desire to know what advantage it is to the Northern Rockies Geographic Area.
- Discussed possibility of considering a joint rotation based on a PL level.
- Re-iterated that this was a simple inquiry to determine interest level; have not begun to look at specifics as of yet.
- WFAA DNRC – good to consider all options; however, noted need to explore thoroughly.
- Group discussed past experience receiving push back from Agency Administrators that specific teams were desired at certain times and desire not to wait for mobilization. Some agencies/units desired the familiarity of certain teams.
 - WFAA would need to be willing to commit.
- Discussed concern over workload increase.
 - Eastern Area had known fewer assignments.
 - Would increase the pull on Northern Rockies resources.
- Succession planning concern expressed.
- Group discussion around being supportive of continuing the conversation.
- Group discussion around the advantage:
 - Stretching the same amount of teams and the same amount of activity over one large area versus two smaller areas.
- Group reviewed the history of last season team usage and declining IMT resource pool nationally.
- Group discussion on if the RMCC Agency Administrators are supportive of this as well.
- WFAAs – Desire to look at IMT usage data from both GACCs and that the Agency Administrators from both sides have this understanding of no specific team selection; ensure that is understood all the way down.
- Mike Granger – will continue correspondence with RMCC counterpart and will communicate back to the incoming WFAA chair.
- WFAA consensus - When get to data gathering step, would like to include season of use and timing.
- Group discussion on Line Officer support; all team members are collateral duties and also have duties at their regular jobs that they are responsible to perform.
- Reviewed one of the advantages with the Eastern Area was that there were shared team members.
 - Desire to not limit the region and to put those types of items on the table as well.
- WFAAs - would like analysis to include extended rolls.
- Group discussion on continue this conversation with RMCC; potential to end up with a suite of options instead of one single solution.

Resource Impacts on Private Land during Suppression Operations

- Seeing an increasing trend of suppression actions being taken on private land for fires coming off public land.
- Growing sense of frustration – viewpoint of these individuals differs from viewpoint of agency needed suppression actions.
 - Discussed how Right flank of Gold Hill went around Stempson Private Forest – presents a good example of how can minimize impact to private land when it is practical.
- Early engagement critical element.
- Issue needs to be discussed as an interagency community.
- Desire expressed to see issue discussed at the team meeting.
 - Action Item – Facilitate a discussion at the IMT Team Meeting and thought process that goes into that; considering alternatives etc.
 - If can't keep it off the private property, what can be done to minimize?
 - Discussion on how to engage with the landowners.
 - Would be good to have some of the ICs talk about success and failures.
- WFAAs expressed desire to keep to the overall larger picture without getting too much into the tactical.
- Need also exists to ensure line officers understand this piece.
- DNRC BOD – really looking for some awareness building. Raise awareness so that when you can achieve the same suppression outcomes with differing alternatives – that all alternatives are considered and all concerns are considered.
- WFAA DNRC – discussed experience with Montana Forest Owners Association; came to DNRC with an overwhelming concern of not having had a positive experience with the engagement of IMTs.
 - Initial inquiry requested protocols for dealing with landowners.
 - DNRC is attempting to care for this relationship and be proactive with preseason conversations.
- IDL BOD – similar situation occurred since 2015. Weekly calls have assisted in keeping all parties engaged.
 - Provides national and regional informational awareness without getting into resource allotment.
 - Seems to have helped the situation. Some is also perception. (Example: Unstaffed fire near industrial landowner's land.)
 - Benefit of increased communication has had a positive impact. Provides the why without getting tactical.
- WFAAs expressed desire to ensure that teams are truly tuned in to all values at risk and all concerns.
 - In addition to the WFAA being tuned in to these as well; being able to help highlight these values at risk.
- WFAA Question: Impact mitigation – are issues being observed with individuals going in and not doing appropriate mitigation?
 - Mostly hearing from the timber industry.
 - Action Item – Break Out discussion for ICs at the Team Meeting.
 - Potential lead – Allen Christman
- BLM BOD – some is appropriate to be spelled out in delegations of authorities.
- WFAA Question: Should leader's intent letter include "regardless of landownership" language?
 - To ensure looking at values at risk for all; not only for the agency that order the team.

Formalize Expectations – BOD to Zones

- Desire for the BOD to formalize the times of year that their meetings occur.
- Request also to send out to the committees' expectation that committees will meet prior to the board and come to the NRCG meetings prepared to report out, discuss taskings and current project status.
 - BOD Question on formalizing these meeting times:
 - Group discussion and consensus on time frames:
 - Fall Meeting
 - Group Discussion and consensus to establish fall meeting first full week of November.
 - Spring Meeting
 - Last Week of February – Tues – Thurs;
 - WFAA – commitment to meet face to face has always been with the Spring NRCG Meeting and at the IMT Team Meetings
- Mike Granger will send out a letter from the board to the committees with the meeting dates and expectations.

2018 Fire Season Recognition

- Group discussion regarding individuals or groups for recognition:
 - Judy Heintz – long time help and support; retiring soon. Worthy of a plaque.
 - Thank you for Neal Beetch for helping when MAC activated.
 - Bruce Suenram is retiring.
 - Doug Williams – Letter.
 - Paul Fieldhouse – also announced he is retiring at the end of the year.
 - Steve Heppner – letter.
 - Will also inquire with the ICs.

Findings from the Risk Assessment Effort (Dave Williams)

- Draft paper was distributed, included the original proposal.
- Review of the assessment history – going from the incident level and taking discussion to the strategic level; engaging Agency Administrators.
- Looking for best practices and things that can be shared.
- Interagency approach taken with team members representing various agencies.
- Intent was to start the discussion and engage at this level; challenging to avoid preconceived perceptions. Sensitivity and complexity of reviewed incident were both taken into account.
- Intent was to learn and share methods for communicating risk and intent.
- Multiple questions were asked regarding various aspects.
- A lot of discussion with the team occurred.
- Was good to have an outside perspective included in the group, in addition to an IC.
- Visited Howe Ridge Incident and spoke with many associated management levels.
- Value in the learning that can be done from sharing interagency perspectives.
- Level of expertise is completely necessary for the make-up of the team.
 - Learned for the future - finding Agency Administrators to participate is a critical element.
- Majority of the best practices were developed by the team.
 - BOD Question: Who do you envision this document being distributed to and what are your expectation for the information?
 - Would like to see distributed to the Agency Administrators. Each may find

different aspects of the document specifically valuable.

- BOD Question: Would assume it would go out with some kind of cover letter telling them how to use and what the perceived value would be.
- Group discussed the fact that the team was acting for the MAC; letter would either come out from MAC or NRCG.
- WFAA USFS – other work going on in the USFS that is well aligned with this interagency effort; emphasis on Agency Administrators and level of risk education and engagement.
 - This assists in building that interagency bridge to help make a connection to the agency as wildland fire is interagency work.
- Reviewed specific findings in the document.
- Overall, keeping it short, brief and avoiding a controversial perspective had good value.
- Desire is to improve how we navigate these challenges at this strategic level.
- BOD Question: Is there a better time to do this to increase participant willingness?
- WFAA Question: Is there value to inform and educate agency administrators that can come out of this for the ongoing incident?
 - Specifically, some kind of on-site incident support?
 - Speaks to the effort of developing agency administrator core competencies.
- Group discussed the fact that by currently discussing this issue now; by default – have chosen a lessons learned approach.
- Need exits to identify if trying to do both - to provide real time support or a lessons learned intent?
 - Both have various aspects associated with each approach. (Example: Hesitation for transparency from interviewed individuals during ongoing incident due to intent perceptions.)
- Group discussion on how to create an environment in an ongoing incident where individuals are comfortable to speak freely.
- Emphasis placed on the importance of knowing why the team is there so that it can be communicated clearly, and in writing, to those participants.
- Historically, FAST teams have gone out with a letter.
- WFAA USFS – parallels with what is done with RMAT.
 - Delegation of authority is issued and established credibility.
- WFAA FWS – discussed experience as part of a large fire review.
 - Similar experience with make-up of panel and experience levels.
 - Perhaps the delegators would be the WFAA.
- Group discussion on this team in the future being tasked by the WFAA.
- Need expressed to give some thought to what is the intention and how to get to that piece.
- WFAAs – One of the responsibilities of the Agencies Administrators is to “Lead the Learning”. This provides a unique opportunity.
 - Speaks to developing core agency administrator competencies.
- Discussed if a Northern Rockies Line Officer course training, in addition to the agency specific requirements, may not be beneficial?
 - Could discuss many of the topics that have been addressed at this meeting.
- Briefing on best practices from this report may also be of value.
- Group discussion on relevance to 581 course.
- Group supportive of the idea of doing 581 or mini-581 on a zone basis.
- WFAAs discussed role associated with this topic.
 - How to close off this team’s work (which in the future should be WFAA chartered work).
 - There is a lot of interest amongst the WFAAs on having a conversation on how can we

invest in this and what would the WFAA role be in going forward; whether it is live incident or local training centric.

