

NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP
81st MEETING MINUTES
June 2001

The 81st meeting of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group was held in Portland, Oregon, June 5-6, 2001.

Members attending: Don Artley, Chair, Montana Division of Forestry
Roger Erb, Vice Chair, Fish and Wildlife Service
Rick Gale, National Park Service
Jim Hull, NASF, Texas Forest Service
Jerry Williams, Forest Service
Harry Croft, Forest Service
Dave Cleaves, Forest Service Research
Hugh Wood, U. S. Fire Administration
Jim Stires, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Don Motanic, Intertribal Timber Council
Tim Murphy for Larry Hamilton,
Bureau of Land Management
Murray Dudfield, FCOG, New Zealand
Jim Smalley, NFPA
Jim Stumpf, Executive Secretary

Guests attending:

June 5, 2001

Paul Steensland, WFIWT
Pete Norkeveck, ODF
Sean Hart, BIA
Denny Truesdale, Forest Service
Larry Sutton, BLM Training Leadership Task Force
Jim Glenn, TWT
Bruce Suenram, IAWF
Mike Wong, Forest Service, Fire Incident Pilot Project
Sandra Tripp, Forest Service, Fire Incident Pilot Project
Alice Forbes, FEWT

June 6, 2001

Gary Machlis, NPS
Amanda Kaplan, NPS
Mike Ziolk, Meteorology Manager,
Oregon Department of Forestry
Alice Forbes, FEWT

1. **SUBJECT:** Approval of 80th meeting minutes.

DISCUSSION: The final 80th meeting minutes were mailed to members after NWCG and Working Team review and acceptance.

MOTION: Accept minutes as corrected and mailed.

SECONDED AND CARRIED.

2. **SUBJECT:** Eastern Area Coordination Group (EACG) proposal for fire overhead training assignments.

DISCUSSION: We currently do well with the classroom portions of overhead fire training. Field training and experience could be improved in both quality and quantity of experiences the trainee receives. The proposal includes only overhead positions and is not intended to substitute for any basic fire fighter training. The EACG suggests an automatic 10% trainee order for each fire particularly in shortage categories. The NWCG carried the issue to the joint meeting with the GACGs on June 7 for further discussion. As there was not a consensus on either adopting the proposal or trying a pilot project, the decision was to ask the dispatch community to recommend a process by Fall 2001 to achieve an approximate 10% training opportunity on national incidents. Jim Stires volunteered to work directly with Neal Hitchcock on this issue.

3. **SUBJECT:** Fire Control Officers Group (FCOG) NWCG agreement

DISCUSSION: Two agreements are proposed, one with Australia, the other with New Zealand with the United States. This will be a non-binding arrangement between Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior with Australia and New Zealand. The agreement requires an annual operating plan between the United States and Australia and New Zealand (there will be one Operating Plan). The Annual Operating Plan becomes binding between agencies, not the countries. Insurance and other benefits (health and death) are not covered under this plan.

Roger Erb is the formal liaison between NWCG and FCOG and has been designated to follow up with completion of the Annual Operating Plan between the United States and FCOG.

Rick Gale will be a speaker at the August FCOG meeting and will represent NWCG in attendance during this conference.

NWCG has been asked to consider holding their Fall 2003 meeting in Sydney, Australia in conjunction with the International Fire Conference.

MOTION: FCOG is an Associate Member of NWCG and has a standing invitation to attend and participate in NWCG meetings. NWCG will attempt to send a member to all FCOG meetings.

SECONDED AND CARRIED

4. **SUBJECT:** International Association for Wildland Fire (IAWF)

DISCUSSION: IAWF is developing a business and marketing plan to better meet the International needs and information sharing in the wildland community. IAWF is looking into hosting a national meeting (tentatively, winter 2002) regarding policy issues for wildland fire. IAWF has negotiated a management agreement with the International Association Fire Chiefs for assistance with IAWF.

