



Northern Rockies Coordinating Group

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

Board of Directors Conference Call Agenda

Tuesday, August 17, 2021

Participants:

Board Members: Aaron Thompson, Jim “James” Forsythe, Jake Ganieany, Rich Cowger – Vice Chair, Patrick Lonergan, Dan Warthin, Ralph Rau

Deputies and Others: John Monzie, Andy Schell, Melissa Wegner, Tara Dana, Dave Williams, Kathy Pipkin, 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 join this meeting.

Northern Rockies GACC and Operational Updates:

NRCG Operations (Andy Schell – Acting for Cory Buhl - Detailer)

- Critical Fire Weather across most of the GACC.
- Had 28 new fires for 10,000 acres of growth.
- Briefly reviewed individual fires of significance.
- Character Complex increased in size, experienced extreme fire behavior, evacuations in place and ordered a T2 IMT.
- West Lolo Complex was active and increased size.
- Trestle Creek Complex was active; communities threatened and transfer command at end of shift today.
- Limited resources and zero IMTs available.
- California, Washington and Oregon all had significant activity yesterday and are forecasted for more activity today.
- Sampson’s Team 5 going available on 19th.
- Dan Warthin – Team Liaison for Sampson – team does not have a Finance Section Chief and won’t be available on the 19th.

NRCC Update (Kathy Pipkin)

- Joined late; no further updates.

Old Business

IC Path Forward – Revised Draft – Decisional Topic – Josh Harvey

- (See revised IC Path Forward draft in pre-reading materials)
- Vote was postponed from June meeting due to a lack of a quorum.
- Jim Forsythe - Suggestion to push to fall.
- Aaron Thompson – Feel that need exists to move on this quickly, prior to fall selection timeframe.
- Rich Cowger – Concerns on mentoring section as well; do understand this needs to be addressed soon.
- Jim Forsythe – Hesitation is also with the mentoring and shadowing aspects. Not realistic with current schedules. Question the necessity of this document.



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- Ralph Rau – Do believe need exists for something and also believe the ICs are in agreement that there is this need. Have a responsibility as a board to articulate some sort of a process.
- Dan Warthin – Agree on the mentoring and time aspect concerns. Do feel could keep the mentoring with the ICs. Would like to see closure on this document.
- Rich Cowger – Think the ICs should take the lead on mentoring. Do think there should be a guiding document.
- Dan Warthin – Motion to strike the mentoring paragraph; leave the previous paragraph and then proceed on this issue.
- Aaron Thompson – Second the motion and support, as long as IC trainees would still come before the board to be approved.
- **Action Item: Dan Warthin will provide the revised draft to Pam Jolly for finalization and signature preparation.**
- Vote to approve revision as stated above:
 - BLM – Support.
 - FWS – Support.
 - MT DES – Support.
 - MT DNRC – Support.
 - MT State Fire Chiefs’ Association – Support.
 - MT County Fire Wardens Association – Support.
 - NPS – Support.
 - USFS – Support.
- **Approved – unanimous consent.**

Process for Requesting Mobilization Guide Changes – Decisional Topic – Kathy Pipkin

- (See draft in pre-reading materials)
- Vote was postponed from the June meeting due to a lack of a quorum.
- Item will be postponed until the September meeting.

Extending Monthly NRCG BOD Meetings to 90 minutes – Decisional Topic – Josh Harvey

- Vote was postponed from the June meeting due to a lack of a quorum.
- Rich Cowger – Would personally like see meetings left at 60 mins; with special sessions as needed.
- Ralph Rau – Many of the meetings do go over in time. If not extended, then need to actually have a hard stop at the 60-minute timeframe. Need exists to be respectful of everyone’s time.
- Aaron Thompson – Agree with above; also need to look at SOPs and discuss what a quorum means for non-fiscal decisions.
- Rich Cowger – Need exists to designate a specific timeframe and make efficient use of that time.
- Aaron Thompson – Motion to extend meetings to 90 mins.
- Ralph Rau – Second that motion.
- Jim Forsythe – Need exists to prioritize agenda in a more efficient manner.
- Dan Warthin – When was chair of the Alaska Coordinating Group; made an effort to focus on decision items prioritized over informational items. SOPs included a “map” of items on a month-by-month basis that need to be discussed. Could craft this to fit NRCG. Will distribute to all the BOD for review.



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- Vote:
 - BLM – Support.
 - FWS – Support.
 - MT DES – Support.
 - MT DNRC – Support.
 - MT State Fire Chiefs' Association – Support.
 - MT County Fire Wardens Association – Support.
 - NPS – Support.
 - USFS – Support.
- Approved – unanimous consent.
- Action Item – Pam Jolly will extend all future calendared meetings to 90 minutes.

NRCG Recognition for Support – Decisional Topic – Kathy Pipkin

- (See Nomination Template in pre-reading materials.)
- Vote was postponed from the June meeting due to a lack of a quorum.
- Item will be postponed until the September meeting.

New Business

Stafford Act Agreements – Extensions – Informational Topic – Ralph Rau

- All three agreements expire at the end of the year.
- Unlikely that with current workload will be able to have signed agreements by December.
- Will need to have one-year extensions initiated.
- Wanted to ensure all are aware.
- Is a line officer decision. Discussion will need to be held on identifying who from each agency will accomplish this work and coordinate with the USFS, who takes the lead on writing.
- There is agency specificity on requesting extensions.
- Recommend asking for one year extension on all three.
- Dan Warthin – Does WFAA group need to be aware?
- Ralph Rau – Yes; have brought to USFS Leanne Marten. Conversation needs to be had amongst line officers.
- Recommend signatory work with their line officers.

Review of Action Items: (Josh Harvey)

- Differed in the interest of time.

The next scheduled NRCG Monthly Conference Call is September 21, 2021 at 10:00 Hours Mountain Time