



# NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP

Memorandum

September 23, 1999

To: NWCG Members, Working Team Chairs

From: Executive Secretary

Subject: Fiscal Year 1999 Annual Report

Attached is the Annual Report on activities for NWCG and Working Teams. Please contact me if you have questions.

/s/ Jim Stumpf

Attachment



# NATIONAL WILDFIRE

## COORDINATING GROUP

### FISCAL YEAR 1999 ANNUAL REPORT

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) was formed in 1976 by an Interagency Agreement signed by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture. In 1993 the Federal Emergency Management Agency, specifically the U.S. Fire Administration, was added by agreement.

The governing body of NWCG consists of representatives of Federal and State partners:

Department of Agriculture:

Fire and Aviation Management, Forest Service  
Vegetation Management and Protection Research, Forest Service

Department of the Interior:

Bureau of Land Management  
Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Intertribal Timber Council  
National Park Service  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The Intertribal Timber Council was added as a full member this year. The Council represents Tribal agencies throughout the United States who produce timber. A fire management program is a major portion of timber management and production.

The National Association of State Foresters has both an Eastern and Western State representative to ensure optimal use of all State personnel during emergencies.

The National Fire Protection Association and U.S. Fire Administration are Associate Members of NWCG.

Don Artley, State Forester for Montana, is the Chair and Roger Erb, Chief, Fire Management Branch, Fish and Wildlife Service, is the Vice Chair of NWCG.

NWCG revised and clarified their Vision and Mission Statement, developed a set of beliefs, and developed an Action Plan in support of this mission. Additionally, a Business Practices Plan was developed to assist Working Teams in business practices. Following are the Vision Statement, Beliefs and Mission Statement:

## **VISION STATEMENT**

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group provides leadership for a seamless response to wildland fire across the nation.

## **BELIEFS**

We believe effective wildland fire management is achieved when:  
Firefighter and public safety is the first priority in all fire management activities.  
Individuals are held accountable for all their actions.  
Shared leadership and mutual trust and assistance exist among all wildland fire organizations, regardless of jurisdictional boundaries.  
Economy, efficiency, and quality is evident in all activities.  
Public trust is maintained through quality service and the wise efficient use of funds.  
Public responsibility is realized through active partnerships.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group is to provide leadership in establishing and maintaining consistent nationwide policies, standards and procedures for wildland fire management.

The NWCG Vision, Beliefs and Mission Statement will guide NWCG and the Working Teams in establishment of guidelines and budgeting.

The detailed products of the NWCG are produced by the twelve Working Teams. The remainder of this report is a listing of the major projects or products, which are the Working Teams. Additional information on any issue can be obtained by contacting the NWCG Chair, the Executive Secretary or the Chair of the particular Working Team or Advisory Group.

## **FIRE WEATHER WORKING TEAM**

Following is the report submitted for the activities of the FWWT for FY 1999:

FY 1999 Working Team Budget was \$7,000 for State Travel (\$6,000) and Weather Station Standards Task Group (\$1,000).

The following project(s) not completed in FY 1999 carry over onto the FY 2000 Work plan:

National Weather Service Fire Weather Program (no percentage for project determined). The major Team activity this past year has been to continue with efforts initiated in FY 1998, when the Team was established. Ensure the viability of the national fire weather program, which delivers products and services used by all the wildland fire agencies. No estimate is given for completion of this effort. Significant and critical work continues into FY 2000.

NFDRS Weather Station Standards Task Group (80% complete). The Task Group developed a draft set of standards for stations which are a part of a National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS) network. The draft standards include the requirement for Year 2000 compliance and data needs for the next generation of the NFDRS. The standards would (upon approval) be published and available as a PMS publication. This effort is being coordinated with the National Advisory Group on Fire Danger Rating. The remainder of the work planned should be completed during FY 2000. Funding for completion of the work will be included in the FY 2000 FWWT budget. Phil Sielaff is the FWWT Liaison to this Task Group.

Site Specific (Spot) Weather Forecast Task Group (80% complete). The Task Group has developed a draft revision to the Spot Forecast form. The task group included representatives from the wildland fire agencies and the NWS. Chris Fontana is serving as Chairman on the Task Group. Funding for completion of the work will be included in the FY 2000 FWWT budget.

Significant occurrences during FY 1999. The FWWT met once during the year (January in Albuquerque, New Mexico) and conducted two conference calls. The following summarizes work efforts during FY 1999:

Six new members joined the Team --

Mike Wallace, BIA

Bonnie Mason, USFS

Richard Bahr, NPS

Bob Lee, BLM

Pete Guilbert, CDF (Western States)

Don Motanic, NWCG Liaison

NFDRS Weather Station Standards were drafted by a task group and will soon circulate for comment by the wildland fire community.

A revision to the Site Specific (Spot) Weather Forecast Form has been developed by a task group and will soon circulate for comment by the wildland fire community.

