



ROCKY MOUNTAIN COORDINATING GROUP

Bureau of Indian Affairs (Southwest, Rocky Mountain and Great Plains Regions)
Bureau of Land Management (Colorado and Wyoming)
Fish and Wildlife Service (Mountain/Prairie Region)
Forest Service (Rocky Mountain Region)
National Park Service (Intermountain and Midwest Regions)
State Agencies in Colorado, Wyoming, South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas

Minutes of Spring Meeting April 1-2, 2013 Cheyenne, Wyoming

In Attendance:

Members

- Chair** Ken Kerr
- Vice Chair** Ron Graham
- Jay Esperance
- Rocco Snart
- Angie Foster
- Bill Ott
- Willie Thompson
- Mike Davin
- Bob Jones
- Dave Carter
- Cal Pino
- Dave Hall
- Earl Imler
- Don Westover

- Ross Hauck
- Dan Smith
- Robert LaPlant
- Jim McMahill
- Facilitator** Jim Fletcher
- Business Manager** Brooke Malcolm

Ex-Officio

- Chad Ray

Guests

- Dwight Henninger
- Jim Loach
- Scott Sugg
- Cliff Hutton
- Paul Hohn
- Jason Baldwin

1. Extension of Type 2 IMT Season

Fletcher/All

- Recommendation has been presented by Operations Committee to extend IMT season for Type 2 teams to March 1 to October 31.
 - Problems arise when team fires occur during "shoulder seasons," causing delays in mobilization to allow for availability checks with off-season teams.
 - Considerations for season extension include administrative hurdles (IQCS/IQS experience & currency updates, RT-130/WCT completion).
 - Completion of rosters presents a challenge for RMACC, due to lapsed qualifications and team member availability, particularly at early and late dates in season.
- Evaluation of extension of Type 2 IMT season for 2014.
 - RMCG needs to validate recommendation made by Operations Committee.
 - Setting start dates earlier may urge team members to complete currency requirements earlier and be more prepared for earlier start.
- **Tasking:** Operations Committee will draft letter to GPZ board regarding agreement for use of Team C as primary team for RMA response during times when other teams are not available (off-season). Letter will also be distributed to Teams A & B to request consideration for C&G staff to be available outside of regular rotation schedule.

2. Pre-Planning for 2013 Fire Season

All

- Cumulative fatigue
 - Many fire resources feeling effects of long season in 2012. Early fires in 2013 have highlighted fatigue carryover from last year.

- Need to evaluate workload in busy seasons and look for ways to mitigate at all levels.
- Heavy load placed on RMACC to coordinate VIPR, team rosters, and other administrative items.
- Many dispatch staff were overloaded or burned out last year. Have identified trigger points for step-up at RMACC, particularly in busy years.
- Incident business support is critical to pre-planning, and many key positions are in transition or vacant.
- Two versions of Colorado Operating Plan need to be reconciled. Fletcher will work with V. Jones and Snart to clarify plan and eliminate confusion between statewide plan and local MOUs.
- Planning will continue for mob centers for use as soon as plans and agreements can be solidified.
- RMCG members need to be prepared to appoint someone as their representative for MAC operations if the member cannot participate in MAC due to local activity, IMT assignments, etc.
 - Possibility for MAC to be located outside of Denver area if activity warrants.
- RMCG Duty Officer rotation schedule established for 2013.
- MAC Exercise is scheduled for May 10 and will help refresh and prepare members for fire season.
- **Tasking:** Fletcher will continue to explore options for RMACC FTE sponsorship. So far, no agency has been able to sponsor, despite having commitment for salary from State of Colorado.
- **Tasking:** (Unassigned) Write Leaders' Intent letter to fire community from RMCG/Executives regarding preparation for 2013 season. Should include accomplishments made by RMCG so far.

