NR CG Business Committee 2022 Spring Meeting

March 15th-17th, 2022

In attendance: Sarah Lee, Amanda Boatright, Susan Dowler, Deanna Crawford, Amber Honsaker, Becky Shepard, Loretta Forsberg, Dawn Hernandez, Chuck Tapia, Biddy Simet, Erin Lally, Katie Baret, Fauzia Massey, Time Ryan, Mike Lucas, Aaron Thompson, Jamey Toland, Dianne Sigler, Dana Bangart, Wendy McCartney, and Nicole Lee.

2022 NR Trainings; Review, Feedback on Completed Courses and Status of Upcoming Courses

- **S-481**
  - Encountered challenges in course planning.
    - Finance courses initially taken off the schedule, was able to get added back. Nomination window closed and had to be extended.
    - Did not have a Course Coordinator until the beginning of January.
    - Selection letters were late, prework not completed by some students.
    - Confusion over delivery platform and responsibility to set up.
  - Course delivery went very well, despite challenges. Had positive feedback from students.

- **L-975**
  - Same challenges in course planning as S-481
    - Not all students vetted prior to issuing selection letter. Upon evaluating prerequisites went from around 20 students to 10. Unfortunately, only had one student from the Northern Rockies.
    - Shared FireNet Team with S-481 course created some challenges in managing access and course material.
  - Actual delivery went well once the course got going and some of the FireNet access issues were sorted out.

- **S-973**
  - Cancelled due to low nominations – 7 total, with only one Northern Rockies nominee.

- **N-9062, eIsuite**
  - Cadre meeting regularly, have many of the same instructors. Due to large class size are looking for more breakout room coaches.
  - Recorded several components last year, intend to use those again this year.
  - Agency IT requirements for installing computer programs will continue to be a challenge.

- **M-581**
  - Course is late April, plugged in with coordinator and prepared to present unit.

- **S-339**
  - Went very well. Cadre kept finance as part of the conversation throughout course and was integral to simulation.
  - Would be beneficial for another committee member to cover finance piece next year. Interactions with the next generation of DIVS would be a great opportunity.

- **S-420**
  - Planning for this years’ session was not as intense as last years’, since have already presented in a virtual format.
  - Cadre was mostly the same.
  - Hope this can be presented in person next year.

- **ICS-300 & ICS-400**
  - Course is next week. Have both cadre and coaches from the IBC. Numerous students enrolled this year with a waiting list.

2022 Webinars
- IMT Meeting and Dispatch workshop dates are in conflict with schedule established in the fall.
- Determined on the agency lead call yesterday that based on courses already delivered and the fact webinars were delivered last year, to cancel this year’s session with the exception of one, possibly two, courses.
  o Virtual Finance
    ▪ Joyce and Bertalee have already put significant time and effort into their session. Will coordinate with them to present at a time not in conflict with IMT meetings.
    ▪ HETF – timeline dependent on task group recommendations, potential to still deliver. Prerecorded session an option.
- Northern Rockies has been presenting training and supplemental training essentially on a national scale. This is not our responsibility, and we need to recognize that.

**2022 IMT Workshops – Finance & Logistics Session**

- Goeller’s IMT is coordinating. Amy Schrenk is their FSC and lead for a finance session.
- FSC’s are interested in a joint finance and logistics session. Recognize that many participate in the IMRR calls but would like to discuss Northern Rockies specific topics and issues.
- Agency Business Leads are pulling together a list of talking points, including state agencies, to provide clarifying guidance for their agency processes and policies in addition to NR updates.
- Format will still be virtual. General and functional area sessions open to anyone interested in attending.

**Overall Training Discussion**

- Focus year model at NRTC might not be working as intended.
  o Presenting 3-5 training sessions a focus year is a significant commitment.
  o Focus years have not gone as plan the last three years due to complications with the furlough and COVID.
  o Biddy has a draft plan on how-to spread-out delivery.
- Expectation for finance course cadre seems to be different than operations courses, in terms of preparation and coordination.
- Consider setting aside 2023 as a year to focus on delivery of zone level courses, instead of GACC level courses.
  o Developing prerecorded unit or partial unit presentations might be beneficial in delivery these local courses.
- Advanced cost and an in-person workshop could be options as well.