The WT is engaged in an ongoing process to track accomplishments of the NWS as described in their Fire Weather Action Plan;

The WT is developing a set of roles and responsibilities for individuals in the wildland

fire agencies related to the fire weather program.

## INCIDENT BUSINESS PRACTICES WORKING TEAM

The NWCG Incident Business Practices WT accomplished the following during FY 1999:

### Meetings Conducted:

October 1998  
February 1999  
April 1999  
July 1999,  
Continued with conference call August 1999  
Cost of meetings from budget: \$1,500

### Projects:

#### 1. FLSA Exempt/Non-exempt Position Review.

Mike Benscoter and Tory Majors reviewed the current positions listed in the IIBPHB for accuracy. Several positions were identified to be reviewed by personnelists for reconsideration to be places in the non-exempt status versus the exempt. A summary document was prepared and submitted along with the corresponding task books.

Response: Personnel stated that the positions appear to be correct under FLSA determinations, but if we wanted to pursue we could. The WT accepted the decision and did not pursue.

Status: Completed. Budget applied: 0

#### 2. IIBMHB Revisions.

Memo was sent to all agencies requesting individuals to submit any omissions, errors, or the need for additional information to be submitted through their incident business coordinator or working team representative. A handbook committee reviewed the comments provided and began revisions to the handbook. The committee will meet in October 1999 for final draft writing. This draft will be reviewed by a select group of subject matter experts, final product to the cache for printing and release by April 2000. The handbook will be replaced in its entirety.

Status: Continuing into FY 2000      Budget: SME travel \$1,000 FY2000 SME travel



OF-285, Warehouse Supplies Order  
OF-290, Receipt for Property, Fire Suppression  
OF-295, Fire Receiving Report  
OF-296, Vehicle/heavy Equipment Safety Inspection Checklist  
Incident Replacement Requisition  
Incident Replacement Requisition Replacement, continuation page

Interagency Incident Waybill  
Interagency Incident Waybill, continuing page  
Incident Injury Case File Envelope  
Incident Claims Case File Envelope

The proposal for a new form was submitted from Forest Service Contracting for the payment processing of the National Interagency Mobile Commissary Services Contract and Payment Invoice. This form has been adopted and is available through PMS.

A letter was also sent to Forest Service Contracting requesting review, edits, and final submission of the following forms due to changes in the contracts and the need for reprinting:

NFES 2052, Interagency Mobile Food Services Daily Meal Order/Invoice  
NFES 2053, Interagency Mobile Food Services Daily Meal Order/Invoice  
Continuation  
NFES 2054, Interagency Mobile Shower Facilities Daily Shower Order/Invoice  
NFES 2055, Interagency Mobile Shower Facilities Daily Shower Order/Invoice  
Continuation  
NFES 2506, Interagency Mobile Shower Facilities Evaluation  
NFES 0822, Interagency Mobile Food Services Evaluation

These forms were all reviewed and modified to fit the current contract changes. The instructions were also edited and the final product is being printed currently through the Cache. These forms are available on the PMS web site.

Status: Completed (GSA ongoing). Budget: None.

6. Incident Base Automation.

A committee was established with the task of completing an analysis of what should be automated at incident and developing a strategic plan. This resulted in incomplete information. The Working Team developed an Incident Base Automation charter that was presented to NWCG in order to highlight the extent of the project and critical areas. NWCG adopted the charter for continuing on with the identification of what should be automated. This will be presented to NWCG in FY 2000 with a proposal for prioritization by them. Included in that will

be cost estimates, where practical. This project is ongoing and most likely will last several years if automation is selected as a priority for funding.

Status: Ongoing. Budget: None. FY2000 budget, SME travel

7. National Interagency Incident Business Meeting.

Supported and assisted in a national meeting that focuses on issues, concerns, policy changes, and other critical items that arose during the FY 1998 season. Specific focus was on Florida and Texas successes and problems. The Working Team hosts this meeting every 2 to 3 years.

Status: Completed. Budget: \$800

8. Charter Revision.

Proposed a few subtle changes to the charter. Included a request to increase membership for representation from the Eastern States and FEMA. Charter was approved with a few verbiage changes, and assistance is to be provided from the States and FEMA representative for appointing members. Eastern representative has been appointed.

Status: Completed. Budget: None.

9. OF-288 Rewrite.

The need for revisions to the OF-288, Fire Time Report, has arisen due to tax withholding for AD Pay Plan hires, as well as other needed changes. A committee has been established to review the suggested changes received to date and prepare in draft test form for FY 2000 season. After testing it will be finalized and submitted to GSA for printing.

Status: Ongoing. Budget: None. FY 2000 budget, SME travel

These were the critical items either accomplished by Working Team members or committee members during FY 1999.

