

Southwest Coordinating Group Meeting October 9-11, 2007

Approved by SWCG, 11-7-07

October 9, 2007 – Springerville, AZ

In Attendance: *SWCG Members* – Marcia Andre, Dave Behrens, Jason Greenlee, Donald Griego, Kenan Jaycox, Mark Kaib, Bob Lineback, Pam McAlpin, Hector Madrid, Cal Pino, Leon Ben.

Guest – Gene Blankenbaker

Recording- Bianca Juganaru

UPCOMING SWCG DATES:

Future Meetings:

Nov. 2, 10am NM time	Conference Call
Nov. 7-8	Phoenix
Jan. 23-24, 2008	Albuquerque, NM USFS RO
February 13, 2008	Albuquerque, NM USFS RO (Chair will miss this one)
March 25-27, 2008	Parallel meeting with T1 team meeting, Santa Fe
May 13-14, 2008	Albuquerque, NM USFS RO
Oct 14, 15, 16	Springerville (?) and IC AAR

PREVIOUS MEETING NOTES AND ACTION ITEMS

July meeting notes approved; Bianca will modify to show “approved” on the website.

Action Items reviewed; updated and carried over to the end of these notes. Some discussion of these Action Items were as follows:

- Hector, Donald, and Mark determined that the Ops Group Charter needs revised and they are circulating draft edits. The Ops Group will have a meeting this winter and/or conference call. They will have Ops Group will have reps attend the IHC AAR in a few weeks and, get feedback on the IHC Committee.

- Prevention Committee Charter is being revised and will hopefully be Prevention/Information.

- New meeting date of October 31, 2007 for the new NM Master Agreement Meeting

- Thank you letter for IMT involvement went out. Dugger will need to be consulted regarding IMT participation solicitation letter for training packets.

- Discussion of whether or not the Coordinating Group needs to formalize SW drawdown levels.

Decision was made to eliminate this Action Item and if need arises, they can be developed later. NMAC is routinely ignoring drawdown levels set by GACC’s.

- Dave B. has agreed to schedule an AZ Master Agreement meeting.

- Mark K. spoke to AIDC and was told by Ron Melcher that there are no current IT problems.

- Group discussed the issues involved distinguishing between Type 1 and IHC crews. When a crew temporarily drops down to “trainee” status, there is no designation for that in ROSS; National dispatch guidance has been to dispatch such crews as Type 2 IA’s, but this is not an accurate description of the resource. The issue needs to be presented at the National Dispatch Coordinators meeting in December, but SWCG chair will also present at the NMAC AAR in January. Recommendation is to create new status in ROSS for T1 trainee crews rather than designating them as T2 IA Crews. Will be discussed again at our Nov. meeting, after a report from the SW IHC AAR. Mark K. has offered to draft a memo if necessary.

10-9-07

REVIEW OF 2007 IMT EVALUATIONS

Kenan Jaycox presented on SW IMT activity during the 2007 season. Each T1 IMT had two assignments; none in the SW. Minimal assignments within the SW for Type 2 IMTs, which are still managed by T2 team boards, but busy out of GACC. There was a general review of out of GACC IMT assignment evaluations and feedback.

The question arose on if there should be any changes to the IMT assignment evaluation process to get more constructive feedback; Jason Greenly offered to look into this to see if he or others could come up with some recommendations for the 2008 season.

Feedback from NMAC was non-existent this year due to lack of involvement in the SW by the SW NMAC rep.

DISCUSSION/DECISION IN SW INTERAGENCY T2 IMT MANAGEMENT

The proposal to bring SW interagency T2 IMT's under SWCG management has been widely discussed since last spring, and comments and feedback was discussed. The case for change was summarized by the following:

- Inconsistence or lack of Zone or local board Oversight/Management.
- Increasing number of out of GACC assignments which SWCG is responsible for.
- Inconsistency in T2 IMT adherence to National Mob Guide Standards.
- Issues related to "out of GACC" assignment oversight.
- Lack of responsiveness by T2 team boards to issues.
- Nationally, T2 teams being considered an important and needed national resources. NMAC is demanding them more often.
- Inconsistency in: IC selection/tenure, charters, nomination process, and availability issues.
- Need to increase the pool of candidates for all teams.
- New applicants hesitant to apply due to "good old boy" system.
- Direction of Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior to GACC's to manage the IMT's.
- More prompt and responsive communications to teams from SWCG & NMAC.
- Spreading individual agency staff between teams so that one team callout does not drain agency.
- Zone or board restrictions on geographic availability and team use out of local area.
- IMT members getting burned out by being on call all season long and could benefit by having more of a rotation that allows some time off.