- WFAAs discussed concern on how the rest of the agencies are lined out in contrast to the USFS.
- Group consensus that the Geographic Area level is a great start to address those realities and differences.
- Dave Williams – recommend there is value in addressing in a real time centric approach to this learning opportunity; question would revolve around the “how”.
- Group discussed value of going smaller and going more often; in addition to going early as well.
 - Assists with building the trust.
 - Could utilize with other models as well – Type 3 fires.
- Discussion on a small team with practical experience. May wish to consider hybrid – go primary intending to conduct lessons learned but when you leave – might do a close out with the Agency Administrator with “here are some things you may want to consider right now”.
- IDL BOD – in order for it to be effective, needs to be real time driven.
 - Clear cut vision of what it is initially; to the degree of over communicating.
 - This assists with overcoming perceptions.
 - Reminder from Agency Administrators through a phone call prior to the teams arrival.
- Group acknowledged that different things are learned “in the moment” and “after the fact”.
- BLM BOD – something similar with sage grouse habitat large fires; becomes the normal and not perceived as a threat.
- Discussed suggestion to come up with something individuals could utilize.
 - (Example: Crisis response card.)
 - Could help foster along this risk assessment and provide a tool that could be utilized.
- Discussion on keys to success – short, pointed and simple to understand.
- Action item for the WFAA – would recommend that Dave Williams come up with a draft charter for the WFAA and a cover letter for the document distribution.
- Discussed importance of recognizing that this does not replacing FAST teams.
 - Also, important that Dave design this so that it can be handed off to someone else; only part of a shared position.
 - Perhaps value in floating the structure at the IMT Team Meetings. Also, value in the idea of having some joint line officer meetings between the agencies.

Wednesday, October 31 – General Session

Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed all and expressed appreciation for everyone’s attendance and dedication.

NMAC Update (Aitor Bidaburu)

NWCG and FMB updates:

- Season interactions went well; strategy discussion and back and forth worked well
- Upcoming – NMAC is planning for annual NMAC / GMAC meeting Jan 14th. Encourage agenda topic submission.
- Lots going on with NWCG training – PNU is working on a number of things that fundamentally change how training in the future may be delivered. Bringing in technology and reducing redundancy. Going through a modernization effort.

- FMB – Fire Management Board – Chartering the Predictive Services Oversight Group; intent to form a longer standing oversight group. FMB funds the program and has all the FTEs for it. Will be a more detailed report out on this at the NMAC/GMAC meeting.
- Questions?
 - Mike DeGrosky – Can you please provide an overview of appropriate content for agenda items?
 - Covers a broad range of topics both national and geographic in scope. Military Mobilization is on the agenda already. (Examples: AARs from Fire Seasons, Team Rotation Issues, National Mob Guide language, Coordination between the GACCs.)
 - Mike Granger – Discussed HEQB feedback from earlier in the year; was advised it was a 310-1 issue. Will be discussing at CGAC. Was also discussed during WFAA meeting reference speed to competency. Will be bringing forward to discuss non-traditional ways of recognizing qualifications through the system.

Northern Rockies End of Year Report (Kathy Pipkin)

- NRCC Cost Share Document reviewed. (See Handout)
- In GACC did over 10,000 resource orders.
- Felt it was an average year for number of resource orders; although statistics are slightly higher. This may be due to our season beginning late.
- Helped Missoula Dispatch out with dispatching the tankers and fixed wing.
 - To do this, had to bring in a detailer.
 - This increased aviation work load a great deal.
 - Will be working on a long term plan for the future.
- In the future, would like to work on county reporting for North Dakota to be accurately reflected in the SIT report.
 - Mike Odell – Would not have those numbers until much later after reporting times.
 - Kathy Pipkin – once the numbers are obtained, reflecting in the year to date would be beneficial.
 - Mike Odell – agreed that can be done.

Norther Rockies Operational Update (Craig Goodell)

- Team Utilization – had between two to four assignments.
- On the CGAC call last Friday – discussion on other GACCs teams having higher utilization last season. Concerns about work/rest. Discussion on adjusting available in the future. This would affect us in the bigger picture. Suggest talking about at higher levels – how we can get additional agencies that work in resource management signed up in agreements, so that we may utilize their individuals and increase resource pool.
- ICAP will be open 11/26-1/18; Connell's Team re-applying this year.
- Jordan McKnight – USFS Operations Position will begin mid-November. Some supervision re-alignment will occur at the AFD.
- Attended IC meeting yesterday. Discussed IC call; generally participants liked timing and format. It was suggested that when go to PL 4 and have MAC active – to move the zone report out to the afternoon MAC call.
- Implemented the Northern Rockies Critical Mission Request last season. Will be continuing with this for next season.
 - Mike Granger – Concern expressed on impact of limited pool of resource during season

- already and impact of this on how resources are allotted and timeframes associated.
- Mike DeGrosky – Would argue that is all the more reason to utilize.
- Ken Schmid – need exists to shift our plans due to resources being spread so thin.
- Craig Goodell – that was the main driver of this program.
- Mike DeGrosky – like that the language was changed from “surge” to this more accurate description.
 - Do not wish to get in the habit of holding resources in anticipation of a request.
- Craig Goodell – that is not the intent; incorporated in a more pro-active approach with resource that are known to be coming available.
- Mike Granger – may be good to see this addressed in the Leader’s Intent Letter.
- Ken Schmid – How did the IC call timing work for NRCC?
 - Kathy Pipkin – it was a crunch; with the needed preparation. However, adjusted to the new schedule.
 - Craig Goodell – some of the information was utilized on multiple calls throughout the morning.
- Mike DeGrosky – Was the workload change worth it?
 - Kathy Pipkin – for NRCC it was the same.
 - Craig Goodell – perspective was that timing worked well for information flow.
- Mike Granger – Craig will follow up on suggestion to move the zone report out to the MAC Calls.
 - Action Item – Decision to be made on suggestion to move the zone report out to the afternoon MAC calls by the February Meeting.

Northern Rockies Contracting Update (Tim Murphy)

- (See PowerPoint)
- Most agencies are on a three year rotation schedule.
- New solicitations – this year was the first time for medical solicitation in Idaho; fairly good turnout. Were available for southern Idaho also. Fair amount of use, especially by southern portion of Idaho. Montana – second year and a fair amount of use.
 - Action Item – NRCG Board needs to approve 2019 Northern Rockies Solicitation Plan – be prepared to discuss and make a decision on December Call.
- Another new solicitation was the chippers – some use in GACC.
- New solicitation – mulchers and masticators – did use masticators.
- Constant pinch point – engines. Numbers compared over the last three years. Number is only representative of contract resources.
- Received a letter from an attorney in Missoula regarding local government competing with contractors for business.
 - Have prepared a response to letter from attorney – currently it is with OGC.
- Discussed perceived issue of contract resources being held during periods of high fire activity outside the GACC.
 - Resources were not “locked down” during the season.
 - Often, NRCC receives resource orders with unrealistic date and time needed – those orders are turned back.
 - Once during this last season; MAC did decided to put contractors on a preposition order. This was not a “lock down”.
 - Need exists to continue to communicate this to all entities.
 - Another pinch point – water tenders. Numbers and use discussed.
- There was a lot of use of the Heavy Equipment Task Forces.

- Options this year allowed the teams to add an additional piece of equipment.
 - Important to note that solicitation is for the Northern Rockies only.
- Fair amount of use of Heavy Equipment in general.
- Mike DeGrosky – excellent analysis; is it possible to do an average over a period of time for the same kind of statistics, including costs over time? Believe this information may be needed for the legislature.
 - Yes; with Barb Whiteman’s assistance.
- Of note - first time for response of private contract equipment in Glacier National Park.
- Video – Montana Loggers Association - expect draft by the end of November; final by the end of the year.

Northern Rockies Safety Report (Dave Williams)

- Slow year and thankful for it; no significant safety issues or trends.
- Daily safety call was implemented.
- Several injuries and close calls; however, no FLAs.
- Only a couple of Safenets in the region that were address with the home units.
- Things to keep an eye on:
 - Were some significant complications with medical direction with the USFS that affected the teams. (Example: OTC Medication)
 - Changes in USFS direction are occurring and coming.
 - Safety positions – lots of things are changing in risk management. Many of the long standing ADs are not educated on the latest information.
 - Need to understand how this is communicated and differences between incidents.
 - Change may be coming to move more risk management into the safety positions role.
 - Feedback on any of these topics is encouraged and will be fed back up the chain.
- Questions?
 - Diane Mann-Klager – If there are number of different risk management styles/techniques – maybe that speaks to the need for the charter/tasking for the assessments so that more of those lessons learned are obtained to help analyze which tools are working in which situations.
 - Dave Williams – This one focuses in more on the strategic level versus addressing the local unit level.
 - Maintaining this separation assists with navigating the changing environment at this time.
 - Mike DeGrosky – discussion on behind the scenes bureaucracy on Safenets. Have we had any in our GACC that you felt the information needed to get out but was capped?
 - Upon receiving a “heads up” on a Safenet submission - typically ask questions right away upon notification and assess on a case by case basis.
 - Ken Schmid – Any thoughts on how to get the most current information to the ADs?
 - Discussed fact that this issue is not just focused on safety; affects every position and is complex . Have spoken to national training individual about this issue.
 - Mike DeGrosky – do you think it would be worthwhile to set up an NRCG Risk Management Committee?
 - Would be tricky given the agency specific changing environment at this time.

