

Southwest Coordinating Group Meeting May 23-24, 2007

May 23, 2007 – Albuquerque, NM

In Attendance:

SWCG Members – Marcia Andre, Donald Griego, Roy Hall, Kenan Jaycox, Mark Kaib, Bob Lineback, Hector Madrid, Pam McAlpin, Rich Nieto, Cal Pino, Pat Willetto (standing in for Jason Greenlee)

Recording- Bianca Juganaru

Guests – Chuck Maxwell

PREVIOUS MEETING NOTES & UPCOMING MEETINGS

April meeting notes revised and approved. Action Items reviewed; uncompleted ones are carried over to the end of these notes. Dave Lentz is exiting the group because he has taken a new position in the Northwest. His position as liaison to the Operations Group from SWCG will be taken by Hector Madrid. Hector will discuss with other members the possibility of taking over as liaison to the FPA committee. Cal Pino is standing in for John Lee this meeting. Mark Kaib presented a draft letter explaining the formation of the Type 1 Crew Committee, under the Ops Group, and he was gathering edits.

Future Meetings:	July 25-26 (tentative)	ABQ
	September 13	Conference Call
	Oct. 9-11	Springerville, starts at 1300 on 10/9. 10/10 will be the SW IMT Incident Commanders end of season critique, 10/11 will complete the SWCG mtg.
	Nov. 7-8	Phoenix?
	Jan. 23-24, 2008	?
	March 25-27, 2008	Parallel meeting with the T1 team meeting, Santa Fe

NMAC LETTER

Reviewed latest NMAC letter. Due to ongoing action in Georgia and Florida, NMAC will be limiting fire resources for non-fire response.

PREVENTION / RESTRICTIONS COMMITTEE UPDATE

At the last SWCG meeting the Prevention Committee brought up the proposal for PLIC to manage and coordinate restrictions and closures in the SW. This proposal has not been thoroughly examined, so a SWCG decision was not made. Since then a proposal has been developed to a proposed transition of responsibility this June. Public affairs personnel of various agencies, external to fire, were also involved in negotiations. SWCG has been tasked in the past with coordinating Restrictions and Closures. At this time, an interim solution has been worked out on the SWCC website that will be used for this fire season. To reduce USFS workload there will be additional work by the prevention committee to develop a more consistent format for information submission. The committee will help look for detailers to help the USFS if the season becomes busy. The committee will analyze the options and revisit SWCG next fall, suggesting a more permanent solution. Donna Hummel was contacted and this decision discussed by speakerphone. The Public Affairs branches feel that the website needs to be very public user friendly in informing the public of restrictions and closures. The Prevention Committee needs to develop a closer relationship with the Information Committee.

2007 IMT ASSIGNMENTS & REPORT FROM T2 IMT TASK FORCE

There have been two SW T1 and two T2 IMT deployments thus far in 2007. Some issues related to those deployments were discussed, and actions will be followed up by assigned SWCG members.

Hector Madrid presented a draft white paper and took feedback on the T2 IMT task force study of whether or not SW T2 IMTs should be managed by SWCG. The committee will look for input on issues and impacts from other individuals (ICs, Center Managers hosting a team, Agency Administrators, etc.). Any changes in management will have to be implemented in early fall. The Task Force is to continue editing the draft and developing this proposal. Input is anticipated to help flesh out the pros and cons.

A discussion on the extension process for Oltrogge's team found that the SWCG was left out of the process. Bob called NFAEB and they realized that they did not follow the correct process and said they would do better in the future.

SW REGION FIRE WEATHER DIGITAL SERVICES BRIEFING

Chuck Maxwell and members of the National Weather Service presented new information and possibilities for the future regarding Predictive Services. We are in the Digital Age and things like textual products (Red Flag, Fire Weather Reports) are coming out of digital data bases and the products are becoming more individualized and specific. While familiar products will continue to be provided, new graphical and digitally derived products are being developed.

