

NRCG Business Committee 2021 Fall Meeting

October 19th- 20th, 2021

In attendance: Amber Honsaker, Tracey Nimlos, Amanda Boatright, Sarah Lee, Susan Dowler, Becky Shepard, Dawn Hernandez, Biddy Simet, Chuck Tapia, Katie Baret, Mike Lucas, Tim Ryan, Juanita Nelson, Jamey Toland, Doug Turman, Jeff Gardner, Joanne Marceau, Fauzia Massey, Randy Linthicum, Dianne Sigler

Committee Reports

- **Operations**

- Fairly short meeting. Discussed differentiation between Critical Mission Resource Groups and Surge Resources, IBA issues

- **IC**

- Connell is current chair, Sampson will return as chair next year
- Surge/CMRG issues discussed
 - Costs not getting back to IMTs, check-in and the incident replacement process; not all requests go to FS to adjudicate. Need more formal guidance for these issues in future.
- No decisions made at this meeting. Waiting to hear report out from board after November meeting to address action items
- Discussion on IC successions this year
 - Scott Schuster is applying for Team 2 IC and Doug will join Aaron Thompson as deputy.
 - Discussed viability of N ID IMT and how many IMTs we can staff in general next year. Lots of questions whether we had viable IMTs, no IC conceded that could not.
 - Connell's Volunteers was an interesting experiment that yielded some lessons learned for the pool concept.
 - Current model does not seem to be working, still borrowing personnel, and sharing across IMTs. Pool of available IMT members continues to shrink. Burning out those who are still engaged.

- Frustrations with IBAs this season discussed. Specific issues were surrounding federal procurement laws and travel regulations

- Some felt IBAs overbearing and restrictive, making it difficult for them to do their jobs.
- Issues with the IBA need to be discussed with the AA, who both the IC and IBA work for.
 - The 3-way communication between the IC, AA and IBA seemed to be missing this year.
 - Sounds like there needs to be good discussion on what the role of the IBA is. Providing further justification to an IBA to address an issue or help paint the picture of what the incidents needs are shouldn't be a problem, however maybe some feel that way.
 - May help create understanding and environment where issues can be resolved at the lowest level in season to come.

- Would like specific examples from the ICs from this season. Would be great to present at an AA workshop, M581, and virtual IMT workshop

- Highlight importance of these discussions between IC, IBA and AA so everyone is on the same page.
- Differences in agency policy may be adding to the frustration; what works on one incident may work on another.

- **Training-**

- No Report

- **Buying Team-**

- Supported 21 fires in the Northern Rockies and 2 out of GACC. Assignments shared between 4 different leads.
- Mix of onsite and virtual staff. Virtual was hit or miss. Does work but have some processes and protocols to iron out.
- Still in clean up mode for local fires.
- Setting up AAR with IBAs to identify and remedy issues

- **Dispatch**

- David Lee is chair of steering committee. Fall meeting pushed back due to continued fire activity.

- Analysis is underway in regard current and projected staffing challenges and discussions to potentially merge centers. Discussion on hold until fire activity slows down.
- **NRCG Board of Directors**
 - Getting ready for their fall meeting
 - Sarah and Jeni continuing to work on financial agreement. Outcome will be based on feedback from leads and intel from their respective budget personnel.
 - Staffing changes upcoming- Granger retired, Dan will be retiring, Ralph is retiring the end of the month.

