



National Interagency Hotshot Crew Steering Committee

***** Meeting Notes *****
January 17, 2007
Half Moon Bay Resort, San Diego, California

List of Attendees:

Steering Committee

Marshall Brown (MDB)– Committee Chairman and R1/R6 Representative – Entiat IHC
Randy Lehman (RL) – Incoming R1/R6 Representative – Rogue River IHC
Shane Greer (SG) – Outgoing R2/R4 Representative – Pike IHC
Matt Hoggard (MH) – Incoming R2/R4 Representative – Black Mountain IHC
Rich Dolphin (RD) – R3/R8/R9 Representative - Smokey Bear IHC
Mike Beckett (MB) – R5/R10 Representative – Eldorado IHC
Carlos Nosie Jr. (CN) – BIA Rep – Geronomino IHC
Randy Anderson (RA) - BLM Representative – Snake River IHC
Dave Niemi (DM) – NPS Representative – Alpine IHC

Advisors

Jim Cook (JC) – FS Representative - NIFC
Kurt LaRue (KL)– DOI Representative - NIFC

Other Attendees

Bob Little (BL) – Medewin IHC
Dennis Baldrige (DB) – Laguna IHC
Duane Tewa (DT) – FUTA
Kyle Cannon (KC) – Scribe / Entiat IHC Assistant

• **Introductions**

Presenter: Marshall Brown

• **Australia Update**

Discussion Leader: Kurt Larue

60-80 US firefighters to Australia. Eventually up to 100. Melbourne Province. Team leader from NFWS with 2 liasons.

2-3 person groups shipped to field stations to respond with local forces. Relief for local forces. Specific IMT positions requested.

Called for 1 or 2 crews also.

- **Crew Updates and Season Review**

No issues or discussion

- **Old Issues**

Discussion Leader: Marshall Brown

- **Medical Standards**

Medical Standards implemented in R6 and R3. Others on hold. Experience with the system growing. New hiring through ASC in ABQ will include medical testing. Time periods likely to be longer this year for hiring.

- **Crew Typing**

Discussion Leader: Marshall Brown

Topic is on hold. No changes. R5 seems to be evolving toward rest of IHC community. Brown spoke with Ralph – R5 interested in cleaning up some of problem RHCs in R5.

MB – Still a division between IHCs and gonna-be IHC. Two sided peer review process. IHCs claiming that no one is doing peer reviews. Appears to be little peer reviews occurring. Crews being certified in R5 without peer reviews.

In 2006, more crews certified in R5 than 2 previous years. Info suggests certification is occurring without meeting standards.

Most NOT called themselves Hotshots. Teams still make errors and name them IHCs.

Issue still out there. Clean up of RHCs still a topic. New director and budget deficits possibly spurring change. Crews may go away naturally – both IHCs and RHCs. Some down sizing possible based crews not meeting to ops guide.

RL – Maybe national crew study issue tomorrow may address some of this issue. Many current crews were not likely to have been instituted using a formal study or process.

MB – High initial attack success rates of other resources may divert funds to those resources and change number of crews.

MDB – Crew studies often political and messy similar to R6 contract crew study. Contract crew study is best value study similar to R5 RHC certification process. Rating effects dispatch priority. Claim is contract crew process being cleaned up.

In 2006, many contract resources sub standard. Most likely not to see contract Type 1 crews in the near future due to performance issues. Agency resources already paid for and often cheaper per hour. Contract process very political.

SG – Proposal - Crew typing chart to be removed. IHC is Type 1. Working team not overly interested. Another push may be needed. Shane has ear with IOS working team with his new job.

KL – IOS team looking at changing chart. No Type 3 crews in existence. Dispatch world wants it to remain simple or simpler. IOS team chair changing.

SG- Type 1 crews are proposed to IHC only.

KL – Anything easier is dispatch friendly. IMTs may not care all that much. To IMT Type 2 inconsistencies is a major issues. IMTs believe IHCs not an issue- Type 2 crew corps is much bigger issue.

MB- ICs not all that concerned with Type 1 problem.

KL – As ops chief, put T1 crews in hard situations, put effort into sorting out T2.

SG- May be worth making another push. Want to have when Type 1 crew ordered an IHC fills the order. Type1 = IHC is the goal.

JC – To get buy in, do some kind of outreach to NICC and national IC group in order to get buy in. Maybe have a small group work on it.