**Finance In-Briefing Document**

- Sent around several times over the winter. Many changes and updates have been added.
- Many topics on older version included logistics information. Will add these items to an additional page, to accompany Finance In-Brief.
- Section that discusses access to incident in e-ISuite Enterprise and FireNet will be moved later in the document, and not in the section that covers transition from IA/Extended Attack.
  o IMT members asking for access post-demobilization has been an issue with the move to working primarily in Enterprise and FireNet the last few years. IMT or individual products should not be stored in FireNet, and any changes need to invoices after demobilization should be coordinated with current Finance section.
- Make language regarding interim payments more generic and direct IMTs to follow host unit guidelines.
  o While federal agencies require payment every 14 days or when approaching a dollar amount threshold, the state agencies do not have similar requirements.
- PII- guidance coming from FireNet.
- Edited language that could be applicable across all agencies in the Northern Rockies. Bring the focus and intent of document to be less prescriptive and more a list of discussion points for a finance section Inbrief.

**Finance/Logistics Evaluation**
- Review of edits and suggested changes.

**Lend/Lease Guidance**
- NWCG IBS is currently working on a performance package for e-ISuite. Significant changes anticipated in the future in regard to current issue of inability to create more than one federal financial code in e-ISuite Enterprise.
  - Until complete will not update national lend/lease guidance.
- Group elected to re-label lend/lease guidance currently on NRCG IBC website to clarify that it only pertains to incidents managed in site version and identify a task group to create a document that provides workarounds to the issue.
- Due to issues from last season and unintended consequences of having so many additional users in databases.
  - Noted that we often use lend/lease for well beyond the time frame that was intended. Resources are not always being reassigned to receiving incident after being lent to receiving incident for more than 3 days.

**2022 Northern Rockies Solicitations**
- Water handling equipment solicitation closed yesterday. Includes engines, tenders, and heavy equipment with water handling capabilities.
- Refrigerated trailers and clerical units solicited at the national level this year as well.
- Rate negotiations and technical reviews will be next. Contract Operations and a group of ICPI’s and equipment SME’s will perform reviews. Hope to go back to performing VIPR compliance inspections this season.
- Goal is for DPLs to be finalized by June 1st.
- Rollover updates for pricing and host dispatch for current contracts also happening.
- Ryan and Dianne are both going on details starting April 11th, Brian Webber and Dale Newby, respectively, will be detailing in behind them.

**USFS Heavy Equipment Task Force Update**
- Regional Forester requested focus group convene to address issues that arose from use of HETFs on incidents last summer. Issues were surrounding use, supervision, and payments.
  - Group is interagency and several program areas represented: timber, line officers, fire fighters, and incident business/finance.
- Information and recommendations that include simplifying payments, have been compiled and submitted to the Regional Forester for review. No response yet, and no timeline established. Getting close to a critical time of year to share any updates on the use of HEFTs.
- Will table presenting a webinar for now and will be dependent on when receive response.

**IMT Finance Succession Planning**
- IMT rosters have not been distributed yet. Hard to say where things stand for our finance sections.
- Seems like there are potentially several individuals out there on the verge of being ready to start working on Unit Leader qualifications. Suggest we look at those who did not meet prerequisites for L-975 and get them up to speed to take the course the next offering.
- Hard for those ready to move on to FSC2t when there are not enough qualified Unit Leaders to backfill.
  - Need for qualified FSC3’s is also growing.
- DNRC is revamping their list of finance resources and will work on identifying gaps and individuals ready to work on additional qualifications.
- RIST (Remote Incident Support Team) might be an avenue for those who are not able to go on traditional fire assignments to get experience.
- Concern for IMTs that did not have finance personnel apply this year.
**NR IBC Notetaker Vacancy Outreach**
- Outreach will be circulated soon. Please share with anyone you think might be interested in a great opportunity to get more exposure to Incident Business.

