

# Southwest Fire Management Board

Meeting Minutes – January 23-24, 2002

**Members Present:** Kirk Rowdabaugh (AZS), Willie Begay (BIA), Frank Smith (NMS), Bob Lee (BLM-NM), Bill Waterbury (FS), Pam McAlpin (BLM-AZ), Jeff Whitney (FWS), Bryan Swift (NPS), Vernon Ely (SWCC-Acting), Chuck Maxwell (SWCC)

**Guests:** Van Bateman (FS-COF), Larry Humphrey (BLM-SAD), Dave Daniels (BLM-YUD), Roger Jensen (BIA-ZUA), Dean Clark (NPS-BAP), Barbara Luna (NMS-N1S), John Kwait (BLM-ABD), Eva Wilson (ABZ), Jim Paxon (FS-GNF), Jay Ellington (SWCC)

The meeting was called to order at 1300.

## Team Selection

Van Bateman and Larry Humphrey, SWA Type 1 IC's for 2002, submitted their rosters to the Board for approval. Both Van and Larry stated they received an increase in the number of applicants for this year. However, several positions continue to go unfilled, but these positions are expected to be filled prior to the beginning of the fire season. In order to insure there are enough applicants for the future, additional applicants are needed in Human Resources, Fire Behavior, and Procurement. **The Board approved the rosters submitted by Van and Larry.**

- A discussion was held on whether an AD Deputy IC can replace an IC if the IC is unavailable for assignment. **The Board decided that an AD cannot take over management of a team for an IC that is unavailable.**
- Since Van's tenor is up after this season and Larry's is up next season, a discussion was held on the process for selection of the next Type 1 IC. **The Board decided that instead of deciding at this time, all applicants will need to submit an application during the fall 2002 nomination period.** A separate discussion was held on the participation of SWFMB members on Type 1 teams. In a decision by the Board at the January 2001 meeting, it was decided that Board members are allowed to participate on Type 1 teams, including IC.
- A discussion was held on whether to allow someone from the local police or sheriff's department accompany the team to incidents. The purpose is to handle liaison with local law enforcement at the incident. **The Board agreed with the IC's. The IC's will follow-up.**
- A discussion was held on bringing together the T1 & T2 IC's, SWFMB, and Zone Board Chairs. The purpose of the meeting would be to layout plans for a nomination and selection process, training, and coordination in order to keep folks interested in participating on fire teams. **The Board agreed to host a meeting as part of the fall SWFMB Meeting. The meeting would be held in New Mexico in order to, hopefully, attract more folks from New Mexico to participate.**

- A discussion was held on the current policy pertaining to the National Team Rotation list. At issue is number of those individuals participating on teams from only a handful of units, determination of team rotation during the season, and team availability for national call-up. **The Board decided to send a position paper to the National MAC Group requesting explanation on Type 1 rotation. In addition, Van Bateman will submit to the Board a draft letter detailing a different method that may be considered with respect to the rotation process.**
- Team funds seem to be adequate. Teams have been able to implement ISUITES and have purchased several laptop computers.
- The Type 1 team meeting will be held **February 26-28, 2002 in Laughlin, NV**. Pam McAlpin will represent the SWFMB at the team meeting.

### **International Border Issues**

The Coronado NF no longer has an agreement with Mexico to provide firefighting resources. The past agreement was signed with the Federal government of Mexican. It seems that in order for an agreement to be valid it must be established with each Mexican state. The Southeast Zone is currently working on another agreement with their bordering Mexican state. If this happens, other units can tier off the agreement. At the same time, several other units along the border are working on agreements.

### **Fire Weather Program**

Chuck Maxwell gave a presentation on the direction of the current fire weather program established at SWCC. Chuck went over the new 10-Day Fire Weather/Fire Danger Outlook, daily area-wide fire weather/fire danger summaries, Internet weather briefings, monthly monitoring of precipitation and snowpack, and smoke management summaries. He also gave a quick assessment of current conditions as they may relate to the 2002 fire season. In addition, Chuck presented the Board with several proposals:

- A proposal to require feedback on all spot weather forecasts submitted to the National Weather Service. **The Board would like for the NWS to determine what their objectives are when requesting the feedback.**
- A proposal to determine if the RAWS effort at SWCC should be formalized, including defining roles and responsibilities for SWCC meteorologists. **The Board decided that a statement pertaining to the roles, responsibilities, and duties should be included in the mobilization guide.**
- A proposal to establish an incentive program for folks participating and excelling in establishing a strong NFDRS, WIMS, and weather station maintenance program. **The Board decided that WIMS and station maintenance are the bases for many of the things we do. It is important that all of our stations are maintained properly and data is entered continuously and accurately. In addition, Board members will pass along to any group that they may be speaking before about the need for valid data.**

Jeff Whitney stated that FWS and BLM-NM were working on establishing a Smoke Management position with the New Mexico State Environment Department. The position is geared toward monitoring smoke once an approval is done. This position will not be a Smoke Coordinator position.

### **Arizona Interagency Coordinating Group**

Kirk presented a draft charter to the Board for review. The role of the AICG is to facilitate collaboration and cooperation, priority setting, and accountability for and implementation of the Southwest Regional and National Fire Plan(s), for discussing and resolving issues affecting Arizona's wildland fire management programs, coordinate briefing papers, talking points, and other public information and education efforts of the Zone Boards, Southwest Fire Management Board, and the Southwest Strategy, and coordinate statewide wildland smoke management issues. **No action required by the Board.**

### **Medical Standards**

Several issues have arisen over the past couple of months pertaining to the new Medical Standards. This is the first year of the test program being implemented for DOI agencies in the Southwest Area. Issues include non-fire position descriptions, legality, payment of physicals, FOH, and contracting physicians. A suggestion was made to invite the Medical Standards group to the SWA to meet and talk directly to field units. **The Board decided no action is required at this time.**

### **Mobilization Guide**

Jay Ellington stated the only requested change coming from the field to be made to the Mob Guide for 2002 is to include the Type 1 team Freelance Policy. **After review of the policy adopted during 2000, the Board agreed to insert the policy into the mob guide in the Preparedness Level section.** No other major changes are to be made to the 2002 SWA Mobilization Guide.