Northern Rockies Cache Report (Anthony Krause)

- Reviewed 2018 Issue Totals. (See Handout)
- No injuries and 97% fill rate.
- Did provide a fair amount of cache support to other regions.
- Noticing an increase in amount of water handling. Actively working to increase by about 20% in the next two years.
- Bringing in older equipment due to usage reports.
- Took the lead and spurred change in the medical person – replacing 500 person kit with beefed up 100 person kit.
 - Transporting oxygen in kits was an issue.
- Changing our business model this year.
- Updating pump kits to the new national standard; including new fittings.
- Road signs kits – starting to build 30 of those each year.
- Overhaul and modernization of cache vans occurred.
- Have doubled and tripled batteries use with digital radios.
 - Implemented a battery recycle system.
- Working with the teams to update preorders.
- Upgraded to a semi at zero costs.
- Tied in with two job corps to run the hose camp with great success.
- Questions?
 - Mike DeGrosky – Are you planning to talk about preorders at the Team Meeting?
 - Yes; in addition to addressing multiple break out groups and other topics.
 - Kathy Pipkin – suggest that it come in a letter from the top down from NRCG to ICs
 - Action Item – assign to the working group planning the team meetings and tasking to IC committee
 - Craig Goodell – IC Committee has produced a product in relation to this – a preorder they would like to see for the initial mobilization.
 - Mike DeGrosky – would like Anthony included in that group.
 - Kathy – would like Dispatch Steering Committee involved as well.

Northern Rockies Team IT Update (Patrick Murphy)

- Identified some lower cost and stable wireless options this year. This was the only new significant equipment added this year.
- Trends:
 - Industry is moving away from satellites and towards long distance wireless communication and data transmission. (Mountain top to mountain top.) When available as a contracted option; will be moving that way as well.
 - Paying a daily rate – but less than a satellite vendor. Don't get charged per unit of data; get significantly better speeds as well. Valuable for mobile data connections. At this point, no point in buying this equipment at this time.
 - Can be strung from point to point to point.
 - May in the long term allow us to be able to place camps closer to the incident and have better connectivity at spike camps.
 - Less expensive option with better service.
 - JT Wensman – experience with one of these this summer was positive.
 - USDA has issued guidance that all mobile devices now have to have Mobile Iron. Comes

- with security issues that are difficult for field use.
 - Additional purchases of iPads and mobile tables will not be prudent at this time.
 - Mike Granger – FWS (perhaps DOI) does have the stipulation that if specific types of technology are utilized for Law Enforcement and Fire – then that type of security is not required, if not connected. May need to explorer through DOI in the future, if need arrives.
- Plotters – in previous years have had old, but robust models.
 - No longer a viable option.
 - Newer models have their own issues and tend to be more fragile.
 - Transportation to camps has been an issue. Need to have options in place to supplement those machines in camp.
 - Explored renting options with little success.
 - Recommend looking at national coping services that are contracted as an option to meet this need. Significant expense; however, discussion with the business committee could be had to explore contracting options.
 - Mike DeGrosky – another option would be remote printing.
 - Patrick Murphy – another option would be utilization of private vendors in the local area.
 - Mike Granger – another option would be explore “copy trailer” option in the Northern Rockies. ICs have had positive experiences with these; however, cost is significant.
 - Group discussion and consensus for Patrick Murphy to go to the business committee with this issue.
- Briefed group on status of One USDA initiative with 2210’s in USFS being assimilated into the CIO. Will provide further information once it is known.

Recognition of Outgoing Member Ken Schmid

- Group Thanks given for service.

NRTC Update / Priority Trainee (Melissa Wegner)

- GATR Meeting next week in Georgia.
- Changes coming in future training.
- Reviewed 2017-2108 Training Session Completions. (See Handout)
- Total number of nominations includes all received.
- Front office position will be filled this year.
- Futuring out – next month have a Remote Education (RED) Workshop.
 - Distributed last week; can take more nominations.
 - As of last week had 50 nominations.
- From the field – paying attention to interests that were expressed.
 - Have been working with CISM and suicide awareness.
 - Has affected many of our first line supervisors; organic conversations have occurred last season.
 - Will continue to work on this topic.
 - Bear Awareness – will work with Alaska on how to implement in the Northern Rockies for entire field, not just fire.
 - Satellite Delivery Kits – built several last year; includes a variety of equipment.
 - NTDP – Chartered with taking the lead in delivery; virtual reality training.

- Idea is experience without exposure.
- Priority Trainee Program
 - Last year had 118 confirmed mobilization of our priority trainees.
 - Suggestion from two committees that for the google form, addition of supervisory approval notification email.
 - Will have it open for three months again this year.
 - Welcome suggestions and will be putting explanation of the process on the web site by February of this year.
 - Mike DeGrosky – Had discussion last two days on critical shortage positions; if could get some information out on where we need to find people to fill those gaps.
 - Melissa – can work with Judy to identify that data.

IMT Evaluations, Composition and Recruitment (Judy Heintz)

- Thumb drive for each BOD member that contains all received IMT Evaluations.
 - Exception of the NIMO Team; have not received as of yet
- 29 mobilizations of teams in the GACC last year.
 - Reviewed mobilization statistics. (See Thumbdrive document.)
 - Type 2 team use in GACC – 162 days
 - All had an out of GACC assignment
 - Had visiting type 2 teams for 72 days
 - Almas – first and last mobilization – 65 days out total; (get stats from Judy)
 - Sampson – out for total of 29 days; no out of GACC assignments this year
 - Hosted NIMO
 - Number of Days BUYT was out – 88 days; 30 of those were two out of GACC assignments early in the season.
 - Had visiting BUYTs for 33 days.
 - Thumb drive has team statistics on it; in addition to the Ten Year Statistical Composition Document.
 - Also included some other noteworthy comparisons.
 - Was a robust discussion at the IC meeting yesterday about the Eastern Area team letter.
 - ICs have pro-actively reached out to the individuals on their teams and have received reassurances that they will continue to be able to participate.
 - Other GACC Team Solicitations actually refer to dropping teams in the near future.
 - Need concurrence from the board on IC's for next year.
 - BOD concurrence given.
 - ICs also had a robust discussion on recruiting team members from non-traditional sources.
 - IMT Team Meetings April 16-18 at Hilton Garden Inn, Missoula MT – Dispatch Steering Committee also wants to meet concurrently.
 - Bin Item – Discussion on BOD involvement with IMT Team Meeting Agenda Development – Working Group - Steering Committee development
 - Mike DeGrosky, Rich Cowger and Kathy Pipkin will participate on that working group.

Rapid Extraction Modules / Medical Units Review (Mike DeGrosky)

- Need exists to put together a group to discuss; need to identify a lead.
- Roy Robinson has offered to be the DNRC representative.
- Craig Goodell – at the Operations Committee they put together a sub-committee to address this; that is the role Roy is going to fill.
- Mike Granger – this is needed to identify if this need exist here in the Northern Rockies and explore efficient and cost effective ways to provide this in our GACC
 - Mike DeGrosky – Does the sub-committee understand their tasking?
 - Sub-committee needs to vet if REM is needed
 - If so - under what circumstances are they necessary?
 - What are the options currently available?
 - Craig Goodell – sub-committee will look at the overall picture and will also look at differences in configuration; will identify what is truly needed.
 - Mike DeGrosky – history has shown that reliance on a REM can actually delay getting an individual to care. Look at a need driven capability.
 - Diane Mann-Klager – Need to ask: Is it being put in place because someone is looking at their risk assessment and using it as a mitigating factor for increasing risk?
 - Dan Warthin – need exists to identify those pressure points drivers.
 - Craig Goodell – some of the drive is coming from the Dutch Creek protocols.
 - Mike DeGrosky – also, some may be vendor driven.
 - Diane Mann-Klager – is part of the assessment to identify what is available locally?
 - Yes; group will be looking at what is available locally for REM design.

Fire Closeout Protocols (Ken Schmid)

- Attempt to standardization.
- Review of draft document.
- Feedback on draft from group is encouraged.
- Discussion on where this document would reside.
- Mike DeGrosky – encourage BOD to stay focused; no need to duplicate the effort of the Agency Administrator at close out.
 - Focus only on NRCG / MAC related items.
 - Write up should be short and concise.
- Suggestion for a short, fill-in-able form for Close Out Briefings
 - Action Item – Create a short, Close Out Briefing Form (short, fill-in-able)
 - Follow up on form and protocols for Spring Meeting.
- Craig Goodell – Suggestion that NRCG Documents an incoming team needs be better organized on the website under a separate link; one easily found by an incoming IC.
 - Patrick Lonergan– Suggestion for NRCC or Craig Goodell to email in brief packet to incoming IC.
- Craig Goodell – Suggestion for each team liaison board member to ensure that Team’s closeout is covered as part of liaison duties. Out of GACC teams would need some other protocols.

