



Northern Rockies Coordinating Group

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

Board of Directors Conference Call Agenda

Tuesday, August 13, 2019

Conference Call Line: 888-844-9904 | Access Code 3599209#

Participants:

Board Members: Ray Hart; Aaron Thompson, Jake Ganieany, Mike DeGrosky (Chair), Rich Cowger, Patrick Lonergan, Vern Burdick, Dan Warthin, Ralph Rau

Deputies and Others: Bob Jones, Greg Morris, Craig Goodell, Tim Murphy, Kathy Pipkin, Aitor Bidaburu, Mike Richmond, Julie Polutnik, Warren Appelhans, Melissa Wegner, Dave Williams, Tracey Nimlos, Billy Philips, Pam Jolly

Purpose: Welcome and a reminder that this is a public meeting for the purpose of conducting government business.

NWCG/NMAC Update: (Aitor Bidaburu)

- At a very low PL 3 nationally; things have moderated since precipitation last weekend
- Taking actions to release a number of CWN airtankers
- CGAG memo regarding HEQB is moving forward with the recommendations. Will be discussed at NWCG next week; may go to OTC committee as a tasking

Predictive Services Update:

Meteorological: (Michael Richmond / Coleen Haskell)

Will remain dry in the western half of the region through Thursday, then a week trough will move through. North Idaho should stay dry with near normal temperatures. Will be warming up and drying out substantially in the near future as a four corners high sets up.

Fire Behavior: (Warren Appelhans)

- Comparable rain event years - 2004 and 2009
- Reviewing the input into the 209 from the fuels pull down menu; issue will be brought to the SIT – 209 committee's attention by Julie Polutnik. Issue may require a white paper in the future. Will be distributing interim guidance to the field.

GACC Situation: (Julie Polutnik)

- Since last call have had 554 new fires for 11,710 acres
- Year to Date have had 1,504 fires for 25,061 acres
- 10 year average – 1,735 fires for 174,010 acres
- In 2009, PL was 2 on Sept. 27nd then moved to PL 3

Northern Rockies GACC and Operational Updates:

NRCG Operations (Craig Goodell)

- Still have a significant amount of personel out over the geographic area
- NR Team 3 Almas was extended; transferred command this morning and close out will be in Helena at 1600 today (Jake Ganieany is attending the close out for the BOD.)



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- NR Team 5 Sampson – has three to four more days of indirect line construction before turning back the incident back over to a T3. Transfer of command and close out will be on Saturday. Details will be forthcoming. (USFS will cover this close out. Ralph Rau will provide a name to Craig Goodell.)
- Miles City jump base will be open today; there has been an uptick in activity on the east side
- NRCC Assistant Center Manager position has closed; hope to have a cert by Aug. 23rd
- Have been working with remote SIT out of Missoula (Billy Philips)
 - Have put together a briefing paper and will distribute
 - Was established prior to PL 3 due to numerous requests; at first was funded directly by incident codes and then by a regional support code
- Priority Trainee Program (Melissa Wegner)
 - Moved 23 Priority Trainees through the program
 - Worked with an additional 16 other Priority Trainees for out of GACC mobilization
 - Moved an approximate total of 39 Priority Trainees so far this season

NRCC Update (Kathy Pipkin)

- Have rotated NRCC staff through out of area assignments
- Dingle Act has instigated multiple requests to the IROC group reference resource tracking. It is also bringing about questioning of associated dispatch definitions. There will be more to come on this issue.
- Anniversary of Justin Beebe's death; there will be a moment of silence observed at 1600 hours.

Contracting Updates: (Tim Murphy)

- Last week was the peak of contractor use; roughly 50% of contractors were in use
- To date have not sent any contractors outside of the GACC
- Two weeks ago attended a Wildfire Defense Systems meeting in Bozeman. Important to note how this corporation interacts with agency contractors.

Safety Updates: (Dave Williams)

- There have been a fair number of accidents and injuries uploaded to the lessons learned site.

Follow up on Old Business:

ATV / UTV Policy Update (Aaron Thompson)

- Verbiage has been vetted by the Business Committee and the Operations Committee
- Discussion that terminology in the memo does not match terminology utilized on the forms. ("ATV" utilized in memo; "UTV" utilized in the form.)
- Motion to approve with the suggested verbiage match edits
- **Approved – unanimous consent**



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Critical Mission Resource Group (CMRG) Update (Craig Goodell)

- There was a slight language change; clarified what “fully self-sufficient” meant
- Motion to approve as submitted
- **Approved – unanimous consent**

New Business:

Agency Administrators and IMT Rotation (Mike DeGrosky)

- Feedback received that line officers and others have been overhead making statements in meetings referencing system manipulation in order to receive a specific, desired team
- Request to all BOD to monitor and ensure each unit mitigates this behavior

IMT Rotation (Patrick Lonergan)

- Is it appropriate for the board to implement board discretionary procedures to ensure teams who have not had an assignment are given opportunity for any future mobilization priority this season?
- Group discussion that either alternative could be problematic
- **Action Item: Craig Goodell will talk with the ICs to obtain their thoughts and then email the BOD as soon as possible.**

Frequency of NRCG Calls (Group Discussion)

- Decision to remain at one call per month until activity warrants additional calls

Review of Action Items: (Mike DeGrosky)

- Postponed until the September call; ask for that call will be for all to review the action items assigned to them. A comprehensive review of the Action Items listing will be conducted at that time.

Round Robin – Updates from Agency Participants:

BIA NW – (Not on the call)

BIA GP – Have been receiving precipitation; no significant fire activity.

BIA RM – Fairly quiet; have had some small fires and IA and a few short term requests. Still have a few helicopters; one may go to the Southwest to help with prescribed burning

BLM – Yesterday a fire lookout employee possibly suffered a stroke; currently is in the hospital in Billings. Did have a pair of duals come off an engine while it was going a slow rate of speed. Minor damage to the engine. Last week a BLM employee in North Dakota was killed when struck by lightning. Due to the Dingle Act, the BLM has gone to location based services – GPS locators on specific vehicles

FWS – (Not on the call)

IDL – (Not on the call)



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MT DES – Worked with the DNRC for approval on the North Hills fire; did a good job getting information submitted. Was also able to gather information for Horsefly as well, if it had been needed. Hiring another person for mitigation; should onboard next month.

MT DNRC – Still having some IA, especially on the east side. Will be losing a large amount of seasonal workforce; however, aviation resources will remain staffed for seven day a week coverage. Have focused on some hiring; on the cusp of hiring a training, safety and workforce development individual. There are currently lots of moving parts around hiring.

Montana State Fire Chiefs – Staying ready and participating in a lot of venues; IA on a couple of relatively small fires

Montana Fire Wardens – No new updates at this time

MT Peace Officers – (Not on the call)

ND FS – (Not on the call)

NPS – Two small fires at Yellowstone National Park currently; largest is 29 acres and is being managed for multiple objectives. Did have a historic lookout destroyed by lightning. AAR for the Holmes incident is on the lessons learned site. Hired two regional communications specialists.

USFS – Fire activity relatively light; there was a steady trickle of individuals that provided support outside of the GACC. Do still have lots of work going on in the GACC. Have some summer prescribed burn proposals and expect to get back into prescription for those soon. The recent moisture has put them back a bit.

The next scheduled NRCG Monthly Conference Call is September 17, 2019 at 10:00 Hours Mountain Time