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## Tuesday, November 3 – General Session

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

### Welcome & Introductions (Mike DeGrosky)

- Acknowledgement and appreciation for those attending and those who have performed as chairs and ICs.
- Request all remain engaged throughout the meeting. Intent is to maximize efficiency during this limited timeframe.

### NMAC Update (Aitor Bidaburu)

- NMAC continues at PL 2; conditions have moderated a bit. Trend is looking favorable.
- Availability of teams is increasing. Probability of large emerging fires is decreasing and are expecting favorable weather.
- Expressed appreciation for the Northern Rockies support for the national effort.
- Save the Date Annual NMAC/GMAC meeting January 12-14<sup>th</sup>. Will be held virtually.
- NMAC will be holding AAR next week.
- NWCG has a key item moving forward with the Wildfire Learning Portal. Training Delivery committee has a high priority mission of populating this portal. Will be key moving forward into the training season. Portal has been in the plans all along; however, Covid accelerated the process. Training Committee will need IT Support and funding support. Are considering adding a sub-committee as well.
- FMB decision regarding the pre-season preparedness requirements - waivers have ended and for the 2021 season, the goal is to resume pre-season preparedness with mitigations and prevention measures for Covid. Will distribute the memo shortly.

### Northern Rockies End of Year Report (Kathy Pipkin)

- Please review volume of work document that was added to the team file.
- Reviewed statistics and average comparisons.

## Northern Rockies Operational Update (Craig Goodell)

- Had an approximate 6,000 acre fire over the weekend near Dillon, MT. Are still seeing human caused starts; however, most are being caught small. Have had red flag warning in the GACC this last week. Are expecting favorable weather soon.
- Are participating on Incident Workforce Development Group (IWDG) and making progress towards addressing workforce development issues.
- Participated on the Northern Rockies Covid Support Group with good success providing support throughout the season. 341 fire personnel tested; 308 tested negative; 34 tested positive. Were not aware of any hospitalizations from positive cases. Good success mitigating Covid exposure within the GACC.
- Did implement a PIO at PL 3 that produced a daily product. Have received good feedback and recommendations for future implementation.
- Implemented virtual MAC exercise in early June with good success.
- Implemented MAC at PL 4 in a virtual environment.
- Implemented the Northern Rockies draw down plan and was effective, particularly at the PL 2 and 3 levels. This assisted with transition from exporting to importing resources.
- All Northern Rockies IMTs had two assignments this year. Only brought in one out of area IMT during the season. Almost all assignments were extended and this may have impacted team availability over the long term.
- Surge aircraft that were brought on by the Forest Service due to Covid did significantly enhance IA success.

## Northern Rockies Contracting Update (Tim Murphy)

- Ryan Patrick is shadowing Tim Murphy through the end of December and will begin a detail into the position in January.
- 2021 Draft Solicitation Plan – working with BLM on solicitor concerns; similar to questions from NPS. Hope is to present final product on December call for Board vote.
- Nationally Forest Service is moving forward with adding Type 2 crews to their contracts.
  - Earlier in the spring, Northern Rockies solicited units and three areas (Coeur d’Alene, Butte & Kalispell) have stepped up with willingness to host additional crews.
- **Proposal for the board to approve:**
  - Requesting Board to assign an action item for the Operations, IC and Dispatch committees to work through this spring to see if changes are needed regarding the Pre-Use Equipment & personnel inspections currently performed by the Zone Dispatch Centers.
  - The Contractual reasoning for pre-use inspections is there is no commitment to pay a vendor until the government accepts that resource.
    - Options:
      - Current no change leaving the pre-use inspection responsibility with the Zone Dispatch Centers.
      - No inspection options – potential liability issues.
      - Let the incidents do the inspections – Cons: lack of inspectors on IMTs and resources would have to travel long distances (across the Northern Rockies and/or country) to be rejected.

- Another entity other than zone dispatch manages the pre-use inspections. (i.e. contract out all inspections; caches handle inspections; Northern Rockies Contract Equipment Unit manages inspections; NRCC manages inspections, etc.)
- So far have had few issues with contractors that were sent outside the GACC. Are hearing concerns regarding how contractors were treated in California or Colorado; some regarding workers compensation and another regarding identification of place of business that required a business license. Working through claims for payment, slow payment and other issues.
- Rocky Mountain, Northern California and other GACCs are looking at developing heavy equipment task forces agreements. Five HEFTs were used within the GACC, no issues.
- Ralph Rau – Agency has changed contracting organizational structure from a Regional to National structure, putting more workload on the Fire Program. Plan is to fill the GS12 position and the Forest Service will now be funding a needed GS-11 position; however, this will come at a cost of other support positions at the AFD. Will be coming to the board to see if another agency will be able to step up and provide additional contracting support.