Resource Benefit Fires – Ensuring Accurately Reflected in Prioritization (Mike DeGrosky)

- Root issue is driven by structure of 209 reporting system.
- Full Suppression goal fires utilizing confine/contain strategy fell to the bottom of the list and only had weekly reporting.
 - USFS position is that those fires have a full suppression goal utilizing a confine/contain strategy.
 - Confusion exists at multiple levels.
- Mike DeGrosky – If these fires were just run through Criterion like every other fire, without checking that box, would it change how that fire was ranked?
 - Kathy Pipkin – all of the options were reflected, regardless if it was a resource benefit fire.
 - Mike DeGrosky – are they falling to the bottom of the list because they are resource benefit fires or because they are not ranking out in Criterion?
 - Craig Goodell – only ranked as large fires.
- Greg Morris – actions were that a cognitive decision was made to change Criterion to move a specific fire down. 209 is limited with either it is a Full Suppression or something other than full suppression.
- Group discussion on allowing for discretion room through final board ranking; not through criterion.
- Greg Morris – non-daily reporting requirement does not facilitate the conversation in a proactive way.
- Diane Mann-Klager – this is one of those hard issues to define. Need to come into agreement as to what is actually occurring.
 - May be an item for the PIO messaging discussed earlier in the week during the WFAA meeting.
- Mike Granger – attempting to line out what the decision space is and how to handle for the Northern Rockies. Discussion will continue; however, limited decision space for an Action Item.
- Diane Mann-Klager – Messaging to the public could assist with both internal and external communications.
- Greg Morris – one piece is recognizing that the current reporting 209 system is not nuanced enough to accurately reflect what is occurring on the ground.
- Julie Polutnik – Intelligence group is looking in the future at WFDSS as the authoritative data source for what comes across to the 209.
- Craig Goodell – Tim Sexton’s group is also discussing this issue at a higher level.

South African Crew Program – Future Use Discussion (Tim Murphy)

- Reviewed historical origins of program.
- Utilized for one 14 day assignment.
- Nationally there does not appear to be an interest to pursue this; response is quiet.
- No interest within the NWCG to explore a government to government agreement.
- If elect to explore within the Northern Rockies, would be contractor to sub-contractor agreement.
- Going to South Africa soon; will hold further discussions. Contractors advise there is potential for additional resources.
- Mike DeGrosky – although increases capacity; this issue may be one that is brought up in the

legislature. Need to be able to answer potential questions with clear talking points.

- Ken Schmid – ongoing issue; number of crews continues to decrease.
- Mike DeGrosky – need to be ready to address with facts and statistics.
- Mike Granger – no interest expressed at the higher national levels; need exists to have information in front of us to justify any actions.
- Diane Mann-Klager – Do we have those numbers?
 - Greg Morris – yes; Kathy can produce those numbers. Due to the timing of our season, Northern Rockies has found that it has to be self-reliant, for the most part, for crews. This is a way of supplementing resources. Agree that we need to be able to tell the reason behind the action.
- JT Wensmen – have a meeting next week with Lieutenant Governor and Senator in regards to the letter that was mentioned earlier.
- Dan Warthin – the contractor is the one bringing in the South Africans. This is a key element in this issue.
- Mike Granger – **Item tabled for future discussion.**

NRCG Handbook (Kathy Pipkin)

- Tasked to develop a template for an NRCG Handbook.
- Reviewed draft document. (See Handout)
- Appendices include NRCG relevant documents (chair rotations, IMT meeting payment agreements; close out procedures could be added and reside in this document as well).
- **Action Item – Edits due back to Pam prior to the January Conference Call; will discuss edits on the January Conference call. Goal of finalization by Spring Meeting.**
 - Edits need to include changing charter language to current language – year rotation from one to two – Kathy will redo and send.
 - Suggestion to add “NRCG Decision Document” to appendices.

Predictive Services Oversight Group (Bryan Henry)

- (See PowerPoint Presentation)
- Historical Predictive Services Program review.
- A few years ago the FMB began an investigative, three phase initiative with a goal of providing more structure.
- Over the years, Meteorologist and Intelligence functions evolved into different directions.
- Desire for a Fire Behavior Specialist at each GACC.
- Currently, identifying individuals that will participate in group membership.
- Mission for predictive services has little change from charter in 2001.
- Concern expressed if regional needs will still be able to be addressed with this national motion and direction.
 - National leaders give assurance that it will continue to meet all needs.
- Charter places a heavy emphasis on coordinating with our stakeholders.
- Regular products, with increased emphasis on verification, will continue.
- Benefits:
 - Provides governance structure.
 - Better two way access with stakeholders.
 - Direct access to FMB with budget possibility.
 - Re-development of Seven Day Fire Potential Product.

- May have funding to fill needed vacancies.
- Concerns:
 - Unwillingness to seek input from core members. (Example: Nuisances in systems that PSOG is not aware of – AWIPs hiccups)
 - May lead to a difficult start.
 - On the ground impact of this currently – in order to get the data, have to pay a subscription to a local vendor.
 - Succession Planning for group
 - Communication lines are not open, currently, between all levels.
 - Have been promised more transparency once the group is established.
- Additional Information
 - Lack of Transparency has been a hard item to work around.
 - For instance - learned that there are four proposed solutions for the meteorologists; know status of two options; management unwilling to state the status of the other two.
 - Julie Polutnik – Intelligence did not even know that they were a part of this initiative until two months ago.
- RMCC submitted some recommendations for the Charter; however, it does not look like any were adopted into the charter.
- Encourage GACCs and Coordinating Groups to continue to submit recommendations and input.
 - At a minimum will continue to generate discussion.
- Field initially advised that they would be part of the process; however, charter was released prior to input request.
 - Grievance filed on behalf of USFS and BLM meteorologist; reflecting lack of input. USFS responses indicated input would be forthcoming with implementation of structure.
- Mike Granger – if FMB is going to cover the costs of those positions; that would reduce the agency contributions. However, what would be all of the impacts of that reporting structure?
- Ken Schmid – in the new structure, would only need to look at the funding for the non-existing positions. (Example: fire analysts)
- Mike Granger – Key elements are that there is representation on the CGAC and to ensure the ability for the GACCs to have local input towards the specific products that are produced.
- Ken Schmid and Dan Warthin – encouraged all to have an open mind during this national direction motion.
- Colleen Haskell – in the RMCC response, concern was expressed that if there was going to be state representation since it was FMB. Aitor’s briefing this morning led towards it being more inclusive.

Northern Rockies GIS Data Standards Group (Greg Dillion)

- 2018 Update reviewed. (See Handout)
- Historical origin of the group reviewed.
- Group was tasked with developing standards and developing a common approach to meeting national standards.
- One large piece was engaging the GIS community in the Northern Rockies.
- Other large piece was common approach developmental phase.
 - Ensured meeting National Standards.
 - Also implemented enhancements at the regional level that benefit the users.
 - Produced GIS Users Guide.
 - Developed a Firenet Site.

- Developed a user group.
- Conducted an AAR with positive response.
 - Working to streamline for next year.
 - Another challenge has been talking with national individuals and relieving concerns that the Northern Rockies was doing something slightly different than the National level.
 - Will implement some regional changes based on the conversations next year.
 - National level will also be considering changes based on the work done in the Northern Rockies.
 - Talk of an attempt to develop an Initial Attack platform in the future.
- Remote Situational Unit Pilot
 - Were supportive of this initiative; however, due to season – did not occur this year.
- Recommend group consider in the future a full time GIS Coordinator for Fire. (See Proposed NR Fire GIS Coordinator Position Handout)
 - Precedent is set in other GACCs.
 - Group put in a great deal of time this year dedicated to this; all as collateral duties.
- Mike Granger – How do we go ahead and support a request from another GACC for remote situational unit support without a resource order?
 - Kathy – history of the situation last season was that ultimately the resource order never came.
- Mike Granger – Was there opposition to what we were telling our teams to do?
 - No; however, one team ran into connectivity issues and challenges - the extra step of uploading into the Northern Rockies work flow was causing challenges. Due to that, on their next roll - they also went directly to the national work flow.
 - Action Item – BOD to review recommendations and discuss on January Conference Call.

