



Northern Rockies Coordinating Group

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

Board of Directors Conference Call Agenda

Tuesday, February 18, 2020

Participants:

Board Members: Ray Hart, Aaron Thompson, Jake Ganieany, Mike DeGrosky – Chair, Patrick Lonergan, Dan Warthin

Deputies and Others: Andy Schell, Tracey Nimlos, Craig Goodell, Tim Murphy, Julie Polutnik, Diane Mann-Klager, 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)

- Unable to attend call.

Northern Rockies GACC and Operational Updates:

NRCG Operations (Craig Goodell)

- Australia Support is beginning to wind down. Activity is subsiding significantly. Goicoechea's short team is still down there; in addition to other individuals.
- IMT selections for the Northern Rockies have been compiled and forwarded out to the ICs. Did have two applications for IC trainees that will need to be addressed by the BOD.
- Attended an IMT sustainability workshop two weeks ago. Should see two briefing papers coming out of that workshop that will contain recommendations.
- Had a couple of large fires in Eastern Montana the first weekend of February. Meteorologists are currently developing spring outlooks. Early indications are that May is looking to be fairly dry.
- Will be working on resource step up and draw down plans; hope to have drafts ready for the spring NRCG meeting.

NRCC Update (Julie Polutnik)

- Still have four vacancies at NRCC.
- IROC – ROSS shutdown still on schedule; there has been one webinar and a train the trainer is scheduled; will have a general training in April. Will also reach out to the IMT meeting to see if they desire an update as well.
- Tim Murphy - Contractors are interested in when they would be able to self-status in IROC. Dispatch will have to status until this feature is available in IROC; worth noting the workload on dispatch will increase.

OLD BUSINESS

NRCG Restrictions and Closure Procedures – Decisional Topic (Pam Jolly for Rita Chandler)

- Vote to approve for 2020 season implementation needed.
- Main changes addresses the authorities.
- Added language that it should be reviewed in a minimum of 5 year intervals.
- Will stay in effect without exception unless review necessitates changes.
- Item was tabled until the February call due to late submission edits.
- Approved – unanimous consent.



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Proposal to Share Costs for 2017 Montana National Guard Firefighter Training – Decisional Fiscal Topic (Tracey Nimlos)

- Notes from 2017 MAC meetings indicated all agencies in Montana agreed to request and train Montana National Guard (MTNG) soldiers to perform as wildland firefighters.
- The comments in FireCode when NRCC created the incident were: “This is for the MT NG mobilization and training. This will be a NR MAC cost share.”
- Tracey Nimlos was not informed at the time of the decision, so no cost share agreement was created.
- The default NR split is probably not appropriate because the MTNG was not trained with any intention of being deployed in Idaho (an assumption).
- USFS received a cooperative bill from MT DNRC for the 2017 MT National Guard crew mobilization. This bill is for \$158,135 for the cost of salary and travel for the MTNG soldiers themselves during their training period.
- The Forest Service has already paid a bill to DNRC for \$81,183 for the cost of instructors who were hired by DNRC to train the MTNG. The Forest Service has also expended an additional \$72,761 for personnel and equipment (busses and transportation) to train the MTNG, bringing the total Forest Service expenditures to \$153,944.
- It was never intended that the Forest Service cover the entire cost of training the MTNG.
- Total known burden for training the MTNG (still need to check with other federal agencies to determine if they had costs, but likely to be minimal) is \$312,079.
- Noted that NPS should be added into this cost share; this agency was not on the proposal that was sent out for review.
 - Cost Share proposal was based on what the probability of use was, in addition to being based on similar cost shares.
 - Group discussion and consensus to utilize draft proposal.
 - Noted that this would all be on suppression funds.
- Approved – Unanimous consent.

Delegation of Authority – NR Operations Officer – Language Modification for 2020 – Decisional Topic (Aaron Thompson)

- Historically, since ordering in outside resources on the cost share agreement involves a fiscal decision from all participating agencies, either the BOD or the MAC has voted on bringing in specific outside resources prior to ordering. This proposed new language delegates that authority from each agencies BOD representative to Craig Goodell.
- **Below is a side-by-side comparison of the language:**
 - Previous Verbiage:
 - In conjunction with the NRCC Manager move resources and extend resources which support the region geographically for all agencies use; these will be assigned appropriate support codes agreed to through cost shares. For agency specific needs, agency support codes will need to be utilized.
 - New Verbiage:
 - In conjunction with the NRCC Manager, proactively order outside critical resources, move resources and extend resources which support the geographic area for all agencies use. These will be assigned appropriate support codes agreed to through



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cost share agreements. For agency specific needs, agency support codes should be used.