Zone Reports

- **Northern Idaho-**
 - Finishing cleanup, working on bills. Will be a new Deputy Fire Staff on NCF and a new Dispatch Center Manager on the Panhandle
- **Southwest-**
 - Prevention: Got a facelift this year with new theme “Treasure our State” with local artists (adults and kids) providing “Keep MT green” artwork to use with the messaging.
 - Was operational for 98 days; \$119457 was spent on messaging with an additional \$9500 spent on personnel.
 - Looking at additional funding (FS) that would come of the top to allow for additional preseason work.
 - AAR:
 - Appreciated use of Zone surge capacity resources and the sharing of resources. Would like to explore additional surge options such as aircraft.
 - Lolo working on standing up aT3 organization and possibly staff 2 teams this next year.
 - Charter is being reviewed
- **Central-**
 - Joe Sampson is new Fire Staff on BDF.
 - Both forests still wrapping up their fires. Tammy is working on the HLF incidents, Joyce and Bertalee are cleaning up BDF fires. Not sure about the DNRC.
 - Bidy will continue to share info to the zone. An AAR would help helpful for the zone. Some of the topics and issues that came up would be good training items.
 - Each fire had 5 or 6 IMTs- lots of good lessons to learn there.
 - Central Zone FS IBS job is assigned to an HR specialist. Hoping for an advertisement out fairly soon.
- **South Central-**
 - Fauzia joined zone meeting. Discussed issue of operations not thinking of impacts to support functions during decision making process. Support function complexity is not always commensurate with operational needs. Lend/lease was used widely.
- **Eastern-**
 - MAC group meet weekly for most of the summer, zone meeting is next week.
- **North Dakota-**
 - Above average fire activity this year. Had good amount of support from out of GACC. Were able to send resources out when activity allowed.
- **Fire Wardens-**
 - No report
- **Fire Chiefs-**
 - Local government resources were busy, no issues to report
- **NW BIA-**
 - Busy season, working on contractor invoice payment. Currently have \$11M worth of contract invoices to get through after their FY end blackout. Have already paid a substantial amount in invoices.
- **GP BIA-**
 - Regional FMO took another job- acting is Lawrence Thompson. Hope to advertise soon. Getting bills paid for fires this year.
- **NWCG IBC-**
 - Meeting next week, don’t have agenda yet. Feedback on naming conventions will definitely be a topic of discussion.

- AD Annual Behavior form may need a revision. Current iteration does not provide enough guidance to hold employees accountable for actions.
- S-110 is being revised to include content for non-operational personnel.
- Revising S-260 test to remove outdated content.
- AD Pay Plan will be discussed. Please notify your agency lead if you have any suggested changes.
- More changes likely coming to NERV. 2021 changes really prevented misuse, however there are still issues. Thanks to those who were included in tasking.
- Lots of frustrations for policies not being black and white and exceptions that don't make sense. Recognition that some of the rules aren't black and white and defer to your agency lead when you have questions.

Agency Reports, AAR Agenda Planning, Successes and Challenges

- BIA-

- Funding issue early in the season. Doing fairly good now, getting caught up. NW region has biggest balance of outstanding. Rocky Mountain region is sitting good.
- Busy summer on east side. Season started early and never really let up.
- A big challenge early on in the season was meeting special needs in regard to meals.
 - Had two crews at once with multiple gluten free meal requests. Staffing shortages made it difficult to get meals in general this summer, let alone ones that meet dietary restrictions.
 - Reasonable Accommodation language is in the SIIBM but might need to be discussed further.
 - Jeff- was an issue with contracted resources as well. When didn't get meals that met dietary restrictions, contractors were submitting claims for meal reimbursement. Agrees should be discussed.
- IMTs on East side of MT were using virtual finance staff on incidents where that was not realistic, given time frame of incidents and connectivity.
- Had issue with Ronan seat base. Base did not get included on new FS award for retardant, but vendor was providing it anyway. Working to resolve issue and make the payment for retardant used since July. Aviation CO in contact with FS CO, will try to get remedied.
- New fire director, Aaron Baldwin, starts at the end of October.

- IDL-

- Amber is new Fire Business program manager for IDL
- Set up contracts early on in the season that proved valuable.
- Training needs identified for IDL – INBA and 260/261.

- MT DRNC-

- Considering having an AAR for this season.
- Nemah retired at the end of September. Susan Dowler will be the new West Side Incident Business Specialist. Contracting responsibilities will no longer be part of the position. The DNRC will be filling a fire contracting position to work out of Missoula.
- Matt Hall will replace Mike Degrosky as Fire Protection Bureau Chief
- Hired around 600 Emergency Fire Fighters this season, might be a record.
- Did have a few FMAG fires.