**Liaison Updates**

- **NR CG BOD**
  - ID BLM will join the NR CG BOD as a non-voting member.
  - New Master Cooperative Agreements are being developed for Idaho, Montana and North Dakota.
    Aggressive timeline to complete with master and agreements that tier off the master agreement. Seem to be in a good shape to complete.
  - NR RIST is growing and is beyond what can be managed by fire assignment detailers all summer. The Forest Service will have two 120-day detailers to coordinate.
    - Will be funded by NR CG Cost Share for 2022.
    - Will transfer workload from NR Operations Officer and NRCC.
    - There has been a proposal to fill permanent RIST positions, potential to be hosted by any agency. In reviewing organization charts this year the FS had spots to fill. Will not necessarily be FS when and if filled permanently.
    - Unclear how this will tier to national RIST organization, thought also potential for a permanent RIST coordinator at the national level as well.
  - Fire prioritization tool in process of being updated. Intent is to have a new product in place by this season.
  - Dispatch Complexity Analysis underway to identify complexity of each center. Interagency effort to help each center identify and attain appropriate staffing levels.
  - Encourage committee to draft briefing paper on challenges with training courses. Brief, specific and with ideas for improvement. In time for next NR CG BOD Meeting if possible.
  - IMT Availability
    - BLM in AZ sent out message to employees that pauses non-fire employee fire assignments until preparedness level is 5. This will have significant impact on SW IMTs, as well as IMTs across the country.
    - Intent not to stop participation, but to ensure high priority work is still accomplished.
    - Similar letter issued by a Region 1 forest.
    - Work behind the scenes on this issue is ongoing.

- **Operations**
  - Discussed training and that in future, majority of courses will be presented virtually, with a few exceptions; L-380, L-381, potential for M-581
  - Detailer for RIST identified, will start at the end of April.
  - Priority Trainee Program will include everyone who with an open task book. No application will be required. NRCC will pull report from IROC to provide those names and trainee qualifications.
  - NRCC is updating the NR Mobilization Guide and the consolidation of Bozeman and Billings Dispatch Centers.
    - Calvin Miller from SACC is detailed into the NRCC CM position.
  - NRK experiencing staffing issues. May not be able to staff the cache 7 days a week this season.
  - Tate Fischer new BOD representative to Operations Committee.
  - Formal request from 1 Wildland Fire Module from the Panhandle anticipated.
  - Staffing concern from every zone. Key positions vacant, having trouble finding detailers and backfilling positions.
Will still have 7 IHCs this season, Forest Service crews have all adopted national standard configuration of 23-25 crew members.

Plan to review HETF guidance when released.

**Incident Commanders**

- Drafting proposal for future IMT configuration in the Northern Rockies.
  - How many IMTs we can truly staff and potential impacts of adopting Complex Incident Management Teams (CIIMT).
  - One IMT has reported they will not be viable in 2023.
  - Also looking at building Type 3 IMT capacity in the Northern Rockies
  - Intent will not be to limit participation but provide flexibility and work/life balance for IMT members.
  - Plan to have proposal to BOD at fall meeting.

- Have voted on IMT rosters. Waiting on finishing touches and final approval for participation of individuals from other geographical areas.

- Rocky Mountain is the only geographical area that has a proposal in to NMAC to try CIIMT this year. Currently do not have approval to mobilize outside of the RM area in a CIIMT configuration and their Type 1 IMT would need to remain such to stay in the national rotation.
  - Given these limitations potential they could remain status quo this year.

**Training**

- No report, Meeting in April.

**Dispatch**

- Experiencing same shortages in dispatch personnel across the nation.

- Gaylen Yates is the new chair and Kathryn Sorenson new vice-chair of dispatch steering committee.

- Complexity analysis required a fairly extensive survey. Finding common data to use for all centers was not straightforward.
  - Did not quantify collateral duties performed by dispatch or the specifics of the busier seasons.
  - Intent to establish baseline staffing, not standardized staffing.

- Billings Dispatch is absorbing Bozeman Dispatch. Date of transfer is mid-April. Advertising additional dispatch positions in Billings.

**NWCG**

- No change to NERV procedures this year. Do anticipate significant changes coming in 2023
  - Lots of issues, half to three quarters of NERV payment packages not fully submitted.

- Naming convention task group is working through comments and agency specific requirements. On track to have recommendations submitted by the end of March.
  - Some geographical areas have developed their own naming conventions and are not using the national versions. This is an issue for IMT transitions. Need to impress on IMTs and GACCs we all use national version.

- O-305, Type 3 All-Hazards Incident Management Team Course
  - Collecting feedback from IC on whether this should be a required or recommended course for Type 3 C&G certification.
  - Concern that individuals on type 3 incidents have not had upper-level courses (i.e., S-420, S-520) and might require additional training.