RL- All non-IHC Type 1 crew currently, would become Type 2 IA. Would increase quality of Type 2 crews.

KL – Have 4 types: IHC, Type 1, Type 2 IA, and Type 2. Easiest solution is to remove T3 and add IHC to dispatch list.

MDB – Certified RHCs included with IHCs?

KL – Get change to column first, then work on who is in it.

MB – In R5, RHC held to IHC standards and all funding is from same pool. Will likely see RHCs in mob guide in 2007.

JC- Crew typing is a contentious issue. If resolution occurs and typing is changed, names of qualified crews should come from NSC through formalized process. Highly recommended. Reps may need to discuss in this forum. Mob guide already in print. Mid January is deadline for all the mob guide text.

MB- R5 will be biggest issue. Mike will need to present to Division Chiefs.

SG- Sync IHC web page with mob guide list of IHCs

*****Decision made that a table will be produced showing proposed crew typing that removes Type 3 and adds IHC type. Chart will be shown to Incident Commanders and NICC. Jim Cook and Kurt Larue will take it forward. Mike Beckett will present it to the Region 5 Operations Group.*****

- **Prescribed Burn Hazard Pay**

Discussion Leader: Dave Niemi

Brought copies of proposal. 5 step process to recommend HP for RX. He is working on step 2. Dave to spend time on issue soon.

- **FPA**

Discussion Leader: Kurt Larue

KL – Still working on FPA and still spending money on it. Program can be gamed to get outcome that you want. Political need is input that can be manipulated. As long as political need is included system will not work. FPA comes up with too many answers that are not working. Model is not working.

MDB – Shared resources not included yet, but FPA is not an issue right now.

- **Resupply on Incidents**

Discussion Leader: Marshall Brown

List of specialty equipment was proposed at previous meeting. Decision not to develop cumbersome list. Last season MDB talked with national supply folks and got very divergent opinions and interpretations from national supply group.

One option- talk with supply group at check in to discuss equipment that crew has and what might need to be replaced from fire if damaged. Equipment manifest was useful for some supply managers, but not useful for others.

Hand tools, saw parts, etc, not usually a problem. Supply prefers to give part upfront. Rather than ordering at demob, go in advance and give them list of what we used ahead of time. Mobile saw shop seemed to work well. Often very generous with parts and resupply.

If reasonable with resupply, seems to work out well. Specialty items are often a problem. Non-standard equipment may need to be discussed with supply up front.

Another issue – assign liaison with national supply group. Problems may be minor, but could be helpful if representative talks deals with supply group.

RL- May not be a big issue now, but if B code is used for FS crews, it will become very big.

MDB- DOI crews have B codes and need resupply on fires now. Mindset for supply is towards Type 2 group not IHC. IHC comes with lots of equipment – different mind set.

****Decision made that Matt Hoggard will represent the NSC at the Equipment/Cache meetings.****

- **30-Mile**

Discussion Leader: Marshall Brown

Criminal complaint against ICT3 at 30 mile. Marshall has paper that describes process of grand jury. Marshall gave a statement last year on case. DOJ did not discuss charges with FS before being issued. MDB has copy of charges against 30 Mile IC if copies needed.

- **Liability**

Discussion Leader: Marshall Brown

OGC will no longer instruct liability section of RX-300. Reasons are uncertain. R2 cancelled class because OGC pulled out and liability issues are so uncertain at this time.

Break

- **BLM Incidents in 2006**

Presenter: Kurt Larue

KL- Burnover and rollovers for BLM. Mud Fire incident had problems in particular- Care from small towns in NV was not very well treated or doctored by local physicians.

If on BLM land and employee gets a burn, victims will be moved to a burn center automatically if fire is on BLM land. Will end up in Salt Lake, Boise, Sherman Oaks, Phoenix, Davis etc.

MB- How do we deal with doctors and hospitals if employees admitted to doctors.

KL- If in rural areas, hospitals do not have long term treatment options. Option are either treat and release or movement to different facility. Local dispatch and managers will work with moving burn victims to burn facility for assessment. Lear jet ambulance can be used.

For BLM crews, crews are on a lot of large fires that are not getting put out. Tripod, Clear, Bar, etc. Crews end up stuck on big, long term fires. End up losing more fires since crews are kegged up on large, long term fires.

If crews stuck on large fires or in areas where not much productive work is being done, BLM crews will pull out of national pool and name request crews to be moved back to BLM land. BLM IHCs agree with the change.