The presentation also covered the latest format for Spot Forecast and Fire Weather Graphs. The sheer amount of data that can now be presented is massive. Hourly Fire Weather Graphs are not meant to replace Spot Forecasts but, to supplement them. These presentations have also been customized pertinent to the geographical area. The goal is to make the forecast presentations more impact based so they meet the needs of the audience. There are graphics being created to focus on density altitude for aircraft purposes. SWCC requested a Tanker Base report that is now created upon demand. SW and Southern Areas are leading in the development of Fire Weather/Predictive Services products. The theme is to make it streamlined so that people in the field can access, understand, and utilize information more effectively. Predictive Services is open to input on needs for decision-based products.

NM MASTER AGREEMENT

Meeting is planned June 5th in Santa Fe to go over the 1st Draft. State legal staff has already had some input, and there may be issues related to the Stafford Act, but all parties have an opportunity to review the draft for the June meeting.

AZ NEW MASTER AGREEMENT

There is no news regarding the AZ New Master Agreement.

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION OF T1 RESOURCE MOVEMENT

There is more active pre-positioning in the SW this year, with the tighter severity funding and the availability of NM resources to help in AZ. NM is in a much more moderate fire danger situation. The USFS R3 has been told that there is little or no severity funding. There was also a reiteration that the T1 Air Tankers have a first priority of Initial Attack, and are available for cost effective large fire use after the IA needs have been met.

RESOUCCE DRAWDOWN GUIDE

Examination of Rocky Mountain's Resource Drawdown Levels and the question of whether or not something like this would be useful in the SW. There was discussion that a matrix may be misleading or inadequate to address issues of isolated severity while the rest of the area is in low fire danger. It is believed that this could be modified to reflect realistic need. NMAC is looking at taking control of many more resources than they have in the past. There may be an issue with data consistency given the problems with accurate reporting from stations. T1 IHC are not utilized much on grass fires but areas with intense grass fire activity could drive up the Preparedness Levels. The decision was for all members to make notes this season, and we will reconsider this business in the fall for the 2008 mob guide. Kenan will continue to stay in contact with Bob on changes in PL levels and appropriate levels of SW resources. Bob will pass issues of significance on to SWCG members.

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Recording- Bianca Juganaru

Guests – Denise Atensio, Karen Carter, Jay Ellington, Chuck Maxwell, Hans Stewart

FY08 T1 IMT FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The T1 IMTs seem not to have utilized their SWCG agency contributions yet. Time is running out for the state agencies that have a different fiscal year. As of now, the process next year will be similar. Funds not claimed soon will be allocated elsewhere as fiscal year end approaches.

ADDENDUM FOR T1 IC FALL APPLICATIONS

Around September 1st the advertisement will go out for a new Type 1 IC to follow behind outgoing IC Oltrogge. The group is developing additional questions that will go out with the application process.

MAC PRIORITY MATRIX

In the Priority Matrix that is utilized by the MAC group, "Probability of Not Meeting Agency Objectives" is a problematic category that is open to different interpretations. Discussion followed on point allocation and interpretation and the category was amended. It is now "Probability of Meeting Agency Objectives (and the objectives are realistic)." Bob will incorporate the changes into the new MAC handbook; Kenan will insure the website and MAC room board reflect the same. The entire Priority Matrix will continue to be evaluated by SWCG members.

NEW PREDICTIVE SERVICES HANDBOOK

Chuck Maxwell, who leads the National Committee, presented on the draft national Predictive Services Handbook. NMAC had asked the GACC's to support and respond to Predictive Services on the matter of the handbook. The Handbook is required as part of NPSG getting re-charted under NFAEB last spring. They are defining standard program capability and requirements. It will be reviewed by NFAEB next month. Certain key points include making Center Managers as operational supervisors of PS positions, national program requirements, program decision process, training and development guidelines. NFAEB has recently wavered on support for the program, so it may weaken these new standards.