3. Mob Centers & Transportation

Fletcher

- Plan for mob centers started in 2002; Fletcher will work with Sugg, V. Jones and Hutton and others to flesh out details and further develop plan for future.
- For 2013 season, RMA will order self-sufficient crews that will be prepositioned with local units as hosts for short-term staging.
- Bus situation is critical—only two are available with pre-season agreements in RMA.
 - Buses hired on EERAs cannot be reassigned to another incident without a new agreement.
 - In 2012, crews were turned away due to restrictions on transportation or inability to transport them to incidents.
 - School buses cannot be used due to insurance requirements.
 - Some question about whether or not states will have same insurance restrictions. Graham will check for State of Wyoming.
 - Wyoming can pursue National Guard for crew transportation options.
 - Cost is very high, but they are available each year.
 - Colorado may have same access to National Guard. CDFPC will look into.
 - Probable issue of in-state restriction for travel with both states' National Guard buses.
- Mob center plan and transportation require coordination with incident business/contracting for pre-season agreements for facilities and transportation.
 - Work in Wyoming to develop statewide agreement for buses/transportation in Service & Supply Plans and/or source lists.
- Also working with Colorado all-hazard (Henninger) and other contacts to look for solutions.
- Alternative to use agency and rental vehicles (possibly with chase vehicles for tools) to transport crews to incidents.
 - Problem in 2012 with getting buses into incidents with difficult access.
 - Unlike buses on EERAs, vehicles can be reassigned to other incidents so that they can stay with the crew.
- Alternative to have state-purchased crew carriers housed at RMA Cache or RMACC to be available for incoming crews without transportation.
 - Similar opportunity to use state motor pool vehicles for same purpose.
- Alternative to use buses from local colleges/universities (ex: CSU coaches used for local incident)

4. Fire Information Function

Fletcher

- Rocky Mountain Information Council has been developed with lead public affairs representatives from all federal agencies to formulate model for management of fire information.
 - Valerie Hunt and Steve Hall leading the group through current planning stage.
- MOU model preferred over RMCG charter model (handouts distributed).
 - All agencies would agree to do business according to the model.
 - Good response from all agencies so far to develop guidelines according to needs of everyone.
- Optimal arrangement is housing the fire information function outside of RMACC to prevent distractions to the center.
 - Acting PIO would be interacting with RMACC via briefings and other information sharing efforts.
- Group is currently rotating responsibility for interim handling of media calls among all participating agencies, including answering calls to fire information phone line.
- Recommendation to emphasize strength of local information functions to coordinate with RMA Council as needed.

5. MAC Exercise Update

Fletcher

- Dan Kleinman's NIMO team will conduct the exercise on May 10 at RMACC.
- Group of RMCG members met to develop list of requests to be included in exercise.
 - Fletcher will distribute notes from meeting to all RMCG members.
 - Based upon 2012 AAR and MAC Group lessons learned.
- WebEx and/or VTC will be arranged for those that cannot attend.

6. Colorado Dispatch Annual Operating Plan

Fletcher

- Agreement between federal agencies and states for support of dispatch system.
- Has evolved over the years, which necessitates a re-vamping of the document.
 - Now includes all other states and agencies for RMCG Business Manager position, etc.
 - Became a tool for exchange of funds for local dispatch centers, which was not its original intent.
- State of Colorado was historically has not yet established billing & payment systems internally following their reorganization.
 - Completion of agreement will proceed without State of Colorado until state legislature formulates and releases budgets.
- In recent years, it has been a struggle to get all signatures required in a timely fashion for payment processing within the fiscal year.
 - Causes problems for many parties to the agreement because billings and payment obligations cannot be made until the agreement is final.
 - AOP serves as billing document for costs between federal agencies.
- Recommendation from LaPlant that other federal agencies consider arrangement similar that of BIA: one agency holds partnership agreement with state and pays entire bill, then funds are exchanged among other federal agencies to compensate.
- Pino exploring possibility of making BIA national office signatory to agreement, but no responses yet from BIA at NIFC.
- State of Wyoming prefers being signatory to Dispatch AOP, in the interest of supporting budget and planning activities.
- Modifications to agreement will include:
 - Updated list of parties to the agreement
 - Detailed table breakdown of costs and responsibilities by agency (including in-kind funding)
 - Removal of historical "IOU"s
- Suggestion for AOP to become intent of cost sharing breakdown to be included as appendix in RMA Mob Guide.