### Chair's Remarks (Mike DeGrosky)

- Expressed appreciation and heartfelt gratitude for Tim Murphy's long and distinguished career; particularly his involvement with NRCG over the years. Acknowledged international contributions as well.

### Northern Rockies Cache Report (Anthony Krause)

- Successfully made the transition to supporting incidents in the Covid environment.
- Provided large amounts to Colorado and California.
- Reviewed season statistics thus far.
- Are still supporting the national effort; with many items still in the field.
- Are fully stocked to support Covid mitigation items as well.
- Successful ordering and receiving timeframes.
- Working on a proposal to expand and bring items in house; thus reducing the need for additional lease space.
- Main suppliers were run down and large backlogs for parts currently exists. This will be a challenge for next year's preparedness; however, confident that it will be overcome.

### NRTC Update / Priority Trainee (Melissa Wegner)

- NRTC staff updates – Rosie Lemire is retiring December 31<sup>st</sup>. Have made a tentative job offer for the front office position that has been accepted. Billy Philips is now 100% a NRTC employee.
- Focus on bringing cancelled courses (due to both furlough and Covid) into a virtual delivery environment as much as possible.
  - NRTC is not going to charge tuition this season, in this virtual delivery.
  - Have multiple courses scheduled, with prioritization of courses in place.
  - Focus on helping zones and local units put on courses.
  - Will also have larger class sizes; intent is to take care of the current backlog that exists. Focus will be primarily on Northern Rockies; however, will open to out of GACC as well.
- Had success with the Priority Trainee program this season. Working with NRCC for availability and reporting in the new IROC program.
- Are working with the Training Delivery Committee at a national level; however, initial memo was confusing regarding primary membership makeup of the committee.

- Navigating primary focus of meeting Northern Rockies needs and also participating on this committee can be challenging.
- Have a solid plan for meeting the need and prioritization for the Northern Rockies. Mirrors national effort.
- Wildland Learning Portal does require substantial work to load courses and do have concerns regarding 508 compliance. Also, there is not a web platform for virtual delivery built within the Portal.
- Proposal – Ask is for a “Train as we fight, fight as we train” – Ask that all of the training be delivered on the Firenet365 platform; just as the IMTs and other fire support is conducted in this environment.
  - Will send the proposal once it has had an opportunity to go through the Training Committee.
  - No money ask; only requesting each agency to support the use of this platform.
  - Rick Connell – Concerns over Firenet365 documentation and file structure standardization.
  - Kathy Pipkin – Training Development Group has approached business committee for Firenet365 regarding this same proposal. It has been passed back for further discussion due to confusion within the Training Development Group.

## Northern Rockies Team IT Update (Patrick Murphy)

- Reviewed report out in pre-reading materials.
- Program has undergone organizational structure changes. These resulted in being moved under a fire group within the CIO branch. Transition is now complete. Actions are now geared more towards national support.
- Law is driving some of these changes, including those related to equipment procurement.
- Policy impacts also restrict the use of Forest Service laptops from what has historically occurred.
- IMTs will now need to take on maintenance and transportation of IT trailers, in addition to taking on coordination of ITSS positions.
- Will not be able to provide laptops for training as historically has been done. Laptops will be transferred to dispatch centers.
- Will be able to maintain some support for the IMTs, mostly recruitment of ITSS individuals.
- Tara Dana and Patrick Murphy will largely be working on contracts and SME work. Will be limited in capacity to provide support for the region.
- Future potential to advocate for efficient solutions and additional IT support options.
- Aaron Thompson – IT and connectivity was a large topic and issue from this season. Has been brought up as a national concern as well. Look forward to future discussion in an effort to prepare the region for next season.
- Greg Morris – Expressed appreciation for all of the IT support over the years.

## AFD Operating Plan (Ryan Patrick)

- *(See financial plan in pre-reading materials.)*
- Intent is to simplify the plan.
- This requires careful examination of plan specifics on an individual component basis.
- Recommend identifying each agencies’ specific number of individuals that are required for the plan’s process.
- Recommend identifying what additional funding needs exist.
- These actions will allow for transparency and will provide an avenue for prioritization.
- Aaron Thompson – Would like to examine the plan to identify agencies that are over-contributing.

Emphasized importance of identifying workload in this process.

- Mike DeGrosky – Appreciate the work and effort that has gone into this plan. Fair share approach has historically been aspirational and a source of conflict at times. Agree it is time for a different approach and open to exploring that option.
- Ralph Rau – Agree with the simplification effort. Careful attention needs to be given to the specifics of current agency budget realities. Having an efficient prioritization process would assist the Board in efforts to meet geographic area needs. Support taking a more holistic approach than have taken in the past.
- Mike Granger – Will be challenging for smaller agencies to support more contribution. Emphasized the importance of maintaining accounting contribution data.
- **Propose distributing a rough draft to the Board for review.** Will strive for a December delivery.
  - Mike DeGrosky – Open to review of a draft.
  - Ralph Rau – Also support.

