

New Mexico Interagency Coordinating Group Meeting

Sept. 21, 2011 – Santa Fe, NM

Approved Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Jeff Hickerson, NPS (Chair); Pam Bostwick, FS; Lisa Bye, BLM; Claudia Standish, NM Smoke Coordinator (BLM); Josh Hall, FS Air & Water Quality; and Donald Geigo, NM Forestry/SWCG Liaison

Review and Approval of the last NMICG Meeting Notes

The April 20, 2011 meeting notes were reviewed and approved as distributed, and will be posted on the Committee’s website by Jeff.

NMICG Action Items

The following is the updated NMICG Action Item and Assignment List. New or Updated Action Items are in red. Completed Action Items have been removed.

Topic	Action Needed	Responsibility	Date
NMICG Chair Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Check SWCG website at see if NMICG’s membership list, and essential documents are up to date. If not, contact Jay Ellington. ▪ Coordinate meetings, prepares agenda, and distribute meeting notes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hickerson ▪ Hickerson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ongoing ▪ Ongoing
AZ Interagency Smoke Management MOU and Charter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finalize NMICG Charter for final review and then submit to SWCG ▪ Begin process to replace existing MOU, which expires in Aug. 2013, each agency should review their section and update/modify as appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hickerson/ALL ▪ Bye/Hickerson/ALL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oct. 20 ▪ Ongoing
NM Smoke Management Rule Revision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consult with Rita on proposed tiered approach for wildfire reporting; if OK, conduct workload analysis/thresholds by fire size for breakpoints (tracking vs. register). ▪ Work with AQB to draft Talking Points/PowerPoint about the SMP rule revision/changes for units/burners. ▪ Explore funding options for smoke monitoring equipment and capacity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hall ▪ ALL ▪ ALL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ASAP ▪ Ongoing ▪ Ongoing
NM Smoke Management Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determine who is coordinating the IMT Meeting in Prescott (Pierson/ Philban). ▪ Weekly Smoke Coordination Call ▪ Encourage units to register all unplanned fire with “multiple objective” in the online NM Smoke Management Program database. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Griego ▪ Standish ▪ ALL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completed ▪ Ongoing ▪ Ongoing

The following is a summarization of discussions for each existing issue or topic.

New Mexico Smoke Management Plan Revision Status - Hall

In May several federal agency personnel met with NM State Forestry and NM State Lands Office to draft up new language to address concerns of the wildfire requirements in the proposed rule. The fire season also identified additional problems/issues with the proposed wildfire rule: “typing” fires, timelines (24-hours), public notification requirements, as well as definitions, etc.

Due to a variety of factors (including the ones listed above as well as waiting on the release of the EPA fire policy and the NM’s EIB is tasked/focused on other political priorities); the NM Air Quality Bureau (NM AQB) postponed the revised Smoke Management Plan/Rule indefinitely in early August.

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In the meantime, Josh has consulted with NM AQB about drafting a tiered approach for addressing the wildfire requirements. For example this might look something like: no reporting for fires under 100-acres, for fires 101 to 1000-acres personnel would submit tracking only, for fires over 1000-acres or if a formal incident management team (type I, II or III) would require the fire to be fully registered. Josh will try to explore thresholds/break points as well as identify the potential workload for the end users and share them with the Group. There is also debate if there's a need to distinguish by fuels types and/or duration.

NM Smoke Management Program Update – Standish

Currently there is very little prescribed fire activity, so no weekly coordination calls are scheduled. As activity increases and becomes more robust, Claudia will initiate the calls (if needed).

Claudia is planning to address smoke management topics and issues at the SW Prevention and Education meeting/training later this fall. She is also trying to get on the SW Incident Management Team meeting schedule for next spring in Prescott, AZ.

Claudia handed out copies of the current MOU related to her position and the program. The Group focused on clarifying each agency's contributions, as the NPS has had issues processing transfer of funds to BLM. Each agency needs to review and propose changes; for example FWS and NPS may purchase monitoring equipment or office supplies to support the program as our contributions (rather than buying computers and/or transferring funds).

The EPA has withdrawn its proposal to changes ozone regulation/standards.

Fire Season/Smoke Coordination Review - Hall

During the peak of the SW fire season daily smoke coordination calls were taking place and a follow up After Action Review (ARR) was recently completed in mid-September. During the AAR several technical issues were identified that NMICG may be able to assist with addressing. The primary concern is does NM and the Southwest area have enough equipment (emission monitors) as well as capacity (trained and qualified personnel).

Currently there are a limited number of monitors available in the SW and only one agency qualified person in NM to set them up. Of the monitoring equipment available, several are old DataRam, which has no satellite telemetry for real time data. Although emission equipment is available through the RAWs Depot in Boise, ID., there were many issues with them and it "did not work." It was noted, the NM Department of Environmental Quality has trained and qualified personnel to setup the equipment, but currently there's no means to pay them through fire accounts.

Chuck Maxwell, from the Southwest Coordination Center, has expressed interest in helping and is willing to provide training as well as host a cache of smoke/emission monitors. The primary need is a funding source to provide the training and purchase the equipment.

NMICG Charter - Hickerson

The Group discussed various proposed changes and made a few new recommendations to the draft NMICG charter. Jeff will edit and then send out the updated version to the Group for final comments. Jeff will also try to clarify the BIA's involvement as well as their role in regards to the Vic- Chair position. Once finalized, Jeff will be taken before SWCG for signature.

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Agency Round Robin

BLM: Fuels Tech. vacancy in Las Cruces; funded several contracted chemical treatments and arch survey work for FY12; limited prescribed fire planned; NM RX Fire Council is planning a fall field trip (no other information) as well as developing their website/brochure.

FS: Anticipate burning activity; nationally the FS is concerned about not meeting its FY11 target/R-3 expects to just meet their target; Gila NF vacancy – fuels/timber GS-12/13; shared R1/R3 WFM IMT will no longer be hosted by R3.

NM State: Burns plans Las Cruces with FWS and state parks; Senate and House are in currently special session; there is proposed fireworks ban bill; have 2 vacant position in Santa Fe (LEO and OPS Spec.)

FWS: Small broadcast burns scheduled for Oct/Nov at Bosque del Apache; Jake Nuttall received the NM District FMO position; the AFMO position is currently vacant.

NPS: El Mapias FMO vacant and should be advertise again in the near future, the Saguaro FMO (AZ) is vacant and open; Gary Kemp at Bandelier is not retiring; Dan Oltrogge, FMO/Area Commander will be retiring at the end of the year and his position will be refilled; currently focused on closing out FY11 budget/NFPORS; pile burns planned with very limited broadcast burning expected, as many planned treatments burned during wild fires this past summer.

Next Meeting/Adjournment

The next meeting will take place on Nov. 14 2011 at 1:00 p.m. at the NPS Old Santa Fe Trail Building in Santa Fe.