RA- Boatner level change?

KL – Yes. Boatner level. NICC not real fond of change.

SG- Last season, NMAC and NICC told GACCs to hold all IHCs in Region. Is this true?

KL- NMAC not dialed in with NIFC group very often. Often dispatch information may not match NMAC information as to reason for changes.

3 state investigation teams performed by KL. More operational people needed for investigation teams. Especially sups that are transitioning out of IHC crews. Very few red card quals on investigation teams. Not team of peers – very little fire experience on investigation teams. Many investigators ignorant of fire. Need more ops guide with understanding of fire.

MB- R5 has list, but not kept up to date

JC- Michelle Rierson and Larry Sutton set up teams. Michelle is looking for ops people.

MBD- Very good idea to have experts on investigation teams rather than inexperienced fire personnel. Only improve if fire people get involved. Ops background makes it much more likely to be good investigation

- **National Operations Meeting Review**

Presenter: Marshall Brown

Fire taking increasingly large portion of FS budget. Cost saving issues discussed at length. Aviation contracts renegotiations, increased national shared resources assignment length, were discussed as possible solutions.

- **Competitive Sourcing**

Presenter: Marshall Brown

Dispatching is finished and aviation is near conclusion. Firefighting is next for FS. DOI made firefighting inherently governmental. FS chose to examine firefighting for competitive sourcing. Marshall has copy of green plan. Discussed outline of sourcing process. Important to fully describe program of work. May hurt IHCs if program of work does not fully represent what IHC do. Need to make sure all of IHC tasks and duties are described.

MB- Same happened with mechanics. Better value for FS shop to do work than other sources, but chose to not use FS shop system. Even after contract failure, not allowed to go back to old system. Even if work fully described, other concerns may not allow for favorable outcome for IHCs.

- **Radios**

Discussion Leader: Marshall Brown

Change in radio program at NIFC for IHCs. Royce Shearing retired. Jose Lopez has taken his position. MDB talked to Shearing and Lopez. 2007 plan is in power point format. Will be mailed out to group. Not much change in program for 2007. Seems positive. Intersquad radios tested by Entiat. Worked out OK, but not a replacement for programmable radios. Useful for close proximity work. Small, compact with decent range.

- **GS-7 Squad Leader Position Description**

Discussion Leader: Marshall Brown

GS-7 PD classified and in AVUE for Region 6. Understood to be R6 only. Entiat and other R6 crews have GS-7 squad leaders now. Non-exempt position. HR director in R6 got some flack from WO. Submitted to national office for national use in AVUE in near future hopefully.

MB- GS-6 lead firefighter included?

MDB- No. Tried for package of classification. Agency classifier dropped the ball, so R6 sent PD to contractor.

MB- Gap is now between 5 and 7.

RL - National group issue for GS-6 lead firefighter PD.

MB- Straight upgrade for SL?

MDB- Yes. Direct accretion of duties was used.

- **Crew Production Study**

Discussion Leader: Marshall Brown

Production study has some preliminary data from 2006. Funding secured for 2007 funding, so will continue study for update of production data. Data may be useful for competitive sourcing. Needs experienced IHC person to take crews out. George Broyles can be contacted at San Dimas.

- **IHC and NIMO IMT involvement**

Discussion Leaders: Jim Cook and Randy Anderson

Dan Clineman has position on NIMO team. Looking for IHC involvement with NIMO teams. Looking for IHC to get involved on NIMO incidents. Use IHC leaders in different positions on the teams on incidents. Will give IHC more experience and NIMO teams more versatility.

JC- NIMO teams did not get out last season.

KL- NIMO teams may be included in fire assignments.

JC- NIMO teams evolving. 8 teams total eventually. Configured like old Class 1 short teams with 8 members. Tasked with Harbour doctrine approach issues currently. Looking at NIMO to take over "black hole" incidents. Slightly different than area command teams. NIMO teams working on non incident tasks also. Example – rethink NMAC approach, improve IMT staffing issues. Moving from concept to application.

MDB- Clineman not totally clear on IHC use in NIMO. Also looking for ideas.

JC- Dan wants to tap IHCs for expertise.