IMT Succession Plan (Doug Turman)

- Broke succession plan into two parts – what does it look like and positions.
- Many factors need to be considered; including work life balance.
- One challenge is the finance piece and agency specific policy involved.
- Another challenge is holding the team to 58 individuals; and attempting to right size once on scene.
 - Expressed belief that other regions mobilize with more individuals.
- Another challenge is getting individuals through the training challenges; and all that is involved.
 - Sarah Lee – some of the home units have been requiring Command and General Staff be signed off as a Type 2 prior to being signed off as a Type 1.
 - Difficult to train these individuals up and have them go back to home unit; only to have them advised they need to be signed off on a Type 2 level first.
 - Task book is the same for both.
 - Mike Granger – systemic problem that was discussed earlier in the week.
 - Diane Mann-Klager – perhaps needs to be more than a Speed to Competency Memo; needs to reflect the actual requirements and understanding of the performance based system.
 - Sarah Lee – only asking people to follow the policies we have; not requesting any change. Requesting people follow the existing policies.
 - Dave Carter – need to identify if need exists for doing away with Type 1 and Type 2 designations. There are differences in some instances. It is a question of core

- competencies.
 - Mike DeGrosky – system was designed over a decade ago; problems then are not the same as the problems being experienced now.
 - Mike Granger – in agreement that there are some positions that typing requirement may need to be re-evaluated.
- Other strategies that were implemented – opportunities to utilize and bring along additional trainees; providing that critical on the job training.
- Another strategy is bringing along multiple individuals; allows for someone available to fall back on.
- Another opportunity was utilizing individuals in a remote capacity.
- Also crucial - being able to tap into individuals from other GACCs.
- Our plan currently looks like most sections are in fairly good shape for the next couple of years.
- Questions:
 - Mike DeGrosky – Key items to see if practical for a succession template:
 - Do you think you could practically, for identified trainees, establish target date for completion?
 - Same question or those identified as future players?
 - Doug Turman – yes to both.
- Mike Granger – Could you produce something that is three years out?
 - Doug Turman – the third year becomes challenging to predict. Everyone that is listed as a trainee – probably one more year, and they are all ready to roll.
- Mike Granger – posing the same question to the ICs in the room.
- Rick Connell – question is even simpler; and one for the Agency Administrators – all positions will be needed at some point.
 - Mike DeGrosky – without specific targets, if the Agency Administrators just keep encouraging people to apply for all positions – we are going to continue to get what we are experiencing now.
 - Mike Granger – also gives the BOD a visionary document to ensure viable teams.
 - Joe Sampson – provided background on IC committee discussion.
 - Diane Mann-Klager – on the question of “what do we need to give to Agency Administrators” – we have Agency administrators and line officers that don’t understand the basics of this training. It requires time away from the office and their regular duties. It requires this over time to have them reach fully qualified. Need to be able to say here are the people we are willing to put up and sacrifice their contribution to the office in order to support this effort.
 - Greg Morris – this ask provides for the needed specifics that help the Agency Administrators have these strategic conversations with managers.
 - Board is tasking to each of the teams for a succession plan for at least two years by the team meeting. Doug has produced a template that can be utilized.
 - Mike DeGrosky – boards responsibility to ensure a viable team system in the Northern Rockies. Need exists to take action on this item.

IC Reports

Request each IC address the following during report out:

1. When is the most effective time for the BOD representative to show up?
2. How can we better support the ICs?
3. What did we do this year?
4. What should we be doing?

Rick Connell

- Were able to get one command and general staff individual all qualified at the type 2 level.
- Team is reapplying this year.
- Have talked with at least one from the Eastern Area that feels they will be able to come back.
- Creative measures – most individuals still accomplish day job work while mobilized.
- Do have holes that are more challenging to fill – Medical Unit Leader. Not a large resource pool in the Northern Rockies. May need to take some action to recruit from elsewhere.
- Would like to see AD term no longer used; as not all ADs are retired individuals. Use the term “retirees” instead of ADs, if needed.
- Board – show up anytime; would love to have you.
- To better support the ICs – in need of a new team trailer.
 - Would like to see every GACC have some information that is easily found on their GACC webpage for incoming teams.
 - This does exist already in the Northern Rockies.
 - Work is year round – team stashed for hurricane mobilization.
 - Number of FMOs that might want to be tasked to be an IC in the future – need to look at unit’s workload and staffing as an element.

Joe Sampson

- Successful year with trainees – able to sign off three command and general staff.
- Resource shortage standpoint – trouble with getting 14 day and 14 + day commitments.
 - Brings about need for three people deep.
 - Some positions not easily swapped every few days; others it works out OK
- Opinion that Board should be present at close out and also; present, if possible, during delegation and leaders intent conversation initially.
- Board can support IC by:
 - Assist with driving recruitment and participation.
 - Still a stopgap with no one chasing compliance to make individuals available when the letters come down.
 - Agency Administrators relationships with the team is improving greatly; experienced success with this year.
 - Above assisted with Resource Shortage issue – worked direct with the agency administrators to utilize zone and local unit resources to the greatest extent possible.
 - International incident highlighted success of working with partners.
 - Highlighted issue of completion versus suppression - percent completion vs % suppression.

Mike Goicoechea

- 42 days out
 - One out of GACC Type 1 IC – got a good start in his book. May ultimately be brought into his current GACC.
 - Started on another for Operations Chief.
 - Did get one Plans Chief signed off; and another on her Type 2. Also one signed off on Finance in Type 2.
 - Multiple other good starts in their books.
 - Logistics in priority spot that no one is showing interest in stepping into; current individual is getting close to going out.
- Obviously not enough resources in the system. Issue showing up to the fires with full suppression labels; however, not enough resources.
 - Large difference in education level of contractors (example: preparation and burnout operations) and experience level of agency individuals.
- Would be good for BOD to go to delegations and intent conversations; has both pros and drawbacks. If unable to attend, showing up a few days afterwards would be good. Also support attending at the end.
 - Mike Granger – What is the value of board showing up on an out of GACC assignment?
 - Joe Sampson – would think it would be a good idea.
 - Mike Granger – think board should discuss value of this action.
- Board can support by:
 - Acknowledging agency specific pressures for home unit workload. Board needs to have this conversation sooner rather than later. Many on teams have the potential to be affected.
 - Extended while out of GACC both times due to lack of Type 2 teams in the system or that the unit was unwilling to go out of area for a Type 2 team.
 - Greg Morris – pressure to extend has been trending towards increasing; would like to get feedback on how that is working for the teams.
 - Mike DeGrosky – good to hear the feedback as to extension rational; as the ones the board heard were different.
 - Group discussion on various team extension rational.
 - Appreciated the increase in the funding.

John Thompson

- Resource shortages and challenges on the team:
 - Did have some shortages after the roster was built; did have some fatigue from multiple levels including resource managers.
 - Had some individuals that chose to move up that created some gaps; were unknown during recruitment.
 - On incidents managed:
 - Had to get creative on some of the support positions – relied more on some trainees working outside the box.
 - Consistent shortage on crews. Believes this region needs to take some risks and establish crews.
 - Driven by agency organizational staffing levels.
 - Greater agency specific capacity needed.
 - Challenge with contract crews is that they are not all on the same experience level.

- If it is an agency Type 2 or Type 2 IA that shows up – pretty certain on what they bring to the table.
- Ideally, would like to see the board show up late morning or afternoon. Would like to see at close out; however, supportive of BOD presence at the delegation and leader's intent conversation.
- Can support the ICs by:
 - Valuing IC input.
- Took our first assignment out of GACC, staged for five days. Took advantage of the time to continue conversations from the team meeting.
 - Feel staging is effective for a certain amount of time; afterwards, see it as a fine timeline.
- Next assignment to the Payette was a good experience. Bar was set high to perform and team did well.
- Did an assignment up on the Kootenai – mobilized to the Davis Fire; heard rumors that would be taking Gold Hill; however, timeline was not clear. In hind sight, this may have not been the most effective approach.
- Appreciate the extra funding.
- What should BOD be doing?
 - Remember and acknowledge that we are all volunteers.

Jay Winfield (for Bob Fry)

- Interesting year as it was a conglomeration of team members from three different teams.
- Early July had some key positions back out (aviation) – was a scramble to locate resources; found one out of GACC. Rolled with the team twice and assisted with finding longevity for that position.
 - Hiring was a factor in this occurrence.
 - Was a challenge in filling positions in both command and general staff and regular positions.
 - Was a re-build year and proud of team – performed well and were professional.
- Task Books – know of five that were completed.
- Mode for team is to bring as many trainees as possible.
- Would like to see board show up anytime; however, specific times would benefit the Northern Rockies Board – delegation and leader's intent meeting and closeouts.
 - Reference out of GACC assignments question – believe this is also critical to show up.
- Board can support the IC by:
 - Off season work – requires extensive hours and workload.
 - Recruiting shortage positions.
 - Funding – do appreciate the increase; however, restrictions and sideboards of this region seem a bit more stringent.
- Three different rolls this year – two in GACC, one out of GACC.
 - Davis Fire on Kootenai.
 - Then went to incident in Utah. Rich Cowger was present at that one.
- Creatively trying to solve resource shortages – how addressing:
 - Two FNDY resources.
 - Attempting to recruit DES individuals.
- What should the BOD be doing?
 - Building our bench.
 - Demonstrate willingness to take some risks to build that bench.

Roger Staats – (for Mike Almas)

- Agree with what has already been presented.
- On creative measures for resource shortages – for the last couple of years, team has exceeded the maximum allowable number of trainees. Where are those trainees going?
 - Recommend stipulation that if going to train – need to be willing to commit.
 - Team makeup is reflective of resources from multiple GACCs – without those folks, would not have a team.
 - Fairly staffed up as a team this year.
 - However, when down to fourth assignment – was harder to obtain individuals.
- Resource Shortages – when went out of GACC, had the resources we needed to get the job done.
- Most effective time for the BOD to show up – agree with the rest, delegation and leader’s intent meeting.
- BOD can support the ICs by:
 - Appreciate the support and direction from NRCG; especially in the last few years of cleaning up older direction.
 - Appreciate the funding increase.
 - Trailers require maintenance.
- Had four assignments this last year – out 65 days.
 - Colorado was an exceptional assignment. Have not ever seen so much gratitude.
- Success in having some signed off in various positions.
- Do carry a lot of ADs and retirees. They are good about passing knowledge along.
 - This is what we should be doing – passing on the best knowledge and experience that we can.
 - No one interested in stepping up to IC position
 - Except one individual who is a GS-7.
 - IC workload is not reflective of a GS-7.