**PUBLICATIONS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM WORKING TEAM**

PMS will have the digitizing of ICS Modules 1-6 completed early in FY 2000. Their budget of \$5,000 in FY 1999 is sufficient to complete the project.

PMS is the only Working Team that works on a calendar year basis. Their report on accomplishments will be sent separately after January 1, 2000. This report coincides with the annual inventory at the Great Basin Warehouse in Boise, Idaho.

PMS has no established budget, and manages the system of publications for all agencies through the Great Basin Warehouse. They have established a Home Page that is receiving fairly heavy public and agency use. They will be communicating with other Working Teams and Advisory Groups about making more publications available on this web site. The PMS Home Page address is:  
<http://fwspceaa.nifc.r9.fws.gov/~olson/pms/pms.html>.

## FIRE USE WORKING TEAM

Team Management (\$4,000 for 2 meetings) - Working Team business included two travel meetings: Combined Incident Operations Standards (IOSWT), Training (TWT), and FUWT, in New Orleans, Louisiana (November 17-19, 1998), and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Conservation Training Center, Shepherdstown, West Virginia (June 2-3, 1999).

Team Web Presence (\$0) - The FUWT has a full presence on the NWCG Web Page including the Team charter, membership, business (minutes and annual action plans, FY96 to present), and activities.

Fire Use Qualifications and Certification System (310-1) (\$0) - In conjunction with the IOSWT and TWT, completed the update of the Wildland Fire Qualification Subsystem PMS 310-1. Fire Use position qualifications were updated included in the March 1999 PMS 310-1, and updated taskbooks delivered to the IOSWT for publication in the PMS.

Prescribed Fire Training Development (\$13,500) - All prescribed fire training courses will be completed when RX300 (Prescribed Fire Implementation) is tested and sent to all agencies for final review. No additional funds needed for RX300. RX540 (Applied Fire Effects) (\$0) is tested for the second time. Training course needs for the Fire Effects Monitor will be explored and addressed in FY00.

Air Quality/Smoke Management Issues (\$0) - Copies of the National Strategic Plan for Wildland Fire and Air Quality; Modeling and Data System were sent to all Federal and State fire management agencies, the EPA, and every State air quality agency. A copy of the Plan and the implementation tracking process is posted on the Team's web page (<http://fire.r9.fws.gov/ifcc/fuwt/ExpressPlan.htm>). A draft of the NWCG Smoke Management Guide update was reviewed and comments sent to the coordinator. Workshops were planned and scheduled to receive practitioner comments on the expanded emissions and impact reduction section as part of the EPA partnership.

Prescribed Fire Education (\$55,000) - Cooperated with Ohio State University, Dept. of Environmental Education to produce a guidebook for implementing the Fire Role and Use Message components through existing processes. Provided funding for the "FireWorks" education process to develop a prototype middle school "work chest" for implementation of the message at grades 7-9.

## INFORMATION RESOURCES MANAGEMENT WORKING TEAM

The FY99 initial budget equaled \$274,500, but \$20,000 earmarked for the Messaging Project was returned to NWCG, reducing the final FY99 budget to \$254,500. Expenses for the NWCG WWW Support and CASE Tool Projects were less than anticipated and FY00 budget requests have been reduced accordingly.

FY99 IRM WT Project -----	Final Allocation -----	Actual Spent -----
State Travelers	\$6,500	\$6,500
ROSS Implementation	\$120,000	\$120,000
NWCG WWW Support	\$10,000	\$1,000
CASE Tool	\$10,000	\$4,500
Messaging Project	\$0	\$0
IRM Program Manager	<u>\$108,000</u>	<u>\$108,000</u>
Total =	\$254,500	\$240,000

### Meetings:

The IRMWT meeting timing and frequency are determined by the NWCG schedule. We try to meet at least 8 weeks in advance of every NWCG meeting. Meetings are located near one of the eleven Geographic Area Coordination Centers, if possible. It is also desirable to locate one of the meetings in California annually to enhance opportunity to the fire management organizations there. Recent and planned IRMWT meetings are listed below.

#### Meetings Conducted:

- September 1-2, 1998, in Fairbanks, Alaska
- January 12-14, 1999, Riverside, California, including a visit to the Federal Interagency Communication Center
- April 13-15, 1999, Salt Lake City, Utah
- August 10-12, 1999, Rhinelander, Wisconsin

#### Meetings Planned:

- November 15-17, 1999, Reno, Nevada
- December 7-8, 1999, St. Louis, Missouri, participate in National Coordinators Meeting
- March 6-8, 2000, Northern California, specifics to be determined
- June 19-22, Denver, Colorado, specifics to be determined

## IRM Coordination Infrastructure - NWCG IRM Program Manager and Staff

Barry Mathias was hired as Manager of the NWCG IRM Program Office (IRM-PO). His work plan for the first year was primarily to establish the IRM-PO organization and become knowledgeable of ongoing NWCG Projects and related activities (ROSS, IQS, IQCS, etc.). Barry has completed all position classifications and other preparations. Three additional positions are required - a GS-334-13 Data Architect, a GS-334-13 Process Architect, and a GS-334-12 Repository Manager. The Forest Service has received internal authorization to provide two positions, and BLM is planning to provide the third. Presently the Forest Service is waiting to learn if it will have the requested budget to fund its positions. Barry will coordinate the selection process.

