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**In attendance:** Rita Chandler, USFS; CT Camel, CSKT; Ali Ulwelling, MT DNRC; Crystal Beckman, MT DNRC; Chris Barth, BLM; Mark Eliot – IDL for North ID; Chris (CJ) Johnson, USFS; Anna Henderson, USFA; Courtney Couch, USFS; Kathy Bushnell, USFS; Ashley Snellman, USFS; Tam Kolar, MTDES;  
**Phone in:** Jordan Koppen, MT DNR-SWMT zone; Shannon Bonney-BLM; Larry Elder- BLM;  
Michael O’dell-NDFS

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**Tuesday, October 16, 2018** (*Italics/highlighted items are actionable items to move forward*)

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**Review of Action Items from Spring Meeting Notes – we met March 13 in Bozeman.**

**Did we do what we had planned?**

- Revisit how to share information and documents within the group
  - Facebook group didn’t really take off this season
  - One of the main things to share is a One Less Spark (OLS) toolkit
  - What about FireNet?
    - People would need to have FireNet account
    - **Chris will talk with NRCC about creating a NRCG FPEC FireNet account** and what it takes for everyone on the FPEC to get access. Will then need to move unofficial google account documents over to FireNet account with access to Team Drive. (*more to figure out here*)
  - What about nrcgfireprevention@gmail account? – some use it/ some don’t.
- Follow-up on fire restriction survey: general results reported to NRCG Board back in spring.
  - People did talk about it in their fire restriction areas.
  - Did follow-up questions get sent out?
  - Things seem to be improving, but there is still an emphasis on restrictions despite causes not necessarily being affected by the prohibitions
  - Fire restrictions do help us prevent other causes when we are having problems with things like equipment, but it is difficult to assess those things
  - Suggestion to approach MACO to discuss fire restrictions with county counterparts (and other states association of counties).
    - We want to be unified, but what expertise is influencing the decisions?
  - Some discussion about restrictions today to prime the discussion tomorrow. Challenges are the process, and importance of a unified message to the public...
- **Look at revising fire restriction training, ppt., roadshow, etc.**
- **Consider how to communicate what restrictions are and what they are not. Story Map??? - CJ**
- **Develop a Parcel Assessment course for geographic area – Crystal/Chris/Anna**
- **What about making fire restrictions a Story Map? Have all the information preloaded so you can turn layers on and off? - Ali**

**Agency & Zone Updates – consider these questions:**

- ✓ *What worked for this season & what did not?*
  - ✓ *What did you do with restriction analysis data?*
  - ✓ *Suggested adjustments for next year*
  - ✓ *What are your plans for Smokey 75<sup>th</sup> in 2019?*
- **SW MT Zone**

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- Had a prevention team come in for 14 days (started July 29), they built on what was done regionally the previous year and get set up for the fall. Plan to make that a model moving forward – bring in FPETs when they are starting to talk about fire restrictions.
  - *Andy Colson – procured Smokey hot air balloon for Smokey 75 in Missoula at the Western MT Fair 2019.*
  - Prevention team worked very well
  - Staying with OLS worked well. Didn't have to recreate the wheel
  - Went into fire restrictions briefly. Jumped straight to Stage II again this year.
  - Focusing on what people **can do** versus what they **cannot do**
  - Looked at exemptions for utility, railroads, etc.
  - Presented restrictions survey info to restrictions board. It was a good precursor to planning for season and fire season planning.
  - County Mitigation Coordinator hired in Missoula area
  - Did home assessments in the spring with the Interra.
  - CMAT came week of October 9-16 working with CSWG (Missoula)
    - See using more WiRe process in the future [www.wildfireresearchcenter.org](http://www.wildfireresearchcenter.org)
  - “We don't capture cause of fire with the detail that we need.” If we restrict it, we should track it.
  - Jordan and CJ received a bronze Smokey Bear award (national)
  - For next year – open up the language for next year. Continue:
    - FPET-start sooner than later with direction to push out media (billboards).
    - Focus on OLS and visiting: [www.firerestrictions.us](http://www.firerestrictions.us)
    - Used Spotify (PSAs had to listen to ads).
    - Also used FuelMT – video screens at gas stations (Missoula + some surrounding areas) – Three different messages on FuelMT.
    - Also need newspaper ads (for rural communities. All the information is on the [nrcgfireprevention@gmail.com](mailto:nrcgfireprevention@gmail.com)- google drive (note if FPEC needs to access this)
  - **Billings Zone**
    - 7 counties, 4 went into restrictions
    - Need to work with counties more
    - Below average year for fire restrictions
  - **Lewistown Zone**
    - Purchased more license holders – using OLS information
    - Smokey Bear in several parades
    - 6<sup>th</sup> annual wildfire preparedness festival
    - Started restriction calls in May (went through September)
    - Work with county commissioners and county fire wardens more
  - **Miles City Zone**
    - Designed fire prevention social media posts
    - OLS banner
    - Several events associated with Bucking Horse
    - Has three cooperative assistance agreements getting mitigation work done
    - Did not go into restrictions in the area this year
  - **North Dakota Zone**