5. **SUBJECT:** Wildland Fire Investigator standards

DISCUSSION: The Wildland Fire Investigation Working Team (WFIWT) has been working on the development of standards for wildland fire investigators. Three types (Types 1-3) have been proposed. The WFIWT has worked with the IOSWT and received peer input in the development of the standards. Light or no physical fitness levels may be more desirable than the current moderate standards. Type 3, origin and cause determination, Type 2 and 1 levels would be those involved in the full investigative work. The investigator positions are not designed for commissioned law enforcement officers as a pre-requisite. Final recommendations and NWCG action will take place at the October 2001 meeting.

6. **SUBJECT:** Leadership Task Group report

DISCUSSION: The development and institutionalization of leadership needs to be included in training and position requirements in the fire organization. The current courses deal with more of the supervision and management issues, not necessarily leadership. Leadership is currently not required in any of the fire training (310-1) requirements. Fourteen recommendations for implementation are provided in the task group report. These include:

- Establish a distinct Leadership curriculum.
- Develop a strategy for new course development, including Leadership.
- *Human Factors* and *Followership to Leadership* course should be in PMS.
- Eliminate *S-131* and substitute *Followership to Leadership*.
- Revise 310-1 to make specific Leadership courses required.
- Adopt a specific set of desired leadership principles and values that are common to all.

- *Primary and Advanced Incident Leadership* courses should be exempt from NWCG Course Development Standards.
- Establish a mechanism to evaluate the effectiveness of Leadership Training.
- Eliminate the current *S-201* and *301* courses from the NWCG Training Curriculum.
- Incorporate the *Human Factors* course into firefighter training.
- Develop a self -study component of the Leadership Curriculum.
- Institute the use of leadership skills assessment tools within the leadership Curriculum.
- Establish a standing group for overseeing the implementation of recommendations.
- Analyze courses within the S curriculum to determine the appropriate leadership content.

A steering group should be established to continue the work on the Leadership/decision making tasks. The consensus from NWCG members is that the TWT appears to be on the right track with this project. This task force will be responsible to the TWT as long as it remains in the training context.

MOTION: Adopt recommendation #13 of the Leadership/Decision-Making Task Group report to develop a standing Task Group responsible to the TWT. The membership for the Task Force proposal will be presented to NWCG by July 4 for membership. The ratification can be accomplished using e-mail or through a conference call prior to the NWCG October meeting.

SECONDED AND CARRIED

7. SUBJECT: National Fire Prevention Teams

DISCUSSION: This is an on-going review under the auspices of the WFEWT but no recommendations have yet been formulated.

8. SUBJECT: SHWT and OSHA Collaboration

DISCUSSION: OSHA has become historically, but only periodically, involved with safety issues of fires. OSHA does not appear too interested in developing any collaborative relationship based on previous SHWT work. The SHWT recommends this proposal be abandoned at this time.

MOTION: Concur with the recommendation of the SHWT

SECONDED AND CARRIED

9. **SUBJECT:** Use and management of Type 1 IMT's

DISCUSSION: The IOSWT has met with the National Incident Commanders and have concurrence with the preliminary recommendations. The project is not complete but will be presented to NWCG at the October 2001 meeting.

10. **SUBJECT:** Implementation of the 2001 fire policy

DISCUSSION: It was recommended that NWCG support the implementation of the updated fire policy by:

- Agreeing to develop the 2001 policy implementation guidelines and directives together.
- Agreeing to continue using the 1995 policy guidelines and directions until the 2001 delivery is uniform and complete.
- Agreeing to have clear policy direction to the field under the NWCG letterhead.

This issue is not an NWCG issue and should be resolved in another arena.

11. **SUBJECT:** Fire Incident Pilot Project (Continuous Improvement Process)

DISCUSSION: The pilot project is aimed at fire incident enhancement. This is predominantly a Forest Service project but may have some interagency applications. Through interviews and surveys with employees at an Incident Base the project will develop short and long range improvements for employee moral on fires. The survey will focus on safety, communications, mutual respect, creature comfort, and willingness to participate again in fires.

12. **SUBJECT:** Fire shelters

DISCUSSION: Two problems were discussed.

