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**In attendance:** Rita Chandler, USFS; CT Camel, CSKT; Tim Crosmer, MT DNRC-NRCG Training; Ali Ulwelling, MT DNRC; Crystal Beckman, MT DNRC; Chris Barth, BLM; Mark Eliot – IDL for North ID; Ashley Juran, MT DNR; Ashley Sites, USFS-CGF; Domo Woodham, MSU Extension Gallatin Co; Deana Harms, BLM; Marianne Baumberger, USFS-CMT zone; Jordan Koppen, MT DNR-SWMT zone;

**Phone in:** Nick Schreiner-USFS; Terina Goicoechea-BLM; Shannon Bonney-BLM; Larry Elder- BLM;

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### **Review of Action Items from Fall Meeting Notes - Met October 17-18 in Lewistown.**

Committee identified our priorities for moving forward in the coming year.

1. Restriction review
  - *There will be a report later in the agenda*
2. Platform for sharing committee documents

Jordan Koppen to create a Facebook FPEC private group so we can share items

  - The challenge is that there are agency restrictions on who can use the various platforms.
  - *People can send a friend request to Jordan and he can add them to the FB private group*
  - We can try it out and report back in the fall.
3. NRCG FPE has a signed charter (posted on website)

### **Report out of Fire Restriction Survey/Fire Restriction and Closure Plan (NRCG Tasking)**

The original tasking from NRCG Board was:

- **Are Fire Restrictions Working?**
  - The nuance is in the details, but generally respondents had positive views about fire restrictions.
- **Do Fire Restrictions Prevent Fire?**
  - Q: Do fire restrictions prevent unwanted human ignitions? **74.1% said YES**, but less so with federal government (65%), public affairs staff (63%), ND (40%), ID-Clearwater (50%), MT-Great Falls (60%)
  - Q: Do you think fire restrictions are/are not effective at preventing unwanted human ignitions? **75.2% said ARE**, but less so with state government (67%), fire management (67%), ND (46%), ID-Clearwater (50%), MT-Great Falls (60%)
  - Q: Fire restrictions are effective at reducing the number of unwanted human ignitions. **69.3% agree or strongly agree**, but less so with state government (63%), public affairs (64%), ID-Clearwater (33%), ND (46%), MT-Great Falls (65%)
- **Are We Restricting the Right Thing at the Right Time?**
  - Q: Are we restricting the right thing at the right time? **68.2% said YES**, but less so with state government (62%), public affairs (50%), MT-Bozeman (43%), ND (47%)
  - Q: Were Stage I Fire Restrictions implemented when the appropriate conditions were met? **79.4% said YES**, but less so federal government (68%), fire prevention (73%), MT-Great Falls (50%), ND (69%)
  - Q: Stage I Fire Restrictions were appropriate for the conditions. **76% agree or strongly agree**, but less so with state government (69%), fire prevention (57%), public affairs (62.5%), ND (46%), MT-Bozeman (50%), MT-Great Falls (50%)

- Q: Stage I Fire Restrictions were in effect at the right time. **64.3% agree or strongly agree**, but less so with federal government (58%), fire management (57%), MT-Bozeman (33%), ND (46%), MT-Great Falls (50%)
- Q: Were Stage II Fire Restrictions implemented when the appropriate conditions were met? **77.8% said YES**, but less so federal government (60%), line officer (70%), fire management (72%), MT-Helena (54%), ND (57%)
- Q: Stage II Fire Restrictions were appropriate for the conditions. **73.1% agree or strongly agree**, but less so with other (43%), federal government (67%), public affairs (62.5%), fire management (64%), ND (43%), MT-Helena (54%)
- Q: Stage II Fire Restrictions were in effect at the right time. **62.7% agree or strongly agree**, but less so with other (43%), federal government (50%), fire management (52%), fire prevention (54%), MT-Miles City (20%), ND (28%)
- **Of Note:**
  - **For Fire Restrictions Area Coordinators:** *Look at the results and see if there are additional questions/pairings you want to look at for your area.*
  - Will be reporting general results back to the NRCG Board next month
  - Still more work to do looking at the analysis of fire causes (with 2017 data)
  - Rewrite of NRCG Fire Restriction and Closure Plan in 2019 based on what was learned through this effort and other experiences/lessons since 2013
  - **For 2018, focus will be on short-term changes that can be made to address what we know.**
    - All areas should follow a conference call template using the criteria for entering restrictions (first order of business)
  - **Training/Coordination ranked highest** as what people want to address (followed by Coordination and Notification/Communication)
  - Additional details can be found in the survey comments. They can be used to answer some of the variability in the responses. *Eg - is there anything in the comments from the 57% of respondents in MT-Bozeman that address why they think we are not restricting the right thing at the right time?*

*\*Chris will send out survey results to FPE Committee (specifically FPE Committee and Restriction Area Coordinators)*

- **Committee Ask for Restriction Areas:**
  - Identify what's your plan moving forward?
  - **update contact info (and local restriction area contacts),**
  - **provide restriction area plans to Rita**
  - save sweeping revisions until NR plan comes out in 2019 (tier to GA plan)
  - Chris will ask that RA report back by mid/late April with comments on survey results.