- USFS-

- AAR Items- if we do separate IB/Finance AAR we should include NR finance chiefs and the other BUYLs
- Had significant issues with IMTs changing processes and not continuing where the previous IMT left off, i.e., hard copy vs. electronic. Each team wanted to use own process, rather than continuing with process established by previous IMT.
 - Example: one IMT spent their entire assignment reorganizing files rather than making payments, including interims.
 - The B-D had 3 T1 IMTs follow each other and made very few interim payments. One invoice alone was over \$1M.
 - Vendors have been going 45-90 days with no interim payments processed.

- Interim payments are addressed in the ASC payment guide, our IBOGs and was mentioned several times on the NR FSC calls this summer. Concerning this direction was still not followed.
- Another issue that needs addressed this year was the tracking of unoperated equipment.
 - Didn't seem like logistics sections had a good tracking process for unoperated equipment.
 - UTVs, toilets and a UTV trailer disappeared.
 - One fire didn't know how many tents they had.
- IMT members staying in hotels rather than camping
 - Not sure what prompted this- COVID related or if this is just the expectation that's been set now.
 - Issues with one NR IMT where IC authorized and got an AA to cosign a letter authorizing per diem and lodging for everyone on IMT, including personnel working on their own unit.
 - Trend started in July and August. GACC-wide guidance may need to be considered. A topic also to elevate nationally.
 - Hotel rooms almost impossible to find in most places this summer in the Northern Rockies and the cost of rooms was very high.
 - IMT on Hay Creek used grizzly bears as additional justification for hotels, rather than seeking additional security as an option
- The Forest Services' Procurement reorganization resulted in utilizing many purchasers and contracting officers new to fire procurement.
 - Biggest impact was EERAs being written for commercial items that are normally paid via credit card. Smart source computers, copy machines, trash removal, bags of ice, etc. This created more of a workload for finance sections.
- Cost Share agreements with Central Land office not signed yet. Tracey is hoping to have signed before she retires
- Cooperative agreements are expiring and have to apply to WO to extend agreements. All agencies aware of need to extend.
- Close to making offer for the Cooperative Agreement position. Has been vacant since April.
- Ralph Rau, Fire Director, is retiring at the end of the month. Craig Glazier will be detailing behind him.
- Tracey is retiring at the end of the year.
 - Position was not approved for advertisement yet, will likely be two detailers until position is filled permanently.
- One notable success of the season was ordering rental trucks from Flex Fleet.
 - Company has GSA supply schedule. Used this summer to rent trucks. Have half-ton, three-quarter ton trucks, potentially vans.
 - Reasonably priced and have with unlimited mileage. Compared to what paid for other rentals this summer was a great deal.
 - AIMS wrote EERAs and payment is made via commercial invoices. Pricing and terms already defined in GSA schedule.
 - NRCC got about 30 trucks total and 3 other dispatch centers utilized.
 - Tracking of vehicles is a stringent requirement of program.
 - Program required a central POC for region- all invoices funneled to Tracey.
 - Trucks delivered were brand new, no mechanical issues.

- **NPS**

- No changes on the horizon for NPS policy. Busy season, similar struggles to other federal agencies.

- **BLM**

- Corey Buhl will be the new permanent Operations Director at NRCC. Brad Bergman will detail behind him.
- Karly DeMars is the new state Fire Planner.