- USFS AD Pay Plan has been released, and DOI is waiting on final review to release theirs.

- Error in IROC currently that does not allow users without dispatch role to pull continuous resource orders being worked on by IROC team

- Created BUYT-specific extension form. BUYT Coordinators have not always aware of extensions, intent is to fix that.
Creating new videos for Injury and Claims.

Zone & SME Representatives Updates

- **BIA Northwest**
  - No report
- **BIA Great Plains**
  - No Report
- **Northern Idaho**
  - Melanie Roose is the Coeur d’Alene Dispatch Center Manager
- **Northwest Montana**
  - Biddy officially NW Zone Representative
  - Sarah Whetzel new Kalispell Dispatch Center Manager
- **Southwest Montana**
  - Will have MAC meeting this spring
- **Central Montana**
  - Uncertain if zone has met yet or not.
  - Central MT IMT3 meeting late Spring
- **South Central Montana**
  - Zone meeting soon. Loss of MT-BZC will be a significant topic.
  - DNRC Bozeman Unit Manager position unfilled, was integral to training in the past, will be big shoes to fill.
- **Eastern Montana,**
  - Last time zone met was October. Pile burning and prescribed fire.
- **North Dakota,**
  - Preparing for upcoming fire season. No fires quite yet, was busy this time last year. Have good lessons learned from last year
- **Montana Fire Chiefs,**
  - Not much in the way of meetings. Had a couple of requests re: rates of line going chapter 50 rates.
  - Haven’t been looked at, needs to do some more discussion with the state. Need to be mindful of paying vehicles are sitting in a parking lot at ICP the off-road rate.
- **Montana Wardens,**
  - Conference will be held in May
- **Buying Teams,**
  - Applications reviewed, hoping to go available April 1st.
  - Did get clarification that BUYLs can not be added as approvers for micro purchasers (USFS charge cards).

Agency Updates

- **BIA**
  - New Fire Director is Aaron Baldwin. Will be advertising an SES position to supervise Forestry and Fire at higher level
  - Robin White, national AO and NWCG rep took new position in RM region. National budget officer also vacant.
  - Rocky Mountain Region has had several changes. Staffing and qualifications of applicants are a significant challenge right now.
  - Still no regional AFMO or FOS. Hope to get advertised, have been vacant for a while.
  - Helitack programs both have several vacancies. Might be advertised soon.
  - BIA has centralized HR for fire vacancies. Has not been smooth. Will be looking for detailers, ADs, and will rely on agreement with BLM for staffing.
- Readiness reviews starting next month. Implementing new format.
- Gearing up for local training season.
  - Brandon Spencer is detailed into NRTC vice-Mary Reavis. No word on if will advertise on the TC position.

- BLM
  - Finished leading panel for state AFMO. Selection made, no announcement yet.
  - Susan Vincent officially AK BLM Business Lead.
  - BLM Fire Business Spring meeting coming up toward end of March.
  - DOL OWCP on track to have dedicated claims unit to field federal fire fighter claims this summer.
  - Change to trespass laws- BLM will have ability to collect additional funds.
  - Lots of discussions on renewing, and rehiring incident business positions at district and state levels that have been lost over years of budget cuts.
  - OPM is working on new Wildland Firefighter series, not a lot of discussion beyond OPM yet. As it stands now, BLM would like everyone in fire, including incident business.
  - Orange book updates on track for 2022 release.
  - Clarification for who NIFC has agreements to contract for, MT is not included in those states and still have Fire COs.
  - PNW Incident Business Coordinator position will no longer be Service First; both the BLM and USFS will have their own coordinator/lead.