## NR IMT Management (Aaron Thompson / Mike DeGrosky)

- Aaron Thompson – IMT Management is a large portion of the Board’s workload. IMT realities are changing rapidly.
  - What can the Board do to support Northern Rockies IMTs?
  - Do all understand and agree as to what the IC Selection Process is? Does this process need to be reviewed for additional specifics?
  - Are all involved receiving the support they need regarding the IMT Roster Selection Process?
  - Expressed the desire for the Board to assist the IMTs with succession plans.
  - Does the GACC have the appropriate number of IMTs?
  - Should the WFMT participate in the NR Type 2 IMT rotation?
  - **Propose creating a Northern Rockies IMT committee and survey to identify lessons learned – successes and challenges. Committee would be comprised of Board members.**
  - How does the Board carve out time to discuss IMT Management?
  - Mike DeGrosky – Have completed most of these items. Held an IMT summit approximately three years ago. Have made progress since then. Summit does not need to be a one time event. Expressed desire to communicate in this capacity again with the ICs. Propose attack these issues Aaron Thompson mentioned by conducting another summit. This would address issues identified in this current operating environment.
  - Patrick Lonergan – Expressed support for a Northern Rockies IMT committee. Value found in having a group that has some limited authority to address issues and implement solutions.
  - Ralph Rau – Did find value in the previous summit. Changes and solutions were implemented from that event. Would not want to see a sub-committee that does not include all representation, including line engagement, and would need to pay particular attention to transparency.
  - Rich Cowger – Agree with Aaron Thompson; expressed that the previous summit had almost a reactionary component; would like this to be a pro-active approach prior to entering a crisis situation. Team Liaison engagement may need to be carefully examined as well. Feel a specific committee that could identify needs of the teams and bring those back to the Board would be of value.
  - Mike Granger – Issues from the summit three years ago have not gone away; and, in fact have become more critical over time. Do feel team liaison engagement is crucial. Agree with Mike DeGrosky and Ralph Rau regarding the previous summit. Did follow through with several

- items and processes from that event. Concerns around ensuring that the entire Board is involved with decision making. Acknowledged the value in having a small committee that could identify needs of the IMTs and then report back to the Board for decision making in an Executive Session.
- Mike DeGrosky – Express that over time, NRCG meetings have evolved to discuss more needs than just IMT support. In the past, this has not always been the case. Prefer all the Board members to have open discussions with the ICs, rather than a small group that does not have all agencies or all IMTs represented.
  - Rick Connell shared the notes from the IMT Summit and the IC Committee charter for all to download. Recommend that a letter encouraging IC application come down as it has historically.
    - Kathy Pipkin – Will be issuing letter soon; however, need to know if the Board wishes to revamp the process or proceed as previously?
    - Mike DeGrosky – Would like IC feedback regarding this topic.
    - Rick Connell – Process needs to reflect specific needs on desired information for decision making.
    - Ralph Rau – Current process includes some steps that were put in place due to necessity, including agency line officer commitment of support for individual applying.
    - Mike Granger – Agency Administrators do have a strong interest in this particular topic. Due to the timeline involved, recommend any changes be discussed during the next IMT Summit.
    - Bob Fry – Had submitted a couple of names a few of years ago and have not received any feedback on those. Would appreciate clarification regarding the next steps.
    - Joe Sampson – Support the idea of this conversation being held during the IMT Summit. Expressed idea that application process is rather lengthy.
    - Aaron Thompson – Recommend having the IMT immediate needs Executive Session prior to the end of the year.
    - Ralph Rau – Emphasized the need to identify scheduling timeframes for specific portions of the process.
    - Kathy Pipkin – Letter as is does contain an interview process; should that be kept?
      - Mike DeGrosky – will discuss tomorrow after more review overnight.
  - Dan Warthin – Identified that some of the consternation with the IC application process has been from changes that have occurred over the last couple of years. (i.e. retirements, programs utilized, etc.) Support the idea of another IMT Summit.
  - Joe Sampson – Favor review of previous summit. Processes developed throughout that summit do not necessary fix the problem. (i.e. dwindling IC applicant pool) Expressed that IMT management throughout the Northern Rockies could benefit from improvement.
  - Rich Cowger – Envision the committee not in a decision making capacity, but rather in more of an issue identification and option exploration role. More of a working group capacity to help identify and consolidate.
  - Aaron Thompson – Would like to identify when time can be set aside for these discussions that were covered above.