- Mariah Gibson is the new Incident Business Specialist for Eastern MT and the Dakotas. Positions previously held by Meg and Ann have been consolidated into one.
- Starting well into second year of workforce transition. Engine captains have transitioned to PFT GS-8s. Still analyzing staffing levels for districts. The overall alignment of organization is still in process.
- Had many issues surrounding following business practices, including creating AD exemptions outside of established process.
- Dealt with issues of ICs exceeding authority. BLM does not have authority for local per diem. Can approve hotels and authorize catered meals, but not per diem. Had upset employees as a result.
- NR Team 2 had 3 assignments. BLM had a few IMTs on their incidents this season.
- Concerned interim payments not being made on several incidents.
- Consistency of teams and naming conventions in general is an issue.
- Other issues of working in the digital environment this season- duplicates files and documents, some IMTs were shredding hard copy docs after scanning. This is concerning given cooperator resources typically need their originals to submit their payment.
- The electronic process in general is not very efficient. Each document is touched at least five times in the process. These are easy to misfile and delete.
- IMTs were asked to take on very challenging fires, in some cases two complexes at a time.
 - The size and complexity of what IMTs are being asked to do is likely contributing to burn out.
- Hotels when is available can be more cost effective.
 - Yurts can be tens of thousands a day to work out of. Hotels not always available, especially in Eastern Montana and the Dakotas.
 - When they are available all infectious diseases seem to be significantly reduced- not just COVID.
- Devil's Creek accident report should be out soon, currently pending final review.
- Kentucky employee spent significant amount of time in Billings ICU for COVID.
- Getting ready to send out requests for 2020 FMAG documentation.

- **NWCG IBC Updates**

- No Report.

Lead Rotation- Skip FS for 2022 Amber

- Committee should consider having the BLM or BIA be the next Chair, rather than have a detailer fill role.
 - Would be difficult to maintain continuity and be unfair to the detailer.
 - BLM will chair next year with BIA as Vice Chair.

2022 Training– Commitments and updates from the different groups developing or presenting classes- including Webinars

- Mary Reavis took another job, and the BIA will be able to fill a detailer behind her.
 - Detail is only 120 days right now. Hopefully selection will be announced in the next few weeks.
- NRTC will be able to present Finance courses tentatively scheduled for this training season.
 - L975, Deanna nominated for Lead, L973 Sarah will lead, and S481 Amanda will lead, and Bidy will assist.
 - Will be virtual and dates flexible since logistics of open rooms will not be a consideration.
 - Tracey will meet with leads to schedule dates and firm up cadres.
 - May be only geographical area offering finance courses this training season.
- After what was experienced this season it seems like training is not hitting the mark. Need to look at what are we teaching vs. where the deficiencies are. Specific topics to address should be the outcome of an AAR.
 - L973 and L975 don't necessarily hit the mark, however our webinars and workshops are updated every year, and address issues from the previous year.
 - Will be adding virtual environment inputs to FSC, UL and INBA courses
 - Tracey is going to propose a national level incident business webinar or training.
 - Beyond the NR and GB there doesn't seem to be enough maintenance training offered. This is really daylighted when we host IMTs from other Geographical Areas.
 - Webinars have been successful. If we want to go that route again there would be some logic behind that.

- Good feedback on sessions that emphasized walking through a system or process. Sarah's IROC session was good example- something along those lines would be helpful.
- Might consider instructional videos vs. webinars. Something people can reference back to.
- Another topic that may be more for a national committee is what positions are appropriate to perform virtual. Virtual requires its own skill set and a higher understanding of what you are doing and how that fits into the bigger picture. Skill set and experience differences need to be identified and addressed.
- Issue needs elevated to NWCG IBC. Need effort to help individuals maintain current skill level in addition to acquiring skills for new processes that were not developed when many first gained currency.
 - Maintenance training should be considered as a requirement for currency, especially at the FSC level. In many instances, if personnel do not attend our webinars, they don't receive any updates or training.
 - COs have been getting 6-7 calls a day from finance section personnel, some very elementary in nature and are very clearly spelled out in agreements.
 - Not specific to NR IMTs, seems to be a national issue
 - Many questions from operations as well, i.e., how to utilize contractors. Maybe we don't address in current training.
- May lose lead time to develop our own webinar series if we wait for a decision at the national level.
- Each lead will run up through their respective agencies, highlighting groundwork that has already been done here.
- During review of action items decision made to highlight previously recorded materials and a series of new webinars to address lessons learned and training gaps daylighted during the season.
 - PTRC and EQTR- use previous recordings, potentially with live Q&A sessions
 - HETF – Biddy
 - INJR with specific instructions for forms – Sarah
 - BUYT – Mike
 - Virtual Finance – Bertalee and Joyce
 - Contract Administration and Auditing – Amanda and Joanne
 - Dispatch, specific topic TBD - Jamey
- Southwest Zone Training Center
 - Offering 5 operations courses that would need a finance message. Deanna is typically POC for these inputs as the Zone Representative.
- Northern Rockies Training Center
 - M581 – Sarah
 - S339 - Biddy
 - S420 - Biddy
 - E-iSuite – Karly has been lead for a few years, unsure if that is still the case.

