

# Southwest Fire Management Board

Meeting Minutes – April 17-18, 2002

**Voting Members Present:** Kirk Rowdabaugh (AZS), Willie Begay (BIA), Bob Lee (BLM-NM), Bill Waterbury (FS), Pam McAlpin (BLM-AZ), Jeff Whitney (FWS), Bryan Swift (NPS), **Voting Members Absent:** Frank Smith (NMS), **Non-Voting Members Present:** Vernon Ely (SWCC – Acting Center Director), Chuck Maxwell (SWCC – Fire Weather), Jay Ellington (SWCC – Board Secretary)

**Guests:** Roger Jensen, Bob Lineback, Carrie Templin, Wendell Peacock, Larry McCoy, Melvin Hunter, Barbara Red Feather, Chris Ashkie, Susanne Romero, Ed Singleton, Tom Beddow, Chuck Scott, George Leech, Ken Butler, Pete Lahm, Lee Englesby

The meeting was called to order at 1300.

**SWA INTERAGENCY PREVENTION COMMITTEE (SWIPC)** (Wendell Peacock)  
Committee endorses the FIREWISE program established by the NFPA for the SWA. As a result, the committee is seeking to combine FIREWISE group efforts in Arizona with the efforts in New Mexico, thus, producing a coordinated effort of FIREWISE program in the Southwest Area. Current NFPA FIREWISE Coordinator for the SWA is Tom Beddow, Apache-Sitgreaves NF. Tom has been in this position for the past several years on behalf of the AICG and NMCG. **The Board decided the ties to NFPA should continue and transfer coordination from Tom Beddow to the SWA Interagency Prevention Committee. Prevention Committee will need to select an individual from the committee to be take over this function. It was also agreed that the SWIPC would coordinate FIREWISE efforts nationally and AICG and NMCG would coordinate FIREWISE efforts regionally and locally. Bob Lee is Board Liaison.**

Other issues being discussed by the Committee include standardization of Fire Prevention position descriptions for all agencies, SWA Information and Prevention Academy for 2003, need for a U.S. Fish & Wildlife committee member, and development of fire prevention task book. The Committee will inform the NWCG Training Working Team of some of the activities occurring in the Southwest Area. Wendell to send Jay Ellington a copy of committee notes for posting to the SWA website.

## **DISPATCH STEERING COMMITTEE** (Melvin Hunter)

A proposal for funding was presented to the Board to cover costs associated with activities occurring in the dispatch community. Funding would cover 2003 Dispatchers Workshop, travel and per diem to cover ROSS partners providing Train-the-Trainer sessions, and development of a task book. **The Board decided the host agency for each ROSS partner will need to cover travel & per diem (about \$11k total). Vernon Ely will provide the Board with a list of ROSS Partner names who will be the Train-the-Trainers. FS/BIA will host the January 2003 Dispatchers Workshop and NPS will host the January 2004 Workshop.**

## **WEATHER WORKING GROUP** (Chuck Maxwell)

Issues with the National Weather Service (NWS) are being resolved as the relationship with the NWS is improving. However, there are still some issues at the local level. There has been an increase in the number of spot forecasts, but the burn boss verification process still needs improvement. The committee would like to insert language in the SWA Fire Weather Plan to cover verification of the Spot Forecast. At issue is the concern by the NWS for liability and producing better forecasts. **The Board agreed and will issue a letter re-emphasizing the importance of verification and work toward institutionalizing this action. Chuck will draft letter for Board signature.**

Other topics covered by Chuck included 2 A-Day Forecasts, change in forecast format for NM, and status of the SWA Weather Operating Plan. According to NIFC, the GACC Weather Program will take on Smoke Management Forecasts as part of the Predictive Services Component. Chuck will work with NIFC office to decide on parameters. If no resolution, Chuck will provide the Board a letter for signature addressing the issues. The committee continues to work on the IMET issue, whereby GACC Meteorologists are part of the IMET group, but only as a last resort. **Board agrees that GACC MET's should be available for IMET duty as necessary. If so, the GACC MET's must maintain annual currency. Products produced by the Predictive Service Unit comes from keeping abreast of activities occurring on field assignments. Chuck will follow-up with NIFC office, then Larry McCoy to follow-up with NWS Western Region on behalf of the Committee.**

#### **SWA INFORMATION COMMITTEE (Carrie Templin)**

The National Fire Information Conference held last November in Scottsdale, AZ, was well received. The Committee is looking to work with another geographic area to set up and host a 2004 conference. **Carrie to provide Kirk with a white paper to carry to the National GACC Meeting in May. The paper will cover the benefits and costs associated with hosting the conference with the intent to get another GACC to host.**

Committee working with the Prevention Committee to host the Information and Prevention Academy. The Academy would include S-203 & 403, and a CIMS training session. Committee has been approached by the CIMS group to ask for their help in limiting the number of requests from outside of the SWA for use of the CIMS group. This has to do with the comfort factor of the group. They would like a training assignment in the SWA before making themselves available nationally. **Wendell to provide Kirk with information in order for Kirk to carry to the National GACC meeting in May.**