- Mike DeGrosky – Motion to schedule two meetings: One to discuss immediate concerns including retirement of Mike Almas and another to schedule another IMT Summit for joint discussion time with the ICs.
  - All present expressed support.
  - Motion Approved.
  - Action Item: Mike DeGrosky – may set aside December meeting for IMT Immediate Needs and Concerns discussion. Could extend to a four hour meeting with this being the only topic.
- Almas IC Position
  - Mike DeGrosky – Item tabled to a separate Executive Session meeting.
- Turman’s IMT Reapplication
  - Mike DeGrosky – Item tabled to a separate Executive Session meeting.

## HRSP Coordinator Needs for Northern Rockies

- Key individual that provides this for the region is retiring on December 31<sup>st</sup>. Individual is willing to carry this workload as an AD for a while; however, there is a limited resource pool regarding a long-term solution.
- Is an interagency concern regarding ability to support region’s IMTs.
- Will distribute a short briefing paper regarding this issue to the Board for review.
- Will need to be addressed on a future agenda.

## Wednesday, November 4 – General Session

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### IC Committee Report Out (Rick Connell)

- *(See Report Out in pre-reading materials)*
- Have not had a meeting since the extended fire season.
- Did a couple of workshops last spring with risk management.
- Initiated a regional response template regarding Covid mitigation.
- Assisted with the regional Covid response and management plan.
- In June had two teams participate in the National Covid simulation.
- Responded to a tasking to identify resources needed to expand and support a Covid outbreak.
- Teams worked to obtain additional funding and equipment for virtual incident management support.
- All teams received two assignments.
- Discussed committee chair and vice-chair positions being two-year commitments.
- Mike DeGrosky – Expressed appreciation for leadership and acknowledged all the work the committee has accomplished.

### Incident Commander’s Report Outs:

#### NR Team 1 – Goicoechea

- Supported Australia response early on.
- Were pulled in to support initial regional Covid response.
- Prior to season, team already had approximately 60 days of IMT work completed.
- First assignment during season went well and appreciated the virtual support.



- At end of August, IMT went to SQF Complex in California. Spent a total of 25 days supporting this incident.
- Challenging season with many issues that were exposed in the system.
- Very much appreciated the extra funding for the audio and video equipment; it was very helpful.
- Available for another year as an IC. Aaron Thompson has also completed his IC task book.

### NR Team 2 – Turman

- Became active in late August.
- Were able to observe season prior to mobilization.
- First incident was near the coast and had a great deal of county involvement.
- Were able to utilize and continue previously implemented Covid protocols.
- Second assignment involved multiple agencies and eventually was zoned out with two teams assigned. Was a high complexity incident.
- Had approximately 40 days providing IMT support.
- Interesting functioning with ICP located separate from the base camp. Poses unique challenges and some benefits.
- Have been working with Scott Schuster, training this individual as an IC. Turman will remain until Schuster is fully qualified.

### NR Team 3 – Almas

- Retired September 30<sup>th</sup> from the Forest Service; are still interested in continuing to be an IC. No current IC trainee.
- Team met weekly beginning in April.
- Never received the extra \$2,000 funding for audio/visual equipment.
- Had two assignments. First was to a highly impacted Covid area. Were also asked to take on a wilderness fire as well. Did have a positive Covid test on that incident; was interesting the way it was handled.
- Second assignment was to a Complex with four fires.
- Took a long time to obtain computers. This required some team members to stay extra days to catch up.

### NR Team 4 – Connell

- Participated in national Covid exercises and pre-season planning.
- First assignment was spread out. Did not have any Covid cases while there.
- Were able to utilize the SMART program; was a positive experience.
- Utilized virtual employees on the incident. This came with technical challenges.
- Conducting interactions with Agency Administrators in a remote environment was challenging.
- Second incident was in California. Did have structure and vehicle losses. Took over from a type one team and worked with multiple Department of Defense resources. This provided additional learning opportunities around FEMA involvement.
- Would like clarification if there are common widget expectations from IMTs. (Example – Contractor payments.)
- Did have a Covid coordinator on site.
- Have one more year in IC commitment. Deputy also has another year left. Do have one individual that may apply as an IC trainee.
- Recruitment for non-operations individuals is crucial for IMT sustainability, especially in the Covid

environment. Need assistance from agency administrators to fulfill this need.

- Greg Morris – Covid environment has completely changed the way logistical business is conducted.
- Mike DeGrosky – May be a good tasking for the IC committee to identify the critical resource needs.
- Tim Murphy - Nationally there is a logistics group meeting virtually every Tuesday to discuss 2020 Logistics issues and solutions. Anyone can join the group. Might consider recognizing a few Northern Rockies Logistics folks to be part of this National effort and report back to IMTs.
- Mike Granger – Emphasized importance of capturing lessons learned from each of the IMTs.