*\*FPE Restriction task group will provide conference call template, standard language on why we use restrictions (TBD) - Due date to be identified to get this done pulled together.*

### **Discussion of Wildfire Awareness Month**

- May is Wildfire Awareness Month
- Last year there wasn't a large response. Coordinated effort was largely via social media. Locally people may have done more, but within MT not much was shared at a statewide level.
- 10 state proclamation is underway (going around and getting signatures)

- Ashley Juran (DNRC) is spearheading an effort (MT) for 2018.
  - Would communities benefit from a community chipping day? Are people interested, would people host it?
  - Is there something (action-oriented) that could be different from the educational events that have been done in the past?
  - She has developed a flyer that can be shared. Happy to share that – or hear others ideas about what they might be interested in.
  - Jordan (Missoula Area) – working with a group in Missoula that is going forward with a effort working with the mayor that May 5<sup>th</sup> would be a chipping day. Could it be elevated to the governor to be elevated to a statewide effort?
  - May 5<sup>th</sup> is NFPA's National Wildfire Preparedness Day.
  - Some areas may still be under snow on May 5<sup>th</sup>. Events (sponsored) only need to have part of the activity on May 5<sup>th</sup> – those efforts can be some type of inside activity with the action taking place at a future date.
  - Would be good to develop a communication plan for the FPE for Wildfire Awareness Month to have consistent messages (and graphics) to share leading up to May 5<sup>th</sup>, on May 5<sup>th</sup> and throughout the month. (Ashley (lead), Mark, Jordan, Deana, and Crystal)
  - Jordan is making some videos that he will share.
  - Lots of people have great ideas around that state (and GA), but the point was made that there is value in making sure that we all share this information with others so that each other knows what is going on and available
    - Segued into FAM topic (*more on that later*)
  - How do we make #fireadapted cool?

### **Review of NRCG MAC Operating Guidelines and NRCG 2018 Fire Strategy (2018)**

- FPE to make some recommendations to the language in the plan
- Modifications were made to language in strategy document
- Should be consistent with guidelines document
- Suggestion to change position/role to Fire Education and Prevention

*\*Rita gathered input and submitted to operations group making the updates to these documents.*

As things hand off from one chair to another for continuity of information sharing we need to insure there is one place where we have our information. Also one email that is used by the Prevention specialist that gets activated in the NRCG MAC operating guidelines.

*\*Crystal will make sure that the email account (google drive) has all the appropriate tools in it (Access to firerestrictions.us, templates, etc.)*

### **Zone Reports**

**Billings:** Larry Elder-Prevention /Education/Mitigation Events Billings District

- Spring Home Improvement Show - March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>
  - Had 27 individuals stop with questions Defensible Space
  - Had some Educators wanting to set up in school visits about fire education
- West High School/Central Heights Elementary 4<sup>th</sup> Grade and Juniors - March 15<sup>th</sup>

- Talk about fire Education and 1988 Yellowstone fires They will have 3 stations set up on fuels , fire Behavior and fire effects
- Billing Area Restriction Meeting - March 21<sup>th</sup>
  - Educate Restrictions folks on procedures
- Red Lodge Evacuation Exercise - March 24<sup>th</sup> Postponed
  - This is an exercise for emergency responders involving a wildland fire scenario where evacuations and structure triage of residential subdivisions are required.
  - The exercise will begin in the classroom and will 1) review evacuation process best practices, 2) discuss structure marking systems, 3) review structure prep and triage using Situation Analyst, 4) demonstrate the launch of a Code RED emergency notification and 5) provide instruction on a new GIS-based evacuation survey system developed by Carbon County
- Billings Arbor Day Fire awareness 4<sup>th</sup> Graders from Billings Schools approx. 300-400 hundred kids to attend - May 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Wildfire Community Preparedness Shepherd VFD - May 5<sup>th</sup>
- St Vincent Health Care/ Kid's Fun Day @ Zoo Montana - May 19<sup>th</sup>
  - Volunteers from Police/Fire/Rescue Vehicles. This is a great opportunity to come and show and share to hundreds of children in our community. Smokey Bear to attend
- Smokey Event Planned -June 8<sup>th</sup>
  - 20-to 30 students
  - Fire education (Fire Lookout based)
  - Prevention