After soliciting responses from team boards, IC's, Agency Administrators and getting a wide array of responses, the Ops Committee crafted a recommendation which would best suit the various needs and concerns. This was a modification of the original proposal. This modified proposal would involve SW geographic response areas per T2 team. Management would be cooperative between SWCG, the Ops Committee, SWCC, and the IC's. The applications will be designed to accommodate applicant's choices to apply for several teams by their priority. Applicants would indicate a geographic and team preference. Agency reps would have input. The IC's would have a major role in selection. The proposal includes:

- Development of team cycle dates, (application, team mtg., AAR, etc.).
- An annual spring multi-team meeting, with SWCG represented.
- T2 IC selection would be conducted by SWCG. IC's would have 3 year tenures. Not all IC's will turn over in the same year.
- SWCC will house the rosters and coordinate mobilization.
- The T2 teams will be located in their current response areas (since it is believed that these have evolved to represent large fire occurrence in the SW), and will be the first team assigned in that area.

2nd team needed in that area would be per a GACC wide T2 team rotation. The question of mobilization was discussed extensively. Geography is not the only factor in IMT response time. Team readiness, team members location, time of callout, and means of transit all enter into team response. The SWCG may make adjustments for flexibility as needed, as this new system develops.

SWCG voted to take on this modified version of the management of the Type 2 IMTs. Flexibility will be needed this first year to get the system established, but many long term benefits will be realized. The group will work on developing a clearer delineation between the responsibilities of the Ops Committee and the SWCG in regards to the teams. The SW Team Guidelines will need to be updated for 2008.

2008 SW IMT SELECTION PROCESS AND TIMELINES (T1, FUMT, T2)

The status of present T2 ICs in the SW Area will need to be confirmed, but there will be a couple of openings. Time is critical in implementation of this program, as we are approaching the team application period, so T2 IC applications for vacancies will be accelerated with nomination deadline of October 26, 2007 with a decisions by Nov. 2, 2007. An abbreviated version of the T1 IC application process will be used for this year, with Pam and Marcia volunteering to update the application ASAP. Team member nominations will be due December 14, 2007.

Meanwhile, the Ops group will update the application announcement and application form for T1 Teams, FUMT's, and interagency T2 teams.

SWCG confirmed that the Reinharz late season Fire Use Team concept will continue this year, (year 2).

AZ STATE MASTER AGREEMENT UPDATE

Dave B. will be setting up a date for a meeting involving the agencies. Draft still being developed.

NM STATE MASTER AGREEMENT UPDATE

A meeting has been scheduled in Santa Fe, NM for October 31st to discuss the appendices after which agency legal staff will have their chance to examine this new draft. Needs to be done by March of 2008.

SWCG MOU UPDATE

Has been on hold during the fire season. Comments have been submitted by USFS, BIA, NPS, FWS, and NM State. Late requests to include updated specific language on management of the IMTs, language on agency responsibility pertaining to leadership on legal issues, and question for requiring a quorum for all decisions. Bob took comments and will try and have new draft available in November. Need to have done by March 2008.

INCIDENT RELEASE PRIORITIES UPDATE

There is a lack of official SW guidance on the process of prioritizing resource releases from incidents. This was discussed in July, and Kenan utilized that direction to develop a new draft. After discussion and some edits, the new draft was accepted for inclusion in the 2008 SW Mob Guide. Kenan will send all members an electronic copy of the modified proposal.

IMT AAR 10-10-07

In Attendance: *SWCG Members* – Marcia Andre, Dave Behrens, Leon Ben, Jason Greenlee, Donald Griego, Kenan Jaycox, Mark Kaib, Bob Lineback, Pam McAlpin, Hector Madrid, Cal Pino.