1. There is only one approved fire shelter for use on fires and that is the GSA fire shelter. The *Roth Shelter* is being marketed but is not an approved shelter and may not be used by federal employees, nor may it be used by any person on a Federal jurisdiction fire. A draft letter will be developed and sent to federal agencies making sure there is equal understanding.
2. Shelter tabs were pulling off on the bags that have been provided by GSA. GSA will accept old bags as an exchange for the new containers at no cost.

13. **SUBJECT:** Aviation Resource Use Committee

DISCUSSION: The group is meeting in Boise to develop their charter. We hope to have a preliminary report to NWCG by the Fall 2001 meeting. The project can hopefully be closed out in early 2002. A temporary fix to repair some of the aviation problems raised

during the 2000 fire season will occur before July 1, 2001. An agency policy letter will be transmitted to federal fire and aviation agencies for implementation of early changes within the next 30 days. The policy will address the arduous physical fitness rating for Helicopter Managers limited or restricted duty helicopters, and the elimination of the need for a civilian Helicopter Manager for National Guard helicopters in certain mission profiles.

14. SUBJECT: NWCG website

DISCUSSION: The Information Resource Management Working Team (IRMWT) has reviewed and assessed the NWCG website and provided information on the site. Several working teams are considering establishing their own websites. This will be acceptable provided the working team site is linked to the NWCG site. There is a new NWCG web master (Ted Tower) who has more time to dedicate to the maintenance of the site. At this time the WT chairs have been asked to submit their minutes to the webmaster for posting. In addition, the WT Chairs have been asked to provide a year of future meeting dates and locations to better coordinate meetings between working teams.

15. SUBJECT: Research needs

DISCUSSION: The Forest Service research program is looking at science gaps presented by agencies for the priority user needs for research for the next ten years. NWCG will send the draft proposal to the Working Teams for their input and perhaps additional items to be included. Dave Cleaves will draft this letter for the Chair's signature.

16. SUBJECT: SEAT Manager position

DISCUSSION: At this time SEAT Managers are Technical Specialists but it is desirable to include this position in the 310-1 qualification. The position has a current Task Book and Qualifications that should also be reviewed. The IOSWT is responsible and should review this position.

MOTION: The IOSWT should consider the SEAT Manager position for inclusion in NWCG 310-1 by January 2002.

SECONDED AND CARRIED

17. SUBJECT: Quarter-turn quick-connect coupling

DISCUSSION: The decision to convert to quick connect couplings was delayed by NWCG conference vote this winter. The NASF is reviewing this proposal and the

conversion will be addressed at the NASF winter meeting. NWCG will review this proposal at the January 2002 meeting.

18. SUBJECT: Coast Guard qualified Information Officers

DISCUSSION: The proposal is being reviewed by both the IOS and Wildland Fire Education Working Team (WFEWTs) for possible approval. It was determined that this proposal was not brought forward through the Coast Guard chain of command, therefore, no action can take place until this is resolved. The subject is tabled for this time.

19. SUBJECT: Incident Management System (IMS) Consortium

DISCUSSION: The IOSWT plans to make sure the IMS is woven into Incident Command System (ICS). The IOSWT will participate in future meetings with the IMS. It may be advantageous to have an IOSWT member appear on the IMS Consortium and will invite an IMS member to sit on the IOSWT. This will be discussed again at the January 2002 NWCG meeting.

20. SUBJECT: Helicopter Crew Member Task Book

DISCUSSION: Update the task book to reflect what training can be accomplished in the classroom rather than in the field as it now exists. The IOSWT concurs and will double check the Task Book to ensure it fits within the standards established for Task Books. Bob Leaverton, IOSWT is asked to draft a letter to the PNWCG for the Chair's signature.

21. SUBJECT: Weather Service correspondence

DISCUSSION: Since the National Weather Service (NWS) has began their modernization organization, there have been conflicts between the Weather Service and the Federal Wildland Agencies. It appears the quality of weather predictions has declined since the start of their modification. Another problem may be conflicts in forecasts between wildland agency predictions and the predictions from the National Weather Service. The Weather service has requested that the California Model for the relationship should be the model adopted by NWCG as a national model. Information from the Fire Weather Working Team indicates that the Weather Service perspective and the fire agencies are not in agreement on the effectiveness of weather service in California. Roles between the National Weather Service and the Federal Wildland Agencies forecasters need to be clearly defined.