- **Training Issues and SME Issues**

Discussion Leaders: Marshall Brown and Rich Dolphin

- **S-134**

JC- Web based course for beginning firing course. NWCG did not accept S134 course. 234 targeted at 2 levels. Need basic course. All courses need to support specific position. BLM has only mature training group. NSC could partner with BLM to produce a non-NWCG course

- **S-234**

RA- Bad experience with SME. Frustrating process. Product not really improved. AAR typed up and suggested the use of AAR process in SME. Possibly a waste of time. Deb Epps was presented with the class.

KL- Leadership is critical for SME process like everything else.

DN- Will there be a peer review and will change be made at that point?

RA- Not good communication between leader and group at this time

KL- Will you be part of the alpha test?

RA - I have not heard. No others in the group have acted as SME. May be an isolated experience.

JC- NSC needs to discuss with NWCG some of the problems to help improve process.

KL- Epps usually gives out info on field reviews. IHC need to be involved in field review process.

JC- If NSC wants to develop letter to Epps, JC will take to her.

KL - BLM sups have been more involved in SME process and usually comes out with good product.

JC- Capture some of action items tomorrow afternoon would be good business.

MDB- Agreed.

*****Decision made for Jim Cook and Randy Anderson to write a position paper on the NSC concerns on the S-234 course and the SME process for course reviews.*****

Lunch Break

- **Training and Staff Rides**

Discussion Leader: Jim Cook

Course development list for January is out. 234 is preparing for field review. Will be last set of revisions until PTB revisions below occur.

Suspension of all course development for next two years. NWCG, National Fire Program, and others are planning to integrate courses and taskbooks. Also, changing books to reflect logical building of skills and hopefully remove redundancies.

KL - Ops taskbooks rewrites are going on and the IOC is soliciting reviewers for input into changes to PTBs.

JC - Vince Mazier? is lead on ops effort. PTB drive the course development process. Will look at whole training curriculum to redesign training program.

MDB- Work session this afternoon will address some of these bin action items.

Refresher website will be integrated into NWCG. Training specialist position advertisement handed out by JC and position discussed.

Staff rides being developed. South Canyon is online soon. Mann Gulch and Battlement are close. Texas FS and New Jersey FS starting to develop programs.

Redding and Redmond IHC have added staff rides to their training program.

San Juan IHC Sup Shawna Lagarza helps support national staff ride. Mormon Lake and San Juan doing Battlement Mesa in May

Dude fire used as case study for staff ride development.

FUTA uses Cerro Grande as staff ride. Lots of opportunities to get involved with staff rides. NWCG leadership committee keeps staff ride library. Duane is now on committee and is a contact for staff ride issues.

MB- Eldorado may go through New York Peak fire at end of 2007 training.

JC - May have a formal electronic site to store local staff rides that are not up to leadership website standards. Could use site to archive info on local web sites.

MDB- Staff rides are good opportunity for crews to learn about fires.

JC- Staff rides can be done on success stories as well, but fires that have significant impact on how fire service has evolved. Made for experienced learners. Not intended for new firefighters. Experience learns from failure, inexperience learns from successes. Boise NF made staff ride around success story of transition for IC refresher.

- **Tactical Decision Games**

In effort to integrate with oversight group, effort is afoot to add more TDGS to leadership website. Second TDGS development meeting happening this spring. Looking for 15-20 people to build more TDGS. Contact Shane Olpin from Black Mountain. Shane on detail working for Jim and leading development.

*****Decision made for Jim Cook to send out a letter of solicitation on TDGS development and staff ride.*****

- **Other Training**

NAFRI will have oversight of FUTA, JAC. Attempt to coordinate training effort.

420, 520, 620 is complete dilemma. Dropped elements in 520 not picked up by 420. Changes coming.

IS-700 is required review. 1-2 hour review.

DB- Can take 4-6 hours with slow internet connection.

JC- Other options for certification.

STL and TFLD need L-380 to complete those PTBs. STL and TFLD are priority for those classes through national money.

ICT3 and DIVS are priority candidates for L-381 class. Nationally fund 15 classes. If not getting slots, training officers need to be questioned.

- **Diversity Initiative**

Discussion Leader: Bob Little

National Fire and Aviation Diversity Committee. Regional rep could not make meeting. Bob attended week long meeting at FUTA. IHC usually don't get info from the top. Committee wanted IHC representative. Committee has been working for 2-3 years. Bill Miller, Randy Skelton, and Margarite Phillips are the "on the ground folks". Direction coming from Harbour. Large funding associated with fire drawing attention to fire organization from FS. Committee looking at larger scale plan to deal with diversity.

