



**Bureau of Land Management: Arizona, New Mexico  
Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2  
Bureau of Indian Affairs: Southwest, Navajo, Western Regions  
National Park Service: Intermountain Region  
U. S. Forest Service, Southwestern Region  
Arizona State Forestry Division  
New Mexico State Forestry**

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**Date: 5/15/2009**

**To: Lyle Carlile , NMAC Chair**

**From: SWCG**

**Topic/Issue: Use of trainees and Large Fire Cost Reviews**

The Southwest Coordinating Group (SWCG) would like to make you aware that proposed national level policy regarding cost containment (reference NWCG #003-2009 Interagency Large Fire Cost Reviews – Process and Guidance, February 5, 2009) conflicts with other national goals. Cost containment audits suggest suppression costs could be contained by reducing the number of trainees holding positions on fires. While this is true, the impact of limiting trainees on Incident Management Teams (IMTs) is much less than the impact of many other cost-containment measures.

We are concerned that any reduction in the number of trainee opportunities would make it even more difficult for us to fully staff and field our Incident Management Teams (IMTs), now and in the future. As a result of demographic changes in our federal workforce, our IMTs are largely composed of fire staff from our non-federal partner agencies. To provide these skilled individuals with large-fire experience necessary to fill positions on our IMTs, we rely, increasingly, on trainee opportunities. Without this prerequisite experience, we will be unable to fill our IMT positions.

The National Interagency Mobilization Guide states that “In addition to the 27 positions identified on the long team configuration, IMTs may have a maximum of seventeen (17) positions to be negotiated and concurred on by the Incident Commander and the Agency Administrator from the requesting unit. As well, they may bring an additional six (6) trainee positions and six (6) S420/S520 command and general staff mentorees. These positions are identified by the IMTs and not by the receiving unit. Unless notified otherwise, these trainees will be mobilized for incidents on Federal lands.”

As long as the above guidance is adhered to per the National Mobilization Guide standards, the IMTs should not be scrutinized for having too many trainees. We, the members of SWCG, bring this to your attention knowing that we cannot resolve this issue at our level. SWCG understands the benefits of the cost containment reviews, and we fully support the involvement of the review teams. We recommend a national caucus address this concern. Please ensure the review teams are made aware, at a national level, of the necessity of trainees on IMTs. It may be helpful for national-level standards be developed to specify the number of trainees that Type 2 teams, long Type 1 teams and short

*/S/ Donald Griego*

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**Chair, Southwest Coordinating Group**