## NWCG Internet Home Page

The NWCG Internet World Wide Web (WWW) home page has been functional all year. Continuing modifications have been accomplished to make the site easier to use. To accommodate ROSS/DMS Internet address requirements, the NWCG Domain Name Server will be moved to the USDA National Computer Center at Kansas City. This does not necessarily affect the physical location of the NWCG WWW server, currently maintained by FWS at NIFC. The webmaster is Dottie Miller.

## Electronic Messaging and Integration Status

Lotus Notes has been widely implemented throughout DOI agencies this year, and is planned for implementation by the Forest Service as well. The BLM and FS Chief Information Officers and IRM organizations, through their Service First project, are making progress on integration issues. The Forest Service has adopted Microsoft Office 2000 as its new office automation software, which will further improve electronic document exchange.

## Resource Ordering and Statusing System (ROSS)

Neal Hitchcock, Jon Skeels, and the rest of the ROSS team are doing an excellent job. ROSS is currently on schedule, within budget and according to specifications. The design phase will be completed and the build phase begun in October if adequate funding is provided.

## Dispatch Messaging System (DMS)

The DMS is an essential component of ROSS, providing reliable electronic communications between dispatch offices, independent of agency administrative e-mail systems. It is operational at NICC and several GACCs, and planned for complete implementation by December 1999.

## Interagency Application Support

ROSS application support cannot be provided within the current application support capabilities of the NWCG agencies. This, and similar applications with the need for shared support, is pushing the IRMWT to develop an interagency application support strategy. A plan and initial project are scheduled to be addressed in FY00.

#### Computer Aided Software Engineering (CASE) Tool

ROSS and other projects are utilizing Silverun CASE Software. Progress (and expenditures) toward a metadata repository will be limited until the IRM-PO Repository Manager position is filled. This person, using CASE and other software tools, will fill a vital role as “librarian” for process and data analysis products needed to integrate NWCG information systems.

#### Windows 3.XX/Windows 95

The NWCG accepted the IRMWT's recommendation that Windows 3.1 software not be supported after 1999.

#### State IQS

The State IQS application is currently in production. Training in each region is largely complete. The NASF, through its State representatives on the IRMWT, continues to coordinate State IQS with other NWCG projects.

## IQCS Project

The Interagency Qualification and Certification System originated as a DOI effort, but now has been joined by the Forest Service and NASF. A charter will be presented for consideration at the October 1999 NWCG meeting.

## National Interagency Fire Statistics Information Project (NIFSIP) and Interagency Fire Information Reporting System (IFIRS)

NIFSIP delivered necessary Business Process Model, Conceptual Data Model, Data Dictionary, and Entity Relationship Diagrams, although changes need to be made to incorporate the revised fire mgmt terminology, air quality issues, and fire cause codes. IFIRS is a fire statistics system designed to be an interagency application utilizing NIFSIP data requirements. Next step is to design physical database and applications to support it. Recommendations are to develop a charter for the IFIRS project, continue coordination with NFIRS, host on a single computer, and create a single interagency application.

NWCG made a good decision to postpone having IFIRS proceed to avoid competing for resources with ROSS. The IRMWT will advise NWCG as soon as there is an opportunity to resume activity on this project.

## Mnemonic Overhead Position Identifiers

With leadership from Neal Hitchcock, a change management procedure and board have been established. Gladys Crabtree is the IRMWT contact for mnemonic issues.

## Team Membership Changes

The IRMWT is undergoing many membership changes.

- The Western States Representative is now Phil Murphy, from Colorado.
- The Fire Research Representative is now Don Latham, Fire Sciences Laboratory, Rocky Mountain Research Station, Missoula.
- The NWCG Liaison is likely be Jim Stires, BIA, Boise.
- The Eastern States Representative is currently vacant.
- The FWS Representative is currently vacant.
- I have been informed the BLM representative will be changing.

## Charter Revision proposal

Revisions to the IRMWT charter have been proposed:

- to establish the IRMWT relationship to the IRM Program Office,
- to establish Fire Research representation in the IRMWT,
- to establish a Vice Chair position to assist, and eventually succeed, the Chair,
- to recognize the increased meeting frequency required by IRM volume of

business.

#### Coordination with Other Working Teams

The Incident Business Practices WT and IRMWT have been collaborating closely throughout the year, especially on the incident base automation project.

