

## SW Communications Committee Minutes from 10/12/2011 Conference call



**Attendees:** Dale Brown- AZ State Fire, Darrell Long- AZ-BIA, Dave Dukart- NM-NPS, Curtis Steinman- NM-USFS, Kristine Damsgaard NM- R3 office, Chris Romo- NM State Forestry.

The meeting began with a role call and introductions. Committee members from NM-USFS, BIA, NMSF and AZSF were in attendance in the call; members from NM-BLM/ AZ-BLM, FWS, were not. Kristine Damsgaard will be succeed Rance Irwin on the Committee and Art Goldberg will represent AZ. Dale Brown will invite Chris Dennison (AZ-FS).

The communications committee covered:

- **Minutes** from last meeting including action items.
- **Charter**- Romo stated that it was approved by the OPS/ SWCG and put on the SWCC website.
- **Election Ballots:** 2 President votes for Dale Brown-AZSF, 2- Vice Pres. Votes for Scott Harness, 1- Vice for Romo. Dale accepted the position and will transition with Romo after the call. Romo will contact Scott and see if he can take this role; if not Romo will take the position and Dale will appoint a Secretary.
- **SW Freq.** MOU- The committee needs to develop a MOU for frequency sharing; this task came from the SWCG. Dale stated that there is already a national MOU and will send it out to the group.
- **IDOPP**- Dale stated that we need to work in conjunction with them and not step on their toes. Romo added if the committee should start a Radio Optimization Project with members from the committee working with all zones in AZ/NM to better enhance radio communications and will cover: Radio coverage/quality, shadowed/ dead zone areas, test radio equipment and report all findings to the OPS/SWCG. Romo will consult with the OPS and see if this is a route work going or is it part of IDOPP already.
- **Interoperability frequencies**- Romo asked if any agencies have these frequencies in their communications plan. Curtis stated that they have National Search and rescue frequencies on the Santa Fe. The group will see if OPS want these frequencies in a separate group for all agencies in the SW. The only set-back would be that they are TAC channels and no Dispatch Centers monitor these frequencies, it would just be to get ground forces on the same channel when responding to an incident regardless of agency.
- **Tri-band radios**- These radios can cover VHF, UHF and 700 MHz frequencies, but the cost is very high. Curtis stated how many would each agency need and if it was more than 100 it would not be in our best interest as it pertains to cost. Romo added it would be good for communicating with various agencies that operate on different frequencies. Dale added that there are tests underway now with these radios.
- **SW Frequency lists**- Kris stated that the aviation committee will continue to generate this list annually. The committee will aid with this if needed.
- **Round Robin- AZ** went first: Everything went well as far as communications.  
**NM:** There were some issues with the amount of repeaters on the Las Conchas and were busy with the Pacheco going on to the east.

There was communication issues on the Track fire, some of these were mainly radio placement issues and some aviation and ground resources with radios that could not be cloned. The on-going problem on the Cimarron is the lack of radio coverage within the district and it is like this within the whole state. The state is currently trying to re-due the radio system but it is a slow going process due to the man power working on the problem. Also, there is minimal radio coverage east of I-25 from TDC, so the district has to Flight Follow with aircraft in some of these no coverage areas and it is hard with minimal coverage, it is a definite safety issue for the Zone.

Curtis added that there is a noise that comes up several times per minute, sometimes every 5 seconds or so. Just like a quick squelch break or something, coming from the State radio frequency. Romo will advise the District of the problem.

- **Face-face-meeting-** Dale will see if we can have it in Santa Fe, NM to coincide with the Aviation meeting on Nov.16.

**Actions Items:**

- Romo will transition the Chair Position to Dale Brown and will inform Scott about the Vice position and will also talk to OPS. Also, will advise the Las Vegas/Bernalillo District of the frequency problem. Romo will also send out the minutes for this call.
- Dave will talk to Brent Woffinden about the frequency MOU.
- Dale Brown will contact Chris Dennison (FS) and Art Goldberg (BLM) since both of those folks are on the IDOP and will sent out IFOG and Public Safety websites to the Group.
- Next meeting agenda will be sent out.

**Committee moved to adjourn. Next conference call date/time will be sent out at a later date.**