

**DRAFT**

**Southwest Fire Management Board**

**Meeting of August 21-22, 1996**

**Albuquerque, New Mexico**

**Attending:**

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Cliff Chetwin (NPS, Chair)   | Al Alvarez (BLM-AZ)                      |
| Frank Smith (NM State)       | John Burton (SWCC/USFS)                  |
| Bob Lee (BLM-NM)             | Roger Henson (BIA) (Acting)              |
| Bill Russell (USFS/R03)      | Al Defler (USFS/R03)                     |
| Mike Phillips (FWS)          | Kevin Hamilton (BLM-AZ, Guest)           |
| John Selkirk (BLM-NM, Guest) | Jay Ellington (NPS/SWCC-Board Secretary) |

The meeting was called to order at 1000.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Team Awards** (Cliff Chetwin) - Each agency will forward a reimbursable account number to USFS in order to cover funding for team awards. Bob Lee stated he could make the purchase of the awards off a government credit card.

**Prevention Team** (Cliff Chetwin) Bob Lee has followed-up with the suggestion to nominate Prevention Team leaders for the national 'Golden Smokey' award. Board needs to submit and forward names to the national office. Bob will provide the necessary paperwork to Cliff.

**Internet Access** (Bob Lee) - Progressing... Jay Ellington/Bob Lee/John Burton will prepare a transmittal notifying each zone of the purpose and intent of using the internet for intelligence and information. John stated authorization to purchase laptop computers for each zone has been approved. This will provide each zone with the capability of accessing the internet. Jay will be giving a presentation at the September meeting (i.e. HomePage, local provider access, etc).

**South Zone Coordination Center's Rockwell System** (John Burton) - John will be going to the South Zone to evaluate the dispatch system developed by Rockwell Incorporated. The zone is currently using the 'Beta' version of the system. John will give a demonstration of the system at the September Board meeting.

**Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) - New Mexico State** (Frank Smith) - Current JPA expired 8/15. However, an agreement was reached within the State to extend it through 8/97. All agencies need to sign extension. An attempt will be made to try and have the revised agreement completed by the Spring of 97.

The Department of Energy (DOE, Los Alamos) is very interested in becoming a part of the revised agreement. The DOE concurs with the existing JPA, but would like to look at different

ways of making the process work for them.

**Dome Fire Shelter Deployment** - On-going. Implementation of the 10 action items were discussed.

Follow-up to action items:

- #1. Bob Lee will review, write, and provide the Board with written copies. Bob will expect responses to the review one week prior to the September Board meeting.
- #2. Cliff has sent a letter to each Type 1 and 2 team requesting each to review their operating procedures and to adhere to these procedures.
- #3. Included in letter written in 2 above.
- #4. Contact has been made.
- #5. Included in 1 above.
- #6. Included in 1 above
- #7. Included in 1 above. The Board discussed current dispatching procedures in reference to 'Critical Incident Stress Debriefing.' Cliff will be checking with El Paso Paramedics about including CISD services in their contract. Will have more information at September meeting.
- #8. No further action required.
- #9. A committee meeting will be held October 3 to discuss and develop 'White Paper' due to SWFMB by December 1.
- #10. Mike Phillips will coordinate a review of existing agency policies and will develop a draft SW Area policy for SWFMB to consider.

**Entrapment/Deployment Guidelines** - Revision of SW Area guidelines will be deferred pending the USFS-WO project. Bill Russell noted that some new guidelines will be coming out of the USFS Washington Office over the next several months. However, they will not be interagency guidelines.

It was adopted that language pertaining to Entrapment/Deployment Guidelines will be written and included in the Mobilization Guide.

Bill also noted that the USFS has decided not to make public the review reports concerning deployments on the Clark Peak and Hochderffer fires. Cliff will prepare a request on behalf requesting that the information be released.

**Free Market Approach on Zone Study** (Bob Lee) - Bob stated additional materials are needed and final touches are being placed on the writing. It should be ready by the September meeting.

**National Weather Service** (John Burton) - John attended a meeting with the National Weather Service (NWS) two weeks ago in reference to fire weather reporting. The NWS was very concerned that SWCC used contract meteorologists during the 1996 fire season. John noted that the meeting was attended by some high level personnel from the NWS and was highly productive. Notes from the meeting will be available for the September Board meeting.

**Aircraft Mob Guide Revisions** (Al Alvarez) - To be presented at September meeting.

**SWFMB Handbook** - The MOA establishing the SWFMB and the Boards's operational handbook were updated and revised. Clean copies should be available at the September meeting. The Handbook will be incorporated into the Southwest Mobilization Guide for the 1997 fire season.

**Other** - Bill Russell stated that the USFS has hired a new Training Officer in Aviation and Fire Management for Region 3. The new TO, Richard Reitz, is currently working with Northern Arizona University (NAU) on a new 'Technical Fire Management' course. AFM is currently working on a MOU with the university, assisting in curriculum developed, and devising a payment plan through the use of the SF-182. If all goes well, the course could be available by Fall 1997. It was suggested that the SWFMB should be involved in the development of the curriculum.

Bill also presented a new handbook developed by the Bureau of Land Management on fire operations. The handbook, titled "Fire Operations in America" will be reviewed by the Board, revised and adapted to the Southwest, and made available to fire operations personnel as soon as possible.

In addition, Bill is working on a '1996 Fire Season' review. He is asking for assistance from anyone involved in firefighting in the southwest to provide information. The review will include as much information as possible on what went right and wrong during the past season. Bill passed out to the Board a 'draft' of topics in which the review will cover and emphasized this should be an interagency review.

**Grand Canyon 'Interagency' Agreement** - Cliff presented a payment agreement developed and used in the Grand Canyon Zone. The agreement sets the stage for units within the SWA to cooperate on incidents other than wildfire emergencies. The Board reviewed the agreement, decided to adopt it, and eventually have it inserted into the SWFMB Handbook. Cliff will prepare copies for legal review and agency administrative approval.

**Visit by National Rural Fire Committee** - On Thursday morning, 8/22, the National Rural Fire Committee met with the Board. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss issues pertaining to the use of Volunteer/Rural Fire Department's (VFD) in federal wildland firefighting efforts. According to Larry Adams, Committee Chair, the committee is looking for commonalities among the VFD's throughout the U.S., to see 'what the needs are for wildland firefighting,' and 'if federal funds are being used effectively (i.e. if VFD's can be better used).' Larry indicated that the ranks of the VFD are shrinking at 3-5% per year and that this could lead to real problems in the next 10 years or so.

SWFMB members pointed out some of the common concerns regarding the use of VFD's include communication (i.e. on-scene command, radio's, etc), fitness, command structure, equipment, and PPE's. The point being that VFD's do not always arrive on scene fully trained and equipped to fight wildland fires safely and efficiently. Other points made during the discussion, both by the Committee and the SWFMB, included the possible need to enhance/change the red-card system, the need for VFD's to operate under NIMS-ICS, and the lack of legal authority or DOI agencies to transfer fire equipment and supplies to non-federal entities.

Committee members stressed that leadership at the national level was key to bringing in VFD's into the overall firefighting effort throughout the U.S. SWFMB members agreed that this is needed and informed the committee that they were willing to assist them in any way they could.

**NEXT MEETING:** September 16-20, 1996 in Phoenix, AZ. The meeting will begin on the 16th at 1:00pm at the BLM Training Center.

\*\* Type II management issues will be discussed on the 17th & 18th. All Zone Board Chairs will be invited for these two days and will be welcomed to remain for the latter two days.

The meeting was adjourned at 1600, August 22, 1996.

Jay Ellington  
Board Secretary