**Lewistown:** (Shannon) – homeowner preparedness meeting (January), 6<sup>th</sup> annual wildfire awareness day (5/9), valley county outdoor class in Glasgow (5/ 17), pre-season restriction meeting late March/early April

**Central MT:** (Nick) – no update for FS

Email from Terina G. – Unfortunately, with the change in the meeting date, I am unable to shift my previously booked schedule. As the CZ rep, I reached out to DNRC, FS and fire protection associations in an effort to compile activities across the CZ. I have received zero responses. CZ is loosely organized. The majority of us participating in fire prevention/education/mitigation/outreach activities coordinate as appropriate but mostly function and implement on our own. Many of the partners have zero people specifically identified for fire prevention/ed duties. That is not to say that there isn't stuff happening in the CZ!

The most active of the fire protection associations is the Tri-county FireSafe Working Group (covers L&C, Jefferson and Broadwater Counties). They are highly active and have many events happening or scheduled to happen, in addition to their monthly meetings and local ed/outreach. See below.

\* 3/17-18: Helena Home Show

\* 3/20-21: Montana Forest Collaborative Workshop - Resilient Landscape, Thriving Communities

\* 4/6: Montana Community Foundation Early Recovery Workshop

\* 4/27: Montana Forest Landowner Conference

\* 4/28: Ties to the Land Workshop

\* 5/8-10: DNRC Cooperator Summit

As for the BLM, we are getting busy with pre-season meetings and presentations. Fire Ecology in the schools in May, with other educational field days scheduled the very end of April. Since the BLM District is contained within multiple Zones for NRCG, we are also partners for various activities in those zones.

Although I received no response from the FS, I know they are engaged in various educational activities. This usually falls on the PAO, as there are no designated FPE folks on the CZ forests.

During times of high fire danger and increased activity, the CZ has utilized daily posts on social media to spread and deliver various FPE messages and tips. This was utilized extensively in recent years; the entities on the list posted to their social media sites and shared other posts, as appropriate. Partners are willing to do so again, if conditions warrant.

**NW Montana:** (Ali) – FireSafe Flathead - lecture series, including the media,, working on their website, community preparedness events (fuels, fire, watershed emphasis), 8 HOAs in April, Science on Tap, Farmers Market, Big Fork Chamber, home assessments, “spring circuit” – check FireSafe Flathead Facebook page

**Idaho/IDL:** (Mark) – Planning for interagency school programs, fair season, fire cache refurbished and using an old (42) fire engine for parades, etc., coordination with fire restrictions (NR/GB). He will get with Courtney Couch NezCleawater for North Idaho prevention coordination efforts.

**CSKT:** (CT) – Planning for presentation at schools, do not necessary have problems with juveniles, but rather debris burning, looking at making a video on safe debris burning, will be getting introduced to new RAMS this spring, new prevention handbook out this spring

**MSU Extension:** (Domo) – position is grant funded, grant funding for wildfire risk reduction (tiered reimbursements), MT Farm Bureau grant, lessons learned for ag producers impacted by wildfire, leadership preparedness grant, fire preparedness and control fire workshop, community wildfire preparedness events, wildfire education training for all the extension agents in the state

**Eastern MT:** (Deana) – wide variety of fire programs (classroom and field), some main causes of fire is equipment, burn barrel – focus on training for those, Bucking Horse sale (huge event in MC), presentations/parades/booths, social media (working with PAO), community assistance agreements, pre-season fire restriction meeting in early April, DNRC purchased fire danger ratings signs for the area, BLM purchased a new Smokey for the office in SD, booth at Sturgis (SD) for the rally

**South Central MT:** (Marianne) – Counties working on CWPPs, will have two new prevention tech positions for the forest on the West side at Bozeman & Hebgen Lake RD. The Yellowstone Nature Connection (junior smokejumper program) has a new director.

**SW MT:** (Jordan) – working on some videos for the spring, have an intern from U of M that is helping with the video production (safe burning, HIZ, firewise community, drone incursion, firewise plants, safe

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ag prevention videos), bobble head night (double bobble head – firefighter and homeowner), home ignition zone talks (w/Jack Cohen), using Facebook “boost” to target outreach to certain demographics. (CJ) – Lolo has built a story map online for 2017 fire season and highlights the three objectives of the Cohesive Strategy. Missoula Co. FPA will highlight community /homeowner responsibilities at firefighter Appreciation Night (bobble head design is a homeowner and firefighter together on a pedestal and will highlight Smokey’s 7<sup>th</sup>. From CJ - Kudos to Jordan for his excellent work done in the arena of homeowner responsibility with regard to the home ignition zone as well as reaching out to communities for individual inspections and online assessment tools.