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- Counties “restrictions” tied to fire danger rating
  - Had a short spring season. Had a plan to bring in a FPET, if needed-didn’t happen.
  - Most of their work has been done with students/schools
  - Talked with MT folks about tying into the efforts to do the prevention PSAs (ie- Northern Ag Network)
  - *Looking at doing something at the state fair for Smokey 75<sup>th</sup>*
    - *Involved with Highlights magazine dedicated to Smokey’s 75<sup>th</sup>*
  - **North ID Zone**
    - Got in to firerestrictions.us. The process is not intuitive. Challenges with ID because GB doesn’t use the website. Also, some counties don’t go into restrictions as a whole, but the website doesn’t allow you to divide counties.
    - IDOT changes signs to reflect fire restrictions status
    - 7 of the 8 dispatch areas went into restrictions at some time
    - ID Fish & Game did some things independently with regards to fire restrictions
    - Is there some type of training/educational materials that can help people understand what restrictions are used for
    - *Mark is working on an IDL Prevention Plan*
    - Looking at adding information about fire prevention on their website
  - **NW MT Zone**
    - Ali’s job changed a few months ago
    - A lot of her efforts is focused on Cohesive Strategy (CS), Fire Adapted Community (FAC) type of work
    - Doing home assessments, working with communities
    - Engaging with those adjacent to GNA activities
    - “Smoke Column” – ¼ page weekly in Kalispell Beacon. Have had several contributors over the summer
    - Did a 4 part lecture series at community college in Kalispell last winter. She thinks it may be better to go to communities and share information. Using the 1 hr. road show version of Era of Megafires.
    - MSU small acreage workshop
    - Worked with airport (Kalispell) to communicated fire prevention to visitors
    - Had good coordination for restrictions calls (like others, their restriction call comes after the Zone call).
    - They skipped Stage I, and went right to Stage II this year.
    - Talked about the restriction survey, but then went ahead and did their thing
    - Interested in doing more with CMAT, WiRe, FAC, etc.
    - Moving forward – continue on with their efforts to keep growing
  - **Central Zone**
    - Emphasis on One Less Spark and Fire Adapted Communities (FAC)
    - Lots of school programs and meetings with specific fire departments
    - Partners – TriCo and others brought in Santa Rosa Fire Chief (and Mark Finney) to talk with the public. Good turnout for both meetings.
    - Looking at how to increase diversity at public events – instead of the same people at the meetings all the time (like the FuelMT idea as a way to advertise events, etc.)

- Had a lot of participation on fire restrictions calls
- Wildfire Awareness Month – did a social media trivia game (lots of people participated)
- Smokey 75<sup>th</sup> – state fair in GF. Mann Gulch anniversary in 2019 (will incorporate Smokey 75<sup>th</sup> as well).

**Zones not represented:** South Central Montana

- **CSKT**

- Fire restrictions – had some problems enforcing restrictions
- Flathead Reservation is checker boarded, so it is hard to enforce.
- Met with county OEM/DES to talk (fireworks, planning, etc.)
- *Doing a poster contest for Smokey 75<sup>th</sup> for all 8 schools on the reservation (K-8)*
- Helicopter flew to each school with goal of recruitment, education, etc.
- “Prevention before Suppression” signs – continuing these.