Doug Turman

- Had two assignments – both out of area.
- Notable difference in agency administrator engagement.
 - Went from very little to possibly a bit much.
- Another interesting piece – were in a region that had a lot of contracted resources.
 - Some extra associated work.
 - Experience level differs.
- Having the Board present is valuable.

Summary of take home messages from the ICs: (Mike Granger)

- Board presence at in briefings; delegation and leaders intent meetings; in addition to closeouts.
- Board presence at out of area assignment meetings as well.
- Agree with resource availability increase when ask is in other GACCs.
 - Do agree need exists to discuss further.
- Agree there is a need to discuss funding further in reference funding restrictions. Need to look at ways we can facilitate meeting this need in different ways.
- Acknowledged commitment to teams is a volunteer workload and a work/life burden; it is deeply appreciated. Board does not take this aspect lightly.
- Mike DeGrosky – need exists to convey to Agency Administrators that there is value in having a board presence at those meetings and have that communicated down. Intent is to open

cohesiveness across the GACC.

- Mike Granger – Advised Joe Sampson of the conversation that occurred earlier in the week of a joint rotation with the RMCC Teams.
 - Will be asking for data from the RMCC on these specifics.
 - Would like feedback from the IC Group on this proposal.
 - Wish to ensure that being proactive and not repeating previous events.
 - Joe Sampson – group did discuss; concern of an increased ask already with current set up.
 - Initial response from the ICs is not favorable to go into RMCC rotation.
 - Would be an increased workload and longer season.
 - Expecting already to be asked to go out of GACC more due to a new normal of fire season reality.
 - JT Wensman – counterpart on RMCC board did not know of this proposal.
 - Dave Carter – Great Basin is in the same predicament.
 - Bob Jones – initially do not support the mesh; as it does not address the problem. Problem is not enough people.
 - Joe Sampson – there is already a process in place for team shortages. Prefer current system.
 - Mike DeGrosky – have committed to some further analysis; however, may not be any benefit to our teams.

Round Robin

Montana State Fire Chiefs' Association (Rich Cowger)

- Light year; heading back today – willing to help with Structure Protection Plan, along with Patrick Lonergan
- Also facing staffing challenges at multiple levels.
- Have seen a notch up in the professionalism of the departments across the state.
 - Important to note as resource shortages are discussed.
 - Many local agencies are making progress towards meeting qualifications.

Idaho Department of Lands (J.T. Wensman)

- Significant issue with prison camp crew – rape committed while on an incident. Review conducted recently with Interagency review team. Working on finalizing written report by years end. Department of Corrections crew stood down.
- Did a slight re-organization earlier this year; slight learning curve currently; however, by this time this year, exposure should occur.
- Just received a new Director; started in October. Individual does have some fire experience.
- This year going to have some sort of administration change within the state. Do not anticipate any wholesale changes.
- Working on doing a fire program analysis. Going to reach out to USFS partners as well. Did a fire program review in 2015 – one of their recommendations was to do an analysis. Cannot make any position or budgetary requests until this analysis is done.
 - Looking at shuffling the deck on some funding mechanisms.

U.S. Forest Service (Greg Morris)

- Folks need to be aware of the national push to stovepipe contracting and IT support individuals.
 - Response is that it is funded by interagency support.
 - Letter from NRCG Supporting Maintaining those positions may be useful.
- Pressure from the agency for increased Timber and Fuels – means looking at a lot more of getting work done in the woods; may impact availability.
- Met our fuels target this year.
- Filled Air and Smoke positions.
- Are seeing some competition for Air Quality – impacts multiple units potential for accomplishments. Large issue. Need to pay attention as an interagency group.
- Filled most positions; Fire Hire is a large issue. Lily Huskey was just hired in the Workforce Development position.
- Hired Jordan McKnight as Operations position. Will also be working on standardization initiative and working with Dave Williams on operational risk management.
- Budget is relatively flat; including the slight increase recently received from the initial number.

Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation (Mike DeGrosky)

- Met new State Forester – Sonya Germann this week; Sue Clark was also present. They are currently sorting out which will be the primary for the NRCG duties.
- Have several key retirements occurring:
 - Bruce Suenram
 - Doug Williams
 - Paul Fieldhouse
 - In the process of refilling Doug's position; Bruce's position subject to possible reorganization within the bureau. Paul's position will undoubtedly be filled in some way.
- Ask in April about the Budget and Resources.
 - Do not anticipate budget going up.
 - Will undoubtedly be looking for some support.
- Believe pressure to increase pace and scale is somewhat do to state.
- Putting a lot of emphasis on implementing fire program strategy.
 - Many items going on; may have to make choice on what we do or don't do.

Thursday, November 1 – General Session

Round Robin (Continued)

National Park Service (Dan Warthin)

- Dave Soleim may retire soon.
- Jay Lusher will be holding a staff meeting in Denver next week to discuss vacant positions.
- Budgets unknown at this time.
- Seasonal hiring – southern parks are in the process of hiring.

Bureau of Indian Affairs – NW, RM (Bob Jones)

- New Fire Director.
- At Rocky Mountain Region, changing an AFMO position some.
- Dispatcher position still vacant.
- Two helicopters still in Rocky Mountain; stayed busy.
- Did meet target in fuels, not a lot of acres.
 - Cut the budget in half.
 - Pulled off a broadcast burn this year.
 - Hoping for a cooperative agreement with BLM next year.
 - Some replacements going on with engines.
- Cooperative agreements are expiring at the end of the year; attempting to extend to the end of March.
- Worked on the Native American Crew Plan.
 - May need a few more edits due to recent changes.

Bureau of Land Management (Ken Schmid)

- Billings and Miles City will be combining into one district; will still be a local FMO in both areas. Should not be much of a large effect.
 - Will still be two dispatch centers.
 - Looking at possibilities of increasing efficiencies in aviation.
- Openings in North / Central Montana.
- Flat budgets; did pull some funding that were being looked at.
- Cache continues to be a big issue.
 - Negotiating costs of a new building.
- Will be starting as the new Branch Chief Position in Boise, November 26; Corey Buhl will be acting for 120 days.
- Mike Granger – with the changes coming, do you see a possibility for increasing the number of veterans crews?
 - No, funding is just not there overall.

North Dakota Forest Service (Mike Odell)

- State Forester retiring at the end of October. Will be looking for an internal acting.
- Looking at trusts.

Montana Disaster and Emergency Services (Jake Ganieany)

- President approved Flooding Appeal.
- Full staff; however, losing a mitigation coordinator next week.
- FEMA is working to staff positions in the near future – four positions. Can work on planning and communications.
- Budget – working with National Guard to obtain training earlier. Will be able to get money for funding of training equipment this year.
- All hazard team returned from Liberty County in FL; successful deployment. Will bring back a lot of good experience. In hindsight, they wished they had brought more logistics and PIOs.
 - This year focus was on short IMT teams for local county EOC support.
 - Meeting Saturday in Butte on All Hazzard Type 3 IMT formations.
- Working on flooding and hazard mitigation grant money that came in – projects. Short timeline

for those application deadlines.

- May be a permanent program with the new Disaster Response.
- Do have some money from the FMAGs – working with DNRC and county managers.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Mike Granger)

- DOI reorganization – still operating as independent regions at this point.
- Budget is flat.
- Positions – do have a couple open and intend to fill. DOI Supervisory ratio decision has had a significant impact; in addition to the grade that jobs are advertised at. Significant impact on both entry level position and upwards motion in the organization.
- FWS burned more acres than the BLM in the Northern Rockies.
 - One was a large fire in the sage grouse habitat.
- Exchange of suppression responsibilities – put this out there a while back; hesitancy detected from the group.
 - One thing that has been working well – have joined forces in the Jordan area; joint operational effectiveness experienced.
- Interagency Eastern Montana Crew – worked out really well this year. Went out four times this year.
 - Bunkhouse facility assisted greatly with this effort.

Committee Report Outs

Aviation Committee (Bob Flesch)

- Good sharing last season.
- Good communications with national offices to obtain resources.
- Group has not met as of yet.
- In 2018, Helena was not a VLAT base – it will be approved for 2019.
- No additional USFS rappel programs until 2020.
- Next year there will be three lead plans, in addition to BLM staffed one in Dillion.
- IR challenges experienced this year.
 - Exploring a regional contract option to meet this need.
- UAS were utilized on occasion; trend may increase.
 - BLM has two drones with IR cameras.
 - Two Fireflies are located in Havre, MT.
 - Need to ensure they produce a product that the individuals on the ground need.
 - Mike Granger – Do you see this capability and usage increasing?
 - Yes – see it rapidly expanding.
 - Ken Schmid – Advantages and positive experiences with drones and driver capabilities are leading towards greater usage.
 - Mike DeGrosky – close to having an agency policy in place.
 - Greg Morris – Agency policies differ as well.
 - Ralph Rau – As a board, may want to think about forming a subcommittee within the Aviation Committee to stay on top of this rapidly changing program.
 - **Bin Item – Discussion on future interagency use of drones.**
- DOI Agencies in Alaska are looking to combine aviation assets into one program; want to have it implemented by next year.
 - DOI counterparts in Northern Rockies should be aware and stay advised of this changing environment. Will generate lots of questions for next year.