The Training Working Team and IRM Working Team are collaborating to propose labeling standards to classify the amount and type of support associated with software applications. This classification scheme should provide the information needed by a prospective software user to make an informed decision regarding their use of the software and expectations for user support and documentation.

#### Chief Information Officer (CIO) Strategic IRM Issues and Coordination

The IRMWT will continue to invite to its meetings CIO representatives from all NWCG agencies. The IRMWT believes CIO attendance at IRMWT meetings is important in elevating awareness of NWCG IRM needs and initiatives to the CIO community. The entire fire community would like to improve its customer relationship with CIO organizations that determine and provide computer hardware and software for agency business systems. Toward this end, the IRMWT will prepare a focused message, and send a delegate to appropriate CIO meetings. Barry Mathias has been designated.

#### Strategic IRM Priorities/Issues/Planning

The IRMWT is working to identify the entire spectrum of IRMWT projects so NWCG is in a better position to evaluate alternatives and plan out year budgets. We believe the IRM Program Office, once it is fully established, will greatly assist in providing this information.

#### Incident Base Automation

The IRMWT is providing support to the Incident Business Practices WT for planning an NWCG strategy for incident base automation.

#### ICBS Status Update

The Incident Cache Business System is installed at all caches except Alaska.

## TRAINING WORKING TEAM

### Team Membership

Some turnover occurred on the Team during FY99. Leslie Wiles, Maine State Forest Service, Department of Conservation, was replaced with Ira Jolly, Florida Division of Forestry.

### Overall Direction of the Team for FY99

The training curriculum remains on schedule, with slight modifications due to changes in priorities and budget, fire community needs, etc.

### Budget

The TWT budget was reduced by \$22,000 in mid-year, necessitating a reduction in test courses in FY99, which will have spill-over impacts on the FY00 development and revision schedule. The affected courses include S-355, Ground Support Unit Leader, S-356 Supply Unit Leader, S-357 Food Unit Leader, S-358 Communications Unit Leader, S-359 Medical Unit Leader, S-360 Finance/Administration Unit Leaders, and S-400 Incident Commander.

### Specific Accomplishments

The TWT continues to meet annually with the geographic area training officers. This has greatly increased the communication information flow, and has helped resolve issues related to RX-300, as well as other courses. The geographic area training officers gave the TWT training curriculum priorities that have been incorporated into our revision schedule.

Due to the myriad of fire behavior training course issues that surfaced in FY99, the TWT revived the Fire Behavior Advisory Committee, which consists of some members of the original fire behavior group, with additional new members. This group is comprised of Tom Zimmerman (NPS - Chair), Paul Schlobohm (BLM), Dick Bahr (NPS), Wayne Cook (USFS), Paul Werth (NWS), Crag Carter (CDF), and Pat Andrews (USFS). Joette Borzik (Team member, FWS) is the liaison. A charter was adopted for the group, and the group is responsible for developing and updating the fire behavior portions of the NWCG training curriculum.

The TWT continued to work with the IOSWT and FUWT on revision of the PMS 310-1 document. This task has not been an easy one for any of the Teams. We have liaisons that meet with the IOSWT and the FUWT regularly.

The National Dispatch Training Steering Committee reports that the Support Dispatcher (D-310) revision should be completed fall 1999. Due to budget constraints, a planned

video was not completed. The Aircraft Dispatching project work group, under the direction of the National Dispatch Training Steering Committee, is nearly finished with a draft Job Aid specifically for aircraft dispatching. The Expanded Dispatch Job Aids revision project will be completed in the fall 1999. Expanded Dispatch Position Task Books are completed and available through PMS.

The National Fire Academy completed the development of Urban Interface Firefighter for Company Officers. NWCG contributed \$35,000 toward the development of this course.

Information regarding the TWT meeting, schedules, etc., is now available for public viewing on the Internet via the NWCG home page. Please refer to this web page for the current National Fire and Aviation Training Support Group Projected Course Development Schedule.

#### WILDLAND FIRE EDUCATION WORKING TEAM

Six wildland fire education/prevention guides were completed and made available via the Internet and PMS; *Wildfire Prevention Strategies*; *Wildland Prevention Patrol*; *Fire Education Exhibits and Displays*; *Recreation Area Fire Prevention*; *Fire Communications and Education*; and *Industrial Operations Fire Prevention*. This project was listed under contract with \$40,000 of FY97 funding.

An introduction course for initial responders to wildland fires and a guide, "*Guidelines for Establishing Fire Prevention Education Programs Cooperative Programs and Partnerships*," are 75% completed under contract with \$40,000 of FY98 funding.

With completion of the above project, the Team's plan for developing fire education guides will be complete. These guides have replaced NWCG Handbook 4, *Wildfire Prevention Handbook*, which was retired in FY 1999.

