



## Northern Rockies Fire Prevention & Education Committee

Spring Meeting

March 18, 2020

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

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**In attendance:** Chris Barth (Chair/BLM Rep), Namaan Horn (Vice-Chair/NPS Rep), Deana Harms (Miles City RC/BLM), Larry Elder (Billings RC/BLM), Anna Bateson (BNF), Terina Goeicochea (BLM), Lesley Williams-Gomez (BTNF), Forrest Ford (South Central MT Zone Rep/CGNF), Lee Old Bear Crow Agency), Chris “CJ” Johnson (SW Montana Zone Rep/LNF), Neal Beetch (USFWS Rep), Rita Chandler FS R1 Rep), Jordan Koppen (SW MT/DNRC), Jen Russel (IDL Rep)

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### Agenda

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#### Review of Action Items from [Fall 2019 Meeting \(Missoula\)](#)

1. [FireNet.gov Status Update](#)
  - Update 1/16/20: At this time, the new environment is slated for usage during the 2020 fire season. Migration is planned for the February/March timeframe and planned to be completed by the end of March. Please note that any existing active accounts, along with their associated resources (email and Drive contents) will be migrated. Exceptions to this migration include NEW Google Sites, Google Forms, and resource calendars which do not have a clear migration path and have to be redesigned using tools in O365. Please visit our updated [FAQ Page](#) for frequently asked questions.
2. [NRCG Fire Restrictions and Closures](#)
  - Revisions focused on reviewing and updating authorities.
  - Added language that it should be reviewed in a minimum of five-year intervals. Will stay in effect without exception unless review necessitates changes.
  - Plan approved by NRCG Board and posted to [NRCG website](#).
3. [Fire Restrictions Website](#)
  - Updated guide from CJ
  - Feedback from the FPEC was due to CJ by 11/01/19. CJ received no feedback.

**Action Item:** CJ will resend the guide to Chris for distribution to the FPEC.

**Action Item:** CJ will schedule a firerestrictions.us webinar and send information to Chris for distribution.

4. Parcel Assessment Course for the GA
  - Path forward / any involvement from this group?
  - Summary of what tools everyone is using
  - **[CJ]** integrates parcel assessments in S-215. Uses SAM. He is willing to help. If they are able to implement May Wildfire Awareness event (simulation exercise) in Missoula County, they will be doing risk assessments. It is often a capacity issue to have enough people available to do assessments. CJ reminded the group of his suggestion to have the

IMT DOAs say that IMT does assessments in SAM. Perhaps FPETs should be configured to have capacity to include parcel assessments in their assignment.

- **[Anna B]** at the FAM meeting, she spoke with Kristin Sleeper. Kristin was willing to put together a resource for parcel risk assessments. She and Jordan had a training scheduled, but the March 24 has been cancelled. Waiting to determine if the April 19 course will happen.
- **[Terina]** DNRC was spearheading, along with TriCo FireSafe Working Group, a NFPA risk assessment course.
- **[Lesley W]** Teton Area has used – have used SCA students to help with capacity to conduct rapid risk assessments. Having small group complete the work introduces consistency (less subjective variability) across communities. Developing a risk assessment training for their ambassadors.

**Action Item:** Develop a cloud-based (OneDrive, etc.) list of what people are doing. Provide opportunities for people in other areas to participate. Connect with FAM in order to not duplicate efforts that may already exist.

**Action Item:** Develop list of risk assessment best practices (ie- use a limited number of people to complete risk assessments in a given area to reduce subjective variability).