A revision of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the wildland agencies and the National Weather Service is in the process. It is important that this MOU is negotiated and well documented to include standards of performance. The Pacific Northwest Coordinating Group has an updated agreement with the weather

service, including check points for weather service performance. The PNWCG has offered their agreement as a model for the National MOU. We may want to consider a formal review between the federal fire agencies and the NWS to clearly define what the problems are. This conflict has been on-going for a number of years and it is difficult to clearly understand the problems. A short-term fix may be to use an impartial facilitator to lead the discussion of the MOU update. A long-term fix may be a facilitated process to clarify all actions between the NWS and Wildland Agencies.

We need to reply to the NWS letter. Basically, we agree there should only be one forecast available to the field. If there is a difference in forecasts the NWS and agency forecasters need to work together to resolve differences in forecasts. If an existing MOU is present in a GA this would prevail. In the long-term the National MOU will be negotiated that includes all concerns and define a process for resolving difference in forecasts. This may require facilitation or mediation between the NWS and Fire Agencies. Geographic MOU's can be tiered to the National MOU .

A response to the letter from Vickie Nadolski needs to be developed. The NWCG Chair agreed to draft this response and send copies to all members for review.

22. SUBJECT: Determination of Weather Service circuit breakers

DISCUSSION: The FWWT began the work to designate these circuit breakers in their November 2000 meeting. This work needs to continue and provide specific guidelines we can use for field assessment of both the Weather Service and Wildland Agency forecasts for accuracy. This should be completed by the FWWT no later than January 2002 for NWCG review and approval.

23. SUBJECT: FY 2002 Budget approval

DISCUSSION: The budget for FY 2002 is approved pending the approval of the agency budgets for FY 2002. We added \$25,000 for Safety and Health Working Team (SHWT) based on their request for the International Safety Summit sponsorship and assistance with the development of a safety training CD-Rom. Additionally, NWCG approved a \$5,000 state travel budget for the Aviation Use Task Group.

MOTION: Accept the recommendations for the final budget of \$919,000.

SECONDED AND CARRIED

24. SUBJECT: Add Western State representative to the FEWT

DISCUSSION: Approve the addition of Glen Newman, California Department of Forestry (CDF) to this working team.

25. SUBJECT: Publications Management System Working Team (PMSWT) Chair

DISCUSSION: A new Chair is needed for the Publications Management System. Roger Erb, WT Liaison, is seeking candidates for this position from some agency employee at NIFC.

26. SUBJECT: Program Management Organization (PMO) Charter

DISCUSSION: A draft of the Charter was reviewed by NWCG. The PMO is now fully staffed. The PMO deals with the development, care and maintenance of IRMWT activities within all agencies. A few minor discrepancies were noted. Jim Stires will modify the Charter with agreed changes.

MOTION: Approve PMO charter as amended

SECONDED AND CARRIED

27. SUBJECT: SAFE Initiative

DISCUSSION: The SAFE project had a number of targets, goals, etc. that had to be met as a result of the Wildland Fire Safety Awareness Review. A number of these tasks are the responsibility of various NWCG WTs. These actions, when completed, should close out the Wildland Fire Safety Awareness Review. Perhaps a better approach to resolve these issues is to give the information to the WTs and have them provide input on the status of the items listed. Roger Erb will draft a letter for the NWCG Chair to develop the tasking letter to the working teams.

28. SUBJECT: Narrowband radio conversion letter

DISCUSSION: This letter is designed to be transmitted to the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to outline the problems associated with this conversion process. Modifications to this draft letter were received and will be changed reflecting comments. It was agreed that it is unlikely that we can reverse the conversion to digital at this time. Therefore there is no need for a letter. The issue is closed for this time.

29. SUBJECT: Social sciences and its effect on fire management

DISCUSSION: The project was initiated in July 2000 to study and evaluate the human dimension of federal wildfire management in the United States. The plan includes a comprehensive literature review, a policy analysis of relevant laws, regulations, and policy, a needs assessment based on client workshop, research agenda, and general action plan. To date the team has examined >300 references, policy analysis, and five needs assessment workshops, The first draft of the research agenda has been

completed and the first draft of the action plan is done.