FireNet- Use and Training, Electronic Filing, State Requirements for Original Documentation

- Working in the Teams/Sharepoint environment and electronic filing should be addressed in webinars and additional training. Not just specific to Finance, but all functional areas that access FireNet.
 - Should include “rules of engagement” in training. IMT members should not expect to retain access to an incident after leaving and should keep the products they need for their next incident.
- Needs more overall explanation and training that FireNet is working platform, not the final repository for incident records
 - Use of the FireNet platform should meet the needs of the incident, and not the IMT. Not always the right tool for every incident, especially short duration ones.
- The all-electronic environment creates a huge workload for IMTs, especially finance sections. Current tools are good however the process takes a significant amount of time
 - Number of personnel to accomplish all electronic and reality that we have fewer people available should be considered and addressed.
 - There are reasons for and against working in this format.

- A lot of advantages having ability to utilize people who have an exceptional skill level but need to evaluate whether the benefits outweigh the downfalls.
 - Accommodating virtual staff is a tool and not mandatory.
 - Reality that on some incidents it takes more time and effort than is needed to meet the needs of the host agency. Cannot always cater to the virtual staff
- National direction should be issued, and if not, direction at the geographical level should be considered.
- The hybrid model of accepting hard copy documents and scanning along the way seems to be most successful. Otherwise, consistency can be an issue.
 - Many have experienced that using the “flow” is not consistent and it is difficult to find missing documents in the inbox when using inbox rules.
- Incidents in FireNet get archived in host agencies official filing system- do not stay permanently in FireNet
- Electronic vs Paper documentation for state and cooperator resources.
 - Why the need for states for original shift tickets and CTRs. Is this a legal requirement and where it stem from?
 - From DNRC perspective, they did accept photos as originals. Not a legal requirement for payment.
 - Have to ensure on certain packets are not paid twice. Depends on who it comes from. Some of their units and land offices had packages turned in for their local government resources from other units. Not from the unit that hired them.
 - IDL has similar reasoning. Can accept electronic, but helps resolve questions for cooperators
 - Have experienced wide array of what an IMT sends a resource home with. No consistency.
 - If we did hybrid model would have originals. If working all electronic they resource would retain the original hard copies.
 - Would be beneficial to get everyone on same page on requiring these original documents. Would be beneficial in managing finance section workload.

NERV Update

- Overall use of NERV went fairly well this season, except for availability of vehicles.
- Still potential misuse.
- Were able to get vehicles easily when Enterprise moved their vehicles around
- Non-FS agencies working through new claims process, FS still will not see theirs.
- Something to address again on the business matrix?
 - No, as matrix is geared more toward IMTs and NERV claims are agency-specific

NR Finance/Logistics Evaluation Form

- Group agrees current form, along with the Inbrief/Transition document are outdated.
- Bidy will lead task group to update.

Cost Share Training for Agency Administrators

- Three unresolved Cost Share agreements for FS. Initial agreed upon methodology questioned after the fact and parties requested to change. Difficult to change course since agreements are effort-based and tracked by day.
- Should take opportunity to provide training to our AAs who may not fully understand our capabilities in finance to create well-documented, defensible dollar amounts.
 - Need to highlight the fact that to end a cost share agreement on a specific date is very difficult to do and we cannot necessarily isolate costs accurately for a specific period of time.
- It has been several years since a similar training was conducted. Currently widely varying levels of expertise and understand of our Cooperative Fire Agreements and how Cost Share agreements are tiered off of those.
- Training should be targeted toward both Federal and State agencies within the NR and highlight the differences between the states.
 - Might need a session for each state.
- BLM has done AA refreshers both national level and for MT/Dakotas. Have been successful overall.
- BIA would also support that and would like to get Agency Administrator Reps involved as well.
 - They seem to be more involved in day-to-day communications and operations, which has caused some issues.
 - Agree- FS has same issue, especially with all Cost Share Agreements being negotiated at the Forest Supervisor level now.