5. NRCG FPEC Spring Meeting – spring meeting focused on Fire Year 2020
  - **[Chris B]** Recent focus has shifted to how Fire will be prepared to respond during the current COVID-19 pandemic. Three Area Command teams have been ordered to look at how IMTs will change/adapt their response during the pandemic. Talk of using IMTs to help local government deal with pandemic.
  - **[Neal B]** Upper levels of respective agencies are pushing back at the request to use IMTs for COVID-19 response as it could jeopardize response to wildfire capacity.
  - **[Rita C]** Rita is the ESF-4 lead for R1. we do not have the authority at this time for a response. IMTs (under normal circumstances) are activated “in support of...” and given mission assignments from whatever lead agency is responsible for that type of response.
6. Firerestrictions.us
  - At the Fall 2019 meeting, it was determined wait until further analysis on actual causes was done before looking at changes to firerestrictions.us or an alternative platform.
  - If, and when, changes occur as task group has been identified: CJ, Chris B, Anna B, Kristin S, Jen R
7. Tasking from Mike D – [Unofficial] Are we restricting the right things?
  - Although we have not received an official tasking, Chris B spoke with Mike D during the week of March 3. Mike D said rather than an official tasking, he would like this group to look at the fire cause history and then discuss what are our causes are to see if fire restrictions are focused on the common human wildfire causes.

**Action Item:** Chris B to verify with Mike D that this meets his intent.

**Action Item:** If so, Task group (Rita C and Chris B) to look into the data to determine fire causes across the NR GA using Karen Short data (Rita C – approach using WPSAPS, Chris B approach using spreadsheet data). Answer the question of whether the need is to increase prevention efforts targeting the causes? And/or increase/decrease fire restrictions commensurate with the results.

8. Neighborhood Ambassador Program – **DONE**: Chris sent out info with fall meeting notes
9. Agency members – Mike D will work with Board to get representatives from:
  - NPS – **DONE**: Naaman Horn
  - State Fire Wardens – see Action Item below

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### Old Business

- InFORM:
  - **[Chris B]** transition to InFORM occurring. Does not include Fire Trespass sub form (from WFMI).
  - **[CJ]** Should have increased functionality. Tied to EGP. Talk with local dispatch about status of transition in your units/areas.
  - [Lee OB] Crow is transitioning over as well.
- Wildland Prevention Spatial Analysis Program System (WPSAPS):
  - **[CJ]** several folks took the “train the trainer” course. Will be doing two trainings in the future. One (Ronan) has been cancelled due to COVID-19. CJ and Anna H continuing to plan for training (April 28-30, Missoula) – not yet cancelled. WPSAPS has a user guide/master user guide. They will do this online (as it likely will not be able to be done in person). Will be using Zoom. Target is people charged with prevention efforts as well as fire management staff. Lolo is embracing this wholly (done at the District level).
  - **[Rita C]** FS willing to continue support efforts within the FS (with funding). Interest nationally (WO-FAM).
  - **[Larry E]** interested and would like to learn more.

**Action Item**: CJ will send info to Chris B, and Chris will send to the group.

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### New Business

- Preseason Fire Restrictions Meetings:
  - encouraged to continue to hold these as feasible. Look at alternative ways to conduct these meetings
- Wildfire Community Preparedness Day – May 2, 2020:
  - **[CJ]** Missoula Area/SW MT still planning for May 7-8
  - **[Deana H]** DNRC/County/BLM – risk assessments and treatments.
  - **[Forrest F]** planning to offer services as normal. Nothing specific planned. This year may make things different.
  - **[Larry E]** Musselshell County. Community Awareness event (5/2)
- Wildfire Awareness Month Proclamation:
  - **[Chris B]** MT still working on stand alone wildfire awareness month proclaim via DNRC. Others can promote/share via social media.

**Action Item**: DNRC (Kristin S/Ian) to share with this group when signed

- Montana Wildfire Prevention Campaign Efforts:
  - Develop new campaign - tabled
  - PSA radio ads