## NR Team 5 – Sampson

- Interaction between the ICs and the Board has been good, with good relationships established.
- ICs coordinated and communicated well over the season to support everyone's rosters.
- Had pre-season meetings that were conducted virtually.
- Had two assignments totaling 30 days.
- Stood up an in-GACC short team, freeing up an additional team to support the national suppression effort.
- Covid informational sharing was coordinated well.
- Had four Covid scenarios on first assignment. In the end, all worked out sufficiently.
- On the second incident, the county was very dialed in regarding Covid.
- Had good success mobilizing trainees on both incidents. Were able to sign off several positions.
- Virtual check in and demob has both challenges and benefits. Connectivity is a significant issue.
- Were able to mobilize key resources much faster.
- Does take roughly twice the staff to accomplish the same work in the current environment.
- Had good success with public information distribution.
- Concerns over this season's and future IT support needs.
- Firenet365 continues to be a significant issue. Specifically, who does what.
- Struggled with coordination; specifically, close out of rosters, reassignment of resources, and excessing resources.
- Struggled with needed specialized resources not being made available.
- Had Corey Buhl as an IC trainee. Sampson will be in IC role for the foreseeable future. Plans are for Corey Buhl to be a deputy. Support his gaining additional experience by future mobilization with another team.
- Corey Buhl – Concerns over sustainability of sharing individuals between teams.

## NR Team 6 – Fry

- Virtual interaction promoted efficient communications pre-season; poses challenges during season.
- Virtual check in / demobilization processes do need to be reconciled.
- Share concerns over individuals that are shared on multiple teams.
- Had two assignments this year.
- Was able to have a qualified deputy.
- First incident was a challenging assignment.
- Had a Covid challenge in the IMT. Had a positive case in an individual that had already returned home. This required quarantining individuals who were already in the process of demobilization, some already in travel status.
- As IC, committed on a year to year basis. The time commitment is significant. Have identified a qualified deputy IC, Jay Winfield, and would like to see him take the team. Have two solid deputy IC

trainees also.

- Jay Winfield – Concerns of IMT shortages nationally. Some fires in rehab were holding resources to complete rehab activities and this proved to be challenging to obtain needed resources nationally.

## NR Team 7 – Thompson

- Spent a lot of time during pre-season preparing for Covid-19 planning.
- Had meetings every week to facilitate information sharing among the command and general staff.
- Had an IMT member die from Covid-19 early in the season. It was four days from onset to death. This impacted the team on multiple levels.
- Had notification of a positive case after IMT had left a fire which illuminated the importance of good communication around Covid.
- Had two assignments and struggled with connectivity issues on both. Issue needs to be address before hand and careful consideration needs to be given to this issue when decisions are being made. Required some team members to stay additional days for cleanup.
- Utilized fixed wing UAS and found it was a very good tool. Had a good experience and would order again.
- Decisions made early on assisted with overcoming logistical challenges.
- Team is still viable for the long term; however, have lost a few members due to personal choices.
- Work / Life balance was a challenge this year. Would ask the question effectiveness of pre-season planning, due to all the changing information.
- Intend to apply as an IC again this year.
- Concerns over continuation of team trailers; feel these are a valuable resource.
- Mike DeGrosky – Express appreciation for all ICs and IMT members; acknowledged unique and challenging environment that was experienced by all this year.

## MOU Amendment Request for Overhead – Wildfire Defense Systems (Tim Murphy)

- Issue has morphed since initial letter was received.
- Ask is to expand training MOU to include 300 level courses.
- Had a conversation with Cal Fire regarding this type of business. They had an incident with another similar company that resulted in a negative outcome.
- Wondering if this is not a national issue to be brought to NWCG. Feel the issue is broader than just this one company.
- Recommendation is to take this issue to CGAC and see if there is enough interest to be addressed nationally.
- Melissa Wegner – No other GACCs are providing this currently.
- Greg Morris – Agree it is a national issue. What is the purpose for higher levels of training? Are they going to function in those positions or are they intending to manage their resources? If they are only managing and keeping track of the resources, do they truly need this qualification or would an internal title function in this capacity?
- Tim Murphy – No intent of providing resources; only want to manage their own resources by meeting NWCG, paying attention to span of control.
- Mike DeGrosky – No need expressed here for modification of MOU to follow NWCG. They can utilize NWCG, for their own resources, if they so choose.
- Tim Muprhy – Think they do have a few individuals that are picked up as EFFs or ADs. Are vetted with qualifications at time of hire.

- Mike Granger – Do feel that this is a complex issue, due to the NWCG qualification aspect.
- Diane Mann-Klager – Concerns over expectations that are associated with NWCG qualifications.
- Action Item: Request recommendation from Tim Murphy and Melissa Wegner in writing to be distributed to the board for review that will then be put to a virtual approval or disapproval vote conducted by Pam Jolly.

## Committee Report Outs:

### Business (Mike DeGrosky for Wanemah Hulett / Amber Honsaker)

- Will turn out a full report after the committee meets on the November 23 – 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Please advise the chair if there are any concerns that need to be brought forth. Please send those in email format by the 18<sup>th</sup>.