We need to establish a good public roll out for the completed plan. It will be important that we gain as much publicity (internally and externally) for acceptance. Rick Gale (lead), Jim Hull and Jim Smalley will assist in the development of this roll out plan.

30. SUBJECT: Future NWCG meetings

DISCUSSION:

- October 23-25, 2001 Bar Harbor, ME with the 23rd being a work session. FUWT will provide a status report on 10/24.
- January 15-17, 2002, New Orleans, LA. IBPWT will provide a status report on January 16.
- May 21-23, 2002, Whitefish, MT. TWT will provide a status report on May 22, 2002. This meeting is also tentatively set to meet with the GACGs

81st NWCG MEETING SUMMARY AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

Issue	Action	Responsibility	Accomplishment Date
Fire Trainee use	Work on a pilot project proposal to test the concept for trainee use and make an additional recommendations to NWCG.	Jim Stires/ Neal Hitchcock	October 2001
FCOG Agreement	Complete annual operating plan	Roger Erb	January 2002
Approve Fire Investigator standards	Approve standards as modified	WFIWT, TWT, IOSWT	October 2001
Leadership Task Group priority recommendations	Place the 14 recommendations in priority order and refine these.	TWT	October 2001
Fire Prevention Teams	Provide recommendations on the use of these teams	WFEWT	October 2001
Use and management of Type 1 IMT's	The IOSWT is continuing their work on this project and should be able to complete the work in the Fall	IOSWT	October 2001
Aviation resource use committee	A preliminary report on the use of aviation is developing this study	Jim Stires	October 2001
SEAT Manager	Review the SEAT Manager proposal for inclusion into the 310-1	Rick Gale/IOSWT	January 2002
Quarter-turn Quick-connect couplings	The NASF will reviewing this with the states throughout this year.	Don Artley	January 2002
Coast Guard qualified Information Officers	This proposal requests possible inclusion of Coast Guard Information Officers	IOSWT/WFEWT	October 2001
IMS Consortium/ICS Interface	The IOSWT will continue working with the IMS to review and develop a single approach	IOSWT	January 2002
Determination of Weather Service/Wildland agency weather monitoring plan.	Continue and provide specific guidelines we can use for field assessment. The PNWGC may be a starting point to model these breakers.	FWWT	January 2002
NWS response letter	Draft a response letter for NWCG review to Vickie Nadolski, NWS	Don Artley	September 2001
Research needs	Draft a letter to working teams on identifiatyion of needs.	Dave Cleaves	September 2001
PMSWT Chair	Appoint a new Chair for this WT	Roger Erb	October 2001

SAFE Initiative	Review action items that are uncompleted in the Wildland Fire Safety Awareness Review to determine any additional follow-up needed. A tasking memo will be sent to the identified WT's	Roger Erb	July 2001
Social Science Report	The final report on the Social science and its effect on fire management	Gary Machis	October 2001
Incident Base Automation	Present a status report on the Task Group work	Tory Majors	October 2001
National Preparedness Planning Process	Do we need an NWCG Liaison to the group or will it fit under IRMWT	Don Artley	October 2001
<u>EMERGING ISSUES</u>			
GACG Working Team	Do we want to establish a WT or other Advisory Group made up of GACG representatives?	Don Artley	October 2001
Fire Use Teams	Where do we want to take the issues with the Fire Use Teams?	Rick Gale	October 2001
NFPA standard setting		Smalley	
Local government forces		Croft/Hull	
Use of military in suppression		Artley	
BAER Teams	Is there a need to establish a NWCG link		
FFALC/NWCG Interface issues	Look at needs and make recommendation	Erb, Williams, and Murphy	October 2001
IMS/ICS interface	Monitor both system for a single collective approach	IOSWT/ TWT	On-going
FEMA's role in the National MAC		Williams/Woods	
Federal Fire Policy implementation	How well are we doing to implement this across all boundaries	Williams	