

Southwest Coordinating Group Meeting

April 24-25, 2007

Approved by SWCG 5/23/07

April 24, 2007 – Albuquerque, NM

In Attendance:

SWCG Members – Leon Ben, Donald Griego, Kenan Jaycox, Dave Lentz, Mark Kaib, Bob Lineback, Hector Madrid, Pam McAlpin, Richard Nieto, Cal Pino, Kirk Rowdabaugh

Recording- Bianca Juganaru

Guests – Donna Hummel, Claudia Standish, Dan Ware

PREVIOUS MEETING NOTES & UPCOMING MEETINGS

Selection of Don Griego as the new Vice-Chair. Leon Ben Jr. will be exiting SWCG since he is in a new BIA position. February meeting notes revised and approved. Action Items reviewed; uncompleted ones are carried over to the end of these notes.

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| Future Meetings: | May 23-24 | ABQ MAC room, USFS RO |
| | July 25-26 (tentative) | ABQ |
| | Oct. 10-11 | ? Springerville, with SW team season AAR? |
| | March 24, 2008 | with T1 team meeting, Santa Fe |

SWCC OPERATIONS GUIDE

The 2006 Southwest Coordination Center Operations Guide has been updated and a summary was presented by Kenan Jaycox. This included the new “Neighborhood Agreements” zones are using to help their neighbors. Discussion included SWCC Center Manager Duties in the SWCG Handbook, classifications of Type 1 Crews and their rotation, and the update of supply ordering for teams in ROSS.

TYPE 1 CREWS

Type 1 Crews that do not meet the minimum standards for staffing or qualifications are termed “Trainee” crews, but this status is different from crews that have yet to be certified as a Hotshot crew for the first time. Discussion covered the current checklist that is submitted by the SW IHC’s at the beginning of the fire season, and what may change once the Type 1 Crew Operations Steering Committee commences certification activity. Currently all IHC’s in the Southwest submit the checklist from the National IHC Handbook to SWCC and agency reps at the beginning of their season. Granite Mtn. trainee crew is working toward first time certification, and is outside the regular T1 crew rotation.

ADJACENT GACC NEIGHBORHOOD AGREEMENTS

There are some incoming agreements between bordering Geographic Areas and the Southwest to allow for smoother and more direct interchange of resources at the borders in initial attack. These agreements are not fiscal in nature and address dispatch and sharing procedures. At SWCG’s direction, Bob signed the agreement with the RM Area; he will sign the agreement with South Ops in CA upon some minor revision. These agreements involve Taos, Navajo, Arizona Interagency Dispatch Center, and Yuma. While these agreements are supplementary they do not override any existing fire or agency policy and will be bound by interagency regulations in reference to resource response protocol, (driving regulations, inmate crews, etc.) Agreements are going to be made available as PDF’s on the website after returned with signatures.

AZ NEW STATEWIDE MASTER AGREEMENT DRAFT

Draft for the New Master Agreement (NMA) was discussed. It is to be based on the new national template. Kirk plans to create a concept of “shared resources” by allowing for local fire departments to enter into agreements with both the federal and state governments. The Arizona NMA will call for consistency in the contracts so as to standardize deployment and payments. It is anticipated that the drafting of this agreement will take some time.

A Flagstaff area agreement was presented as an addendum to the current JPA, to be implemented in the interim, which allows Arizona State fire departments to be dispatched within their local area by the local federal interagency dispatch shop. The USFS is awaiting consensus from FMO's on the ground. Payments between Federal Agencies and the State of Arizona, and in turn the local fire departments, were also discussed.

Discussion also revisited the question regarding the lands in Arizona that are not covered by federal, local fire department, or state jurisdictions. Apparently the Reciprocal Fire Protection Act addresses this issue since it allows any agency whether, federal or local, to respond to any fire on such land if it is deemed a threat to their resources. The responding agency is fiscally responsible in such situations.