Businesses Committee (Sarah Lee)

- Met last week.
- Discussed Medical issues at length; including purchasing.
 - Also, discussed vendor driven requests.
 - NCF put out an expectation letter when the medical changed; this assisted IMTs a great deal.
- Beginning to work on 2019 supplement; do not expect major changes.
- Training – will continue with regular schedule for 2019.
- Land Use Agreement tool – being addressed by a task group with an ultimate goal of a product on the webpage.
- Task Group continuing to look at donations.
- Task Group to look at National Rental program (NERV) – will go national in 2019.
 - Expected to have operating guides for the GACC.
- Working with Team Finance staffing and trainees.
- Discussed ATV / UTVs – discussed confusion that exists; not discussed a great deal at last IMT team meeting.
- New business chair – Amanda Boatwright, BIA.
- Questions?
 - Mike Grangers – Medical Unit leader – Agency Administrators requested an ad hoc committee to address; would ask someone from the business committee be involved as well. Jeff Gardner – would be available to fill that role.

Dispatch Steering Committee (Jamey Graham)

- Updated Charter – sent in this week for approval.
- Going to meet next week – will be planning the spring meeting; want to combine with the IMT meeting again this year.

Equipment / Logistics Committee

(Not on the call)

Fuels Committee (Ryan Melin)

- Action Item for this Fall – approve sharing of resources for prescribed burns.

Incident Commander Committee (Joe Sampson)

- Good discussion on REMs
 - Found largely not standardized.
 - General consensus is that there is a need for standardization.
 - Is there a need for them?
 - Discussed utilization of existing crews and skills
- On Medical issues:
 - Discussed massive amount of orders for medical personnel.
 - Discussed OTC medication issue.
 - Discussed Norovirus outbreak incident.
 - Greg Morris – Action Item - recommendation that NRCG draft an issue paper on this subject.
 - Discussion on proper usage of 8 Line.

- Discussion on Copy Trailers and usage.
 - Overall consensus was that there was great value in these resources.
 - Expense was discussed as well.
 - Recommend solicitation for copy trailers.
 - Sarah Lee – those are on a national VIPER contract; none in our area.
 - Mike Granger – need to be looking at the potential to solicit for copy trailers. Patrick will be looking into options with the Business Committee.
- Talked about tent order packages and heating and cooling systems. Discussed need to pre-order these.
 - Worked on a general, short, pre-order list tool – calling it a “Dispatch List”.
 - Kathy – when list is formalized; please give to NRCC. It will be placed on the website and all dispatch centers will be advised to go to the site, pull the list and begin work on it as soon as the team is ordered.
- Discussed confusion on ATV / UTV inspection requirements and regional policy. Discussed with Business Committee.
 - Mike Granger – Operations Committee is working on that and may be making a recommendation to exclude Working Capital Fund vehicles.
- Good discussion on completion versus containment processes. Have heard Tim Sexton’s team is working on it. Tabled this topic till spring to see if there is more direction coming. Led to a bigger discussion on unwillingness to call a fire something other than full suppression fire.
 - Greg Morris – high degree to resistance to change and control. Causes confusion at all levels and with partners and public. Discussed with WFAAs.
 - Julie Polutnik – intelligence is looking at that as well. Looking at in the future, WFDSS being the authoritative data source for that information.
- Good discussions on IR frustrations that were experienced last season.
- Good discussions on FireNet – experiences were across the board. Intent is good. Experienced file sharing issues.
 - Proposal – have a room set up at IMT team meeting to get ADs and Retirees through that process.
 - Billy Philips – additional training on FireNet available in the next few weeks through remote education.
- Discuss need to revamp ICS forms and standardizations across the GACCs.
 - Discussed regional IAP standardization.
 - Discussed example of incident within an incident plan. Definition of “incident within an Incident” is very broad.
- Had good discussions with the Business Committee; good interactions.
 - Discussed IBA, IBS and IC interactions. Also discussed delegations.
 - Sarah Lee – agree with Joe; finding we don’t have enough IBAs. Now no prerequisites to be an IBA. Educations learning curve exists; are putting on a related webinar.
- Information / Training – being asked to do and provide much more.
 - PIOs are a difficult resource to obtain.
 - Seeing a trend where the host units are starting to staff up PIOs, contributing to this resource deficit.
 - Expectations for social media support are and increasing trend.
 - Training – suggestion that to push the annual needs analysis to the ICs earlier. Would also assist with the successional planning.
- Discussed surge capacity resource force experience this year. Supportive of form; awaiting feedback from out of area resources.
- Heavy Equipment Task Forces – discussed associated issues.

- Discussed IMT SOPs – continuing streamlining work.
- Discussed team successional planning.
- Discussed Eastern Area letter and team member participation. All teams have eastern area members.
- Increased USFS Pace and Scale will affect availability.
- Trend is continuing – in danger of losing another team in the next few years.
- Agreed as a group that some positions lend more to typing than others.
- Signed off multiple trainees – several out of GACC.
- Spring IMT Team Meetings – Proposing to look at changing the format a bit; smaller General Session portion and refocus timeframes.
 - Mike Granger – discussed the board taking a bigger role in the IMT Team Meeting - Steering Committee and need to address issues that arise during the year.
 - Joe – would like to be a part of that.
 - Bin Item – ICs for 2019.

Native American Crew Committee (Rob Miramontez)

- One of the biggest changes is moving into the Red Book.
- No AD pay plans attached as of yet.
- Follows the 2015 medical standards.
- Highlights – goal is 50 crews. Question on what are the actual statistics on that?
 - Kathy – six is a more accurate number.
 - Rob – will be discussing this in the plan further.
- Also says would like to have each tribe or agency staff an IA Crew – question on accuracy?
 - Kathy – reality is that three units that can staff one crew.
- Forest Service urban crews are no longer referenced in the book.
- A few additional edits expected soon. Should be finalized in the next few weeks.

Operations Committee (Corey Buhl)

- Discussed PSOG; reviewed charter and identified some Northern Rockies insights.
 - Biggest concern is that FMB does not represent the state agencies.
- Will be calling a meeting to discuss priorities after 420 trainings.
- Was working with Aviation on multiple items
 - Helena VLAT base.
 - IR concerns and alternatives.
- Also discussed ATV / UTV policy – will follow up further with Sarah. **Will make those edits and have draft policy ready for Spring meeting.**
- Priorities Trainees – desire for supervisory approval for those. Craig working with Melissa on that.
- Discussion on REM Modules – **task group formed to work on guidelines for that – briefing paper will be completed by Spring Meeting.**
 - Consensus was that it was a valuable tool; needs definition for what it is reflective of for the Northern Rockies.
- Critical Mission Task Force – task group in place to further develop that; will be seeking an IC for representation as well. **Includes multiple levels of feedback from various groups – dispatch, finance, etc. Will be ready to go prior to the spring meeting as well.**
- Heavy Equipment Boss – discussed a change to 310-1.
 - Mike Granger will be addressing further at CGAC.
- Next Ops committee meeting March 12th and 13th.

Prevention and Education Committee (Chris Barth)

- Met October 16th and 17th in Helena.
- Reviewed information sharing within the group and interaction options.
 - Will be looking into FireNet options to increase file sharing.
- Followed up on Fire Restrictions Survey.
 - Looking at increasing outreach and training.
 - Action Item to look at restrictions site changes.
 - Talked about alternative to that current site – possible storyboard option.
- Discussed parcel assessment course and wildfire risk assessment trainings.
- Update on Fire Adapted Montana – diverse group of practitioners that will exchange and work with each other to create fire adapted communities – met last week.
- Northern Rockies Strategic Fire Prevention plan – not in need of updating at this time.
- Northern Rockies strategies under restrictions and closers plan – in need of revision; goal of completions by April 2019.
 - Encourage comments and suggestion on language of Stage 1 and stage 2 restrictions; monitoring how restrictions are working and questions on boundaries, exemptions and exceptions.
 - Developing training to support restriction coordinators.
- Discussed enforcement – how and if enforcement is occurring in the GACC.
- Next meeting in the spring in Missoula

Training Committee (Jesse Best)

(Not on the call)

Zone Report Outs

North Idaho Zone

- Good sharing across interagency partners both inside and outside the zone.
- Good interaction with the “Hands Across the Border” agreement and sharing aviation resources.
- Worked well – Type 3 team stand ups.
- Aviation – had good access to aircraft due to the way the season went.
- The one short haul did work out smoothly; good outcome.
- Good coordination overall with resources.
- Standing up the Grangeville Task Force – continues to be a successful strategy.
- Shortage of teams led to utilization of NIMO – went well. Enabled sharing of type 3 team with the Kootenai.
- Liked the timing of the IC in the morning. Format wise – is there a way to just report out on 209 updates?
- One of the biggest shortages was the PIO and prevention.