- **MT DES**

- All events other than wildfire.
- Piggyback on to what DNRC does for social media, etc.
- 900 MT National Guard (NG) resources engaged this year.
- Opportunities to reach counties and other state agencies through MT DES
- JIT (just in time training) – required to get NG out on fires. Try to keep several hundred NG qualified to go out (includes administered WCT)

- **MT DNRC**

- Smokey 75<sup>th</sup> – responsibility of each of the areas(within DNRC)
- Still utilizing OLS, FireWise, Ready Set Go (RSG), etc. – stuck to those things that are familiar and working well
- Working on a document for fire resistant plants, Home Ignition Zone (HIZ)
  - Using a website – plants of Montana
  - Goal is to have something in 2019 to share
- Determine your parcel risk Situation Analyst MT (SAM) – public portal is live
  - Still have a lot of room to grow with SAM, only being used sparingly (need to have more local support and capacity)
- Wildfire Awareness Month – was rainy this year. Didn’t get pushed too much this year because there was flooding going on at the time.
- Keep Montana Green had their annual contest – 3000 participants. Mailing going out in November, submissions due in February
- DNRC participated in the Northern Ag PSAs. How do we know if that is the right tool? Are there other networks, etc. to include in that effort?
- Scoring Western States WUI grants (with others)
- NFPA has their wildfire mitigation training. And NWCG is looking at a qualification for Mitigation Specialist – an actual redcard qual in Incident Qualification Certification
- MT Sheriff’s & Peace Officers Association approved a BMP for evacuation in MT. Standardize how evacuation orders go. EVACUATION WARNING and EVACUATION are the terms. *Crystal to send document to Rita and Chris for notes*
- DES Hazard Mitigation grants (post fire). Counties and states can put in for that. DNRC working with DES on that. Applications are due on 11/30.

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- Crystal focusing on Fire Adapted Communities (FAC), resilient landscapes, Cohesive Strategy, etc. and how to move that forward within the organization and with partners.
  - More on FAM as a separate topic
  - Restrictions survey – shared the information with County Commissioner summit last spring.
  - Adjustments for 2019 – DNRC to stick with in/out on Fridays. Working with others to have some consistency.
  - **IDL**
    - Started a Keep Idaho Green (prevention) Twitter account
    - Working on how to keep it fresh and current
  - **BLM**
    - Fire restrictions survey was shared with agency administrators and FMOs. Nationally, BLM program leads have discussed the process for exceptions/exemptions.
    - Many prevention events throughout the year (some have been mentioned already in the zone reports)
    - BLM participated in the Northern Ag campaign that was mentioned previously. There were three different spots that ran (campfires, equipment, and personal responsibility/mitigation). In the future, we will want to look at expanding so that the messages can be used across the geographic area.
    - Cooperative Agreements – we had a new process in 2018. We were able to modify several agreements and award a few new agreements. Looking to announce a new FOA in early 2019.
    - Stats: more than 250 educational events, about 1000 acres of non-fed treatments, more than \$800k awarded to new/existing agreements in 2018
    - Used BLM MT/Dakotas FB to do both fire information and prevention education
  - **Forest Service**
    - Smokey 75<sup>th</sup> being left for the forests to decide how they will handle/participate
    - Rita does forward national information to the group
    - Appreciated hearing about restriction coordination (times/calls/etc.)
    - Rita shared the restrictions survey with agency.
    - Going forward – wants to make changes/improvements to NR Fire Restriction Strategy and website.
    - Working on prevention planning requirements / WPSAPS and NFDRS expectations
    - Prevention piece in the Northern Rockies MAC plan was used as a template for including prevention specialist in Pacific Northwest MAC plan.
    - *Restrictions website on NRCG will be updated as planned – web person in place now.*

#### **Fire Adapted Montana - What's going on with FAM?**

- At the spring FPEC meeting, we discussed a group getting together to talk about a statewide learning network.
- Met in Butte in the spring and discussed how we could use the learning network approach to connect practitioners statewide.

- Meeting next week in Missoula to move from the concept to development stage of what the network will look like and how it will be organized, how practitioners will communicate, learning exchanges – discuss a “roll out” for spring 2019.
- *More information following the fall meeting...*

**We took a look at NRCG Strategic Fire Prevention Plan as created by the Regional FPET 2012.**

Considered:

- ✓ What are each agency/zone requirements for prevention plans?
- ✓ How do you use this or not?
- ✓ Do we even need it?
- ✓ Thoughts for moving forward with either updating it or not?
- Concluded that the NRCG Board signed charter we have in place for the FPEC gives the committee the marching orders for their role in Prevention planning, training, etc.
- Some had no idea this document existed. Nor did they specifically follow it.
- The SWMT zone has a restriction plan but didn't base it off this document.
- Some Forests have updated and several have outdated Prevention Plans.
- Each agency has a requirement to have prevention plans.
- Nationally there are ongoing efforts using NFDRS2016 to create new Fire Danger Operating Plans, and the prevention plan falls under this umbrella.
- The WPSAPS is an analysis program for creating prevention plans – was presented at SWMT zone spring meeting. This tool has been couple years in development and should assist units with plans.
- Zones represented felt that each unit and zone would reach specifics for their plan without this document.
- We will not update it just for sake of having another plan – *Rita will however take a look at the recommendations that were listed in the document to see what may need to be followed up on.*