#### **TRAINING COMMITTEE (George Leech)**

George will be taking over chairperson of the committee soon. The committee's next meeting will be in Hondah, April 23-24. Course announcements will be out in June. The committee is seeing 30-40% no-shows in the 100-200 level courses. Committee is working on a needs analysis. **SWCC needs to provide the training committee with a list of positions that are UTF'd each year. Ed Singleton will provide information to the Board pertaining to position descriptions that have fire support written in their position descriptions.**

#### **TYPE 2 CREW COMMITTEE (Roger Jensen)**

Crew typing is of great interest to the committee and the fire community. At interest is the Type 2 Initial Attack crews. More follow-up is needed. The committee continues to tackle disciplinary issues as units are responsible for sending disciplinary resolutions to Roger for distribution. More units are now producing Type 2 Crew Operating Plans. Folks from San Carlos Agency were on hand to give an excellent presentation on changes occurring in their program to make it stronger and beneficial to the fire community. Some changes include monthly pack, run, and agility tests, yearly physicals, and drug testing to begin in 2002. The committee is working with tribes to improve their drug & alcohol policy, requesting the use of more Type 2 crews vice Type 1 crews on large fires, requesting SWCC send all IARR reports to respective home units, and specifying better physical fitness standards versus crew typing. The Committee proposed to the Board that SWFF Management Guidelines be based on some of the items listed in the SCA Operating Plan. **Board agreed that the SCA plan is from the ground up, but cannot change the SWFF Guidelines based on the SCA plan. The Board cannot institute policy for all tribes in the area. Committee will need to provide the Board with some specific items that need re-writing for the next meeting. Willie Begay will look into the 638 contracts in order for the Board to consider building SWFF program around contracting. Willie will also draft a letter on behalf of the Board to congratulate SCA on turning their program around and being a model for others.**

A discussion was held on rewarding good crews. At issue is the rotation process for Type 2 crews. Can we have fair share dispatching versus automatic rotating crews out-of-area? This issue to be further discussed by the Type 2 Committee with ideas to be brought to the Board at a future meeting.

#### **CWZ REPORT**

Full team this year, but with little to no backup.

#### **WMZ REPORT**

Hiring has been completed with 95% of positions filled. Severity is in place. Zone is working on a one-week academy with overlapping courses, including non-traditional courses (i.e. driver safety). Staffing is up, but training and experience is minimal. WMZ has been approached to consider a 911-type system for wildland and structural fire. Zone is reviewing.

#### **SEZ REPORT**

Working on updating Zone Charter. Severity resources are in place throughout the Zone. Several fires in the zone, including one Type 2 incident, the OVERSIGHT FIRE, plus the REILLY PEAK and LITTLE BLACK HILLS FIRES. Restrictions are being instituted on the Coronado NF soon. Some training is ongoing. Team is in pretty good shape... FBAN is the area of concern.

#### **U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE REPORT**

Serious burning in southern New Mexico with 25K acre burn in San Andreas NWR, 22K on Sevilleta NWR, and 8K on Bosque del Apache NWR. Good support from the Regional Directors Office with respect to fire activities in the Southwestern Region. Regional Office is proposing a Mentoring Program for new and inexperienced fire personnel.

## **BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT – ARIZONA**

Environmental Assessment underway to burn Salt Cedar along the Lower Colorado River. Some issues have arisen pertaining to dispatching and lack of continuity. Severity funding will be providing a SEAT at SAD. Request was made to the Board to look into and review the policy of severity funding and prescribed burning. An issue is that the fire community can be very professional in its prescribed burning program even though a number of severity resources have been ordered in. In other words, severity resources compliment the local resource base, which allows for prescribed burning. **Board agrees and will take up at fall meeting.** The AZ State Office has been approached to look into designing a state of the art Interagency Dispatch Center for central Arizona to include fire and law enforcement.

## **BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT – NEW MEXICO**

Currently there are FMO vacancies at LCD and SCD. For the 2002 season, detailers will be utilized at these units. Severity is in place. Fully staffed at NM State Office.

## **BEAR AWARE PROGRAM (John Philbin)**

John Philbin gave a presentation to the board pertaining to being 'bear aware' when on an assignment in the backcountry. The program, based on problems associated with bears in the area, institutes a "zero tolerance" policy in which no food, paper, wrapper, or other items be left behind on the fireline or in fire camp. Beginning this fire season, the CWZ Team will implement the program on each assignment they will be going on.

## **BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS – TRI-AREA**

Without having Internet access, the BIA is unable to enter data into WIMS. BIA will provide person to SWCC or come up with an alternative plan for entering data. Nothing new about the Internet issue. Zuni Hotshots will be available in the coming weeks, but Navajo Scouts will still be a while. BIA is offering a Chainsaw Certification course... a train-the-training for Class C fallers. They will be using the USFS format. Working on developing a career path for entry-level firefighter to DIVS. Will probably be a 7-year process. BIA is seeking procedural notification information for FEMA declarations, especially information on the duties of the Principle Advisor. Willie requested from the Board if they were aware of a change in crew sponsorship, that is, a transfer from FS to BIA. No immediate information was known, so Willie will follow-up. A number of glitches are occurring with the Type 2 Medical Standards currently being implemented. MEA and ZUA are in fire restrictions.