SOUTHWEST WEATHER TREND UPDATE

It turns out that the initial seasonal outlook (December) may end up being the most accurate one! There have been four issued, and they have evolved significantly each time. There are some anomalous climactic patterns occurring in this area of the United States. Short term, we are looking at more backdoor cold fronts and continued cooler than usual weather over the next two weeks, although AZ is heating up. Into June there may be some anomalous wind events. It is the onset of consistent hot weather that drives the monsoon so this could mean there will be a late monsoon, with the high sitting over NM rather than West TX, and driving moisture up into areas of AZ that have been the driest. This could also mean it will be drier in NM at that time contributing to a late summer/fall fire season in NM. The trend we have seen over the last few years is part of longer term changing climatic patterns and will make predictability harder.

THREE TIER RECOMMENDATIONS

Kelly has been unable to get the Three Tier Committee together before this meeting, so Pam M. presented a chart that shows the unit information to date. The only 4th-Tier that has not submitted the transition plan is Four Corners but they have a group working on it. Phoenix Dispatch may be unable to implement their plan due to the lack of funding for new facilities. The Washington Office wants more information before they are willing to move forward on a decision on this matter. The Committee membership has changed a bit and may need updated. Kelly will present the recommendations from the 3 Tier group at the July meeting.

IFPM UPDATE

Denise Atensio presented on her work with colleges in the area to provide upper division courses, including fire coursework, for IFPM compliance. NAU and Highlands have agreed to offer two week sessions of these courses. Highland's is offering same tuition rate for in and out of state attendees. NAU does have higher out of state tuition, but there may be more negotiating on that in the future. The USFS has an IFPM website and these courses, as well as courses in other states, are listed. There seems to be a lack of consistency among Federal Land Management agencies on IFPM implementation.

SOUTHWEST AREA WEBSITE UPDATE

Jay Ellington presented an update on changes to the Southwest Area Website. This included explanations of the difficulties with posting restrictions due to the format in which they were submitted. There was also info on the evolving format of the Morning Briefing, News and Notes, the Prescribed Fire Map, various predictive service products, and other sections of the website.

PUBLIC LANDS INFORMATION CENTER

Karen Carter and Hans Smith presented on PLIC's proposal to coordinate and manage information on closures and restrictions on public lands in the SW. PLIC can likely provide consistency and are familiar with the process. If this were to start this year it would be a bit of a beta test for the future and would be transparent to the public who would continue to click on the same link at the same place on the website. They would be focused on obtaining this information from all the units and maintaining a format that is easy for the public to understand. Most of SWCG felt that we should not change the way we do business during the fire season. Radical changes like this have the potential to divert SWCG or SWCC attention

from the fire season, which could be a safety issue. Refer back to the start of these notes on ongoing work with the prevention committee and future proposals.

NEW EERA PROCESS

USFS is facing the first solicitation for engines and water tenders in Region 3. There are NWCG solicitation standards for specs. and cost efficiency. In the future SWCG may have to be more actively involved in providing guidance on adherence to those standards. This should enable the contracting officers to be more consistent. Stay tuned.

ROUND ROBIN/OPEN SESSION

Discussion on the logo for the Southwest C.A.T. (Communication Advance Team). Currently the SW is the only area that hosts a CAT. The CAT is a roster of employees with Communications Technician and Unit Leader qualifications. It was developed to deal with the shortage of communications/radio personnel and startup of radio systems on large incidents. They are deployed on a SWCC order for the first 2-3 days of an emerging incident when a team is ordered and they assemble the Radio Start System and set up the Communications Unit. Since it is critical for firefighter safety, there is a desire to raise the profile of this program, which has been very successful, so that other geographic areas might be able to look to our model. NM BLM is going to work with Bianca on encouraging the CAT.

A number of T1 crews have gone to trainee status due to having issues related to the IHC standards, but are available in rotation as trainee crews. The Santa Fe HS will not be available this year at all, but will be rebuilt.

A tasking to the Aviation Committee was developed and Bob will deliver it to them. They will be asked to come up with a plan for the SW to encourage development of aviation shortage positions, (AOBD, ATGS, HEMG, ASGS). It would be also good to have a GACC guide for incoming pilots and aviation people from out of region; currently AZ has one but NM does not. They need to update membership and review their charter. They need to plan a fall review of the SW SEAT Guide; with an emphasis on increasing/encouraging flexibility and mobility of SEAT operations.