- Suggest presenting idea to NRCG. Not just incident business issue. Tracey will draft proposal and circulate to committee prior to sending to the BOD. Sarah will take the lead.
- Past training has been really successful. Getting the AAs, FMOs all together in same room to get a common picture of agreements and getting on same page was really valuable.

AIMS

- Forest Service specific, topic better suited to an AAR

Dispatch- Resource ordering, DPL, Expanded

- Several instances of Dispatch Priority Lists not being followed. Not isolated to one dispatch center.
- Issue that should be addressed by the dispatch steering committee rather than the business committee.
 - o Real potential to lose vendors if inconsistency continues.
 - o Examples- not checking with neighbors for resources before getting on an EERA, orders going out of GA and getting filled.
- From the dispatch perspective, there are a several factors to blame.
 - o Keeping expanded dispatchers current and refreshed is difficult, since the majority of expanded staff do not work in dispatch as their day job. Equipment tends to be the last desk expanded dispatchers want to staff.
- Web based learning should be used to get expanded dispatchers up to speed and refreshed
- We might consider adding a webinar that highlights the overlap and interconnectivity between dispatch and finance functions and pulls the curtain back for dispatchers to see the downstream effects.
 - o Might be difficult to make this work, if crux of issue is expanded dispatchers aren't dispatchers in their normal job. Not our lane to train dispatchers.
 - o Issues should get run through the dispatch steering committee and then through the NRCC.
- There are still systematic issues- only the second year of IROC. Programming pushes don't help the issue
- Many instances of equipment inspected day prior to travel. No mechanism to pay that as a half or full day, since not technically under hire.
 - o In some cases, just did on their own, in some instances directed to by dispatch to do so. Needs addressed

Heavy Equipment- Potential updates to heavy equipment contracts

- No plan to allow HEFT contractors subcontract or expand upon flexibilities in current agreement. Was just solicited this spring and is a 3-year agreement.
 - o Agreements were in jeopardy of being cancelled in September.
 - o Unless we change or there is a large change in management – both financial and operationally- there is a very low probability of adding additional options. If anything, there's potential to remove options.
 - o Contracting fielded a significant amount of HETF questions this summer
- May be exceeding scope of the original intent. Concern surround viability and risk management.
 - o FS Contracting, Safety and Fire Director recently had meeting with Regional Forester regarding how the HEFT has changed and what it has morphed into.
 - Have seen on some IMT preorders.
 - Becoming a catchall when other resources are scarce.
 - Need discussions on redirecting use. May require an approved plan in place prior to ordering in the future to implement sideboards on use
 - IMTs are required to have a plan approved and in place for burning operations, similar process would be ideal for ordering HETFs.
 - The reality that we are logging without NEPA in place might catch up with us.
- Issues with vendors not understanding their agreements and what they were entitled too was also an issue this season.
- Need more education across the board on use and management of HEFTs.
 - o Bidy's instructional video was well received by finance sections.
 - o Excellent topic to address in S339.
 - o Topic should also be routed to IC committee, if it hasn't already, and be included in AA trainings.
- Excavator/Masticator Interchangeable Agreement not possible without a national shift in solicitations.
 - o Machines currently evaluated as two different machines that serve two different functions

- Two different heads on one agreement would be difficult and just as hard to implement as the HETF agreement.
- Have done EERAs for interchangeability in the past. This became an issue in when DPLs were bypassed.
- Have to realize if ordered as a one piece of equipment, the moment they are not being used that way immediately puts them out of scope of their agreement.
 - At that point liability shifts away from government. Any claims working outside of agreement scope have to be denied, and liability turns around to the employee whom, at that point, would not be backed by government.
- VIPR Personnel update - Dana Bangart will be new CO in the Northern Rockies.
 - She will be the lead for the national clerical trailer agreement and assistant for HETFs and most of Heavy Equipment.
- Heavy Equipment with water, water handling equipment and weed washes are on tap for solicitation this winter.