SW MAC

Logistics of MAC calls reviewed and changes made to the format of the meeting/calls, which Bob will follow through on. Then the group did a simulation of MAC call. It was decided to eliminate the Zone reporting format and gather that intel earlier (SWCC), which will be added to the SWCC guide. Often the zones which are busiest do not make the calls. Often the zone information is duplicated by the IC's. Caches will only be on the call if necessary, otherwise they will make their reports to their local dispatch center or SWCC. Furthermore, SWCC will only report on incidents that are not on the call and will begin to develop a means of passing late breaking news and general information to the SWCC Center Manager for the call. Zone Chairs are welcome to call in for informational purposes. Resource Situation reporting was customized for the 2007 season. Refinement of the “Ready Reserve” concept, so that resources allocated as such may still be utilized on incidents, but with the understanding that SWCC/SWCG can reassign/reallocate said resource in a hurry if needed. Discussion also covered the MAC Incident Matrix. The SW Briefing Packet Content List will be edited and added as an appendix to the MAC Handbook.

SOUTHWEST PREVENTION COMMITTEE

Presentation by Donna Hummel, Dan Ware, Claudia Standish of the Southwest Prevention Committee. Awards were presented to Claudia Standish for her efforts in the 2006 season. Donna Hummel is the new Chair of the SW Prevention Committee and Dan Ware was elected Co-Chair. They are working to revise the Committee Charter to establish a rotation for the officers and create voting membership. The intention is to present a draft of the Committee Charter by June for SWCG approval. There has been some discussions about whether or not the Prevention and Information Committees could be merged; not now, but continue to look at.

Description of the SW Fire Prevention Workshop and overview of the Committee's Wildfire Awareness Week, which has been signed off on by the governor and includes a media campaign. The committee is also working on creating a working group to manage their webpage and wants to improve the Toolbox for forest closures and restrictions so as to bring a simpler more consistent process for this. The Public Lands Center has made an offer to USFS and BLM Public Affairs to take on the responsibility of managing public outreach on restrictions and closures including maintaining the website and toll-free number. Their

cost per year would be low, especially when compared for the price of an AD Type 1 Information Officer, and at the time no one else is consistently handling these duties.

REVISIT THE T1 IMT FREELANCING POLICY

Review of current policy which is published in the 2007 SW Mob Guide and discussion of Dugger Hughes and Jeff Whitney’s comments. The teams made a suggestion that the policy be amended to allow team members to take more wide ranging assignments. They propose unrestricted freelancing at PL2 and freelancing within area with the approval of command and general staff at the higher PLs. There have been multiple requests for the IMT’s to comment on the current policy this year (first memo in July of 2006, at the 2006 IMT AAR, and October 2006) but there were no responses until after the policy was published in the Mob Guide. The SWCG decided to stick with the published policy, but to look at more edits after going through this season. In addition, the new “Neighborhood resource policies will allow the T1 team members to be more wide ranging in their local assignments.

REVIEW IMT HANDBOOK (APPRENIIX V) EDITS

Floor was opened to comments regarding the draft. The policy regarding driving vs. flying for IHC was discussed, and found to be in the mob guide so it will not be included in the handbook. A few edits will be made, but SWCG approved this appendix to the SWCG handbook.

April 25, 2007 – Albuquerque, NM

In Attendance:

SWCG Members – Leon Ben, Donald Griego, Kenan Jaycox, Dave Lentz, Mark Kaib, Bob Lineback, Hector Madrid, Pam McAlpin, Richard Nieto, Cal Pino

Recording- Bianca Juganaru

Guests – Jerome Macdonald, Dan Oltroge, Paul Summerfelt, Jeff Whitney

FUTURE OF SWFCO

Jerome Macdonald presented the history and current status of Southwest Fire Council (SWFCO). Originally the Council was put together to bring together the agencies for things like Prescribed Fire, before the SW came together as an interagency geographic area. The Council would hold a yearly conference on a topic and also involved vendors and universities. The budget came from the registration for the conference. The files and remaining funds are being held by the USFS. The Council has been inactive for 3 years, and not real active for a couple before that. Discussions on whether or not to revive or disband the council. Can this council fulfill a need that is not being met elsewhere? It brings non-Federal players more strongly into the mix. Overall, there seems to be a lack of time and energy for this effort at this time. Perhaps the non-Federal members could take the lead or since there seems to be a history of focusing on fuels perhaps there could be a potential for prevention taking it on. SWFCO was started in the 1960’s before there were institutions like FUTA and NAFRI, so perhaps it is time to reinvent this group and their role. This group does not have to be under SWCG and perhaps there is some way to connect it with the Arizona Wildfire Academy, NAU, or FireWise. Jerome will discuss leadership of the Council to non-federal partners and will attempt to find out if anyone would be willing/able to resurrect it.