Action Items - *Ongoing followed by new ones*

Topic	Action needed	Responsibility	Date
SWCC Briefing Packet for Out of Region IMT's	Kenan to finish putting t/g the packets and pre-position 2 with AZ BLM for staging.	Kenan	June 15, 2007
Revitalize Ops Group	Continue to develop Ops Group with emphasis on Type 1 Crew Sub Committee. Put together an Operations Committee meeting for the Fall of '07. Draft letter to T1 crews.	Hector, Donald G., Rich N., Mark Kaib	Ongoing and Fall 2007
Interagency Dispatch Support	Work on NFAEB letter dealing with interagency IT issues, per November Lincoln Zone discussion.	Helen G., Kirk R.	July 25, 2007
SWCG Committee Charters	All committee liaisons need to check SWCC committee website to see if their assigned	All SWCG Members	Ongoing

	charters, memberships are up to date. If not, contact Jay Ellington.		
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 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. Meeting on June 5.	Hector M., Donald G., Ginger B., Mark K.	Ongoing (expires March 08)
AZ Joint Powers Agreement	Kirk to prepare a new AZ draft using the new NWCG approved master agreement.	Kirk R.	July 25, 2007
SW Handbook	Provide Jay E. with approved edits to SWCG Handbook., changes to MAC appendix and Team handbook	Bob L., Jay E.	June 2007
IMT Nominations	Create cover letter to go with nomination and get them into training packets for fall fire classes. Also provide thank you letter to Agency Administrators with request to continue to provide personnel.	Dugger H., Paul S., Kenan J., Hector M., Donald	Fall 2007
Three Tier Dispatch	Review packets and bring questions for Kelly.	All SWCG members	July 25, 2007
New SWCG MOU	Bob to make changes suggested at April Mtg. and present draft by July meeting.	Bob L.	July 2007
T2 IMTs	Task Group to pursue the possibility of SWCG management of T2 IMTs.	Hector M., Mark K., Don G., Rich N.	May 2007
Information Committee	Find out who is the new Chair; discuss possibly future combining with prevention committee.	John L., Cal P.	June 15, 2007
	<i>New Action Items from this meeting listed below</i>		
Some Agenda Items for July SWCG Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three Tier Recommendations • NM/AZ New Master Agreement Updates • Incident Release Priorities • New draft SWCG operating agreement • T2 Team White Paper update • T1 IC Questionnaire Update 	Kelly Castillo Donald/Kirk Kenan Bob L. Hector/et al. Marcia	July 2007
SW Drawdown Levels	Take notes on RMCG chart for future development of drawdown levels.	All SWCG Members	Fall 2007
MAC Priority Matrix	All members take notes if we utilize it this year so we can continue to refine	All SWCG Members	Fall 2007
T1 IC Application	Combine questions into draft of supplemental questions; circulate to SWCG after get all edits.	Marcia A.	July 25, 2007

T1 Crew Subcommittee	Redraft letter from SWCG and send out	Mark K., Bob L.	June 15, 2007
Aviation Committee	Written tasking to them w. SWCG direction	Bob L.	June 15, 2007
SW IC's	Notify them of October 10, Springerville mtg.	Bob L.	July 1, 2007
Prevention Committee	1) Develop 2008 options for coordinating restrictions/closures, 2) Contact Info Committee and discuss feasibility of merging the two committees	Donna H. Hector Mary Z. John Lee	Fall 2007
MAC Priority Matrix	Make sure MAC board and website matrix match the MAC Guide.	Ken J., Jay E.	May 30, 2007
2006 SW UTF List Findings	Share table of most UTF'd positions in 2006 with SWCG.	Kenan, Jay E.	May 30, 2007
NPS Unit Dispatch	Check on the possible mistake of Montezuma Castle under AIDC rather than Prescott.	Ken J.	May 30, 2007
T2 Team follow up issues	Bob to check with Butch Wilson Roy Hall to check with Tony Sciacca	Bob Roy	July 25, 2007