IMT Representation – Mike Bradley, Roy Hall, Dugger Hughes, Gary Loving, Denny Nelson, John Philbin, Larry Raley, Joe Reinartz, Pruett Small, Jeff Whitney, Bill VanBruggen; (*NMT2 IMT did not send a representative.*)

Guest – Gene Blankenbaker

Recording- Bianca Juganaru

REVIEW ACTION ITEMS FROM 2006 IC AAR

Hector Madrid and Donald Griego opened with introductions. 2006 action items reviewed and had been completed.

The day was spent in productive discussions between the IC's and SWCG. Each team gave a summary of their 2007 incidents and included issues and challenges they faced. These are captured in separate notes that will be sent to the IC's and SWCG.

IMT 2007 AAR ACTION ITEMS

- May want to evaluate and consider some flexibility in rotation schedule.
- Need to clarify freelancing policy for T2 team members for 2008 season.
- Consider including availability/commitment date option on team member nomination forms.
- SWCG to re-examine team availability dates.
- Figure out how the SW can broker critical trainees to accelerate their training, (between multiple teams).
- Consider apprentice program to get folks with minimal qualifications interested in IMT's.
- Consider awards for AA's who thoroughly support staff participation in IMTs.
- SWCG annually convey new direction/expectations to SW ICs.
- EAZ team to provide border protocols for SW to other teams and out of area team briefing packets.
- Emphasize importance of good Resource Advisors to Agency Administrators.
- Get Decision Support System and model information to team meeting sessions so that teams have a better understanding of these evolving tools.
- Put together group to plan and implement 2009 IMT meeting.
- NMAC Suggestion: Try and spread out SW T1 teams in national rotation.
- NMAC Suggestion: Work with agencies to minimize "gag orders" on WFU terminology.
- NMAC Suggestion: Is there a way they and GACC's can do better matching of teams to assignments? Insure the system is flexible to changing situation, even if reassignment of teams is necessary.
- NMAC Suggestion: R1 & R6 IMS medical system needs to be abolished because it is less than adequate for meeting incident needs. Need to be able to bring in National Registry qualified EMS.
- NMAC Information: Double standard on in-GACC vs out-of-GACC IMT configuration, (made Raley take air ops support, but then the T1 team that took over from him did not have, so he had to leave his for their use).

10-11-07

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS FROM IMT AAR

Review and discussion of the previous day's IMT AAR action items. IMT availability seasons and timelines further refined. It is possible that season availability dates may have to fluctuate from year to year. Teams may be available for longer than the minimum season, if they so able. Zones may also request seasonal extensions through SWCG, and availability will be negotiated with ICs.

GENERAL REVIEW AND BRAINSTORM FOR NMAC MEETING

Review of SWCG concerns that will be brought up to NMAC. NMAC meeting is supposed to occur in January 2008. Last year's points that were brought up to NMAC from SWCG created a great deal of discussion.

ADJUSTMENT OF SWCG COMMITTEE LIASON ASSIGNMENTS

There is an upcoming meeting at which the Information and Prevention Committees will be deciding on whether their committees will be merging. Also, depending on what happens with FUTA, in the future there may be a way to bring the FUTA steering committee under the training committee. Rotating the GATR position was discussed. The committee liasons from SWCG are now:

AICG – BIA Western (Leon)	NMICG – NM State (Donald)
Aviation – USFS (Marcia)	Dispatch – SWCC (Ken)
FPA – USFS (Marcia)	Predictive Services – FWS (Mark)
Prevention - NM BLM (Hector)	FUTA – NPS (Bob)
Training – AZ BLM (Pam)	Incident Business Management – AZ State (Dave)
Information– BIA Southwest (Cal)	Operations Group – NM BLM/NM State (Hector/Donald)

Operations Subcommittee Liaisons are: Engine Operators: Helen Graham,
T1 Crews: Mark Kaib, T2 Crews: BIA Navajo (Jason)

THREE TIER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee has not been able to get together recently and will present at the Nov. meeting.

