



Forest Service (Southwestern Region)
Bureau of Indian Affairs (Southwest, Navajo, Western Regions)
Bureau of Land Management (Arizona, New Mexico)
Fish and Wildlife Service (Southwest Region)
National Park Service (Intermountain Region)
Arizona State Department of Forestry and Fire Management
New Mexico State Forestry

Southwest Area Decision Support Committee

CHARTER

I. Background

The Southwest Coordinating Group (SWCG) was established in a Memorandum of Understanding in 1991 to provide a forum for understanding and implementing interagency policy, direction, and coordination to the Zone Management Groups and to the Southwest Coordination Center (SWCC) for fire and incident management activities.

In 2008, SWCG re-charted the Memorandum of Understanding, which reauthorized the establishment of committees and task groups.

In 2018, the Southwest Area Planning Committee, the Southwest Area Wildfire Decision Support Subcommittee (of the Southwest Area Planning Committee), and the Southwest Area Predictive Services Committee were all reorganized and combined.

In 2022/23, this charter was updated to address cooperative interagency decision support more comprehensively, following the completion of the NFDRSv4 transition and the addition of a Risk Management Assistance fire analyst to the US Forest Service Regional Office.

II. Name

The name of this committee, hereinafter referred to as the Committee, is the Southwest Area Decision Support Committee of the SWCG.

III. Authority

The Committee is created under the authority and works under the direction of SWCG. This charter sets forth the guidelines and procedures by which the Committee operates.

IV. Mission Statement

The Committee coordinates interagency processes to ensure accurate and timely decision-support products are available and integrated into decision-making for wildfire preparedness, response, and management within the Southwest Geographic Area (SWGA).

V. Membership

The nature of the Committee requires that strong subject matter and technical expertise (SME) from several functional areas be permanently represented. Agency representatives will be decision-makers from various levels of fire management within the SWGA, including Incident Management Teams.

Membership of the Committee shall consist of the following:

- SWCG Liaison (also Predictive Services Oversight Group (PSOG) representative)
- SME/Technical Specialist: National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS)
- SME/Technical Specialist: Predictive Services
- SME/Technical Specialist: Fire Intelligence
- Agency identified representatives for USFS (Southwestern Region), BIA (Southwest, Navajo, and Western Regions), BLM (Arizona), BLM (New Mexico), FWS (Southwest Region), NPS (Intermountain Region), Arizona State Department of Forestry and Fire Management, New Mexico State Forestry.

The Committee shall have an agency representative from each SWCG participating agency. Agency members will serve as points of contact and liaison for their respective agencies. Attending all Committee meetings and functions, arranging an agency alternate if necessary, or notifying the Chair if unable to attend. Additionally:

- The SWCG liaison to the Committee will serve as the SWCG rep to PSOG.
- An updated roster of individuals comprising Committee membership will be maintained separately from this charter.

VI. Organization

The Committee shall select the following officers:

- Committee Chair
- Vice-Chair

The Committee shall select a Chair and Vice-Chair from its membership, and they will normally serve for two years in that position. The Vice-Chair will normally follow into the chair position unless otherwise arranged by the committee. Each position shall rotate through the member agencies of the SWCG if appropriate candidates are available. The selection and rotation of officers shall take place at the fall meeting of the year in which the Chair's term expires.

VII. Responsibilities and Duties

The Committee will coordinate planning and decision support related to pre-fire planning, preparedness, initial response, and incident/large fire management. At the Geographic Area level, this includes resource prepositioning, resource allocation, and incident prioritization.

The Committee’s responsibilities include:

- Providing leadership and oversight for the subordinate NFDRS Subcommittee.
- Defining processes for information flow between national-level committees, groups, and organizations within the SWGA regarding decision support.
- Establishing a training and developmental structure that meets the geographic area’s needs for decision support subject matter expertise.
- Developing standard operating procedures and a framework for setting up and operating a Decision Support Center (DSC) to assist the Southwest Coordination Center (SWCC), SWCG, and SW MAC Group with strategic risk assessment, resource allocation, and incident prioritization.
- Communicating with the Wildland Fire Management Research, Development, and Application (RD&A) group about application updates (WFDSS, IFTDSS) and ensuring that information is distributed to the field level within the SWGA.
- Reviewing the charter annually to ensure the Committee is staying apace of emerging needs.
- Appointing task groups and subcommittees to address specific planning and decision support needs.
- Participating in Committee functions and subcommittees, as necessary.

VIII. Meetings

Meetings will be scheduled by the Chairperson. Meetings will be held at least bi-annually, either in person, via conference calls, or virtually.

IX. Approval

This charter is effective as of the date signed and approved by the SWCG Chairperson. This charter may be amended upon recommendation by a quorum vote of the Committee and approval of the SWCG.

Chair, Southwest Coordinating Group

Date