

New Mexico Interagency Coordinating Group Meeting

April 10, 2012 – Santa Fe, NM

Approved Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Jeff Hickerson, NPS (Chair); Jason Riggins, FWS; Pam Bostwick, FS; Lisa Bye, BLM; Claudia Standish, NM Smoke Coordinator (BLM); Josh Hall, FS Air & Water Quality; Trent Botkin, NM Forestry; and Rita Bates, NM Air Quality Bureau.

Review and Approval of Previous Meetings Notes

Notes from NMICG's last regular meeting on Sept. 21, 2011 as well as notes from a couple special meetings held on Nov. 14, 2011 and Dec. 13, 2011 were approved, 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"> ▪ Initiate process to replace existing MOU, which expires in Aug. 2013, each agency should review their section and update/modify as appropriate. ▪ Assess NM-MED current inventory of emissions monitoring equipment (kind/type, how many, connectivity source, etc.). ▪ Continue to explore options for purchasing/managing emissions monitoring equipment and/or enhance existing equipment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ALL ▪ Standish/Hall ▪ Hickerson/Hall/ALL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ongoing ▪ June 1 ▪ As Funding Allows
NM Smoke Management Rule Revision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In plane language, clearly define IMT (Incident Management Team) and GACC (geographic coordination center) for the Rule. ▪ Redraft Wildland Fire Language in the Rule. ▪ Distribute draft supporting guidance document material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hickerson/ALL ▪ Bates ▪ Standish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ASAP ▪ May 1 ▪ May 1
NM Smoke Management Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Edit and distribute updated Smoke Management Quick Reference Card ▪ 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"> ▪ Standish ▪ Standish ▪ ALL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May 15 ▪ Ongoing ▪ Ongoing
Consortium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draft a proposal for the consortium to organize an outreach field trip for the NM RX Fire Council members, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bye 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ July1

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

New Mexico Smoke Management Plan Revision, Wildfire Requirement Discussion – ALL

The Group along with Rita from AQB put an effort to move the process forward and resolve the wildfire requirements section in the proposed SMP rule. After much debate, the supporting agencies agreed for the purposes of the rule to focus our efforts on targeting all fire with a recognized GACC/National IMT assigned to an incident. These type of fires are generally the state's most complex (fuels, WUI, etc.) as well as some of the longer duration fires, and thus will be held to higher reporting standard. The Group also agree that the Rule will continue to require emission tracking be submitted for all wildfires greater than 100-acres to the Air Quality Bureau (this is carry-over from the current Rule, which had been removed in previous draft language).

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Understanding there is no perfect explanation, where 100% of the wildfires with potential emission impacts will be effectively captured in the Rule, the Group agreed a supporting guidance document /Memo of Understanding was also needed to further clarify and expand on when fires without an IMT may need to also communicate with ABQ. Case in point is how to enforce agencies to handle special situations like the early phases of the 2011 Miller in the Gila Wilderness. Initially this incident was managed by an ad hoc type 3 organization as well as select team members from the Northern Rockies/Southwest Wildland Fire Management Team for several weeks.

NM Smoke Management Program Update – Standish/Hall

Burn registrations, in general, are going “OK.” After a recent suggestion from the field, Claudia is in the process of adding additional fields to the database, which will help filter by unit/district, etc.).

Claudia also handed out several versions of pocket cards/quick reference cards related to smoke management to the Group which she has been developing along with interested parties in other states. Overall the Group was supportive of this endeavor; although the Group felt the cards needed to be clearly target burn bosses and incident commander types (and not the entire firefighting militia) at this time. It was further recommended to avoid utilizing “LCES” in a different context, as this terminology already has clear safety implications within the wildland fire community.

Claudia along with Josh and Ron Sharron (AZ Smoke Coordinator) were able to get a communication briefing for communicating smoke and emissions inserted into the IMT briefing packet for this upcoming fire season. Additionally Josh and Ron made a presentation (remotely) at this year’s SWA IMT meeting in Prescott, AZ related to smoke management issues.

Weekly coordination calls have not been initiated yet. As prescribed fire activity increases, the calls will be initiated (likely in the very near future).

The Group briefly discussed this year’s NM Annual Smoke and Planning Meeting. This year AQB hosted two 3-hour sessions, one for the southern practitioners (in Socorro, NM) and one for the northern burner (in Santa Fe, NM). The general feeling amongst NMICG member who attended was the meetings were improved and most focused (on specific issues), and the facilitators (from MED) were very good. Additionally, the graphic display using GoogleEarth aided the process.

Claudia and Josh noted that prior to this year’s meeting, questions were requested from the field that they would like to see addressed. During the meeting the presenters were able to incorporate and discuss issues generated from this feedback.

The Group would recommend ABQ try to schedule the annual meeting well in advance to best maximize participation.

NM Interagency Smoke Management Program MOU – Hickerson

Agencies need to review the current MOU and provide any adjustments as such (best not wait to the last minute).

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The Group also discussed equipment in the past and any new MOU needs to address managing emissions monitoring equipment. One consideration is for NM-MED to oversee the inventory; as MED personnel are trained to setup and service such equipment. Federal agencies may be able to transfer equipment or funds to bolster/upgrade existing stock as funds become available.

As a reminder, the NMICG's Charter was approved by SWCG last November and is posted on the SWCC website.

SW Fire Science Consortium Meeting - Hickerson

Kent Reid, Pam and Jeff were able to meet with member of the Consortium staff after the SW Fire Ecology Conference. General discussions focused on how NMICG and the Consortium could best work together.

The Consortium personnel ask for us to pass on the following information: they need research proposals, they are starting a burn plan library and would welcome any submission, they also wanted to express they have grant funds available for students to attend events, as well as highly interested in hosting/facilitating multiple events at one time/one place to help save time and money.

Pam mentioned RX-410 may be something the Consortium could help with the logistic as a recent need assessment showed 99 students were in need of the class. Claudia also mentioned the new SmoC online training course may be another alternative.

Lisa Bye mentioned the Consortium could also help arranging a field trip for members of the NM RX Fire Council, etc.

Agency Round Robin

- FWS – AFMO is being held vacant, seasonal starting, prescribed fire projects are mostly completed.
- FS – Lots of plans are ready, but very little implementation to date. R-3 has received \$1M for funding the Veteran's Green Corps to implement fuels projects this FY (plus an additional \$500K may also be added). Feedback of the crews has been positive.
- BLM – Less prescribed burn this year down south, although more chemical treatments.
- NPS – Overall quiet, fires burned up a lot of NPS lands last summer in NM. Just completed program reviews for Grand Canyon and Carlsbad Caverns/Guadalupe Mountains; still working on their reports. Kevin Parrish just started as the new FMO at El Malpais.

Next Meeting/Adjournment

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 15, 2012 at 1000, with the first fall meeting scheduled for Sept. 19, 2012.