

**NORTHERN ROCKIES COORDINATING GROUP
FIRE BUSINESS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

November 1-2, 2011

Helena National Forest SO, Helena, MT

In Attendance:

Lily Huskey, USFS, IBS and Central MT Zone Rep
Sheri Schlader, USFS R1, IBS and Southwest MT Zone Rep
Joli Pavelis BLM, Incident Business Coordinator
Tracey Nimlos, USFS, R1, Incident Business Coordinator
Joyce Anderson, USFS R1, IBS and South Central and Eastern MT Zone Rep
Wendy Stephenson, USFS, Contracting Specialist
Tony Lubke, Bitterroot Dispatch
Deanna Crawford, USFS, IBS and North Idaho Zone Rep
Biddy Simet, NPS Rep
Terri Tangen, USFS R1, IBS and Northwest MT Zone Rep
Ted Mead, MT-DNRC, Chief of Fire and Aviation Management
Greg Archie, MT-DNRC, Operations Committee Rep (for Turman)
Matt Hedrick, MT-DNRC, Incident Business Coordinator (for Okon)
Tony Pirc, IDL, Incident Business Coordinator
Debby Wesselius, USFS, CO and Buying Team Coordinator
Amanda Boatright, BIA, Business Management Coordinator (for Jay Windy Boy)

Tuesday, November 01, 2011

Buying Team Update: handout from Debby W.

- Eastern Zone doesn't have a qualified BUYL so others filled in this year. (Missing the \$100,000 warrant – which may be rectified this month).
- BUYT members may or may not be in primary acquisition positions.
- Debby is not always appraised on where the teams may go.
- Some Northern Rockies folks joined Ron Schiltz on his team this year which gave our folks some experience on big fires, even though activity up here was slow.
- BUYT Trainees: USFS Zone acquisition supervisors have not been amenable to allowing USFS folks to be perm parts of the team. All teams had interagency representation, with the exception of possible the Idaho/MT team (maybe). No Park Service representation.
- Some alternates or trainees have other red-card quals and have a hard time getting out of a Buying Team due to other responsibilities.
- Buying Teams can always use more micropurchasers.
- Concerns about MT-DNRC participants expending state funds on a federal incident... Seems that the federal compensation to the state was timely enough that the state fiscal responsibility was OK.

Buying Team Rep to the NRCG Business Committee and Buying Team Coordinator duties need to be filled by someone new. Debby no longer has time to fill these roles in her current positions. If Northern Rockies follows the national direction, additional help is needed to put a team together. Recruitment period is typically open the same time as the IMT applications – on the NRCC site. Team is down Dec/Jan/Feb.

Proposals:

- From Tracey: Put together an ad-hoc, or subgroup of the NRCG Business Committee to manage the Buying Teams. If there's a BUYL, it falls to that person to manage the team.
- From Debby: May not be able to get one single lead, but may be able to find folks to share the position.
- Debby may be able to communicate issues from the national level back to the committee, until a new leader/coordinator comes forward.

Action Item:

Agency leads to go back to agencies to try to find both micro-purchasers and warranted COs who are willing to join the team. Need to have fire training. The 2012 national buying team applications will be submitted to respective NRCG Business Committee agency rep as identified on the application. The agency reps will take the lead in the 2012 national buying team configuration. Debby will continue to communicate national and regional buying team issues and direction.

Chapter 20 language for Transports:

Kevin and Debby went with national direction: self transport for heavy equipment. Came out late and wasn't included in the Chapter 20 language. This year Chapter 20 will correctly reflect the preferred method of hire for all heavy equipment needing transport. We should begin to see this transport language cleaned up on local heavy equipment agreements. Dozers and excavators are hired with a built-in price for transports; a second E number is no longer required for the transport. The line-item transport price for this heavy equipment is listed either a daily guarantee or mileage, whichever is greater. This transport rate is paid automatically for mob in and de-mob. The fire has the option to keep the transport for that heavy equipment, and continue to pay either the guarantee or mileage. This transport guarantee or mileage is an "addition" to the use invoice for the heavy equipment with the following exception; a transport currently under hire at an incident may, under certain conditions, be utilized to transport multiple pieces of equipment. See the solicitations for further clarification and requirements.