- Forest Service
  - Anticipate will have BPAs for portable toilets, handwashes, tents and yurts.
    - Will be using VIPR templates, on DPLs by center and available for interagency use.
    - Specifications and pricing still TBD.
    - Local vendors desired, haven’t asked for market research yet.
    - Will discuss how this works in the fall
    - FS R1 did not commit to participate in full range of the options AIMS is soliciting preseason.
  - Experiencing many of same issues already expressed with difficulty filling perm and temp positions.
    - Down 16,000 temporary and 9,000 permanent applicants.
    - Affordable housing issue for lots of locations
  - Working on COVID-19 testing BPA, have had to redo specifications. May not come to fruition.
  - Alternative approvers for micro purchasers have been approved. This will be more of a seasonal thing than by fire assignment thing.
    - Alternative approvers must meet specific criteria and meet training requirements
  - ASC-IF is now fully integrated with IPP for payments.
    - Individuals we may have relied on previously to track down payment information no longer will have access to research.
    - Personnel at the contact center will now be the only ones with access to all systems for payments.
  - Have requested we change how payments are batched; rather than one continuous PDF file, would like each invoice and supporting documentation in individual files, along with a cover page. Can still submit multiple invoices per batch.
  - Document is now circulating that walks vendors on how to center, info on sam.gov registration and how to get in touch with PTAC for assistance.
  - VIPR on target for June 1 to have agreements done and DPLs to dispatch centers.
  - AIMS tracker location will move in FireNet, will no longer be tied to one person, AIMS will have own profile.
  - UEI numbers are replacing DUNS
Updates to VIPR agreements; there will be 3 separate updates over spring to update DUNS to UEI. Should be on award for fire season.

- FS CIO has been working on a rental computer BPA. Running into issues with small business set aside rules. Not sure will actually get awarded. Don’t know parameters will be, since working through a non-fire procurement process.
- AD Pay Plan has been released and payment procedures are going through final review, should be out shortly.
  - FS AD PP – did add CISM positions and a releveled MEDL pay rate from H to L.

- IDL
  - Master Agreement main priority.
  - Working on 2020 and 2021 bills and internal policy updates.
  - Approved to get a fire business system but will take time to implement.
  - Fire Business Assistant position got cut but have been funded for additional 10 perm ENGBs. IDL gets 6, timber protective associations get 4
  - Fire season prep, meetings, readiness reviews.
  - State of ID going through system change with state controller- may not be able to support needs of a busy suppression season.

- NPS
  - No report

- ND
  - Preseason preparation.

- MT DNRC
  - Will have off-road vehicle, portable toilets and handwash agreements this year.
  - Experiencing shortages in filling positions, had lots of turn over for seasonals and having trouble filling engine boss positions. Might not have as many engines available.
    - Even with pay rate increase. Housing is the biggest issue. Of the NW units only 3 have bunkhouses.
  - Lots of staff movement internally, lots of positions to fill.
    - New Good Neighbor Authority positions are being filled as funding allows, creating more holes
  - Two office managers with fire finance responsibilities are brand new, will take some training.
  - Working on a lot of incident business training for the entire state.
  - Continually experience communication issues with key repeater.
  - Flathead County does not have an online burn permit process and relies on DNRC NWLO to issue burn permits. DNRC no longer has capacity to use. Have a meeting set to discuss options.
  - EFF packets are now in an online format, working well.
  - Sue Clark retired last fall.
  - Working on legislative inquiries.
  - Proposing to switch to federal per diem rate for in-state assignments, rather than to get approval each time they change their rates.
  - Requesting to get own fire business system. Current using spreadsheets and an access database.
  - Hired new fire finance specialist- handling all accounts payable and FMAGs. So far behind, can’t keep up with FMAGs.
  - Beth still sending out 2020 bills and starting to work on for 2021. Doing great job.
  - Also working on Master Agreement.

2022 Supplement Reviews
- Chapter 0
Minor edits and personnel changes

- **Chapter 10**
  - Removed some DNRC specific language and direction to refer to Chapter 50, EFF rates updated, all increased by $1.70, added positions in updated AD pay plans to EFF.
  - Updates to DNRC work comp direction.

- **Chapter 20**
  - Leave out portable toilets and handwashes.
  - Remove language regarding posting wage determination at camp. Providing this information is the responsibility of contractor.
  - Work/rest guidelines information. Should reference both the Red Book and yellow book is ultimately under 5100, referencing both is not a bad idea.
  - Change references to iBPA to just BPA throughout chapter, remove under header for just EERA.
  - Remove FAR clauses, add link to wage determination on IBP site.
  - Seems like the rates should be going up, given higher cost of fuel, staffing, etc. Deanna will send final draft for rate review.
  - Leave AIS language in each block for specific pieces of equipment.
  - REMS- BOD didn’t want to establish rates, since intent is to use local gov. BUT REMS is ordered in place of getting other, more traditional medical services, i.e., ambulances.
    - Rework sequence of language regarding REMS.
    - Had several IMTs order contract REMS this year. A topic that needs elevated to BOD.
  - Reasonable markup language on Fuel Tender needs “at contracting officer’s discretion” added.
  - Heavy equipment and small truck mechanic rates the same. Need to get someone from contract operations to review. Rates for different typing are different in preseason agreements.
  - Leave ATVs, prohibition to use is not blanket across all agencies.