- Binding MOU agreements could then be signed between agencies to arrange transfers of funds.
- All agencies have agreed to fulfillment of commitments already made for FY13.
 - Priority should be for funds that are committed for salaries and operations.
- Declaration of financial commitments will be added to Recurring Action Log in October to assist with completion of interagency agreements in a timely fashion.
- **Tasking:** Fletcher will set up meeting with Gill Fay and Monica Cordova to discuss agreements external to AOP.

7. Alternatives for Interim Filling of Center Manager Vacancies Fletcher

- Center Manager vacancies are being filled, so less critical situation than in 2012.
- Will be addressed with Center Managers later in week to emphasize continuing need for coverage and support in RMA centers.

8. Team C Configuration Kerr

- South Dakota Secretary of Agriculture announced proposal to host Team C as RMA-wide team.
- RMCG requests proposal be presented to GPZ board, gain consensus and be elevated to RMCG for consideration.
- RMCG will not consider returning Team C to previous configuration as GACC-wide team with caveats—it will either be same configuration as other teams or purely zone team.
- Proposal will be discussed with Operations Committee for implementation no earlier than 2014.

9. RMCG Records Management Malcolm

- Draft records maintenance plan developed to meet requirement in Operating Plan.
- Records will be maintained in electronic format wherever possible, with hard copy files when necessary.
- Based on NARA guidelines for management of federal records, but specifies more strict retention than what is required. Combination of NARA Schedule 26 and 20, as well as bulletins regarding records in multi-agency environments.
- All records will be permanent unless there is a need to purge physical files due to space constraints.
- Clarification that RMCG records generally do not include financial data or similar records. All sensitive files will be held under limited access.
- Consensus to approve draft plan with minor modifications. Business Manager will present to Chair for signature and include as attachment to Operating Plan.

10. Nebraska Wildland Fire Organization Imler

- 2012 was first time since 2006 that an IMT was ordered to Nebraska.
 - More than 500,000 acres burned in 2012, compared to previous record of 240,000 acres.
- Concerns raised by ICs over operating authorities on incidents in Nebraska.
- Operate under Nebraska Emergency Act.
 - Governs how NEMA operates and how Governor's Emergency Fund is accessed.
- NEMA has singular responsibility for coordination of fire management and administration of the Governor's Emergency Fund during times of emergency declaration.
 - NEMA will be the lead agency when Delegation of Authority is signed.
- Imler met with ICs in Nebraska to refine the Delegation of Authority to be used on Nebraska incidents.
 - Feel comfortable with the output from that meeting. Expect much smoother transition for IMTs in the future.
- Nebraska Forest Service engages in wildfire mitigation and education throughout the year.
- Fire Marshal's Office undergoing some internal changes.