FUTA ANNUAL REPORT AND S-520

The FUTA Annual Report was presented to SWCG. There is an additional late S-520 nominee, and the number one priority for the SW has moved to the Northwest. He will be moved to the bottom of the list, and everyone else will be bumped up one place. The late nominee will be added to second from the bottom of the list, if NAFRI is still able to accommodate a change in the SW list.

TYPE 1 IMT'S

Dan Oltrogge presented a summary of the AC/IC meeting in San Antonio. The meeting had a heavy USFS slant pertaining to cost containment and budget cuts, and he suggested that it be more interagency next year. There was discussion of new fire mentoring policy pertaining to USFS Line Officers. The NMAC Representative was there to cover prioritizing and the possibility of there being less resources available this year. The question of coordination vs. command and how that is communicated came up. NIMS and NIMO was also a topic. Karen Wood discussed the plan to conduct S-520 in 2008 and the intention of having qualified T1 IC's involved in the course. The Human Resource Representative presented statistics for the year and NICC/NMAC said it may revise the 209 for the 2007 season. The NIMO teams will not be part of the Type 1 Team rotation and will have their own rotation. There has been talk of them handling all-risk incidents or just the extremely long running incidents. Discussion also covered FEMA response and their attempt to multi-task teams, while the fire community would prefer more specific tasking. There is a work group discussing moving away from typing teams; Joe Reinartz is on that work group.

Next year's SW team meeting is scheduled for the week of March 24th in Santa Fe. Type 2 teams will be invited. There is also a national Fall AC/IC after season critique if the season is busy enough.

Dan Oltrogge, Jeff Whitney, and Paul Summerfelt shared their appreciation for SWCG involvement presented their thoughts on the SWCG Handbook App. V. Adjustments to wording were discussed and were accepted and will be made. There is also discussion over the NMAC versus GACC control of Type 1 IMT's. Discussed the five year versus three year tenure for T1 IC's, (SWCG later discussed further, and intends to stay with the 3 year tenure). The clarification was made that a T1 IC tenure ends when the new roster is approved, usually in late January. The issue of the ever decreasing pool of IMT applicants was discussed. This is a problem that is pervasive throughout the country; getting agencies to commit their people to team position development is becoming more and more difficult. More discussions on how we facilitate this progression. Perhaps there needs to be a discussion with Agency Administrators about making a commitment on making their younger staffs available for these experiences and trainings. Also, have the SWCG raise their profile during the recruitment process and utilize their connections with Agency Administrators to advertise harder for these nominations. May be possible to pass out the nomination with a cover letter from the SWCG, as part of the training packet at the fall classes.

Dates were discussed and added to the handbook for the coming year's deadlines and meetings regarding IMT selection, etc. A suggestion was made to have the GACC chair attend the 08 IC/AC meeting the week of March 3.

Other discussions cover cost containment and SWCG involvement in IMT selection.

There was discussion about reserving Air Attack Platforms for T1 teams within the GACC. There have been a difficulties obtaining these platforms in busy seasons, and in addition to that certain platforms are better suited to the job than others. Since no one can pay for the standby on these aircraft, and since we can't favor certain vendors, the present system will continue. However the SWCC Center Manager will continue to manage aircraft demands so that the team considerations are taken into account. At this time

SWCG cannot provide absolute assurance or guarantee for exclusivity on aircraft. Team ATGS will have to maintain good communications with SWCC on the matter, and monitor the issue closely at higher PLs.

Even though the T1 IC tenure is changing to 3 years, Whitney will finish out his 5 years (rules he was selected under) so that the two SW T1 IC's do not rotate in the same year. This is Oltrogge's last year so SWCG will advertise for his team this fall, (October). SWCG appreciates the hard work and commitment of both IC's.

THREE TIER DISPATCH

Pam presented a summary from task group chair Kelly Castillo. The committee is scheduled to meet at the middle of May and report to SWCG as requested at last meeting. They will also be checking on the progress and feasibility of the various plans that have been submitted. Phoenix Interagency Dispatch Center has run into financial difficulty in building a new building. Money that was expected has failed to come through. Alamogordo has found some technological solutions and is on its way to moving Roswell into their shop. A decision has been made for Farmington's dispatch to move into a third tier at Taos. The Committee has not received a plan from Apache-Sitgreaves, (Springerville/Ft. Apache).