### Dispatch (Mardell Dahlin)

- New Chair is David Lee from Miles City Dispatch Center.
- Is looking to fill the co-chair position.
- Going to review and discuss virtual expanded dispatch plan and how implementation went.

### Native American Crew (Bryce Rogers)

- NAC – FMOs would like more input. Will be working on this over the winter. Aiming for spring (around April) to obtain signature.
- Are restructuring within region - fire will have its own branch; will no longer be underneath forestry.
- Still without an AFMO and fire operations specialist.

### Operations (Andy Schell)

- Have had quite a few taskings to work on.
- Reviewed taskings and current workings. (*See Report Out in pre-reading materials*)
- Appreciate Tim Murphy's contribution over the years.

### Prevention and Education (Christopher Barth)

- (*See Report Out in pre-reading materials*)
- Will continue to be the chair; Vice-chair is Naaman Horn.
- Successful spring coordination and communication.
- Were able to include additional partners and cooperators into the prevention network.
- Experienced good value in consistent messaging.
- Covid pandemic did have dramatic impacts on some of the events that were planned.
- There was a Prevention and Education Team out of the Southwest Zone.
- Good success with multiple outreach efforts involving various prevention campaign messaging.
- There was some effort with fire restriction coordination, in addition to training that was offered regarding the website. Did have a number of restrictions across the area, some that went late into the season. Committee is looking at those for analysis. Will be working on plans as to how to address this challenge.
- Were not able to hold a virtual fall meeting due to the extended fire season.
- Are going to be holding a virtual meeting on December 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- Do have a number of new members in the committee. Are still missing some (see report out under pre-reading materials).

## Training (Tuesday Kimball)

- *(See Report Out in pre-reading materials)*
- Were able to successfully accomplish red card issuance of qualifications through national waivers that were put in place.
- Majority of courses were canceled at both regional and local levels.
- Priority is on critical training needs.
- Concerns including virtual delivery and technical ability issues around the capabilities of local levels to be able to successfully deliver critical level training virtually. Funding concerns for local level critical training identified as well.
- Will be transitioning with another zone representative as chair. Individual has not yet been identified.

## Zone Report Outs:

### North Idaho (Mike Behrens)

- Have not had an opportunity for a fall meeting due to the extended fire season.
- Quite season in the zone, in general.
- Effective use of zone Type 3 IMTs. Will be working on both alternates for ICs and assistance with working in the virtual environment.
- Good coordination with dispatch centers, partners, and cooperators.
- High Covid rates in the zone were a concern.
- Coeur d'Alene Dispatch Center did move into new facility.
- Concerns over voice over IP for both radio and phones, specifically backup systems. Now have connectivity issues in areas where there have historically been none.
- Are having some changes in interagency membership and leadership within the zone.
- Expressed appreciation to vice-chair.

### Northwest Montana (Dylan Kopitzke)

- Will be meeting next week; did not meet during the summer.
- Season went relatively well.
- Reviewed PL 4 step ups within the zone for the different dispatch centers.
- Did have a few monitor fires during the season.
- Did have a Northern Rockies IMT on the Callahan Fire.
- Appreciate the guidance and effort that the Northern Rockies put out early on that led to successes regarding Covid.
- Were able to utilize local resources and some contractors within the zone this year. This was particularly helpful during the latter part of the year.
- Appreciated the ability to share prevention resources and bolster those efforts.
- Also appreciated the surge aviation resources that were available this year.
- Received pressure from private timber companies regarding restrictions. This led to increased communication and stronger relationships being built.
- Increased tourism and public lands recreation.
- Did not receive the typical lightning tracks that have been seen historically.

### Southwest Montana (Karl Nikoleyczik)

- Relatively light fire season.
- Had one Type 2 IMT, Thompson on the Lolo National Forest.

- Support from both the cache and coordination center went well.
- Brought in a Covid coordinator with much success.
- Stood up Zone Prevention Team; relied heavily on virtual communications.
- Zone Chair will be changing to Colt Mortenson and vice-chair will be Mark Wilson on the Bitterroot National Forest.

### Central Montana (John Huston)

- Not participating in this meeting; possibly due to fire response.

### South Central Montana (Patrick Lonergan)

- Not participating in this meeting; possibly due to fire response.

### Eastern Montana (Derek Yeager)

- Not participating in this meeting; possibly due to fire response.

### North Dakota (Justin Kincaid)

- Will be meeting on November 18<sup>th</sup>.
- Are trying to get a Fire Danger Operating Plan together across all agencies. Accumulating data is proving challenging.
- Striving to come together as a group. Are looking at how to build on type 3 organizations.
- Striving for shared stewardship as well.
- Working on dispatching protocols and staffing.
- Established daily calls initially regarding Covid coordination and moved to monthly as the season progressed.
- Slow season overall.
- Working on a charter update for the North Dakota Fire Council.
- Continuing to build on local training protocols.
- Expressed appreciation to Tim Murphy for all his dedication and effort.