The Team has initiated development of the Interagency Education Communication System. The project was modified by the Team during the year to better utilize the NWCG Homepage. An initial step to develop an internal mailing list has been completed by the Team. The remainder of the project is under contract with FY99 funding to develop an electronic bibliography of fire education materials and design the WFEWT site on the NWCG web page, incorporating the electronic bibliography. The work will be completed by May 2000. This project will cost \$6,500, and is under the budgeted \$25,000. The remaining money will be applied to the Fire Ecology brochure project.

The Team continued monitoring projects in the Arson Grant Program funded in previous fiscal years. No funding was required or used this year. A final report will be issued in FY 2000.

Representatives of the WFEWT and the Fire Use Working Team completed a proposal

regarding Action Item 10 of the Federal Fire Policy to develop an education strategy to implement the messages about the role of wildland fire in resource management. The Team will be working to develop this strategy in the upcoming fiscal year.

The Team is negotiating an agreement with the Center of Excellence to utilize the distribution center for Team products which are educational in nature and are not suitable in the Publications Management System. No funding was used this year; however, we will be requesting \$4,000 in FY 2000 to fund start up costs at the distribution center.

The Fire Ecology brochure project is underway. Text editing has been completed and the project will be transferred to the NPS facility, which will be completing the project. This project is costing more than the budgeted \$25,000; it will cost approximately \$40,000 to design and print the *brochure*. The difference comes from the funds remaining in the Interagency Communication System project. The brochure will be *available* in FY 2000.

In 1999, NFPA invited the Team to present a talk on Wildland Fire Education in the United States at a volunteer conference in Pinamar, Argentina. An outcome of the trip is that the Team will be working with the director of fire management in Argentina's national park system to assist them in developing a directory of correct translations of fire terminology.

The Team met twice in FY99 - in Phoenix, Arizona, in December 1998 and in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, in April 1999. Conference calls were held as needed.

#### INCIDENT OPERATIONS STANDARDS WORKING TEAM

The IOSWT was budgeted \$19,500 for State/State subject matter expert travel. The majority of the Team's time was spent in review and refinement of the 310-1, Fire Qualification revision. This project should draw to a conclusion in FY 2000. Completed activities include:

Radio Operator Qualifications

IOS Roles and Responsibilities chart

Changing the calculations of control force to prescribed fire.

## FIRE EQUIPMENT WORKING TEAM

FEWT held two meetings this year. The spring meeting was held in Fort Worth, Texas, and was hosted by Larry Camp, General Services Administration, a key cooperater. The fall meeting was held in Reno, Nevada; in addition to our FEWT membership, Barry Marsden of Victoria, Australia, attended and shared information on their fire equipment programs. Both meetings were focused on out-year planning for the Committee works. A final version of this will be submitted to the January 2000 NWCG meeting for approval.

Accomplishments for 1999 are:

Completion of the FEWT and NFES brochures. These are available on request from the Chair.

The Engine Subcommittee completed their work with NWCG acceptance of the Engine Typing Standards. They wrote the NFES 1871, NWCG Wildland Fire Engine Component Guide, and have participated as NWCG representatives to the NFPA 1906 Engine Standards Committee.

The Spark Arrestor Guide Volume 2 was updated and is available from PMS at NIFC. Revision of the Fire Equipment Refurbishment Guide was completed and should be available soon from PMS at NIFC.

The Interagency Cache Business System (ICBS) was implemented in all the National Interagency Support Caches, with the exception of Fairbanks, Alaska. This has been a 7- year process, which has finally come to fruition! There have been some issues and changes needed, but we are closely coordinating with the computer group at NIFC - FS to accomplish necessary changes.

Missoula Technology and Development Center (MTDC) has undertaken additional studies on the fire shelter and this report should be available by October 1, 1999. San Dimas Technology and Development Center (SDTDC) is currently working on the Lot Acceptance and Quality Assurance Publication (NFES 1245) and this will hopefully be to the publisher by October 1, 1999.

Work is continuing on the Retardant Base Planning Guide (NFES 1259), but will not be completed this year. This work is also being accomplished at SDTDC. There was no output for the fireline explosives or publications for this FY. The work which was accomplished dealt with the safety can issue, which will replace the traditional "jerry" can from the military. The new safety can will meet all OSHA and DOT requirements, and the National Interagency Support Caches are working to incorporate this new can into the system.

The FEWT budget for 1999 was \$48,000. Of this amount the following was allocated

and spent: State travel - \$14,400. As of now there has only been \$9,000 expended for the spring meeting, and some State travel for the fire engine sub-committee membership. The joint Canadian/USA Fire Equipment Meeting is to be held this fiscal year at Prince Edward Island, and I believe the remaining amount will be spent for State members to attend this meeting.