ARCHIVING MAC DECISIONS AND CHARTS

MAC Documentation (conference call notes, decision matrix, etc.) from 2002 on exist and they have been digitally separated out by folder, labeled by date, and burned onto CD's, in addition to being on the server. On that same disk is a folder that has all of the SWCG Meeting Notes. There is space on the server to continue to post the notes to the website as desired. It was decided to keep the last 2 years posted on the website, and to archive before that.

PREDICTIVE SERVICES 2007 OUTLOOK

Kenan presented for Chuck and Rich, since they were in Colorado. Updated outlook was done March 19th based on the projection of AZ not getting the precipitation necessary. Predictive Services believes they will have to modify the projection again because over the next few weeks we may continue to get some systems moving into the area carrying moisture to the SW. The southern and western part of Arizona will probably still be in severe circumstances, but northern Arizona could see some relief. Furthermore, eastern NM and west TX could have a weak monsoonal flow, and get summer drying leading to a late fire season for them. These systems are making it difficult to make good predictions.

Frost killed brush may be a problem in some areas. There have been three proposed safety alerts so far this season, and thus far they have been localized because they have been species specific. Kenan Jaycox is attempting to coordinate with Chuck Maxwell to see that any alerts are not duplicative.

NM NEW STATEWIDE MASTER AGREEMENT PROCESS UPDATE

Some of the NM State and BLM agency officials have begun working on the new draft and can probably be expected to present it to other agency partners in a few months.

SWCG MOU MEMBER COMMENTS AND UPDATE PROCESS

Current SWCG MOU gone over and comments made. Bob saved the comments and will incorporate. Agreement expires in March. Changes suggested to terminology for accuracy and compliance with new policy.

T2 IMT DISCUSSION

Members brought up the question as to why some GACC's manage their T1 and T2 teams, but the SW only manages their T1 teams (except when the T2's go out of GACC or the SW is at PL-4 or 5). Should the SWCG manage T2 IMTs? If they were all managed by SWCG, then they would all be dispatched by SWCC. SWCC could do this provided that they conduct dispatch of T2 IMTs in the same manner as the T1 IMTs, (Resource Unit Leaders manage the team rosters in ROSS). An advantage of managing the teams together may facilitate a better transition between members moving up to T1 IMTs. SWCG management may make for more efficient and consistent IMT oversight. Hector Madrid was tasked with developing a "white paper" discussing the pros and cons of this issue. It will need to be discussed with the teams, team boards and agency administrators. No decision was made to go in this direction until a complete analysis is done.

One proposal was to have the teams only fill the C & G positions, then to pool all other positions for all SW teams (such as Unit Leaders). It is decided that pooling resources like this would not work out at this time. It will create difficulties filling team orders in a timely manner.

The roster for the "late season" FUMT with Joe Reinarz was approved; Bob will let Joe know.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

FUTA was unable to fill out their last class session. One third of the applicants withdrew from the training for a variety of reasons including job changes, lack of travel money, etc. FUTA is thinking of changing the second session from being a normal Burn Boss Academy to an "Advanced Academy" which would cater to a target group of RXB2s and FUMAs and perhaps team section chiefs. It would include hard to get courses such as L-480. They will be presenting this idea in more detail in the near future.

The national BLM office does not consider FUTA to be a national training center and given the decline in BLM student attendance, the BLM has decided to pull out on a national level. BLM NM cannot make up for this huge shortfall in FY08, but they will continue to contribute at a level on par with the other DOI agencies, which is more in line with the number of BLM students. They will also be withdrawing their vehicles and employee. If FUTA were to become a nationally recognized training institute, (the National Fuels Committee is studying this proposal), then the National BLM office might reconsider. BLM AZ is unable to contribute at this time.

The Operations Group is planning a meeting with the IHC steering committee (Chris Wilcox, Ralph Thomas, and Joe Julian) and hopefully an active IHC superintendent and Duane Tewa to discuss the creation of a SW IHC Certification Committee to create quality and continuity on crew status.

The T2 Subcommittee had a meeting in March. The Handbook was reviewed and approved last fall and is available on the website. Our T2 Crews represented the SW Area very well at the Katrina Incident.