- DNRC has concerns about one agency committing another fiscally without prior discussion. Uncomfortable with this new language that does not clearly indicate that proactive ordering would only be accomplished at the direction of the BOD or MAC.
- Intent was to ensure the GACC has enough resources to appropriately address needed suppression response.
- NPS perspective – perhaps the step up and draw down plans could address these concerns in specific detail.
 - DNRC agrees there needs to be a system check in place.
- USFS also has concerns with the way the proposed language is written; specifically the vagueness.
- NPS – perhaps it would be helpful to identify some fiscal thresholds.
 - DNRC – concerned this steps into the role of the MAC.
- BLM – intent is to address more at the lower PL levels (1-3).
 - DNRC – resources being tied to PL levels doesn't solve the expense issue.
- Craig Goodell – language is relevant to the time sensitive nature of available resources during the lower PL levels. In the past two seasons, have ordered resources in on the GACC cost share and then moved them over to the appropriate incident codes as soon as possible.
- Chair – need language that better reflects empowering this ability, while also identifying that it is subject to cost share.
 - Must be inclusive of all agencies and partners, including IDL and NDFS needs.
 - Do not want to inadvertently open the door to fiscal concerns later.
 - USFS – suggests utilizing language that identifies specific resource types and then tying these to the step up / draw down plans.
- Group discussion and consensus that this language will require further modification prior to approval.
- Please send any thoughts on specific language to Aaron Thompson.
 - Aaron Thompson will compile new draft language and submit for review by the BOD prior to the next conference call.

NWCG Heavy Equipment Boss decision / NRCG revalidation of HE Task Forces – Informational Topic (Tim Muprhy)

- NWCG Memo with Decision was distributed which was one piece of heavy equipment equals one heavy equipment boss.
- Wish to revalidate that all BOD are still in agreement with continuing operations of Northern Rockies Heavy Equipment Task Forces the way they have historically run.
 - Operations determines the Government Tactical Supervisor (HEQB, TFLD, or DIVS)
 - The Government Tactical Supervisor supervises the HETF Foreman, who in turn supervises the 4-6 Equipment Operators.
 - The HETF Foreman is typically a person who supervises multiple pieces of equipment on a daily basis on a logging site.
- DNRC – what has been done to mitigate the Sheep Gap concerns?
 - Specific tactical decision made to put the resources nine miles away from their safety zone. Was more a specific tactical issue rather than a module issue.



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- BLM – concerns over where the liability falls on this issue, in light of the NWCG memo.
- FWS – curious as to how Alaska accomplishes this?
 - Seem to be operating normal; however, may be an issue if something specific were to arise.
- Montana County Fire Wardens – this topic does seem be one of interest and concern to the IMTs and specific functional areas as well. Perhaps should inquire with the operations committee with specific concerns?
- DNRC – does the Northern Rockies need a custom Heavy Equipment Task Force that exceeds the national recommendation?
 - NPS – concerns over resource availability are the driving forces in the origin; would be a significant factor in this decision.
 - DNRC – ideally, the people who supervise those foreman would have a level of qualification that would not limit a number of equipment.
- Tim Murphy – have become more and more reliant on these task forces over the last few years. Have approximately 50 of these resources in the GACC.
- Craig Goodell – possible tasking for the Operations Committee to come up with recommendations for the BOD.
- BLM – must address both policy and capacity for the modules.
- **Action Item – Tasking for the Operations Committee. Mike Granger / Andy Schnell – Timeline – Recommendation back to the board by Spring Meeting. Task: To work with Tim Murphy and Craig Goodell to come up with method by which the Northern Rockies Heavy Equipment Task Force concept best aligns with NWCG qualifications and reply back to the BOD with recommendations. End goal is to minimize the liability while addressing the need for these resources.**

Proposal to Form a NRCG Medical Committee – Decisional Topic (Rich Cowger)

- Anna Stull advised that the USFS submitted a proposal request for data management; if selected, this could assist with data mining.
- DNRC – as often as medical related topics arise, feel that the need exists for a medical committee.
- Group discussion and agreement to consider Anna Stull’s proposal for the next conference call.
 - **Action Item: Mike DeGrosky will email proposal to Pam Jolly for BOD dissemination and review prior to the next conference call.**
- BLM is planning to hire a medical director as well. What would the tasking for an NRCG medical committee look like?
 - Would need identified guidelines.
 - DNRC – part would revolve around implementing REMS. Another would be recommendations for incident EMTs and Paramedics.

