

Fire Danger Working Team Charter National Wildfire Coordinating Group

I. Background

The National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS) has existed as the national system for rating fire danger since 1972. It was developed by USDA-Forest Service Research and is supported by that agency's Division of Fire and Aviation Management. Over the period since initial release, numerous modifications and enhancements have been suggested to improve the function and application of the system resulting in revisions in 1978 and 1988. In 1988 the USDA-FS, Director of Fire and Aviation Management, established an interagency advisory group to oversee the application and use of the NFDRS. This group was known as the National Advisory Group for Fire Danger Rating (NAGFDR). In 1995 to facilitate the national application of fire danger rating and to ensure that notification of modifications were communicated to all wildland fire agencies, NAGFDR was placed under the joint jurisdiction of the Director of Fire and Aviation Management and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). In 1999, NAGFDR was designated as the NWCG Fire Danger Working Team (FDWT) solely under their jurisdiction.

II. Name

The Fire Danger Working Team of NWCG; hereinafter referred to as the Team.

III. Authority

This Team is established pursuant to the charter authority granted to the parent group, NWCG through the respective Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior to accomplish NWCG mission, vision, and beliefs goals. The Team has the authority to develop and execute an annual program of work as approved by NWCG. The Team through its Chair, has broad authority to make contacts, assign work within the Team, make commitments on behalf of the Team and commit such resources that are available within the Team. The Chair may request further resources and authority as needed.

IV. Purpose

The Team is committed to advancing the science and application of fire danger rating.

The objectives of the Team are:

- Facilitate the use of fire danger information to support management decisions made by wildland fire agencies in fire prevention, preparedness, suppression, fire use activities and enhancing firefighter safety.
- Provide an interagency forum to collect, address, and make recommendations on applications, training, and enhancements for the National Fire Danger Rating System.
- Provide coordinated leadership for the interagency community using the National Fire Danger Rating System in addressing issues such as system application, quality and standards of inputs and outputs, information flow and access, operational continuity, training, problem identification and technological advancements.
- Provide a communication linkage among users, research and development, and systems support.

V. Membership

Team membership shall consist of a combination of voting members and non-voting technical specialists and as-needed subject matter experts. Replacement members are selected by the Chair, from a roster supplied by the NWCG Parent Group and approved by the NWCG Chair. A listing of current members will be prepared annually and made a part of the Charter.

VI. Organization

The Team is under the direction of NWCG. A member of NWCG is assigned liaison responsibility for the Team. It is through this person that the Team relates to the Parent Group. Team leadership shall consist of an executive committee: a chair and vice-chair/secretary elected by the voting members. The Team leadership is recommended by the voting members and forwarded to the NWCG Chair. The Team Leaders as well as the voting members are all appointments approved by the NWCG Chair. The Team Chair shall serve for a two (2) year period. At the expiration of the Chair's term, the retiring Chair may reassume member status, the present Vice-chair / secretary will assume the chair position and a new Vice-chair will be recommended. Following each changing term, the succession of Team leadership and the re-adjustment of the Team membership will be forwarded to NWCG Chair for approval. The nominees for the Vice-chair position shall be recommended from an approved NWCG list. The Vice Chair nominee would rotate between the federal and state agency representatives for every changing term unless there are extenuating circumstances.

VII. Cooperation and Coordination

Working team activities, products, projects, or recommendations that may affect another working team shall be coordinated with the team affected. The concurrence of that team will be evident and documented prior to presentation to the Parent group for approval or implementation.

It is one of the Team's objectives to reflect a spirit of cooperation and coordination with other teams especially on projects where cooperative input is required.

VIII. Meetings

Regular Team meetings will be held approximately every six months at a time and place determined by the voting members at the preceding meeting. This information will be forwarded to the Team's NWCG liaison.

It is expected that meetings will be held to the minimum necessary to accomplish the defined purposes of the Team and Group.

No scheduled meeting shall occur unless one executive committee member and four of the six remaining voting members or their designated representative (DR) are present. The DR will be "authorized" in writing to attend the meeting and vote for the absentee member who made the temporary appointment.

Agenda and briefing papers will be distributed to all Team members two (2) weeks prior to scheduled meeting. Minutes of the meetings and the executive summaries will be forwarded to the Team's Liaison and NWCG Secretary. Executive Summaries will be forwarded to other Working Team Chairs. These items as well as other pertinent information concerning Team activities will be posted on the Team's NWCG website.

Cost of the meeting facilities and travel expenses for state representatives will be appropriated for in the Team's NWCG Budget.

Special meetings may be convened to address issues assigned to the Team; meeting assignments shall be completed before the next scheduled meeting.

IX. Responsibility

Executive Committee:

- Drafts program of work and budget proposals for NWCG approval.
- Sets agenda for regularly scheduled meetings.
- Schedules special meetings as needed.
- Every September 1st submits an annual project status and accomplishment report.

Chair:

- Represents the Team in presenting recommendations to NWCG.
- Serves as Team spoke person when it is deemed appropriate especially with outside individuals or groups.
- Convenes meetings at such times and places as deemed necessary by the Team or Parent Group.
- Presides over the meetings.
- Recommends the need for further resources and authority when it becomes evident.
- Assigns work to task groups.
- Selects ad hoc subject matter experts to assist in issue resolution.
- Prepares and signs correspondence approved by a majority of the voting members.
- Works closely with the Team's NWCG liaison.

Vice-Chair/Secretary:

Is responsible for the tracking of all on-going projects and the development and implementation of Team procedures.

- Provides follow-up on assigned projects to ensure timely completion.
- Documents all meeting agreements in the form of minutes.
- Maintains the permanent file of Team activities.
- Sends meeting announcements, agenda items, etc., to membership.
- Distributes executive summary to Team, NWCG, and other Working Team Chairs.

Members and technical advisors:

- Solicit issues or agenda items from the constituents they represent for inclusion in the Team meeting agendas.
- Attend all regularly scheduled meetings.
- Provide to the secretary, three weeks prior to the next scheduled meeting, any briefing papers concerning issues to be included on the upcoming meeting's agenda.
- Report team activities and developments to constituents.

Subject Matter Experts:

- Assemble data or other information requested by the chair into written documents (if warranted) for presentation and peer review by the Team.

X. Reports and Minutes

Annual reports may be either in writing or verbal and are made to the Team as a whole.

It is not anticipated or desired that formal reports (for outside dissemination) be developed or submitted. The products of the Team should speak for its effectiveness; however, at least one report is needed to describe the activities, issues, and goals of the Team. Verbatim minutes are not necessary, but an accurate summary of the actions taken at each meeting is required. Sufficient records should be kept to analyze the performance of the Team and to keep the Team on task and progressing toward its goal. The chair shall insure that information on Team activities gets dissemination (after approval by the Team Membership). Team budget requests and strategic planning need to coincide with NWCG's mission. These need to be submitted as necessary to ensure that the Team is fulfilling its' mission and meeting Team objectives. Any special reports or findings will be appropriately published after being approved and funded by NWCG.

XI. Charter Amendments

Proposed changes to this Charter will be submitted to the executive committee who shall determine if the changes are appropriate and necessary. If they are deemed appropriate and necessary, the revised Charter will be brought to a vote by the Team for concurrence. If affirmed by five (5) voting members, the modification will be forwarded to the Chair, NWCG, for approval. All modifications to this Charter will be filed as supplements to the original Charter.

XII. Charter Approval - This "original" Fire Danger Working Team Charter is effective on the date of signature by the NWCG Chair. Charter revisions are made on the recommendation by the Team and with the concurrence of the NWCG Chair.

NWCG Chair

Date