Spark Arrestor Guide, Volume 2: \$8,000. This money was used for this project. NFES 1245, Lot Acceptance and Quality Assurance: \$12,000. To my knowledge, only about half of this has been spent to date. It is anticipated that this will be published prior to October 1, 1999, which would use the additional \$6,000.

NFES 1259, Retardant Base Planning Guide: \$6,000. A contract was let to assist in the development of a model which will assist managers in determining whether their base should be full service or bulk depending on a variety of factors, including personnel available, gallons pumped and overall cost effectiveness and efficiency. This project will actually exceed the amount which was allocated.

Fireline Explosives, \$10,000:  
Fireline Publications, \$5,000:

There was no work done on fireline explosives this year which required the requested allocation. The USDA FS undertook additional work on the fire shelter. The NWT Crown Fire Experiments which we participate in to test our fire equipment led to some interesting observations this year on the fire shelter. It was anticipated that this money could be used for the additional testing which was undertaken; however, no request was made to do this and it has been covered, so this money will probably not be expended this year.

#### SAFETY AND HEALTH WORKING TEAM

\$56,000 was budgeted, but no report was submitted.

#### FIRE DANGER WORKING TEAM

The Fire Danger Working Team's 1999 accomplishments have been summarized as follows:

At the direction of NWCG, the Fire Danger Working Team (FDWT) is evolving from the National Advisory Group for Fire Danger Rating. The Team will continue its transition and assume its new role and responsibilities.

The FDWT responded to a shared/joint issue with the Fire Weather Working Team. It concerned new standards for NFDRS Reporting Stations. This joint response was presented by Gerry Day at the June NWCG meeting.

The National Fire Danger Rating User's Guide / NFES# 1522 / PMS # 430-3 / October 1985 is outdated and requires a rewrite. A correction letter was drafted and forwarded to Publications in Boise, Idaho. This letter was incorporated into the existing publication until a rewrite of this publication is prepared. The letter emphasizes needed corrections and document changes for the reader to make.

A National Weather Service (NWS)/Fire Danger issue was addressed whereby the Team acknowledged that the NWS no longer has to provide information routinely on lightning activity level (LAL). This is permissible only if it is acceptable to local users. However, if the LAL product is deemed necessary and is requested by local users, it will be made available by the NWS.

Fire Family + software and a User's Guide were introduced to the field. This new Windows program addressed the Y2K issue of many programs previously used in historical analysis and combined them into Fire Family +. These programs included PCFIRDAT, PCSEASON, FIRES, and CLIMATOLOGY. Fire Family + is Y2K compliant and allows the user to continue to utilize the fire weather and fire occurrence databases in the National Integrated Fire Management Interagency Database.

The Weather Information Management System (WIMS):

The processor for NFDRS indices and components has been certified Y2K compliant. It was discussed and decided that the WIMS NFDRS reporting stations utilizing the telephone modem HUB will maintain station metadata in WIMS. To place reporting station metadata in ASCADS will be considered optional.

The new WXOBS 98 data format has been successfully beta tested and is ready for operational use. With the new WXOBS 98 format, WIMS has been adjusted to accept weather data that is observed on the hour and minute.

The Missoula Fire Lab had previously defined the ranges and standards for a new fire danger-rating sensor, solar radiation. This information has been passed to the WO Support Group and the Fire Weather Working Team. This sensor's observations will also be incorporated into the new WXOBS 98 data format and the Fire Weather Working Team's rewrite of NFDRS reporting station standards.

## WILDLAND/URBAN INTERFACE FIRE PROTECTION WORKING TEAM

Work is well underway on nearly all the tasks within the program. Some have been completed and others have been modified to take advantage of unique opportunities.

The following is a brief description of each task under the program, its status and expected completion/resolution:

### Public Information Dissemination

The National Public Education and Information Dissemination Task is targeted at the overall goal of creating an increased awareness of the wildland/urban interface fire problem throughout the country. This awareness is accomplished through contact with the general public, homeowners, homeowner associations, private industry groups, the fire service, governmental organizations and the insurance industry. Through this awareness and information, those affected by wildland/urban interface fire problems will be encouraged to take action to reduce losses that normally result from unwanted fires.

This task includes several publications and activities described below.

### Firewise Home Page

Usage continues to grow, now averaging over 60,000 hits per month on the web site.

### Wildfire News and Notes

The second issue of W-N&N was an Internet only issue (one of two for 1999) and will be made available in two forms - as an interactive web page (as in the past) and a companion version in a pdf format for those readers who need a hard copy.

### Publications Revision

The framework for the CD-ROM version of Wildfire Strikes Home III is nearly complete and the content is being developed for the revision. The task is scheduled for completion by December.

