

RADIO NARROWBAND ADVISORY GROUP

National Wildfire Coordinating Group

Phoenix, Arizona

October 30, 2001

MEETING MINUTES

Advisory Group Members Present:

Stephen M. Jenkins - Advisory Group Chair, USDA/FS, NIFC, Incident Communications Chief

Clare Wren - Oregon Dept. of Forestry, for Kenneth Goodwin

Dean Ross - USDI/USFWS, R2, for Roger Spaulding

Marv Storey - USDA/FS IRM, National Telecommunications Manager

Ron Strong - USDI/BLM/DSC, National Telecommunications Manager

Bob Panko - USDI/NPS, Everglades National Park, Fire and Aviation Management Officer

Dave Dalrymple - Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands

Advisory Group Members Absent:

Mike Wallace - USDI/BIA, NIFC, Fire Operations

Other Attendees:

Tim Quinn - USDA/FS IRM, Assistant Director

Steve German - USDI/BLM, NIFC Incident Communications, Boise, ID

Russ Sveda - USDI/BLM/DSC

The meeting was held to develop the recommendations for incident communications mode of operations for FY2002 and to discuss other related issues.

Advisory Group Recommendations

The group was in agreement that the FY2002 recommendations should not change from the FY2001 recommendations, except for deleting references to wideband or narrowband when mentioning analog mode, since the two are fully interoperable.

Incident Communications Mode of Operations - FY2002

- ✓ *All fire communications activity (interagency), including initial attack, will be performed in analog* mode. The group will annually revisit this decision and consider progress in digital technology and increases in the number of digital sites.*
- ✓ *Any federal, state or local entity that does convert their system to digital must keep it in the multi-mode configuration during fire activity. Multi-mode permits both analog and digital transmission and reception.*
- ✓ *All emergency radio equipment issued by the National Incident Radio Support Cache, for Type I and Type II teams, will be configured in analog mode.*
- ✓ *All FM aviation communications (federal and contracted) will be in analog mode.*
- ✓ *Family Radio Service (FRS) radios are not to be used on incidents - this includes federal, state, and contracted.*

** Wideband analog and narrowband analog are fully interoperable.*

Other Items Discussed

Digital Radio Testing - Steve Jenkins informed the group that tactical digital radio field tests will be conducted next fire season. One Type II and two Type I overhead teams will be using the radios for such incident activities as mop-up and demob.

Flight Following

A subgroup to the Radio Narrowband Advisory Group has been formed to coordinate the interests of agencies and dispatch centers for the national flight following system design. The group is chaired by John Moulder, NIFC, NIICD and consists of the following members:

Kent Saxton - BLM, Idaho State Office

Ken Brown - USFS, Wasatch-Cache National Forest

Border Frequency Issues

The advisory group agreed that it will help coordinate the collective interests of agencies affected by border frequency issues, especially the Mexican border interference issue.

Integrated Crossband Devices for Combined Dispatch

The group will research the feasibility of acquiring integrated crossband devices for NIRSC issue and for interagency dispatch center use.

Surplus Wideband Analog Radio Equipment

The group consensus was that outmoded wideband analog radio equipment not supported by manufacturers should be destroyed rather than excessed.

In a related discussion, the group agreed to voice to vendors that a bare-bones, low-feature, low-cost handheld digital radio is desperately needed for firefighter use.

Standard Code Assignments

After a discussion about the need for interagency standard network access code/talk group/ESN assignments, the group decided that it will research each agency's arrangement and come up with a recommendation that would include interagency coordination of assignments.