**Wednesday, October 17, 2018**

**Community Mitigation Assistance Team (CMAT):**

CJ gave us an update on how this worked for the SWMT zone. Lessons Learned will follow.

- Cohesive Strategy Working Group (CSWG) in Missoula County recently redid their county CWPP. CSWG is wanting to kick-off a large mitigation effort.
- MCFPA requested CMAT (request form on CMAT webpage)
- CSWG identified what they wanted CMAT to assist with
- Reviewed guidance document and agenda
- Final report (11 pages) – *will share with committee.*
- Missoula also completed a CPAW process in 2/18

**NRCG Strategy on Restrictions and Closure Procedures – 2013-2018:**

- *We will lean on the restrictions analysis gathered last winter to assist with 2019 rewrite.*
- *(context – NRCG Board task FPEC with answering questions of:*
  - Are Fire Restrictions Working?
  - Do Fire Restrictions Prevent Fire?

- Are We Restricting the Right Thing at the Right Time?
  - Restriction coordinators were verified in 2018.
  - Plans were requested and received from all zones/areas except Great Falls and Helena Areas, North Dakota zone and South Central Zone (Bozeman Area)

Timeline: Needs to be completed prior to 2019 season  
Has to be finished, reviewed, and approved by NRCG Board- approx. **April 2019**

Laundry List of comments about the NRCG Strategic Restriction and Closure Procedures  
**Bold underlined are themes that developed as we ran through the list/thoughts process.**

- Needs: look at what needs to be changed and what can stay -
- CJ – mostly has to do with the **language** about what is prohibited in Stage I and Stage II, **monitoring** (look at some past years for effects of enacting restrictions), more specific size up info on human-caused fires
  - Larry – restriction plan is not a prevention plan. **All other efforts to reduce loss from wildfire should be exercised before implementing prohibitions** on the public.
  - Ali – restriction **boundaries**, exemptions (who gets them, why, how, are their standards), using a FPET in advance of restrictions, website (can we improve it, or are their other options), coordination (between all players), are we going in to restrictions at the right time, are we all using the same criteria to determine when to go in, Stage I/II effectiveness (language of prohibitions), BMP, do away with exemptions for campsites in Stage I?, enforcement is always an issue, Bob should have its own boundary, difficult for public to understand boundaries (and for us to explain), timing of going in/out (based on criteria)
  - Anna – Stage II or Stage 11 (people are confused by that)
  - Mark – ID boundaries, ID hasn't used website prior to 2018 – make it useable or get rid of it.
  - CT – **exemptions/exceptions** (similar to Ali's comments) and also dealing with tribal council, permitted activity, language is IMPORTANT, enforcement
  - Tam – **training** county commissioners, how to incorporate DES into the process of training counties about restrictions/process
  - Shannon – **website, enforcement**, wording/language
  - Rita – website, education about roles and responsibilities, media coordination
  - Chris – deference to expertise (making restriction decisions based on conditions, not feelings), use other efforts first (don't use Stage I when we have equip. fire causes), more language to support areas to make consistent decisions based on the conditions
- Language
    - Definitions for things like agency-approved fire ring, etc.,
    - Some areas going straight to Stage II – does that mean that we have to abandon Stage I in a NR plan?
    - Why can't the plan have Stage I and II language and areas use just Stage II?

- **Moving Forward:**
- **Plan – RITA – send email to all the Restriction Coordinators (RC) and ask them if what changes are needed for the NR Plan to support their efforts within their restrictions area? Chris and Rita will compile comments and prepare for FPEC to review prior to sending to NRCG for approval.**
- **Website – CJ – will solicit feedback from RCs/MCs on a) what needs to change within the current website, and b) is there an alternative to the current website. CJ will work with Jim to revise the website instructions and make sure the current users are correct.**

**Discussion of spring meeting 2018:**

Needs to occur before spring NRCG meeting if possible.

Missoula SWMT zone will host. Date TBD.