- **Chapter 30 Biddy**
  - Added clarifying language regarding replacement of gov property.
  - Added some additional language for different types of incidents.
  - Line Officer and Agency Administrator may be too prescriptive, change to Line Officer or their designee.
  - Added language for documentation, clarification between standard cache items and non-standard items, personal property and specialized equipment.

- **Chapter 40 Biddy**
  - Minor edits, add Deanna as BUYT Coordinator for this year.

- **Chapter 50 Juanita & Becky**
  - Updated to direction for meal periods. DNRC no longer requires meal breaks to be noted on shift tickets.
    - Makes auditing very difficult, find that tendency is to tack on an extra half hour when lunch break is shown.
    - From a interagency policy perspective this would make teaching 260/261 tricky.
    - Finance insisting meal breaks be shown when one wasn’t taken and resources adding an extra half hour at the end of the day both disciplinary issues.
    - Section worded in a way that committee could agree.
  - Clarified audience for chapter. Contains a lot of the same information from the LGFF Mobilization Guide. Find having direction in both helpful.
  - Sections moved around for added clarification.
  - DNRC waiting for potential policy updates for meal rates and receipts.
  - Backfill now authorized for Option 3 hiring. Historically not the most utilized hiring method.
  - Rates went up for engines, water tenders, medical apparatus, and personnel.
  - REMS
Personnel can be hired as a THSP potentially; extraction doesn’t necessarily need medical qualifications if other medical personnel already on site.

Search and Rescue on FS lands are the responsibility of the counties and could be used in the instances that would necessitate REMS. The ask tends to be for situations with high probability rescue could be needed, so they are there and prepared for response.

- Off road/line going vehicles vs. transportation only.
  - Qualification of resource could be used to determine rate.
  - Will require some due diligence for Finance.
  - Minor terminology edits.

- North Dakota would like hard copy invoice and documentation. Incident could do electronic, but what comes back to ND state should be hard copy.
- Instances of incorrect vehicle information on North Dakota agreements, Loretta will follow up on.
- Brenda Even is still the Fire Business Specialist for South Dakota.

- Chapter 70
  - Minor updates for dates and edits for consistency.

**Review of NR IBC Website and Toolbox**

- Need to update Casual Hire Form link to newest version.
- Time Unit review checklist:
  - Needs updating.
- Lend Lease document:
  - Need to clarify that direction is for incidents managed in site only.
- Remove general message form.
- E-resources list:
  - Needs updated.
- Incident Business In-brief checklist:
  - Updated, should be renamed “Finance and Logistics In-brief Checklist”.
- Local Finance Skills:
  - Biddy will review and update as needed.
- Contracting specific items:
  - Dianne should look at. The contractor evaluation will need to be updated, at a minimum.
- LUA Intake form:
  - Will need to link to the national one NWCG is revising.
- Sack lunch specs might need updates.
  - DNRC has sack lunch vendor list on their site they maintain every year, might be a helpful tool when in need.
- Procurement Unit review checklist:
  - Dana will review

**Additional Comments and BIN Items Discussion**

- IDL has a NERV vehicle that was never turned in and vendor says is missing.
  - Ordered with an overhead resource and handed over to ground support. Direction not followed and was not formally transferred to a resource order.
  - Minimal documentation has been found.
  - Suggest reaching out to vendor for an inventory report and to contact law enforcement.
- DNRC Employee Claims Form, DNRC-382
  - New form specifically for DNRC employees. Has been reviewed by legal department and Deanna. Will be posted on website and as an appendix of fire business manual.
- Vendor Solicitation Letter
  o Link has been updated to 2022, but version is 2021. Deanna will update.

Next Meetings
- 2nd Quarter Call - 11 a.m. April 18th.
- Fall Meeting – October 12th-13th in Billings if can meet in person, October 11th-13th if virtual