Northwest Montana Zone

- High number of large fires.
- Lower numbers of starts.
- Good sharing with Canada.
- Mini-MAC stood up for about a month.

- Talked a good bit about the IC call in the AM:
 - Zone proposes moving zone call to later in the afternoon; perhaps to the MAC call to alleviate timing challenges.
- Question on what committees need zone representatives and for what purpose?
 - Mike Granger – it is up to the committees themselves to solicit representation.
- Talked at length on restrictions:
 - Much related to private lands – work with counties to obtain consistent verbiage.
 - How to deal with local government to provide some guidance on campfires.
 - **Bin Item – Prevention and Education Committee tasking for Restrictions Evaluations – more discussion needed on this item.**
- Conducting agency administrator workshop this year. Board representative invited.
- Another big change – absorbing the Plains Dispatch Unit for the DNRC; occurring over the winter and functioning by March 1st. (Plains District of the Lolo NF is going to the Missoula Dispatch Center.)

Southwest Montana Zone

- Fire Season Overview:
 - Below average for the zone (fire starts down approximately 60% across the zone), Zone MAC Calls active July 17-Sept 11, Success with Prevention Team
 - Lolo: 71 fires for 91 acres (10 year average 131 fires for 36,353 acres)
 - DNRC – SWLO: 44 fires for 23 acres (10 year average 110 fires for 2701 acres)
 - Bitterroot: 44 fires for 1082 acres; largest fire Reynolds Lake at 1,068 acres (# of starts was down 40%)
 - CSKT: 42 fires for 4033 acres; 2 large fires Garden Creek and Rattlesnake for 2,052 and 1,374 acres respectively (10 year average 56 fires for 4,942 acres)
 - Large fires on zone all managed with local T3 IMT's
- Personnel Changes:
 - Lolo:
 - Detailed Forest Supervisor: Joe Alexander
 - DNRC - SWLO:
 - ACM/Missoula Dispatch: Holly Carr
 - Bitterroot:
 - Detailed Forest Supervisor: Kurt Steele
- Vacancies:
 - Lolo:
 - Forest Supervisor
 - Three District Rangers (Ninemile, Plains/Thompson Falls – one panel expected to have recommendations for each location in the next couple weeks - and Seeley Lake)
 - Fire Planner (June 2019)
 - Forest FMO (Oct/Nov 2019)
 - Bitterroot:
 - Forest Supervisor
 - Assistant Center Manager
 - Assistant Supt IHC
 - Additional six positions at the crew lead, assistant crew lead, IA dispatcher and senior firefighter level.
- Issues/Concerns:

- Zonewide:
 - There is an effort to examine efficiencies that can be gained by combining (pairing/sharing/zoning) programs on the Bitterroot and Lolo NF's.
- Lolo:
 - Budget concerns: currently only a \$255,000 operating budget for Fire and Fuels on the Forest after the new FS budget reform has been applied.
- Significant Events:
 - Missoula Dispatch Zone
 - Some changes coming in the dispatch structure as we look to consolidate a couple of 4th tier centers.
 - In 2019, Plains/Thompson Falls and Superior Ranger Districts of the Lolo and the Clearwater Unit of the SWLO will be dispatched out of Missoula Dispatch. Plains Unit of the NWLO will be dispatched out of Kalispell.
 - Helena took over dispatching the Lincoln Field Office of the Clearwater Unit this year with no issues reported.

Central Montana Zone

(Not on the call.)

South Central Montana Zone

- Overall slow season for the zone with no Type 1 or 2 incidents. No restrictions were implemented.
- Two type 3 extended incidents (Bacon Rind and Horseshoe). They went well with great interagency cooperation at all levels.
- The zone had worked to get Bozeman Interagency Dispatch access to Gallatin and Park County tactical frequencies. This was utilized to support the Horseshoe Fire as it was emerging and provided valuable direct access for resource ordering.

Eastern Montana Zone

- Average to below average fire season.
- Dispatch side is struggling with a GS-3 PD and 90 day fire requirement.
- Scott McAvoy is taking a detail.
- Realignment of some fire programs.
- Multiple Vacancies.

North Dakota Zone

- Busy spring season; beginning to get a busy fall season.
- Lots of good cooperation across the zone working on large fires.
- Formulated some new committees and training.
- Working on a MAC plan for the zone.
- Participated on a type 2 IA crew.
- Did have the BIA contractor helicopter damaged and no longer used; contractor worked through to get an upgrade; however, carding process took a while.
- Hosted a rookie firefighter training.
- Hosted a Mini-MAC for a brief period.

Interagency Fuels Management

- Mike DeGrosky – looking for additional alternatives for prescribed burn cooperation efforts that are cost effective.
- Current Cooperative agreement is limited to \$2500 dollar amount.
- Ralph Rau – would like to see discussion on NRCG role in the management of fuels in the Northern Rockies. **Possible future action item?**
- JT Wensman – currently have a grant with BLM that expires in 2020 with no intent to renew. Would be interested in any solutions that are found.
- Diane Mann-Klager – **will provide an example of a cooperative agreement that BIA has with North and South Dakota.**
- Craig Goodell – have the option of Good Neighbor Authority been explored?
- Mike Granger – was tasked to the Fuels committee; however, is more of a Grants and Agreements issue. **Tasking - Mike DeGrosky, Mike Granger, Ken Schmid's counterpart, USFS and JT Wensman will look at Diane's example.**

Taskings and Timelines

1. Delegation of Authority for Operations and NRCC Manager
 - a. Corey Buhl – by January Conference Call
2. Leader's Intents for 2019
 - a. Diane Mann-Klager, Mike DeGrosky – by February Spring Meeting
3. Structure Protection Guidelines
 - a. Rich Cowger – by February Spring Meeting
4. MAC Plan Changes
 - a. JT Wensman, Kathy Pipkin – by February Spring Meeting
5. Mob Guide Updates (PL Descriptions)
 - a. Craig Goodell, Jake Ganieany – by February Spring Meeting
6. Out-of-Area Team Briefing Letter
 - a. Patrick Lonergan – by February Spring Meeting
7. Private Resources Letter
 - a. Mike DeGrosky – by February Spring Meeting
8. NRCG Operating Plan Revision
 - a. Craig Goodell, Kathy Pipkin – by February Spring Meeting

Conference Call Discussion

- Group discussion and consensus to skip November conference call.
 - **Next Conference Call – December 18th.**

Bin Items

- Alpha 491 course:
 - Has been refreshed.
 - Scenario driven.
 - New 491 Plus - has hourly data now; running it takes time.
 - Accuracy and quality of data is becoming much more critical.
 - Issues with weather stations need to be address quickly.
 - Northern Rockies will have a refresher sometime within the first two weeks of May. Julie Shea has taken the lead.

- Doing the first beta test last week of January – nominations are due today.
- Communicating percentiles will be important.
- Spring MAC Exercise:
 - Is there a need to conduct every year? Or should it be every other year?
 - Opportunity to include Agency Administrators in a MAC Exercise.
 - Challenging with Agency Administrators schedule.
 - Another option – other GACCs are incorporating with the M581 course.
 - M581 course is April 29-May 3rd.
 - Group discussion on positive aspects of this option and inclusion of agency administrators.
 - BOD will review and make a final decision on the December Conference Call.
- Dispatch Recruitment issues – Kathy will discuss at February Meeting.
- Restrictions Evaluations – Mike DeGrosky will communicate with the Prevention and Education Committee to ensure original tasking is being addressed.
- Team Trailers:
 - Not standardized.
 - Anaconda Job Corps may be an alternative to explore..
 - Acquired in various ways.
 - Mike Granger – BOD needs to think about how to cover this costs and provide for future maintenance.
 - Kathy Pipkin – other GACCs have acquired excess FEMA trailers.
 - Jake Ganieany – will discuss with FEMA liaison.
 - Mike DeGrosky – will also explore excess options through state agencies.
 - Ken Schmid – need a list from the teams identifying needs for BOD to review.
 - Mike Granger – Tasking of Team Trailer needs analysis for acquisition and maintenance and have ready by February Spring Meeting.
- ICs 2019:
 - Rick Connell’s team is re-applying in 2019.
 - Discussed that IC application process was approved at this meeting. IC will be expected to re-apply as well.
 - Lack of trainees, and in some cases deputies is an issue.
 - Mike DeGrosky – highlights the need for the succession plans.
- Will address the remaining Bin Items on the December call:
 - Drone Sub-committee
 - Stove-piping Contracting and IT
 - Fire Closeout Form
 - South African Crews
 - P.T.L. Critical Needs
 - Northern Rockies Management Standardization

Spring Meeting – Dates & Location

- Group Discussion and consensus to meet the last week of February in Missoula, MT.
 - Group discussion and consensus on time frames:
 - Fall Meeting
 - Group Discussion and consensus to establish fall meeting first full week of November.
 - Spring Meeting
 - Last Week of February – Tues – Thurs;

- WFAA – commitment to meet face to face has always been with the Spring NRCG Meeting and at the IMT Team Meetings

The next NRCG Conference Call will be held December 18, 2018 at 10:00 hours Mountain Time