Committee Chairs should work directly with Jay Ellington in SWCC to ensure that their information on the website is correct. The SWCG Liaison for each committee should periodically check the website for committee currency information.

NMICG is working with Zones on updating their Smoke Plans.

ROUND ROBIN

USFS is looking at a date of the second week of May to consider the need for a air tanker/severity and needs to coordinate on this with the other agencies.

The BIA Southwestern has a number of FMO vacancies (60% vacant) and is lacking support staff.

NPS is sponsoring a WFSA class on May 1st and 2nd angled at FMO's. There are some last minute openings.

Action Items – April 24-25, 2007

Ongoing Action Items followed by new ones

| Topic | Action needed | Responsibility | Date |
|---|--|--|-------------|
| SWCC Briefing Packet for Out of Region IMT's | Acquire H2S Gases and BLM maps, and provide them to Kenan for SWCC briefing packets. Kenan to assemble and get 2 to AZ for staging. Bob to edit the list and add to MAC guide. | Hector M. Helen G. Kenan Bob L. | May 2007 |
| Revitalize Ops Group | Continue to develop Ops Committee with emphasis on Type 1 Crew Sub Committee. Put together an Operations Committee meeting for the Fall of '07. | Dave L, Donald G., Rich N., Mark Kaib | Autumn 2007 |
| Interagency Dispatch Support | Work on NFAEB letter dealing with interagency IT issues, per Lincoln Zone discussion. | Helen G. and Kirk R. | May 07 |
| SWCG Committee Charters | All committee liaisons need to check SWCC committee website to see if their assigned charters, memberships are up to date. If their web info is not correct, contact Jay Ellington to update. | All SWCG Members | Ongoing |
| SW Engine Academy | Develop potential for Interagency Agreement for future SW Engine Academies in the hopes of enabling it to become interagency. | Rich N., Helen G. | Fall 07 |
| Fire Mgmt for Agency Administrators | Contact GATR Jerome and discuss the weakness of the course. Consider putting on a one day SW version in Spring of 2008? Refresher as does not meet national policy? | Helen G. | April 07 |
| Interagency Master Agreement for New Mexico to replace expiring JPA | Committee formed to begin drafting new Interagency Master Agreement for New Mexico that will replace expiring JPA. Other members can help as available or review draft when put t/g. Status report at May meeting. | Hector M., Don G., Ginger B., Dave L | July 2007 |

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| Power Company Access to rights of way on fires | Follow up meeting between USFS and PNM. | Rich N. | May 07 |
| AZ Joint Powers Agreement | Kirk to prepare a new AZ draft using the new NWCG approved master agreement. | Kirk R. | August 2007 |
| Some Agenda Items for May SWCG Meeting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Predictive Services Handbook with Chuck Maxwell. • FY08 T1 IMT Financial Support • Report from Hector's T2 IMT Task Group • Kelly C. Three Tier Recommendations • NM/AZ New Master Agreement Updates • Addendum for fall T1 IC application <p><i>New Action Items from this meeting listed below</i></p> | Bob L., Bianca, Kenan | May 2007 |
| Committee Chairs | Switch out Susanne Romero for Donna Hummel on the Committee website. Type 2 Crew Committee Charter link. | Kenan, Jay E. | May 2007 |
| SW Handbook | Provide Jay E. with approved edits to SWCG Handbook., changes to MAC appendix and Team handbook | Bob L., Jay E. | May 2007 |
| IMT Nominations | Create cover letter to go with nomination and get them into training packets for fall classes. | Dugger H. Paul S., Kenan J. | Fall 2007 |
| Three Tier Dispatch | Read Kelly's summary of Three Tier Plans that Pam handed out and bring questions for Kelly. Schedule Kelly for the May meeting. Get plan from Apache Sitgreaves. | Pam M., Kelly C., Rich N., SWCG members | May 2007 |
| Safety Alerts | Check with Helen G. and Chuck M. on safety alerts pertaining to dead brush and fine fuels. | Kenan J. | May 2007 |
| Changes to SW MOU | Bob to make changes and present draft at July meeting. | Bob L. | July 2007 |
| T2 IMTs | Form a Task Group to pursue the possibility of SWCG management of T2 IMTs and create a white paper detailing. | Hector M., Dave L., Mark K., Don G., Rich N. | May 2007 |
| Information Committee | Find out who is the new Chair. | John L. | May 2007 |