MOB CENTER TASK GROUP

Mob Centers in Albuquerque and Phoenix/Gateway have operated for years with USFS taking up most of the cost. New issues are emerging, so the USFS has proposed a SWCG sponsored task group to do some interagency analysis and look for solutions. SWCG agreed and Marcia will put the finishing touches on a task group charter. This group could take into account other studies going on such as tanker base locations, caches, dispatch, etc.

IFPM QUALIFICATIONS ISSUES

Gene B. shared a memo from NFAEB regarding IFPM.. It changes the competency requirements to guidelines.

DISCUSSION ON USFS STRUCTURE PROTECTION MEMO

A memo was released by the USFS mid-fire season that provided some new structure protection guidance. It was discussed extensively with the IC's yesterday. It did cause some confusion resulting in structure protection measures being taken on some buildings and not on others that were next to each other. The memo was interpreted differently by different IMT's and Agency Administrators. Marcia has taken notes of some of these concerns and will pass them on. An Interagency approach to this guidance would be helpful. Apparently, some of the states that are saying that if the Federal agencies do not do structure protection, then they will order separate teams with that mission.

SWCC ISSUES AND UPDATES

Ken J. presented a summary of the 2007 season in SWCC. He reported on an A-76 driven Dispatch feasibility study. The dispatch community at many levels is being asked to provide time consuming information. It is unknown what will occur after this study. It could bring "business process reinvention". The National Coordinators' meeting will take place in Tucson, AZ on December 10-13th. An agenda has not come out yet. There may be an opportunity to allow local Center Managers to attend.

Center Managers in AZ expressed gratitude for NM fire resources support during the 2007 season. There is ongoing discussion on the use of WildCad in dispatch as part of an integrated database. Several dispatch centers are already integrated on that system. It has not been determined how useful it would be at the GACC level. There has been some issues with the IHC out-of-region rotation because one Dispatch Center has been running a separate rotation that does not match up. Ken has some ideas that might fix this. The R1-R3 Agreement was discussed in some detail, and it's implications. Early in the season R-1 was able to reciprocate that support. The regional and sister agreements provided for engine and overhead exchanges. Alamogordo and Tucson are moving ahead with their Three Tier Plans as is Yuma.

The Dispatchers' Workshop is being transformed to try to make it more hands-on. There are five different dispatch classes that are going to be offered over the course of the winter. It has been stressed that we need to use agency staff before Ads, but ADs are still critical to success. The Zone to Zone Neighborhood Agreement functioned pretty much as expected. It had to be shut off at a high PL3 for a little while.

Aircraft for our teams out of GACC are not to be ordered by us as a Support Request. The order should come from the GACC with the incident. This is to prevent high cost mix-up and duplication since aviation costs are high.

There were some instances in which a SW T2 IA crew was ordered, the order was filled, but upon arrival at the incident it became clear that they were not T2 IA qualified. In such a situation there should be written feedback to the unit that assembled the crew.

SWCC has been working to become less dependent on the FS IT Network, and Comcast internet links have been set up for when the FS Network goes down. They also have permission to set up a snap server. This will enable them to assist other dispatch centers in event of network or electricity outages with their ROSS needs.

Mob Guide updating is anticipated be much like it has in past years. Center Managers were solicited for input on the Mob Guide, but few comments were provided.

REPORT FROM SW AVIATION COMMITTEE ON SWCG TASKING

Dave Underwood, the BIA Inter-Regional Aviation Manager and the Chair of the SW Aviation Committee, came to present on the tasking early summer tasking from SWCG. He reported on SWCG's request to develop a plan to reduce chronic aviation overhead resource shortages. In the past Helitack crews have been

expected to provide a pool of aviation personnel for the system, but now there is an increasing use of CWN programs and reduced staffing. At the IMT AAR there was discussion and desire expressed to develop critical positions, so there is an opening to create training opportunities. SWCC can facilitate training assignments. The SWCG recognizes that the issues involved with aviation position shortages are large and systemic, and their intention is for the Committee to provide achievable suggestions on some steps towards solutions. The committee will keep working on it.

There is an intention of using the AZ Aviation Guide as a template to create one for aviation staff coming into NM. The Aviation Committee Charter will be updated to allow each SWCG agency member a spot on the committee if they wish it. There are plans to do a review and update of the SW SEAT Operations guide. Pam suggested that the committee schedule a face to face meeting.