**Action Item**: Chris B to share existing :30 sec spots with this group

- Gas station ads (FuelTV, Blue Line Media)
  - 0:15 - \$1,195/location/4 weeks
  - 0:30 - \$1,495/location/4 weeks.
  - **[CJ] prevention team worked on this and they continue to use them. Valuable way to reach people (especially useful with tourist traveling through area that may not have access to traditional channels).**
  - **[Terina]** Anna H looked in to which vendors offer the service. Between the two have wide coverage.
  - Videos are available for people to use in their area if they want.
  - What type of coordination can we develop to make the best use of this?
  - FPET DOA should include specification to reach out to all RC and other areas.
  - **[Lesley W]** Harrison Ford may be available to help with recording.
- Spring NRCG Meeting FPEC Report – April 6-10, 2020:
  - New format for committee reports and correspondence with the NRCG Board

### Zone Reports

- Central Montana:
  - no report

**Action Item:** need to identify a Zone Representative from Central Montana Zone

- Eastern Montana:
  - **[Deana H]** Sportsman’s Show in Billings (Campfire). Home and Garden Show in Billings (Ember House). Mitigation efforts in Custer County (County, DNRC, BLM).
  - **[Larry E]** Several school events this winter, future events on hold. Musselshell County hired a forester and working with residents on mitigation work. Yellowstone County has a contract out to do mitigation work (Emerald Hills). Red Lodge/Stillwater County active in mitigation work.
- North Dakota:
  - no report
- North & Central ID:
  - **[Jen R]** everyone (interagency) working on a wildfire awareness month campaign and unified prevention messages. The fire prevention committee in the Great Basin has not met for two years (no one willing to be chair).
- Northwest Montana:
  - **[Keith V]** Dealing with the COVID-19. Updated Northwest Montana Restrictions plan. Valid until 2021. Plan to have a preseason get together at some point this spring with the zone to make sure all are still on the same page. Have some new players in the Zone and have already been in communication with them. Laren Ally will be the Media Coordinator for us this year.
- South Central Montana:
  - **[Forrest F]** lots of events being cancelled dur to COVID-19. New tech employee out of Big Timber. Beyond that business as usual.
- Southwest Montana:

- [CJ] updated Missoula Area Restrictions and Closure Plan implemented by June 1. Tiered to NRCG Plan. Lots of new leadership in the zone. Focused on building templates with consistent language so that people have them available for use when needed. May 7-8 – still planning for Wildfire Community Preparedness Day – will set a trigger point for cancellation as needed. Will send firerestrictions users guide to the group and will set up a webinar (will need their email address). April 28-30 having WPSAPS webinar. Will get to me to send out to this group. Both webinars done via Zoom. OEM Community Wildfire Coordinator (Max) active in the community. Working with UofM podcast (6 episodes) tiered to CS. Contracted with A New Angle. 100k listeners. Focused on interviewing people with a nexus on CS. Resilient landscapes. Community leaders. Fire adapted communities. Safe and effective wildfire response (ICs, risk management, etc.). CJ will share when available. To serve as a tool for the public about why we are doing what we do.
- [Terina G] hunting regs, gas station ads, regular business

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### Agency Reports

- Bureau of Indian Affairs:
  - no report
- BLM:
  - Working with interagency partners to include fire safety education/prevention in MT hunting regs books. Completed an update to our state fire trespass operating plan at the beginning of the year (prior update was 2016). BLM continues to evaluate how WPSAPS will be incorporated into the work of Mitigation/Education Specialists – support/augment existing prevention plans. Working with Fire Adapted Montana and FireSafe Montana on their efforts for 2020 and beyond. Deana has taken a new job in CO – Eastern Montana Dakotas District looking at how to move forward with the vacancy. Tasked with increasing fuels accomplishments (fed/non-fed treatments).
- Disaster and Emergency Services:
  - no report
- Fish & Wildlife Service:
  - Don't have mitigation/prevention positions. This type of work defaults to FMO. Work closely with interagency partners to be consistent.
- Forest Service:
  - had their national meeting two weeks ago. Working on a national prevention library. Will share when she gets a link. Look at what a FPET should do and what it looks like. Nationally FPET will look the same. FPET webinar on April 29. FS HR working on PDs at the national level (4/5/6 prevention tech positions). Wildfire list of communities site – FS site to publish website with list of communities coming out on April 1 – Rita to share. Working with powerlines and rural utility service. Powerline fires and shooting regs restrictions are a hot topic. Did an analysis of prevention positions in R1.
- MT Fire Chiefs Association:
  - no report
- MT Sheriffs & Peace Officers Assoc:
  - no report
- NPS:
  - Naaman's position serves 4 states (MT, WY, CO, UT). Parks don't have a lot of human caused starts, and prevention is not a big focus for the employees in the parks. Focused

more on mitigation activities/fire education. There is a group looking at developing a PIO3 position in addition to PIO1 and PIO2.