### **Southwest Coordination Center Review**

During the week of January 7, a National Review Team came to the Southwest to conduct a review of the staffing, service, and facilities pertaining to the Southwest Coordination Center. The final report for the review arrived January 23<sup>rd</sup> and was reviewed by the Board. A number of questions, concerns, and issues were raised during the review.

#### ***Findings:***

- Diversity... cultural, grade, or agency?
- No career ladder in SWCC...
- Regulars versus AD's...
- Concerns with Center Director unavailable or out-of-pocket during the fire season
- Define Predictive Services and it's role in SWCC
- No Annual Operating Plan
- Tracking of resources...
- SWCC operating hours and responsiveness to customers
- Expand facilities at USFS Regional Office or evaluate new location for SWCC

- Implementation of ROSS and it's effect on SWCC operations
- Agenda, notification of SWFMB meetings

**The Board decided, overall, the Review lacked clear and detailed findings, discussion, and recommendations. At times, the Review did not provide the necessary rationale or, at minimum, a logical starting point for many of the Findings. In addition, a number of the findings seemed to be recommendations and in some cases the findings did not relate to the recommendations. Two primary findings need considerably more clarification. The Board will respond to the Review Team by requesting additional clarification on these two issues as well as other components of the report. Pam McAlpin to write the Board's response. In the meantime, the Board will draft an action plan addressing many of the recommendations in the Report. Jay Ellington will write the first draft based on the notes from the meeting.**

### **Albuquerque Zone Report**

John Kwait, Zone Board Chairperson. The Zone Coordinator position will be open soon as Harry Phillips accepted a new position with the Lincoln Zone Coordination Center. Richard Nieto is the new FMO on the Cibola National Forest. The Zone Board is still reviewing the possibility of moving the Zone Coordination Center and looking at the grade structure in the Center.

### **Type 2 Crew Committee**

Roger Jensen, Zuni Agency. Roger stated that due to the Internet and E-Mail being disconnected among DOI agencies, getting disciplinary information passed around among units is somewhat difficult, if not impossible. The Committee has plans for a meeting in February to review the SWFF Handbook for the 2002 fire season. USFS will fund printing and distribution of the Handbook. NWCG has issued guidelines on what defines a Type 1 and a Type 2 crew. Starting with the 2002 season, Type 2 crews may be split up by their ability to do initial attack.

### **National Crew and Engine Contract**

Willie Begay attended a meeting in Boise recently to discuss the development of a National Crew and Engine Contract. Willie stated the contract is getting closer to fruition, but no contract has been established yet. Apparently, the group requested each GACC provide a listing of the number of crews and engines that could be available within the GACC that would be a part of the contract. In the SWA, it was discussed as to whether there is a need for such a contract. Willie also stated that no one is currently available at the national level to act as administrator of the contract. Bill Waterbury will follow-up with the Board at the next meeting on how the FS fits into the picture.

### **Dispatch Steering Committee**

Eva Wilson, Chairperson, distributed the latest copy of the Dispatch Steering Committee Charter for Board review. Eva stated the Committee is seeking funding from the Board to cover ROSS Super-Training sessions, travel for ROSS instructors from the SWA, and costs associated with the Dispatcher's Workshop. The

Dispatcher's Workshop will be held the week of January 28. **The Board asked Eva to pull together a written budget request and submit it to the Board for review.**

### **Fire Prevention Committee**

Barbara Luna, Prevention Committee Member, stated the committee met in November in Las Cruces. The committee is currently finalizing their charter. They are working on FIREWISE sessions and insuring the message being distributed is consistent.

### **Lincoln Zone Report**

Barbara Luna, Zone Board Chair. The next meeting of the Zone Board will be January 25. In general, the Board is looking into whether a review of Zone operations should occur, challenges to communication among Zone Board members, establishment of a Deputy Zone Board Chair, requesting a representative from Big Bend NP, establishment of an air tanker base location at Air Force base, and responding to the Town of Ruidoso about their contracting of a SEAT.

### **30-Mile Action Plan**

Bill Waterbury distributed the final recommendations made as a result of the 30-Mile incident from the past fire season. Bill pointed out several key points made in the report: (1) extended attack as the top priority of the GACC, (2) complexity analysis completed for all initial attack fires, (3) no collateral duties for ICT3 or 4, and (4) the National Mobilization Guide will include direction that all resources will know the name of the assigned Incident Commander and announce all changes in incident command. **The Board decided that each member should review the document and be prepared to discuss action items and implementation at the next Board meeting.**

### **AD-5 Rates**

The National Business Team will set rates for AD-5 instead of each GACC. This will occur for the 2002 fire season.

### **SWCC Center Director Position**

The Center Director position at SWCC is currently vacant. Vernon Ely is in the acting role for 120 days. Discussions are underway to make the position a 'Service First' GS-12/13 position shared between DOI and USFS. The Board is currently seeking an approved position description. **Bill Waterbury and Bob Lee to discuss the position and respond back to the Board.**

The next meeting of the Board will be April 17-18 in Payson, AZ.

The meeting was adjourned at 1700.

/s/  
Kirk Rowdabaugh  
SWFMB, Chairperson