

WFEWT Conference Call

Subject: Fire Prevention Teams

Date: October 15, 2001

In attendance:

WFEWT members: Lou Southard, Roberta D'Amico, Rick Gibson, Maureen Brooks, Ed Kirtley, Willie Begay, Vi Hillman

Guests: Marion Matthews, Jeannette Hartog, Pat Durland

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Maureen: provided a brief introduction to the purpose of the phone conference

Jeannette: Provided historical information about Fire Prevention Education Teams. The FP team concept was begun in 1996 in the southwest by 10-12 people from various agencies. The project was seen by them as a proactive approach to fire prevention education. The concept grew from the southwest to Alaska in 1996 and has continued to grow each year. In 2000, the teams responded to 18 assignments and 15 national assignments in 2001.

The organizational committee for the National Fire Prevention Education Teams is a self appointed group with Jeannette serving as the leader of the group. The group utilizes the National Fire Prevention Coordinators of FS, BLM and NPS as advisors. The team concept has survived because the organizational committee is a group of dedicated folks who have wanted it and willed it, to survive.

Jeannette believes the time has come to move on to another form of the teams being supported. The steering committee will not be able to continue the current level of service without national recognition and support in the form to add a lasting structure to the Fire Prevention teams. She would like to see the teams be officially recognized and part of the resource ordering system. A strategic plan for the teams is needed which addresses the use of the teams, training, materials required in the field, and standards and qualifications for people on the teams.

Member comments:

Lou – sees the teams as being a major player in overall strategic plan for the Forest Service and other fire agencies at the national level. He concurs with Jeannette, the need to recognize the capabilities of the team is vital as is the need to formalize the team concept. He would like the WFEWT to make some strong recommendations to the NWCG.

Roberta - We need to have our information in hand to give to the parent group in January.

Rick Gibson – We need to move forward so that there is acceptance in NWCG

Willie – We need to discuss who will manage the team.

Maureen – She suggested that this take project status within NWCG where it would receive funding and support.

All concurred that the team supports and recognizes the National Fire Prevention Education Teams

Lou would like for WFEWT have oversight, would also like the teams to be able to work in the off years in planning and assessments.

Jeannette would like to move forward as a real entity in which there is policy and guidelines to develop formality for the teams. She suggested we develop a subgroup to develop an overall strategy for the future of the teams to present to the parent group at the next meeting.

Formally recognize the training opportunities for team members

Pat: Thinks we are at the point of making recommendations to the NWCG. He understands that we already have their support to move forward with the Fire Prevention Education Teams. We need to identify the items we need to be resolved, determine the paths we need to take to get to that point and present this to NWCG. ID the issues, set up task group, and go! Look at both the short term and long term needs. Keep in mind that this is a proactive project: a vehicle which addresses problems before they become larger, trains people at the local level, and puts the ability to solve problems in the field. He believes this is what NWCG is looking for and that this is a great opportunity.

Marion spoke about the role of the training shop at NIFC and how this is one of the functions that they serve. They would help to facilitate writing of a plan of this type but he could not commit their time to this project at this time. His suggestions included developing a plan through the use of a task group, identifying the training development needs, budgetary issues and standards and qualifications.

Lou suggested that the conference call agenda be utilized as a preliminary outline for the report. Discussion continued on the training needs (the National Fire Prevention Team Member training, Team Leader), the draft task books which have been developed, positions needed for the teams and budgetary needs. Discussion was also held regarding the name and focus of the teams. The official name of the team is Fire Prevention Education Teams. While the teams have mostly been utilized in the past to reduce the number of human caused fires there is the potential to utilize the teams for prescribed fire and mitigation needs. A real strength of this team concept is that there is flexibility in make up of the team which makes for a more efficient delivery system.

The group decided to task an interagency group of people who have been on a team or who have used a team. The group will be responsible for developing a strategic plan for

the Fire Prevention Education Teams which will be presented to the national fire directors and the NWCG for the purpose of formalizing and integrating the team concept at the national interagency level. The plan will address the historical background of the teams; current information including numbers and types of assignments, team make up and development; describe the vision for the teams; identify the opportunities and challenges; and recommend budgetary, training, qualifications, and dispatch needs for the successful integration of the teams at the national interagency level. The plan should also identify a timeline for the implementation of the short and long term goals for the Fire Prevention Education Teams.

Task group members - proposed

Vi Hillman – BLM

Rick Gibson – Oregon

Jeannette Butler - FS

Janelle Smith – NIFC, BLM

Dana Dierkes - NPS

Dave Merrifield – retired

Willie Begay -BIA

Jeannette agreed to contact Dave Merrifield to determine if he is available to be a contractual team member in order to assist in the coordination of the group and to write the plan. Lou agreed to work with Jeannette to work out contractual arrangements if Dave is available. Roberta agreed to contact Dana Dierkes and Janelle Smith. The WFEWT agreed to have the task group in place by our conference call on October 23. This will be on the agenda for the 23rd.

Additionally, the WFEWT will look at the team charter for possible revision at the January meeting to include the expanded responsibility of the Fire Prevention Education Teams. Roberta will locate a facilitator for the session.

Many thanks to all of you for your time on this most important subject.
Maureen Brooks