- State Fire Wardens:
  - no report

**Action Item:** need to identify and Agency Representative for State Fire Wardens

- State of Idaho:
  - prevention is the responsibility of the fire warden in ID. No funding for prevention in State of ID. Looking at how do they get a cohesive message across the state. Currently each warden does their own messaging. Multiple Regions, GA, ecosystems, etc. makes it challenging. Interagency prevention group has been valuable.
- State of Montana:
  - no report
- State of North Dakota:
  - no report

**Action Item:** Audrey Davis is Agency Representative for ND. Need to update FPEC list and get info to her.

- [Teton Interagency Fire - Prevention and Education](#)
  - Have a [wildfire prevention tips](#) video geared towards hunter
  - Harrison Ford willing to help with fire prevention PSAs

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### Action Items Moving Forward

From the NRCG FPEC spring meeting minutes (above), the following are items that require further action:

1. CJ will resend the fire restriction guide to Chris for distribution to the FPEC. **DONE**
2. CJ will schedule a firerestrictions.us webinar and send information to Chris for distribution. **DONE**
3. FPEC look at developing a cloud-based (OneDrive, etc.) list of what people are doing for risk assessments. Provide opportunities for people in other areas to participate. Connect with FAM in order to not duplicate efforts that may already exist.
4. FPEC (or work with FAM to) develop list of risk assessment best practices (ie- use a limited number of people to complete risk assessments in a given area to reduce subjective variability).
5. Chris B to verify with Mike D that a “fire history analysis” meets intent of the “tasking”.
  - a. If so, Task group (Rita C and Chris B) to look into the data to determine fire causes across the NR GA using Karen Short data (Rita C – approach using WPSAPS, Chris B approach using spreadsheet data). Answer the question of whether the need is to increase prevention efforts targeting the causes? And/or increase/decrease fire restrictions commensurate with the results.
6. CJ will send WPSAPS training info to Chris B, and Chris will send to the group. **DONE**
7. DNRC (Kristin S/Ian) to share MT Wildfire Proclamation with this group when signed.
8. Chris B to share existing :30 sec fire prevention/mitigation spots with this group.
9. Need to identify a Zone Representative from Central Montana Zone.
10. Need to identify and Agency Representative for State Fire Wardens.

11. Need to update FPEC contact list to show Audrey Davis as Agency Representative for ND. Share information from spring meeting with her. **DONE**
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#### **Bin Items**

- none
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#### **FPEC Report for Spring NRCG Meeting**

- Accomplishments
    - Completed revisions to the NRCG Fire Restrictions and Closures Plan
    - firerestrictions.us user guide has been update and training webinar has been scheduled.
    - WPSAPS training webinar has been scheduled.
    - NPS rep/Vice-Chair identified for FPEC
    - Conducted FPEC virtually in light of current meeting size restrictions
  - Current Project Status
    - N/A
  - Status of Taskings
    - Once validated, task group (Rita C and Chris B) will conduct fire history analysis (see below)
  - Questions or Concerns to be discussed with the Board
    - Validate “tasking” to fire history analysis, determine whether the need is to increase prevention efforts targeting the causes? And/or increase/decrease fire restrictions commensurate with the results.
    - Need to identify a Zone Representative from Central Montana Zone
    - Need to identify and Agency Representative for State Fire Wardens
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#### **Next Meeting: TBD**

- CJ offered Missoula as a possible location
- Jen R offered CDA as a possible location