- Leadership change to Jim Heine as new State Fire Marshal.
- Dedicated to creating continuity for availability and authority over WIRAT to ensure continuous service on incidents to which they are assigned.
- Wildland Incident Response Assistance Team (WIRAT) will only be resourced and requisitioned through NEMA in the future.
 - Will prevent withdrawal of WIRAT from incidents without authorization from NEMA.
- Nebraska is a NIMS-compliant state for federal funding purposes and will adhere to ICS.
 - When IMTs are assigned to incidents, local ICs will become part of Unified Command, or will be assigned to infrastructure protection in their local jurisdiction only.
- Letter endorsed by Governor's office will be sent out to all local fire departments and volunteer resources. Will outline requirements for compliance with NIMS/ICS in order to receive any state funding or reimbursement.
 - Includes standardization of communications equipment and frequencies for use on incidents.
 - NEFS collecting applications for federally-funded radio equipment to improve capabilities of local departments to comply with standard incident communications requirements.
- Imler and Berndt will tour entire state in May to meet with local fire officials. Hoping to open lines of communication and resolve outstanding issues in a "town hall" format.
- Issues regarding aerial applicators without compatible radio systems (or no radio capabilities) are being addressed. Key function of WIRAT is to provide communications go-between with incident and pilot to help clear airspace when agency aircraft are approaching.
- Serious concerns over drought-induced potable water shortages statewide, particularly in smaller communities.
 - About 80 communities are at risk for contaminated drinking water (mercury, arsenic, etc.).
 - May impact availability of water sources for firefighting.
- State of South Dakota putting in full SEAT bases in Valentine and Chadron.
- Movements to start VLAT base at Rapid City, which would serve Nebraska.
- Legislation being considered by Nebraska currently to provide 2 exclusive-use SEATs, pending support infrastructure (bases).
 - Will help support firefighting efforts when aerial applicators (crop dusters) cannot fly due to poor radio communication capabilities.
- NEMA representatives will mobilize immediately (without being requested) upon learning of emerging incidents.
 - NE Department of Roads will also mobilize without being requested due to the need for fast response.

11. Area Command

Loach

- Loach's AC team is a national resource, but is managed by RMACC.
- Ordered to manage complex incidents or areas with multiple IMTs or complicated resource management.
 - Typically a small group of 10 people or less.
- Engaged in long-term succession strategy planning, including accelerated path for Area Commanders.
- Currently 2 AC teams nationally; reduction due to retirements.
 - NWCG planning to stand up third team this season.

12. VLAT

Baldwin

- Aviation Committee prepared lessons learned from VLAT in RMA in 2012 (handout).
- T-911 is higher performance of the two aircraft currently available.
- Continuing to evaluate sites for additional VLAT bases in RMA.
- Will continue to be a CWN contract in 2013.

- 15 VLAT qualified lead planes nationally, including Gickla at BJC.
- Retardant cost comparisons for DC-10 (CWN) vs. other tankers
 - August 4 (Ferris Mountain Fire) – DC-10: \$3.33/gal; P2: \$3.46/gal
 - September 11 (Shepherd Hill Fire) – BAE-146: \$7.02/gal; DC-10: ~\$3.00/gal; SEATs: \$2-3.00/gal
- BAE-146 has pressurized retardant tank, versus in-line tanks in other airtankers.
 - Somewhat less effective because of loss of pressure/tail off at end of drop.
- Coverage levels and length for drops are superior to other airtankers due to automatic in-line tank and higher retardant capacity.
- Availability cost per day comparison (both dry contracts on DoD fuel card):
 - BAE-146: \$23,500/day (Exc. Use) with 3,000 gal maximum = \$7.83/gal
 - DC-10: \$50,000/day (CWN) with 11,700 gal maximum = \$4.27/gal
- Reiterated that VLAT is just another tool, which should be used when the situation warrants it.
- Some concerns about decreasing air traffic control staffing due to FAA sequestration having an impact on availability of VLAT bases.
 - Alternative is to use temporary towers at bases when needed.
 - Baldwin advises reviewing FAA list of airports that may be affected, and be proactive in developing contingency plans before fire season.
 - Aviation Committee members will discuss and determine best way to approach issue. RMCG will follow-up with formal tasking if needed.