NEW BUSINESS

Spring MAC Exercise – Decisional Topic (Craig Goodell)

- Decision needed from BOD as to whether or not to hold a MAC Exercise this spring.
 - If so, when/where and what format.
- In recent history, a spring MAC exercise has been held every other year.
 - Notable that the MAC handbook does specify an exercise.
- Last year, MAC exercise was held in conjunction with the M581 class at NRTC.



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- Is an option for this year; however, decision needs to be made if BOD wants to do that in Missoula at NRTC on April 30th.
- Other options could possibly include an exercise in May on the date regularly scheduled for the NRCG call, or another date/location that can be agreed upon.
- **Action Item: Craig Goodell will handle all MAC Spring Exercise logistics and planning.**
- USFS – supports having the MAC exercise; however, unsure as to Ralph Rau’s availability.
- DNRC - appreciated combining with the M581 last time.
- BLM – supports as well; however, M581 would not work with schedules.
- NPS – supports as well.
- BIA – supports.
- **Action Item: Craig Goodell will construct a doodle poll for available dates and disseminate to all BOD.**

Vendor Source List Process – Informational Topic (Tracey Nimlos)

- The process is to create a vendor source list that local procurement people can use to find non-solicited equipment.
- Previously used database, iTeams, was decommissioned by the USFS CIO. iTeams had hundreds of different types of equipment and services listed, many of them that could easily be found on the internet. Others were vendors that didn’t submit during the competed agreement process. There was difficulty maintaining this database.
 - It was determined an entirely new approach was needed.
- This handout that can be given to vendors who inquire about doing fire business with the government.
- Have limited what types of equipment are going to be kept on a source list because of the reasons described above. Items were selected based on volume of use and difficulty in finding.
- Worked through the dispatch community and the dispatch center managers are on board.
- Thought is to come up with a basic spreadsheet that the centers could populate with the forms they receive.
 - A Google form can be created where vendors could enter their own information online. The Google form would populate a spreadsheet automatically. Each center would be able to sort and view the equipment in their area and have a spreadsheet to give to buying teams and local procurement personnel.
- At this point, haven’t removed the attachments to the handout; however, if go with the Google form -just a link will be shown.
- This process should be far less labor intensive than the old iTeams process.
- Proposal would be put on NRCG letterhead (as a handout without signature) and posted on line. Could also be given as a hard copy to all interested individuals.
- Approved – unanimous consent.
- **Action Item: Pam Jolly will put the proposal on NRCG Letterhead, without signature, and it will be posted to the NRCC website.**

Revision Requests – Annual Leader’s Intent Letter – Informational Topic (Diane Mann-Klager & Mike DeGrosky)

- Not having a February Agency Administrator’s call; however, will be sending letter out to the Agency



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Administrators for review.

- Group discussion and agreement that when it is sent out to Agency Administrator's, request that they each are encouraged to reach out to their respective BOD for input and consideration.
- Can also email any revisions suggestions to Diane Mann-Klager at diane.mann-klager@bia.gov

Review of Action Items: (Mike DeGrosky)

- Web Site – Pam Jolly will be working more on this item in March.
- NRCG Handbook – Kathy Pipkin is working on this item. She is currently on assignment in Australia.
- Dispatch Improvement Project – Kathy Pipkin has not been able to find a comprehensive cost analysis as of yet; however, has obtained some information. Suggestion that this data could be gathered internally to the GACC.
 - Need to address if going to ask Agency Administrators to task BOD with this item.
 - Also, would like to investigate NIFC assistance with this issue.
 - May need to be a topic for Spring Meeting.
- Internal study as opposed to external study – may need further discussions on associated costs and time commitments for SMEs.
 - Action Item: Aaron Thompson will gather this information and topic will be moved to March conference call.

The next scheduled NRCG Monthly Conference Call is March 17, 2020 at 10:00 Hours Mountain Time