## **NATIONAL PARK SERVICE – INTERMOUNTAIN REGION**

Chief, Fire and Aviation certificate completed, but no selection made. On the National Aviation Officer position, a selection has been made, but no announcement. Bob Lineback has replaced Jan Passik as the NFP Coordinator based out of Santa Fe. Many of the issues other agencies are having with Medical Standards are also affecting the NPS. Waivers and recommendations do not match up for LE and Fire. Intermountain Office will be involved in the LNZ review.

## **USDA FOREST SERVICE**

Emily Irwin has been hired as the FUTA Coordinator. The FS would like the Board to review the prescribed fire information inserted in the Preparedness Level section of the mobilization guide. FS is looking into position descriptions and grades across the region to standardize. 50% of personnel in USFS – Southwest Region are red-carded so far

this year. FS has completed its strategies session for the coming fire season. FS will provide an Operations Officer for MAC Group at PL-4. Would like the Board to consider developing a MAC Group Handbook for the SWFMB.

### **ARIZONA STATE LAND DEPARTMENT**

Joint Powers Agreement in progress. DOI has to make determination on All-Risk that is not declared by the President. Arizona Governor is very interested in fire this year. Legislature is considering an increase in funding for this fiscal year. A hiring freeze is in place for the state, but exemptions are available for fire, although no funding is available to hire anyone. No out-of-state resources available. Contracts have been signed for two SEAT's.

### **INTELLIGENCE/PREDICTIVE SERVICES (Chuck Maxwell)**

Following the organization and structure of NICC Intelligence and Predictive Services, Chuck distributed a proposal to create an Intelligence and Predictive Services Section at SWCC. A number of products are produced that include the service of the Intelligence Section and the Fire Weather program. This proposal is to establish a formal arrangement and direction of the program. **After a lengthy discussion, the Board decided SWCC does not need a separate section called Intelligence/Predictive Services and that the current setup with a Fire Weather Program and an Intelligence Section works fine. The Board decided Chuck would be responsible for all products that fall within the Outlook/Forecast format.**

### **NEW MEXICO TYPE 2 TEAM**

A discussion was held on the management and mobilization of the NM Type 2 Team. The discussion revolved primarily around mobilization. **Bob Lee will discuss with John Romero (SNZ) if the SNZ could handle mobilization. A suggestion was made to invite James Villard (LNZ – Type 2 Team Board Manager) to the next Board meeting.**

### **TYPE 2 CREW ROTATION (Vernon Ely)**

Vernon distributed a proposed rotation list for Type 2 crews by Zone. **After a short discussion, the Board accepted the rotation list. The list will posted to the SIT300.**

### **COORDINATION OF INTERAGENCY SEVERITY**

At issue is the process currently being used to coordinate severity requests, such as air tankers, prevention teams, and national resources. **Board agreed to continue notifying each other, as well as to look into how other areas coordinate severity. A suggestion was made to build a severity map and post on the web.**

### **GEOMAC (John Philbin)**

A contract has been signed with USGS to provide geospatial data in map format to support resource allocation. The net result will be fire perimeter maps via the Internet. Jay Ellington will establish link on SWA website.

### **SWCC CENTER DIRECTOR POSITION**

A lengthy discussion was held on the vacancy of the SWCC Center Director position. It seems a standard PD is not available that will allow for the filling of the Center Director

position in a timely manner at the GS-12/13 level. **The Board decided to fly the current position as a one-year detail until the proper PD can be found.**

### **ISSUES TO TAKE TO NATIONAL GACC MEETING**

Kirk Rowdabaugh requested the Board to provide him with topics to take to the National GACC Meeting. The following were suggested:

- Use 310-1 as the standard for ALL agencies. Seems the FS is using FS standards, which don't always ascribed to the 310-1 standards. Would like to see a mandatory system vice a performance system.
- Medical standards. Will need more people in Dallas... forms...confusing direction. Needs better clarification.
- Digital Radios and Narrowbands. Need national strategy to handle problem.
- Will military be available at PL-5? Can waivers be requested for 1039 hires.
- IMT certification. No limitation on trainees. Type 2 short-team configuration will not meet reality.
- Type 2 crew standards. Qualified crew reps... use of AD's.
- NWCG distributing decisions prior to GACC's even knowing there is an issue.
- National standards for WFU Teams. Use of teams for suppression actions.

### **SWCC REVIEW** (Lee Englesby)

A follow-up discussion was held with Lee Englesby to clarify some of the recommendations made in the January 2002 SWCC Review. The results are attached to the Action Plan develop from the Review.

The next meeting of the Board will be June 13-14 in Albuquerque, NM.

The meeting was held at the Best Western Hotel in Payson, AZ. It was adjourned at 1700.

/s/  
Kirk Rowdabaugh  
SWFMB, Chairperson