Summary of new business practice:

The preferred method of hire for all equipment requiring transport to an incident will be paid a daily guarantee or mileage, whichever is greater, for the transport of their equipment. This payment process for transport currently included in the regional agreement language will be included in Chapter 20 language, and be required in local agreements and incident only agreements. For non-competed heavy equipment on local agreements: If the heavy equipment company is not able to provide transport, then dispatch will go to another vendor who may be able to provide transport. . If no heavy equipment is available capable of transport, then dispatch will utilize the DPL for transports and match the heavy equipment with the first

available transport on the DPL capable of transporting that piece of equipment. The heavy equipment does not have the option of choosing a transport at this point. If dispatch has utilized the DPL to find a transport, a transport E number should then be generated, the Government becomes the responsible payer for the transport. This is not the preferred method of hire though; vendors usually know who is capable of transporting their equipment and generally under commercial market conditions are responsible to compensate the transport themselves if they've been hired as a subcontractor.

Action Item:

Cheat sheet to clarify the administration of transport for both regional competed equipment and local heavy equipment agreements. Also clarify Dispatch role and I-Suite work-arounds for the heavy equipment use invoices. Debby to provide draft of administrative role by mid Dec to Joyce and Tony for their respective input. Provide to NRCG Business Committee for review.

Fire Season Review:

- Payment Package checklist: should be updated – some details are not included, like TINs for state. May need to separate out resources and identify payment process for each type/each agency.
- Finance section folks may have little experience or rusty experience. Everything needs to be audited.
- Need operating guidelines and in-briefing information from the host unit to the incoming teams.
- Lack of Procurement Unit Leaders or equipment specialists on teams or in finance.

Suggestions:

- Use the websites to post updates to procedures and policies that folks can visit to stay current. Build more cheatsheets or guidance documents.
- Revisit the idea of “audit” groups coming to fire – finance sections to review packages during the incident while folks are still there – if it happens after, the folks who make the errors don't learn from the mistakes.
- Equipment envelope could be updated to reflect today's business. This should get elevated to the NWCG.
- Maintain Fire 101/S260 refreshers and Finance information in Operations training to keeps folks updated.

Other Finance/IMT issues:

1. Issues with AD FSC and agency folks who are rusty.
Suggestion: Address items with FSC during the finance breakout at the IMT meetings this year or add another section to our annual webinar that's directly targeted to FSC and specific unit leaders – review the basics as well as updates.
2. Team meetings
 - (Missoula: C&GS only – T1 and T2 will be together): Tracey, Pam and Joli will be asked to develop that portion of the IMT meeting, what's good for the general body and what's needed for the breakout.

- Ted: Finance is one arena that we have shortages and inexperienced staff on our teams. He hopes that AA who host the teams do an honest job of evaluations for the teams. Team evaluations should go to the NRCG BOD. ICs will attend the BOD meeting to raise the concerns about finance. (Nov 15 in Missoula) Our discussions of season issues should be summarized for the BOD (Pam will attend for Finance Committee).
- One of our problems is that we'll never stand-down a team. When a team gets called, we pull folks from anywhere and put them on a team and send them out. May or may not be the best folks. Using the pool concept is the best idea so folks can get experience with or without their "primary" team.

Finance Section Chiefs / Trainees: where are we now and plans for the future

We decided not to pair folks specifically, but we'd like to use Bertalee as a trainer, but this year, none of the trainees were able to go. We have both Type 1 and 2 FSC trainees in the pipeline.

Business Committee Representatives – to other committees:

Training, Operations, Equipment

Ann: Serves representation on both Equipment and Finance. If that changes, it would come from the Equipment committee.

Lily: Has been on Training and will stay as nobody else volunteered.

Operations: Bidy will come off that committee, Business Committee vice chair will take over as Ops Committee rep. Will become Tracey.

DNRC Solicitations Update (Matt):

Issues: contracting has been completed through CSD: centralized services division (business center for all agency operations – not directly in fire). Currently discussing whether the solicitations should come thru fire bureau (Pam and Matt). Leaning toward Fire with limited involvement with CSD. Will try to improve the process – Pam recently asked for feedback on the solicitations. Will have other subject-matter-experts in the office who can answer questions about the solicitations and final contracts – using a central office phone number.