### Public Affairs

A new article directed at wildland homeowners has prepared and released for local newspaper coverage through NAPS

### Task 2: Workshop Planning & Participation

The development of public information and awareness tools is a valuable way to effect and inspire action from those closest to the problems of the interface. However, simply

providing information does not ensure that the information is effectively used or the appropriate action taken. For that reason, the second major task of the program is to demonstrate the effects of action and encourage the establishment of local, regional, and national partnerships and alliances to reach targeted audiences with a wide range of information, strategies, and activities.

#### National Workshops

Firewise Communities Workshop series is in the planning and design stages at present. A number of companies and groups have expressed great interest in the workshops. Currently, the Planning Guide and Simulation exercise are in draft stages and have been available for review by the two main task groups involved.

The pilot workshop is scheduled for Deerfield Beach, Florida, October 6-8, 1999. The pilot is being coordinated with Florida Division of Forestry and Florida Emergency Management.

#### Video/Photographic Documentation

No significant work has been done in this area due to absence of funding from the U.S. Fire Administration. Work will be accomplished as budget allows.

#### RADIO NARROWBAND WORKING TEAM

Budgetary expenditures for the Team are limited to State travel. The following is an update on the status of narrowband radio:

Many changes are scheduled for future radio spectrum use affecting both Federal and non-Federal users. Congress has already taken the first step through its mandate that 200 MHz of radio spectrum be transferred from Federal use to non-Federal use. Because of this, all Federal users must show a much more efficient utilization of the radio spectrum.

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) has responsibility for administration of Federal use of the radio spectrum similar to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) administration of non-Federal use. To address the Congressional mandate, the NTIA has directed several changes be accomplished over the next few years.

The first of the changes is the FM land-mobile radio bands are being "narrow-banded." This means current 25 kHz channel spacing (analog wideband) is changing to 12.5 kHz spacing (analog narrowband) in both the 162-174 MHz and 406-420 MHz bands. Implementation of this change must be completed by January 1, 2005, for the 162 - 174 MHz band and by January 1, 2008, for the 406 - 420 band. Equipment purchased after January 1, 1995, must have the capability to meet the new 12.5 kHz guidelines. No

Federal agency is exempted from this mandate. State and local entities are not required to go to the narrowband technology. Compatibility between analog wideband and analog narrowband radio systems will not be a problem.

Early on in the mandated transition to narrowband channel spacing, the Department of the Interior decided to "skip over" the transition to analog narrowband radio and go directly to digital narrowband technologies for its Land Mobile Radios (LMR) systems. On March 4, 1996, the Department of the Interior adopted the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials, International Project 25 (APCO25) technology as the standard for digital narrowband radio communications within the Department of the Interior. Shortly thereafter, the Federal Government adopted the Project 25 digital standard as a national standard. It is designated as EIA/TIA-102.

In February 1998, the Department of the Interior mandated all Interior agencies to purchase only EIA/TIA-102 (P25) compliant equipment. However, Interior did establish a waiver process for the purchase of analog narrowband equipment in special circumstances. On November 12, 1998, the Department of the Interior further mandated the purchase of only EIA/TIA-102 compliant equipment if the radio system carries law enforcement traffic. Waivers from this requirement are not being accepted.

Due to the large anticipated investment in digital radios and radio systems, the Department of Interior established a Department-wide, multi-vendor, multi-year contract for the purchase of P25 compliant radios and support equipment. This contract was awarded on August 21, 1998. The use of this contract is not restricted to DOI agencies, but is open to all Federal agencies.

Currently, the Interior radio contract has no handheld radios that fully meet the requirements for wildland fire. Some vendors are very close and should have a radio for field use sometime this summer. NIFC will be buying some of these radios and testing them on actual incidents with some Type I and Type II teams. If the test results are favorable, the NIFC will distribute that information to the Interior wildfire agencies since they are required to buy digital radios. It must also be remembered that when buying digital, it must be APCO 25 (EIA/TIA-102) compliant.

In summary, three systems exist: (1) analog wideband, (2) analog narrowband, and (3) digital narrowband. Because there exists different systems and the concern about interoperability among the different wildfire entities, a task force was created by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) to address this problem. The States, the Interior wildfire agencies and the U.S. Forest Service represent the group. The task force's first meeting was held in July 1998. The following recommendations were the result of that meeting.

All fire communications activity (interagency), including initial attack, will be performed in the analog wideband mode through the 1999 fire season. (Analog mode is the way we have always done it).

Any Interior entity that converts their system to digital must keep it in the "multi-mode configuration (that means it can accept both digital and/or analog).

All emergency radio equipment coming out of the National Incident Radio Support Cache, for Type I and Type II Teams will be configured in the analog wideband mode.

All aviation communications (Federal and contracted) will be in the analog wideband mode.

On June 9, 1999, the NWCG agreed to the above recommendations. The Radio Narrowband Advisory Group will be meeting in late summer or early fall to discuss what has transpired with the Interior radio contract, field testing, and what mode will be utilized for the 2000 fire season.