Contractor Qualifications and MOU Training

- Issues arose this summer regarding how contractors verify training requirements and are issued qualification cards.
 - Bigger issue with trainings, highlights that some of the training they have and qualifications they have.
 - Example of contract employee at incident presenting himself as qualified TFLD, which may have been case previously.
 - No training or documentation beyond ENGB.
 - Picked up by IMT, flashing card on his phone...Will not release training records, will not.
 - Taking an ENGB off of a contract engine boss takes them out of scope. Guy in question just showed up and qualifications were not verified. Not current TFLD
- Have also ran into individuals who are not government employees or AD/EFFs who just want training, and then turn around to work for contracting.
 - We only let people in training that are not current agency or ADs.
 - Tribal programs cannot hire ADs, since it's a federal authority.
 - Coming up with ways to put an end to it. One MOU provider still unhappy that records will not be shared.
- One example of is shift tickets on one incident signed by a contractor who identified themselves as the IC. Resource was a contract engine boss, not an IC.

NWCG 30 Day Work/Rest vs. Contactor Requirements

- Wide variety of interpretations on how work/rest requirements apply to contractors this season and whether the 30-day assignment cap applies to them or not
 - Have had issues with Contracting Officers making different determinations on how work/rest applies to contractors.
 - Need education for both agency personnel and contracted resources in this area as well.
- There may have been contract personnel working equipment on other incidents on their days off, rather than getting rest.
- Releasing a contracted resource after 30 days may help other, higher priority incidents get resources.
- NWCG looking at updating guidance specific how work/rest requirements apply to contract resources
 - NWCG Incident Business committee has also discussed, wanted to change that had to be released after 30 days, but official direction would need to come from their Safety Committee.
- Problematic to tell contractors what they can and cannot do with own employees, as they are subject to Department of Labor policies.
 - If working 14 days on and 2 off for example, are within what is legal with DOL, that might be problematic to implement.
- If you are going to tell a contractor they have make their own employees take days off it has to be a good reason, has to be relevant. Still have to do same 14 and 2.
- Differences between Personnel(i.e., Fallers and Medical resources) and Equipment? Can they continue to do 14 on/2 off as long as that resource is needed?
 - Should be good to do so.

- There are private businesses and it's the company's responsibility, as their agreement requires, they follow our work/rest requirements in addition to labor laws.
- If NWCG determines 30 is the limit and contract resources need to be released when they hit that threshold hopefully that decision is in writing
- When to release a resource is really up to the IMT. If this is viewed as a safety issue and that's what the team wants to do, they can.

Guide for ordering and tracking Porta Potties (Handwash?)

- Vendors generating and submitted commercial invoices would be helpful to keep track of these items and ensure timely payments are made.
 - Invoices would be signed off by Facilities and then submitted to finance. Would essentially replace a shift ticket. Would not need an OF-286 for Forest Service fires.
 - Several instances this season where the vendor assumes that we are keeping track of what an incident has, and have found that in many cases, the IMT has not.
 - Tracking porta potties and handwashes is a logistics function, not finance. This would transfer that responsibility back where it belongs.
- Tracey will take idea to the national committee.
- Future contracting issues need to be routed to Ryan and Dianne.

COVID

- IDL fires only had a few cases, not as many as last season
- BLM - Yellowstone and Custer county are still being significantly impacted.
 - Did have numerous cases in BLM fire program,
 - State on KY emp. In ICU for several months. Released home rather than a long-term care facility. Not able to fly commercial, so ultimately had to be driven home
 - Issues at BFK and Districts- districts not as big an impact, as employees could telework or could be separated on the line.
- Many incidents in the Northern Rockies had Covid cases.
- No issues with COVID protocols in general, but reverting back to last years' protocols may have been difficult for some at first
- BIA – no major outbreaks at incidents or facilities. Random positive cases here and there, nothing major.
 - Did experience conflict between AAs on Covid protocols to define in a Delegation of Authority for an E MT incident. BIA AA had frustrations with casual attitude of partners. Covid is still a very sensitive topic for Native communities.
 - Had camp crews go to other geographical areas test positive and IMT demobilized, rather than quarantine/isolate crews.
 - Small challenges with some not taking as seriously as their programs. No issues with masking or covid protocols
- Waiting for guidance from DOI on vaccination requirements and how they will affect fire resources
 - Unclear how this will apply to contract or cooperator personnel for all federal agencies still.
- FS – How this requirement will work with cooperators collocated in federal buildings is still undetermined as well.