DNRC tentative process: solicitations out in Dec, send out to committees in Jan, finalize by mid Jan, put out for bid by Feb 1.

Tasking from BOD on Equipment Cost Comparison (Ted Mead):

DNRC and other Equipment Committee folks have met with water-handling contractors. They have been asking for a higher priority on the mobilization list throughout the fire season. NRCG agencies have remained committed to using agency resources first, then working through the DPL. Contractors claim that agency engines and crews are more expensive than them. Ted requested information from the business committee to determine all agency costs for interagency operations. They were looking for Type 3, 4, 5, 6 engines for comparison.

Contractors have also pointed out that they were not sent to Texas, but resource orders coming out from Texas were for “fed only” mainly due to TX bill paying. So R1 could not have sent contractors.

Under current *agreements*, business is not guaranteed by either party. We could, theoretically change to a full-fledged *contract* with obligations that don’t allow either party to say no to an assignment. Could be like an aircraft contract with daily availability and obligated funds. This, however, would not allow the contractor to turn down an assignment. A guaranteed amount of business would totally change the way we do business on both sides. (Not likely to be supported).

National Wildland Contractor’s Association is really looking hard at trying to get a guarantee at some level – would need to go through the NWCG. This will also be discussed among the 50 state wildland fire managers.

Northern Rockies IC Cost Management Summary (Tracey):

This checklist/form is intended to be used when major decisions are made on fires that affect total incident costs regardless of agency. Tracey got four of them back from ICs this fire season. It was not universally used, but Tracey did ask ICs to use them on USFS fires this year. The ICs had some suggestions about how to alter the questions. Feedback overall was good. It’s a simple Word document so it’s easy to use. Currently on an internal USFS site, not yet on the NRCG site.

Part of the use of this document is to intercept the need and impact of a Large Fire Cost Review. If ICs fill out this form, and if Costs are kept well in I-Suite and reports can be pulled, then all the information required to review costs may be handy. From the USFS perspective, Tracey will continue to use this – ask ICs to complete it.

The Decision Document template (that goes along with Cost Share Agreements) was utilized three times, and we had 2 Cost Share agreements in the regions. Greg Poncin, Steve Frye and Rick Connell were instrumental in completing the Decision Document. It’s still called the 2010 template, but it’s probably ready to be finalized. This document is specifically designed for Cost Share and who’s paying what. It’s utilized by Agency Administrators, not ICs. Would be used on a multiple-jurisdiction fire.

Update List of Fuel Cards Used by Agencies:

This list was given to Velvet to be included in the solicitation for fuel tenders indicating what they must be able to accept.

Before the fuel tender agreement gets updated next year, we need to update this list.

BAER:

C.O.s have asked Washington Office to clarify the direction on using I-BPAs or Incident Only EERAs when the fires have converted from suppression to BAER – from the “P” code to the BAER project code. They can’t be used and a new solicitation must be put in place.

Wednesday, November 02, 2011

Vehicle Release Form – Joyce.

Issues with tracking rental cars from pick-up to payment:

- One person rents a vehicle for him/herself at a fire, keeps it and returns it. Support order to an O#.
- One person rents a vehicle for him/herself at a fire it, gets reassigned and leaves the vehicle at the fire under the care of Ground Support.
- One person rents a vehicle for him/herself at a fire, gets reassigned to a different fire and takes the vehicle along.
- Vehicles rented by/for the fire through Ground Support

There isn’t one, consistent way to track the vehicles so that all parties involved understand that payment will be made according to the EERA and so that the vendor can match up the payments received with their outstanding invoices.

A vehicle release form is part of the solicitation for rental cars – but not much guidance on how to use it, why or what it does. Need guidance on how exactly we’ll use that form, who will fill it out and how it will get back to the vendor.

Suggestion: add guidance to the solicitation to request that the vendor complete the form in lieu of their commercial invoice, send to camp with the vehicle and resource order, and it will get returned to the vendor when the vehicle is returned so there’s no question on how payment will occur. Also, add the form to the Business Committee website as a form-fillable document.

Wendy: most of what’s on the Vehicle Release Form is on the Vehicle Inspection Form.