### **Agency Reports**

**MT DNRC:** (Crystal) – hiring the administrator (forester), training time of year, leading a core group in DNRC through a strategic planning effort, emphasis on fire adapted communities, NASF (national) meeting in Whitefish this fall, governors briefing scheduling (try to coordinate with May 5<sup>th</sup>), will try to work with governors public affairs on messaging about fire preparedness/prevention, Council of Western State Foresters meeting in Denver last fall (example of the interagency work in Utah for information/prevention efforts), CS conference in Reno in March, IMT breakouts April 4 (Missoula), Forestry Assistance Bureau summit in May, working on a fire resistant plan document to share for MT (or NR), making a priority to use home ignition zone language (structural ignitability is as important as fuels mitigation), final stages of a public portal for risk assessments (SAM), would we want to engage with other GACCs in the future?, is there an interest in doing Northern Ag Network PSAs again in 2018?

**USFS:** (Rita) – even though we have some work that we want to do, we are doing good things now. The documents and information we have is being used in other areas as an example. Working with PNW as they incorporate some of the things in the NR FPE documents, New Prevention Analysis tool will be rolling out later this year, delegation of authority example for FPETs was sent out, CMAT, report out to NRCG Board on May 8-9 (Chris and Crystal), sharing electronic docs is a national issue on committees, PNW has spatial fire data app to analyze fire history (by cause, by area) – request to have someone from PNW report to this group in the fall, Smokey 75<sup>th</sup> event coordination – is there any interest plans for NR? – not so much. Committee consensus seems to be for Northern Rockies to have things focused locally vs regionally for the Smokey 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary activities. The UM home coming parade will highlight Smokey’s 75<sup>th</sup>- per note from CJ.

**BLM:** (Chris) – In January/February, the BLM had both state and national meetings for our fire mitigation and education program. One of the significant developments in our program is a change to how our assistance agreements are reviewed and approved. We will look at all of our fuels projects (including community assistance) for their effectiveness if/when a fire intersects/crosses them – fuel treatment effectiveness monitoring (FTEM). We completed end of year reports (mitigation/education, trespass, rural fire readiness – training to local cooperators). BLM MT/Dakotas will be updating their Fire and Aviation Management webpage (target late spring). Like others have shared, the BLM is looking at the new RAMS (WPSAPS). We have a team that is representing the BLM. Montana is updating their State Hazard Mitigation Plan – including the wildfire section. Trying to include cohesive strategy goals in how the action items are defined. Will be attending the National Cohesive Strategy workshop in Reno. Presenting on the Wildfire Research (WiRē) Team’s innovative approach to helping communities adapt to wildfire. The WiRē Team recently released a series of three new illustrative videos to describe their

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innovative approach. The videos are on the WiRē Team's website at: <https://wildfireresearchcenter.org/approach/>. For fire information, the NRCG Board gave me a delegation to be the NR PIO representative on the GACC/NIFC PIO calls. What that entails is sharing info from the NR with the national group, and bringing information from the national calls to PIOs with the NR. If the GMAC activates, they may call in a PIO to assist the GMAC with info/communications. BLM MT/Dakotas will continue to do MT Fire Update posts on FB as conditions warrant. We would like to work with partners to do this so that we can have an interagency message and share the responsibility of creating the posts.

#### **Fire Restriction website (on NRCG board page)**

There were some outdated items on the web page. We reviewed them discussing how to make the Restrictions NRCG page more useful and updated.

*\* Rita will take changes back and have web person adjust based on recommendations.*

- *Rita and Chris will email NRCG Zone Committee Chair to ask for an updated list of 2018 Restriction Area Coordinators and Media Coordinators (and alternates).*
- *Restriction Coordinator subcommittee will get activated in 2018 to work on the 2019 NRCG Restriction & Closure Plan revision*

#### **Discussion on Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network**

- Idea is to engage with a national group on sharing/peer learning (learning network)
- Sent email to people in Montana to invite them to join FAC Net as an affiliate member
- In addition to working with the national FAC Net, we want to create a Fire Adapted Montana (FAM) to bring the peer learning concept to the state.
- Some initial concepts have been formulated, but we plan to engage with a core group to determine what is needed (structure, resources, deliverables, etc.)
- Meeting scheduled for FAM in May

**BIN Items:** Continue to explore file sharing opportunities.  
Facebook closed group, google drive (FPE gmail account), others...

#### **Discussion of Fall meeting 2018:**

Place: Helena, MT, with Date: TBD