### Recommendation for Operations Committee (Tim Murphy)

- Recommendation to form a task group between the Operations, IC and Dispatch committees to review the Northern Rockies pre-use inspection procedures by the 2021 fire season.
  - Mike DeGrosky – Motion to accept recommendation and assign tasking.
  - Josh Harvey seconds the motion.
  - All present support.
  - Motion approved.
- **Action Item: Mike DeGrosky will compile a task order.**

### Bin Items

- Mike DeGrosky - Proposing December meeting be extended to four hours and solely address IMT Immediate Needs, IC applications and roster discussion.
  - Propose two – two hour block timeframes. 0900 – 1100 hours; 1300 – 1500 hours.
    - Executive Session (BOD only) in AM for IC selections

- General Session (with all IC's) in afternoon
  - No opposition expressed.
  - **Action Item: Meeting will be scheduled and agenda compiled as stated above.**
- Aaron Thompson – Was contacted by the Idaho State FMO for BLM and he and his State Director are interested in becoming involved with the NRCG.
  - Ralph Rau – Identified that their leadership is part of this GACC. Do have a service first organization in that area. There is a lot of BLM ground covered through agreement and offset. Do feel there is merit to the interest and engagement.
  - Aaron Thompson – There is no official delegation for Montana to cover for Idaho; has always just been a verbal agreement. Have already had conversations around participation versus a delegation of authority.
  - Rich Cowger – Would like clarification on what, if any, would be the voting capacity? Would it be one or two votes for BLM?
  - Diane Mann-Klager – On the WFAAs, have left it at a one voice per agency level. NRCG has differed in this aspect.
  - Mike Granger – Similar situation with FWS; currently are the representative for them. Have received little feedback from them regarding issues or concern. Prefer one representative per agency.
  - Aaron Thompson – As far as a path forward, no decision is needed today. Brought up as an awareness factor so all would know the conversations were occurring.

## Thursday, November 5 – General Session

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### Taskings:

#### Delegation of Authority for Operations and NRCC Manager

- Mike Granger will review, compile a draft, and submit for BOD review prior to the January meeting.

#### Leader's Intents for 2021

- Chair of WFAA and Chair of the NRCG will compile a draft and submit for review at a timeframe to be determined this afternoon. Preferably prior to the February meeting.

#### Structure Protection Guidelines

- Rich Cowger will review, compile a draft, and submit for BOD review prior to the January meeting.

#### Out-of-Area Team Briefing Letter

- Ralph Rau will review, compile a draft, and submit for BOD review prior to the January meeting.

### NR GMAC 2020 AAR (Mike DeGrosky)

- Mike Granger – Expressed appreciation for the virtual MAC exercise and felt it set the organization up for success.
- Mike DeGrosky – Established well that purpose is to prioritize incidents, allocate resources and assist the NRCC with decision making.
- Ralph Rau – Felt the virtual environment was a tremendously effective structure and would look towards that as a model for the future.

- Patrick Lonergan – Have received concerns regarding statement that it was a public meeting and then asking the Zone Chairs to step off the meeting.
  - Mike DeGrosky – Have heard similar concerns; do feel this could be improved upon in the future. Towards the end, this practice was discontinued.
  - Ralph Rau – Not opposed to Zone Chairs remaining on for the duration; however, there are important delineations between agency employees and public individuals.
  - Mike DeGrosky – Important to distinguish the members of the MAC are delegated as the decision makers.
  - Dan Warthin – Suggestion to include Zone Chairs in the pre-season virtual MAC exercise.
  - Kathy Pipkin – In the past, when the MAC went into an Executive Session, the MAC has requested others not attend so that sensitive issues may be discussed. Clarification in advance of the meeting to the MAC coordinator could alleviate this issue in the future.
  - Greg Morris – May be best to separate the Zone Report outs into a separate meeting from the Executive Session for MAC.
- Aaron Thompson – Agree that virtual platform was an efficient way to conduct business for the MAC. Would like to work on increasing Zone participation. Also felt the BOD delved a bit too much into specific resource allocation rather than relying on staff recommendations.
- Mike DeGrosky – Echoed the efficiency of the virtual MAC platform.
- Diane Mann-Klager – There are ways in virtual platforms to limit meeting attendance. Did the MAC see good agency administrator participation?
  - Craig Goodell – Felt there was tremendous value in having the agency administrators participate in the virtual MAC exercise.
  - Ralph Rau – Feel that there has been increased engagement over the last few years by the agency administrators. Also appreciated the PIO information that was provided to the agency administrators by NRCC. It was of great value.
  - Aaron Thompson – Appreciate the engagement of the agency administrator; gives all a better overview of the larger picture.
  - Rick Connell – Support engaging the agency administrators in the virtual MAC exercises at all levels.
  - Greg Morris – Feel that the engagement with the agency administrators has increased over the last few years also. Increases two way understanding regarding decision making at all levels.
  - Mike DeGrosky – Appreciative of the agency administrator engagement and felt the level of engagement was appropriate and adjusted to meet the needs.
  - Bryce Rogers – Expressed appreciation for the engagement of the agency administrators. Would ask that inclusion of all be continued into the future.
- Mike DeGrosky – Felt there was good resolution to the PIO issue. Need is at the NRCC level, not at the NRCG level. Resolution worked well. Will be able to remove that item from action item list.
- Mike DeGrosky – Appreciate what all did regarding balancing regional needs with the national needs.
- Mike DeGrosky – Appreciated the approach to staffing the MAC; including the MAC representatives and MAC coordination.
- Greg Morris – Also appreciated the work by the PIO. Improvement could be made regarding bringing in specialize task forces and increasing the understanding of the relationship to the MAC. Would like feedback regarding the remote SIT process. Additionally, would like increase awareness of specialize efforts such as the air quality coordination work that was accomplished this season.
- Rick Connell – Regarding the PIO function, what is the intent of that product as it was not readily



