



Northern Rockies Coordinating Group

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

Board of Directors Conference Call Agenda

Wednesday, June 17, 2020

Participants:

Board Members: Ray Hart, Bryce Rogers, Aaron Thompson, Jake Ganieany, Mike DeGrosky – Chair, Rich Cowger, Ryan Melin, Dan Warthin, Ralph Rau

Deputies and Others: Andrew Schell, Craig Goodell, Tim Murphy, Kathy Pipkin, Julie Polutnik, Morganne Lehr, Diane Mann-Klager, Billy Phillips, Rick Connell, 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 participate on call.

Northern Rockies GACC and Operational Updates:

NRCG Operations (Craig Goodell)

- Over the weekend had a couple of large fires in the GACC; one near Helena - “Lump Gulch” approximately 1,100 acres; Type 3 IMT Martin assigned. No issues at this time. Advised that things went well and that local units Covid planning was helpful.
- Fire Gulch fire near Ashland approximately 3,400 acres; fire burned readily through the ponderosa pine litter and green grass growth.
- Seeing a beginning of a change in the fuels. This will be the last push of moisture for the foreseeable future. Beginning discussions around moving to PL 2, when appropriate. Southwest moved to PL 4. Alaska moved to PL 3. Rocky Mountain moved to PL 2. Nationally at PL 3.
- Watching drawdown levels.

NRCC Update (Kathy Pipkin)

- The GACC Aircraft coordinator position closed yesterday; hoping for a cert next week.
- Kate Holsapple will be new Intelligence Coordinator; will start July 19th.
- Working on schedule for the season. Plan to put center staffing into two modules. This will help mitigate for Covid. Will also require bringing in more individuals sooner. Missouri room downstairs will serve as expanded. This could potentially impact the MAC group, if it were to be stood up.
- Turman IMT 1 would normally be available next Tuesday; however, Goicoechea’s IMT will cover the first two days of the Northern Rockies rotation turn due to conflicts with Turman’s schedule.
- Northern Operations (CA) also went to PL 2.
- Four Type 2IAs available in the GACC; three of which are contract.
- Type 1 helicopter exclusive use solicitation was protested. Northern Rockies bases will be ordering Call When Needed helicopters to cover. The Washington Office will be paying for those.
- IROC – Julie Polutnik is on the reports group that will be creating reports for IROC.



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OLD BUSINESS

IMT Standard Operation Guide – Decisional Topic (Kathy Pipkin)

- (See draft)
- Included the latest received edits.
- USFS – Suggestion to include the Covid team plan as an appendix.
 - Kathy Pipkin – can make a reference in the document to the Covid team plan.
- **Motioned and seconded to approve the IMT SOG with the Covid plan as an appendix.**
- Vote to approve draft.
 - **Approved – unanimous consent.**

Heavy Equipment Taskforce Supervision – Decisional Topic (Andy Schell)

- (See Proposal)
- USFS – For clarification, no intent around having a heavy equipment boss in addition to a task force leader as well?
 - Andy Schell – correct.
 - DNRC – Important to note that this does not preclude using a heavy equipment boss; provides for flexibility.
 - BLM – FWS BOD member unable to make this call; however, contacted and wanted to voice concerns regarding NWCG expectation that each piece of equipment would have a heavy equipment boss. Concern that this is going against NWCG by saying a task force leader would be supervising those pieces of equipment?
 - DNRC – NWCG does not establish policy; they establish standards. This is regarding a non-standard resource. If an agency administrator wishes to add staffing, that is possible.
 - USFS – Do think there is validity to the concerns; however, this is a non-standard resource that has been developed within this GACC. One of the purposes was to put some direct focus on an appropriate level of supervision for this resource. If not addressed, may lead to a shortage of this critically needed resource. A need also exists to educate line officers.
 - BLM – Having the task force leader does make sense; may be the best option for this time.
 - Tim Murphy – Held several AARs with industry and Montana Logging Association. They were not comfortable with the experience level of the heavy equipment bosses. Industry is fairly comfortable with this upgrade to a task force leader. The contract has one Government supervisor in charge of the foreman, who in turn supervising the equipment operators. If Agencies want to add more oversight, encourage safety officers and / or field observers in lieu of heavy equipment boss(es) be added to pay particular attention to heavy equipment task forces on incidents.
- **Motioned and seconded to accept the recommendation with the caveat that some information and education will occur to further inform that this does not preclude adding additional supervision within the organization.**
- Vote on moving recommendation forward.
- **Approved – majority vote. (One abstention.)**
- NPS – Caveat will generate an action item
 - DNRC – please give thought to this piece and will discuss on next month's call.
- **Pam Jolly will draft up NRCG Memo for Chair's signature.**



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Follow Up Discussion - NR Remote Situation Unit (RSU) Operations Guide – Final Document & Distribution – Decisional Topic (Billy Phillips)

- (See draft)
- Currently, RSU has been ordered for support on the Lump Gulch incident; in addition to receiving multiple other inquiries for both in and out of GACC support.
- Did receive a couple of edits from earlier this week that are not included in the version that was sent for this call. Those do not affect the operations and were only pertinent to the ordering process.
- The funding that board provided allowed the group not only to set up the Northern Rockies up for success, but also helped to provide for IMT success nationally.
- Do have several more training that will need to be provided; however, those require the approval of this guide.
- USFS – Desire to continue to pursue national funding for RSU due to its scope; ask that this information be provided in a summary write up format to support that effort.
- Motioned and seconded to approve the guide.
- Vote to approve draft.
- **Approved – unanimous consent.**
- Distribution Path:
 - Document is approved for sharing widely at this time.
 - Document will be posted to NRCG site and older versions will be removed.
 - Rick Connell will begin sharing with the Northern Rockies Incident Commanders.
 - **Morganne Lehr will send Pam Jolly a final, 508 compliant version that will be posted on the NRCG website.**

Review of Action Items: (Mike DeGrosky)

- Postponed review in the interest of time.

DNRC – Would like to express Thanks to all for recent events. Assistance with three fires; very much appreciate the interagency effort. Additionally Thanks to all those who participated in the Governor's Briefing.

USFS – National Fire Director is retiring; Patty Grantham will become the Acting effective July 1st.

The next scheduled NRCG monthly conference call will be held July 21, 2020 at 1000 Mountain Time.