Action Item Review

- **Cost Share Implementation** - No report, have not met.
 - Suggest using e-iSuite to track costs for effort-based agreements rather than spreadsheets. These were used on the B-D this season. Many issues with formulas, password protection and accuracy when tracked using this method.
 - Our state coop agreements state that we will settle on actual costs, i.e., use transaction reports from our respective financial systems. If we are going to apply percentages, we need something that generates percentages to apply to the actual cost or change the language of the agreement
- **S261 Virtual Delivery**
 - Course and delivery platform overall worked well.
 - Student reactions mixed. Some like shorter day with independent work, some would have preferred the traditional two-day format.

- Need to look at adding content to address some of the issues from season
- East zone sessions very successful. Presented via teams with a Google site to share material.
 - Teaching two audiences – firefighters and future financier section members
 - Did demonstration in e-iSuite of producing 286s and 288s and then pulled up real packets and discussed the auditing process with invoices with issues i.e., breakdowns, 2-person engine crews, etc.
- **State Equipment Review**
 - No report
 - Likely will not meet until November, will need to find an FS rep to replace Tracey

REMS

- Might be at a point where we need to develop rates for REMS to add to Chapter 20 of our supplements.
 - Several ordered this year, no point of reference for reasonable rates.
 - Might be worth it to put together a small task group, preferably with Jeffs involvement.
 - NRCG already established standards however cooperators are identified as the preferred source. When the white paper was written there appeared not to be a need to develop rates.
 - Contracted REMS did not appear to be held to same standards this season, several had add-on items to their agreements. The contractor seemed more in control of the ordering process than the incident or CO in some cases.
 - Having established rates in our supplements would provide good starting point.
- Suggest ordering process be refined, IMT should provide a justification for the need.
 - Require a medical plan in place and a justification that gets signed off by the AA.
 - Validation and verification that local government REMS not available.
 - This would need to go to board to be approved
 - Question if need is actually for REMS or more paramedics.
 - When need is terrain driven may bring up questions if any personnel should be there.
- AA perspective from Doug- if REMS is the right tool at the right time. Either way there we should provide contracting officers a starting point to negotiate rates.
- Committee will report back to the BOD issues with REMS this season and see if they choose to revisit white paper already out.
 - Do not think BOD will have an issue with adding REMS rates to Chapter 20, but whether or not they choose to revisit issue may change how we develop rates.
- Would also be helpful to put something together as a group regarding ordering and purchasing for medical unit
 - Hard to navigate as IBA. Example of overdose kits ordered this summer for respiratory aid.
 - Differentiation between treating personnel on-site and transferring to a medical facility.
 - Discussion whether starting a group to discuss would be helpful. Really a function of Safety, but questions about ordering will always end up with the IBA.
 - Direction more or less already exists- need to anchor back to NWCG and NR IMS allowable purchases, and not stray from.

2022 Supplement Updates

Chapter 0 – Chuck

Chapter 10 – Becky

Chapter 20 – Amber, maybe Susan, if not Tim

Chapter 30 – Biddy

Chapter 40 – Biddy

Chapter 50 – Juanita and Becky

Chapter 70 – Joanne

Next Meetings

- **Quarterly Call- Lead Call day prior**
 - Jan 4th, 1400 Mountain Tuesday. Leads will meet the day before
- **Spring Meeting Group**
 - March 15th-17th – blocks of time over 3 days, rather than 2 solid days. 0900-1200, 1300-1500

