



Northern Rockies Coordinating Group

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

Board of Directors Conference Call Agenda

Tuesday, September 17, 2019

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

Participants:

Board Members: Bryce Rogers, Mike Granger, Mike DeGrosky – Chair, Patrick Lonergan, Vern Burdick, Ralph Rau

Deputies and Others: Darron William, Diane Mann-Klager, Sarah Lee, Brent Woffinden, Greg Morris, Craig Goodell, Tim Muprhy, Kathy Pipkin, Aitor Bidaburu, Mike Richmond, Julie Polutnik, Warren Appelhans, Ryan Patrick, Dave Williams, 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)

- NWCG Group and FMB group will both be meeting tomorrow.
- OTC committee will be transitioning to a new chair this fall; the group's name will also be changed. It will also have sub-groups under it.
- Leadership sub-committee has been elevated to a full committee level.
- Reviewed the three documents distributed for BOD review; purpose for all three is for information sharing only. Please contact if there are any questions.

Predictive Services Update:

Meteorological: (Michael Richmond / Coleen Haskell)

Entering into an early fall pattern with a system currently bringing precipitation over the western portion of the GACC. Will be windy on the East side ahead of a cold front moving through. Another system will follow with a cool, moist pattern later in the week. Afterwards, another weak trough is expected on Sunday. All areas within the GACC should receive some precipitation over the next week.

Fire Behavior: (Warren Appelhans)

- Fuels are around or under average.
- Did post the season ending graphs.

GACC Situation: (Julie Polutnik)

- Currently Northern Rockies is at PL 1
- Since last call have had 532 fires for 46,316 acres.
- Year to date have had 2055 fires for a total of 71,430 acres.
- Multiple units have been conducting prescribed burns
- Had a 315 acre fire north of Billings yesterday; 50% contained as of this morning.
- Grangeville had a 160 acre fire as well; no issues.
- Alaska is currently winding down; Northern California is also winding down and has received precipitation.
- Did send a couple of IHCs to Rocky Mountain area yesterday.
- Connell's T2 IMT is extending in Alaska.



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Northern Rockies GACC and Operational Updates:

NRCG Operations (Craig Goodell)

- All NR T2 IMTs have had an assignment now.
- Connell's team will be extending.
- Turman's team is back from Hurricane assignment.
- Goicoechea's team is in #1 slot for T1 IMT for the Northern Rockies
- Sampson WFTM is off for the rest of the season.
- The smokejumpers moved to five day coverage this last weekend. Down to one smokejumper aircraft for the GACC; located in Missoula.
- Two IHC's currently available.

NRCC Update (Kathy Pipkin)

- Working with HR on getting Aircraft Coordinator PD classified
- Kat Sorenson is temporarily promoted into the Aircraft Coordinator position. Are outreaching the assistant position behind Kat.
- The assistant center manager position interviews were conducted last week.
- Detail ended Sept. 14th for the Intelligence Coordinator position; currently there is not another detailer in place. The assistant intelligence detail position ends in early October; currently working with NPS to explore options.
- The Fire Analyst detail also has ended; individual is currently wrapping up projects.

Contracting Updates: (Tim Murphy)

- Starting to work with partners to begin the 2020 solicitation process. Hope to finalize by the November Fall Meeting.

Safety Updates: (Dave Williams)

- No new updates at this time.

Follow up on Old Business:

Proposed Changes to HEQB Position (Craig Goodell)

- Making progress; reviewed distributed memos.
- Last piece is for NWCG Operations and Training Committee to take up the discussion. Recommend NRCG BOD contact their agency representatives on this committee and discuss the rationale.
- **Action Item: Each BOD member should contact their agency's NWCG representative on the OTC group. Aitor Bidaburu will send out a list of the representative's names.**



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New Business:

Conference Call Format Streamline Process (Mike DeGrosky)

- NRCG Monthly Call Format has gradually morphed into a MAC call format.
- Need exists to reduce the length and number of report outs and realign back to monthly business call format.
- Proposal to cut Predictive Services, Fire Behavior, GACC Situation report outs; at least through the winter, with ability to add back in if needed.
- **Approved – unanimous consent.**

Training Committee Charter (Mike DeGrosky)

- Need for signed charter – Deferred.
- Mike DeGrosky will make direct contact with Tuesday Kimball regarding this issue.

Fall Meeting Agenda Planning (Mike DeGrosky)

- In response to feedback and input from members of the BOD, will try out a new format for this year's meeting.
- Chair's intent is to focus on using available time together for dialogue, discussion, and meaningful interaction.
 - To facilitate this: NRCG will be requesting as many updates and report outs as possible be submitted in advance of the meeting. This will allow for using more of the meeting time for questions and conversation, by reducing one way information flow.
 - These will include:
 - Committee Report Outs
 - Zone Report Outs
 - ICs Report Outs
 - Staff Report Outs (NRTC, NRCC, NRK, Operations, Contracting, Safety, IT)
 - **Action Item: These are to be submitted to Pam Jolly by COB on October 8th.**
 - It is acknowledged that this is a tight timeframe; however, there will be much for the BOD to read and review prior to the meeting.
 - This timeframe will provide each BOD member with adequate time to absorb report out content and formulate questions.
 - Due to some unavoidable schedule conflicts for the people preparing for the meeting, everyone is to please be responsive to the timeframe.
- These modifications will provide the BOD with time needed for discussion regarding how the BOD conducts business.
 - A thorough review of the Action Items listing will occur; in addition to discussions regarding committee taskings.
- All topics for Agenda Items are also requested to be submitted to Pam Jolly by **COB on October 8th.**
- Ralph – suggestion to include template report out format which also provides an opportunity to address specific items of concern with the BOD.
- **Approved – unanimous consent.**



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- **Action Item – Pam Jolly will construct a template report out format and distribute in advance of the October 8th request timeframe.**

Review of Action Items: (Mike DeGrosky)

- Reviewed and updated Action Items listing as a group.

Round Robin – Updates from Agency Participants:

BIA NW – Finished a REMs Helicopter letter from the Pacific Northwest, will forward it to Dan Warthin as reference material. Has been quiet.

BIA GP – Fairly quiet; looking at Ft. Totten area for fall potential.

BIA RM – Fairly quiet; currently have two units without FMOs. Sent out the helicopter quite a bit this summer; supporting other areas.

BLM – Did have a serious accident with a Miles City engine a few weeks ago. Undergoing a realignment of the state fire program. Field offices have been working on prescribed fire activity. Currently under a 14 day temporary hiring freeze.

FWS – Eastern Montana hand crew has been a success this year. Currently working on fuels projects, especially on the west side. Talking with DNRC for a joint prescribed burn project. Hiring has been a challenge. Has been fairly damp so far this fall and hunting season is in full swing.

IDL – Not on call.

MT DES – Not on call.

MT DNRC – Keep having some spikes in activity. Have made progress on hiring; have been working all summer long to fill four program manager positions. Three are now filled. Meeting season is also in full swing. DNRC is forming a new Bureau and is looking for a new chief regarding the Good Neighbor Authority. The position is currently open and will be closing soon.

Montana State Fire Chiefs – Not on call.

Montana County Fire Wardens – No new updates at this time.

MT Peace Officers – Not on call.

ND FS – Not on call.

NPS – Currently managing some fires in Yellowstone National park. Glacier National Park FMO position is currently open.

USFS – Some leadership changes to report, have two new Deputy Regional Foresters in place now. Jane Darnell is now working primarily on National level issues. Also, Jacquie Parks is detailed into Fuels position currently.

The next scheduled NRCG Monthly Conference Call is October 15, 2019 at 10:00 Hours Mountain Time