13. All-Hazards Teams

Henninger

- Reinforced need for diversity in teams and importance of fire community in developing standards and training for all-hazard resources.
- All-hazard resources are available to assist with wildland activities as well.
- FEMA Region 8 has had funding for three years to coordinate training and practical exercises.
 - Working toward interstate standards for qualifications system similar to 310-1.
- All-hazards S-420 course was offered in January, following a pilot course in Northern Rockies Area.
 - Hope to have final all-hazards curriculum completed by this fall.
- Kentucky has asked FEMA Region 8 to assist with development of all-hazards team program.
- Working towards dual certifications program for wildland and all-hazards positions.
- FEMA beginning to release job descriptions for all-hazards team members.
- Five Colorado Type 3 teams have been added to state mobilization plan.
- FEMA Region 8 All-Hazards teams:
 - Colorado: 5 Type 3
 - South Dakota: 4 teams (similar to IMATs)
 - North Dakota: 2 State teams
 - Kansas: 4 teams; encountering problems finding qualified people to sign off taskbooks
 - Wyoming: 1 Type 3; State working on more
 - Nebraska: NEMA working on developing teams & training
- Smith explained that some NWCG courses can be interchanged with FEMA courses, depending on the wildland fire-specific focus.
 - Long-term goal is to have FEMA courses replace NWCG courses, once curricula are completed.
- Potential for all-hazards teams to assist with mob centers and other support functions.
- All-hazards teams can offer support to local governments and infrastructure during incidents.
- All-hazards teams have offered support for wildland fire incidents (ex: Texas fires in 2011).
- Henninger will assist with recruitment for shortage positions if notified of those opportunities.
- Request opportunities for all-hazards resources to “shadow” with RMA IMTs.
- All-Hazards Incident Management Team Association in its 2nd year; over 500 members.
 - New advisory group for EMAC developed.

- Kerr suggested collaboration between all-hazards community and Operations and Training Committees to coordinate efforts and help facilitate integration/cross-training with wildland fire teams.
 - Suggest *ex-officio* member from all-hazards arena join Operations Committee to formalize relationship.
 - Hutton will work with Henninger to work out details of that arrangement.
 - Operations Committee charter has been amended to include *ex-officio* members.
- Need clarification and direction on how RMA IMTs and other federal agency resources can respond to non-Stafford Act incidents.
 - Difficult to arrange payments, etc. without federal disaster declaration.

14. Mobilization Centers

Fletcher

- Need in RMA for ability to handle multiple incoming crews (via NICC jet, etc.) with varying levels of self-sufficiency and transportation.
- Vision for 4 mob center locations: CO Western Slope, CO Front Range, Central Wyoming, Great Plains Zone.
- Need to delineate between mob centers and staging areas.
 - May be necessary to use both types, with resources coming into mob center, then being sent to staging areas.
 - Need to determine what amenities/services are needed at each location, depending on whether it is a staging area or mob center.
- Need to identify funding source(s), and who is in charge.
 - Dispatch Zone Staging Area: Local dispatch zone provides subsistence & uses as needed on local unit. Use Local Severity or Support code or ABCD Misc.
 - GACC Staging Area: GACC provides subsistence & uses as needed throughout GACC. Use GACC Severity or Support or other GACC code.
- States need to engage with military, etc. for agreements to use facilities and identify locations/capacities.
- Need for substantial support staff at mob center. Possibility for Type 3/All-Hazard teams can take role of starting and staffing mob centers.
 - Probably not best option for extended staffing—lacking expertise in certain key areas (ground support/inspections, etc.)
 - Dwight will approach Mobilization Working Group for possible support from Colorado State.
- Need Service & Supply Plan for GACC to cover mob center resources.
- Only 2 buses signed up on VIPR. Other option is EERA, but that hiring authority is incident-specific.
- Henninger will work on fleshing out positions available for mob center start-up & logistics.
- Tasking: Snart & V. Jones will look into how federal agencies cover cost of mob centers via Colorado State (National Guard, etc.), and Graham will do same for Wyoming. Does Nat'l Guard transportation stop at state line? Due May 2nd for conference call.
- Tasking: Fletcher will coordinate update to 2002 Mob Center Plan.