REPORTS BY SWCG COMMITTEE LIASIONS

FPA has completed a Charter revision. There will be a FUTA steering committee meeting coming up 10/24. Meeting date for NMICG to be announced. AICG is 10/25. Other committee issues were covered in other sections of the agenda.

Action Items - Ongoing followed by new ones

Topic	Action needed	Responsibility	Date
Reorganized Ops Group	Continue to develop Ops Group with emphasis on Type 1 Crew Sub Committee; meet with IHC's at fall AAR. Put together an Operations Committee meeting for the Winter 07.	Hector, Donald G., Rich N., Mark Kaib	Ongoing and Fall 2007
SWCG Committee Charters	All committee liaisons need to check SWCC committee website to see if their assigned charters, memberships are up to date. If not, contact Jay Ellington.	All SWCG Members	Ongoing
SW Engine Academy	Develop plan toward making it more interagency 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 is does not meet national policy?	Pam M.	Nov. 07
Interagency Master Agreement for New Mexico to replace expiring JPA	Continued work on the NM Interagency Master Agreement.	Hector M., Donald G., Ginger B., Mark K.	Ongoing (expires April 08)
IMT Recruitment to wider audience	Create cover letter to go with training nominations and get them into training packets for fall fire classes.	Dugger H., Paul S., Kenan J., Hector M., Donald	Fall 2007

Information Committee	Find out who is the new Chair; discuss possibly future combining with prevention committee.	John L., Cal P.	September, 2007
MAC Priority Matrix & handbook	All members take notes; update again this fall. Bob to record updated decision on utilizing the matrix as a decision tool, but not an absolute.	All SWCG Members	Fall 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	Nov. 2007
MAC Priority Matrix	Revise/update MAC board and insure website, handbook, and board are consistent	Ken J., Jay E.	Fall, 2007
2007 SW UTF List Findings	Share table of most UTF'd positions in 2007 with SWCG.	Kenan, Jay E.	Jan. 2008
SW IMT Assignments	Continue to keep record of successes and recommendations on dispatches, and present to SWCG	Kenan	Fall 2007
Who dispatches NPS FF's at Montezuma Castle?	Figure out why they are not geographically dispatched as in other zones	Kenan, Bob, Kirk	Nov. 2007
Release Priorities	Develop draft guidelines for placement into the 2008 Mob Guide. Circulate for comment.	Ken J.	Oct 2007
New AZ Master Agreement	Schedule a meeting.	Kirk R., Dave B.	Nov. 2007
IMT GIS CD's	Provide copy to Kenan for ABQ packets; provide copies to SW IMT's for 08 season	Pam M.	Nov. 07
	<i>New Action Items from this meeting listed below</i>		
Agenda Items for next meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IHC AAR Update • More meaningful team eval process • T2 Team transition update • 3 Tier report • Update Freelance Policy • Mob Guide Update 		
Type 1 Crew Dispatch Nomenclature Issue Presentation to NMAC	Bring up the Type 1 IHC vs. Type 1 "trainee" status and dispatch issue at NMAC meeting. ROSS needs to accommodate reality. Write memo to NMAC from SWCG or National IHC Committee regarding Type 1 Crew "trainee" designation in ROSS.	Bob L., Mark K.	Jan. 2008
T2 ICs	Find out status of Lawrence Garcia. Modify the T1 IC application for use this year in T2 nomination process.	Ken J., Marcia A., Pam M.	Oct. 11, 2007

Improved IMT Evaluation Process	Draft a new evaluation form or evaluation proposal for the IMTs to provide better feedback. Outgoing IC Awards?	Jason G.	March 2008
Outgoing IC	Come up with ideas for outgoing IC recognition.	All	Nov. 2007
GATR	Connect with Jerome on what needs to happen. Recruit for new SW GATR so that orderly transition with Jerome may occur.	Marcia A., Pam M.	Nov. 2007
Aviation Committee	Update committee membership on website by passing info to Jay at SWCC.	Dave Underwood, Marcia A.	Nov. 2007
Committees	SWCG members to make contact with their committees to appraise them of who their new liasons are and maintain communications.	All	Nov. 2007