available to all on the internet.

- Mike DeGrosky – Intent was to relieve media pressure off NRCC and to provide internal agency information to decision makers.
- Mike Granger – Regarding Remote SIT, it was tremendously helpful during both incidents in California. Received feedback that Remote SIT will be heavily leaned upon in the future.
- Patrick Lonergan – Also found tremendous value in the Remote SIT function and have received feedback from all IMTs that have utilize this function that it was highly valued.
- Craig Goodell – Expressed appreciation for the funding that allowed the Remote SIT pre-season work and training that was needed to be accomplished and set the Remote SIT up for success. This function was particularly valuable to the type 3 IMT organizations. This function also provided Firenet365 support regarding filing structure. Regarding the PIO product, individual was asked to produce a product that could be utilized for both internal and external individuals. Product was distributed via email. Have identified some areas for potential information delivery improvement.
- Mike DeGrosky – Expressed appreciation for the work and effort for the predictive services briefings in a challenging and complex weather environment.
- Coleen Haskell – With the smoke coordination efforts, were able to leverage NWS social media platforms to increase messaging and getting information out to the public. Also, feel there was value in the DIRT1 bird products regarding early detection for initial attack.
- Greg Morris – Would like clarification regarding the decision to be early adopters of the new system that Matt Jolly presented.
- Craig Goodell – Early in the season began putting a group together to work with Matt Jolly regarding this new product; however, due to scheduling and product revisions, implementation was not possible before the end of the season. Will be looking to continue with this work moving forward into the future.
- Ralph Rau – Expressed appreciation for the Remote SIT function. Did put this group in for a Secretary's award; however, they did not receive it. Important to note that the majority of the individuals that make up this function are all Forest Service individuals. This function is not part of any of these individual's regular jobs. For this function to be sustainable, the function will need to be supported. Would be prudent to support this in an interagency capacity. Some of the individuals may not be available next year. Individuals capacity may be limited due to the needs of their regular jobs. Important to note that the Fire Director does not have direct say over the regular positions of the individuals that make up this functional area. Remote SIT currently has a very tenuous status at this point.
- Craig Goodell – Important to acknowledge the Remote SIT's contributions to the national efforts as well.
- Diane Mann-Klager – If this issue is going to be elevated, would like to see a briefing provided to the WFAAs prior to the discussion.
- Mike DeGrosky – Appreciate the feedback and please send any further items for attention in an email.

## Chair Rotation Discussion (Mike DeGrosky)

- Chair rotation is scheduled at the end of the year.
- Schedule has IDL as next in rotation, with Montana State Fire Chiefs' Association as the vice-chair.
- Earlier in the year, due to staffing turnover, the IDL was offered the courtesy to skip as the incoming chair in this rotation.
- Since that time, the staffing situation at IDL is now more solidified and would like to extend the opportunity to IDL to continue with scheduled rotation and assume the chair in 2021.

- Josh Harvey – Would feel comfortable moving forward as the chair at this time; with the understanding that there would be heavy reliance on the experience and knowledge found within this board.
- Mike DeGrosky – Motion to return to the original chair rotation.
- Mike Granger – Seconds the motion.
- Rich Cowger – Comfortable with the vice-chair position.
- No opposition express to this course of action.

### Action Items Review (Mike DeGrosky)

- *(See Action Items listing updated November 6, 2020)*
- Reviewed and updated Action Items listing on an item by item basis.
- Removed completed or no longer applicable items.