



Northern Rockies Coordinating Group

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

Board of Directors Conference Call Agenda

Tuesday, June 15, 2021

Participants:

Board Members: Aaron Thompson, Jake Ganieany, Rich Cowger – Vice Chair, Ryan Melin, Dan Warthin, Ralph Rau

Deputies and Others: Scott Hayes, John Monzie, Greg Morris, Aitor Bidaburu, Corey Buhl – Detailer, Ryan Patrick, Jay McAllister (Acting for Kathy Pipkin), Sarah Lee, Jeni Jeresek, Tara Dana, Rick Connell, Morganne Lehr, Billy Philips, Melissa Wegner, Anthony Krause, Dave Williams

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

NWCG/NMAC Update: (Aitor Bidaburu)

- Increased activity throughout the west. Are at PL 3 Nationally as of this morning.
- Crews are a bottleneck currently. Are seeing increase in UTFs for multiple resources. Generally, do not see this until mid-July.
- NWCG meeting on Wednesday; NMAC will be meeting on Thursday.

Northern Rockies GACC and Operational Updates:

NRCG Operations (Corey Buhl - Detailer)

- Connell's IMT2 is mobilizing to the Robertson Draw incident.
- Are assisting Billings Dispatch Center, as that center is currently understaffed.
- Intent is to keep crews active and committed within GACC.
 - Have a crew up from the Rocky Mountain GACC assisting.
 - Northern Rockies two contract crews mobilizing as well.
- Enough air attack coverage currently.
- Brought on a couple of Type 1 helicopters early that will be assigned and kept active.
- Will be looking at potentially moving to PL 2 within the GACC; will be running those numbers later today.
- Helena is operational.

NRCC Update (Jay McAllister)

- Will be re-evaluating beginning seven day staffing early due to activity.
- Operating fully in the cloud with WildCad now.
- Aaron Thompson – Noted that Eastern Montana received lightning and has several fires currently. Concerning fire weather day. Dispatch centers are understaffed.

Old Business

IC Path Forward – Revised Draft – Decisional Topic – Rich Cowger

- (See revised IC Path Forward draft in pre-reading materials)
- Vote postponed due to a lack of a quorum.



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AFD Annual Operating Plan and NR Financial Agreement Survey Results – Decisional Topic – Sarah Lee, Jeni Jeresek

- (Reviewed Survey Results in Pre-reading Materials)
- Reviewed two one-page proposal sheets.
- Intent was to simplify and streamline according to needs and to ensure the plan was equitable.
- No signed agreement in place for this current fiscal year.
- DNRC needs a signed agreement and a bill dated by June 30th to be able to pay BLM.
- **Action Item: Will distribute both status quo plan and the proposed new plan for BOD review. Will schedule a special session for June 22nd at 0900 for one hour for a vote on approving the status quo plan for this fiscal year.**

SIM Card Activation – Decisional Topic – Tara Dana

- (See proposal in pre-reading materials.)
- In person vote needed as only four BOD participated in the online vote.
- **Vote postponed due to a lack of a quorum.**
- Highlighted this issue as an awareness point until a vote can be accomplished.
- **Action Item: Will add a vote on this item to the agenda for the June 22nd special session meeting.**
- Sarah Lee - Unable to add to cost share due to preparedness nature; must be suppression for cost share.
- Rich Cowger - State Fire Chiefs can contribute to this cost.

IMT Transition Protocols/Revision – Informational Topic – Rick Connel

- Item is an almost a two-year-old recommendation from logistics and planning areas.
- With Covid and the emergence of the virtual environment, none have had time to dedicate to this topic.
- Recommendation to drop at this time and bring forward from the ICs at a later time, if still needed.
- **Action Item: Item will be dropped from the Action Items Listing.**

Process for Requesting Mobilization Guide Changes – Decisional Topic – Jay McAllister

- (See draft in pre-reading materials)
- **Vote postponed due to a lack of a quorum.**

Remote Incident Support Team (RIST) Briefing – Informational Topic – Morganne Lehr

- (See RIST Operating Guide Draft in pre-reading materials)
- Expanded past the Situation Unit last year; went further into other functional area support.
- Provided background evolution of this capacity.
- Referenced the draft RIST document that has been compiled.
- National discussions occurring around a potential future support code.
- In past years, have stood up prior to PL 3. Also, have charged to the incident when possible, and to the support code when needed.
- Discussion to determine if there is support to switch from NR RSU Framework to the new National RIST Framework.
- Would continue to be funded as RSU has been funded in the past.



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- Future topic on how to continue to plan for this effort.
- Propose continuation of right sizing the organization and scaling up or down for an appropriate level of support.
- Intent is to work more in a team capacity with the Southwest RIST.
- Also, looking for direction on primary contact for moving forward.
 - Ralph Rau – Would still see this under the Operation Position. Also, due to suppression fund nature associated with cost share, could not be stood up ahead of time.
- Billy Philips – Anticipate with activity and weather may see requests soon.
- Ralph Rau - Fully support when have fires that NRCG support RIST with the cost share, as have done in the past. Setting up ahead of time like was done last year, which is best, is where have had issues simply because have had trouble figuring out how to fund.
- Aaron Thompson – Support as well.
- Ralph Rau – May approach as a business model in the future as a “team 8” for the Northern Rockies.

Extending Monthly NRCG BOD Meetings to 90 minutes – Decisional Topic – Rich Cowger

- **Vote postponed due to a lack of a quorum.**

NRCG Recognition for Support – Decisional Topic – Kathy Pipkin

- (See Nomination Template in pre-reading materials.)
- **Vote postponed due to a lack of a quorum.**

BOD member attendance at T3 IMT close outs - Informational Topic – (Greg Morris)

- (See NRCG IMT Visit Recommendations in pre-reading materials)
- Board needs a better system of identifying who will attend and when; including identifying surrogates to attend in lieu of BOD representative.
- Recommend attempting to have the same individual for both in briefing and close out, if possible.
- Also, feel getting together with agency administrators separately is advantageous.
- Additionally, feel that spending some time on the incident and before close out with both the IC and the Agency Administrator is valuable.
- **Action Item: Revisit who is assigned to what team; place on July’s agenda.**
- Rick Connell – Recommend developing a specific process.

BOD Attendance at Connell IMT In-Briefing

- Rich Cowger will attend at 0800 hours on Wednesday, June 16th at Red Lodge Ranger District.

New Business

- No new business to come before the board.

Review of Action Items: (Rich Cowger)

- Deferred in the interest of time.

The next scheduled NRCG Monthly Conference Call is July 20, 2021 at 10:00 Hours Mountain Time