Suggestion: work through dispatch to educate the vehicle users on their responsibility for tracking and returning the vehicle. Include some kind of a form with the equipment package to let the user know what needs to be done. (Ground support vehicles are the easy ones because they’re tracked – the issue lies with vehicles that are ordered thru dispatch for firefighters to be picked up individually).

Suggestion: add more information to the “fill” information on the RO to include more vehicle description and who its assigned to. Person who picks up the vehicle can call dispatch with the fill information.

Action Item:

Committee subgroup to review these forms and their use and report back.

Review of March Action Items:

1. No S360 for FY2012
2. Mini Guide for Ops Training – completed and posted
3. IBA Class in R1 – No class for 2012
4. Advanced Cost Training: scheduled and announced, Bidy and Joyce working on course framework, agenda and content. Would like to have Pam assist with advanced Excel and other state-specific issues.
5. Fire Cost Management Strategy document: Pam and Tracey worked on the Cost Mngt strategy to make it more interagency, took it to the BOD and got no comments. For now the issue has been dropped. The USFS will go ahead with the strategy for themselves, the other agencies didn't seem interested.
6. Aviation billing: Feds-states. DNRC has been challenged with comparing contract aircraft vs. state-owned aircraft. They need to determine what the aircraft costs were and how the aircraft were contracted (Exclusive Use, CWN – availability paid by fire or covered, etc). At the incident level, finance can get this information, but some of it resides with the aircraft managers – type of contract info, for example. Need to coordinate with the managers to learn more about the aircraft. DNRC is looking at DNRC incidents and any cost-share incident where aircraft costs are shared.
7. Update website to remove old positions: done

Comments on website:

Business Committee website is very busy. Could stand to be reorganized to assist folks with finding things. For example, drill down for supplements, classify tools into categories and drill down to them. Tracey can work with Kitty to help reorganize the website.

Training:

NWCG is developing a course for the ICPI: Incident Contract Project Inspector. Looking for subject-matter-experts for help with the development. Pam Okon has volunteered for this. Bidy has also volunteered. R1 has been asked to roll-out the course first. Folks who could fill these positions would include equipment inspectors who need training on the finance-side. Business Committee has been asked to host the class late in 2012 or spring 2013. Our regional-level training commitments only include S360, Inc Proc Workshop and eI-Suite Train-the-Trainer for 2012/13 training season so we could probably do this.

Buying Team Member taskbooks:

Developed and in the hands of Ron Schilz. Implementation is currently unknown. Wendy is following up, knows folks who could use the taskbook. Wendy will build her team for the November roster. Wendy, Marty and Rita would like to be involved with the Buying Team

Application review process. The NRCG Business Committee subgroup for Buying Team coordination will work on this process.

Incident Procurement Workshop:

Wendy will be course coordinator, Tracey will accept and help review nominations. The information sheet that's connected to the NRTC website will be updated to include Buying Team emphasis and say that late noms may be accepted. Tracey will do this.

Business Committee 2013 Regional Training Calendar:

ICPI

Incident Procurement Workshop – local focus

S360

e-ISuite Train the trainer

eI-Suite:

Train the trainer for Northern Rockies: Bidy, Sheri and Joyce. May-June, 2013. Tracey will follow up on the number of slots available to GACC for this course.

Online S260:

How do we want to manage utilization of this course? Tracey and Pam have discussed that this course is good for Operations folks, but individuals who wish to get involved in Finance should take a classroom S260/S261 and fully implement the combined course. Folks who only need S260 should be directed to take the online course, and classroom sessions should focus on both. This is ultimately a zone decision, but this would be the recommendation that the Business Committee would make.

Training: Finance messages in operations courses.

See Action Items list for who's going to cover which courses....

Bidy to send Deanna ideas for aviation training.

Zone Trainings:

When calendars are set within the zone, route schedules to committee members if seats are available for other participants.

Supplement review:

See Action Items list for who's doing which chapters. Due to the timing, our supplement format may not conform to the new layout for the white pages.

All NRCG hand-outs, guides and cheat-sheets, both on the website and internally among the agencies, will need to be updated to conform to the layout of the 2012 revised IIBMH white pages.

Spring meeting:

Location: Missoula. Tracey will find a location when the dates are set.