In agency, diversity is used as score card. Units either diverse or not and rated. No development program to provide for more successful candidates.

1 year program for job corps being used to help integrate diversity candidates. More players are needed to help deal with the work load.

Get people involved to get IHCs involved.

Type 2 IA crews – Great Northern and Mt Baker- keep quals lower to allow for better integration and can be used as a stepping stone for candidates into fire organization

Web site being put together to help with diversity issues.

Budget is the big driver. Money will go to the areas with the best diversity record. Diversity is looked at as a mandate.

Committee helps to set people up for success rather than throw them into position without preparation.

MDB- Policy development group?

BL – Regional reps put call letters together from projects and programs and prioritize programs for funding. Advisors oversee list of programs and then the WO group makes the decision on funding. IHC input needs to be proactive, not reactive

JC- Skelton frustrated that units don't have access to all the hiring authorities. Job fairs and outreaches identify good candidates, but often are not able to hire them due to the HR processes.

MDB- Action item for this afternoon. Baker crew used some unique techniques to make contact with target groups.

RL- Partnership programs – successful programs will likely have integrated processes for career paths for candidates. Dept of Labor may be involved with funding for job corps.

*****Decision made that Bob Little will be the NSC representative to the Diversity Committee.*****

- **Region 8/Region 9 Program Group**

Discussion Leader: Bob Little

Region 8 developed steering committee charter. Interagency approach. Fire season for Medewin is a bit different. R8 and R9 crews did not have good communication during evolution of new crews. Charter is forwarded to directors and crews. Has been successful in achieving some communication between involved groups.

BL interested in process of including R8 and R9 in NSC. Will R8/R9 be included or used as SME to committee. 1 rep for 5 crews is less crews per rep than most of other reps. Charter is in its infancy, but process is going well.

MDB- Two issues – inclusion in NSC and R8/R9 group development.

SG- Since beginning, NSC wanted to be kept small to make it manageable and not overstate FS voting power. Each agency has rep and then FS is 1 rep per 10-20 crews. Do not see need to add rep to national committee.

MDB- Region 8 and R9 can be rep to steering committee for R3, R8, and R9.

JC- Steering committee could show support for R8/R9 group to help the process.

BL – Understand hesitancy to add member to NSC. Don't want to under-represent R3 if R8/R9 is NSC committee.

*****Decision made not to change Steering Committee configuration. Letter will be written on NSC letterhead to support formation of Region 8 and Region 9 committee by Marshall Brown.*****

Break

- **Crew Performance Ratings**

Discussion Leaders: Carlos Nosie and Duane Tewa

Duane handed out IHC performance rating sheet.

Developed for evaluation of R3 BIA IHCs – Mescalero and Bear Paw. Uses numerical rating. Adds crew cohesion, safety, and specialized operations such as medivac, aviation, IA, etc.

Will be used by R3 for evaluations. Does NSC want to attempt to use it nationally for other crews? Can be used for both certified and non-certified crews.

Electronic copy can be sent out. Copy given to KC for forward to MDB and group.

BIA national office will push it forward to national level is NSC agrees with format and intent.

FUTA application deadline extended until end of January.

****Decision made to distribute evaluation form out to crews in each region for review.****

- **2006 IHC Unable to fill Orders**

Discussion Leaders: Randy Anderson

775 unable to fill orders in 2006 for IHC's

- **IHC Assistance to rest of the Fire Program "Give Backs"**

Discussion Leaders: Marshall Brown and Rich Dolphin

Discussion of IHC involvement in other programs such as the JAC, FUTA, etc.

MB- JAC website shows breakdown of supporting functions and agencies to academy. R5 has largest number of students but lower participation in overhead.

RD- Developed sheet to survey the off fire season work that that crews are doing in an effort to capture the amount of work that IHC do in the winter to support the fire program as a whole.

- **Crew Surveys**

****Decision made that Shane Greer and Kyle Cannon will collate the information on the 2006 crew surveys.****

- **Time to delegate and work on Action Items listed on Next Page**

- **NSC Liaison List Update**

National Operations Liaison – Chairman - Rich

Incident Operations Standards Working Team Liaison – Deputy Chairman - Randy

Incident Commanders/ Area Command Liaison – Mike Beckett

NFES Cache/ Equipment Liaison – Matt Hoggard

National Logistics Group – Carlos Nosie

Interagency Business Management Practices Working Team – Randy Lehman

Safety and Health Working Team – Dave Niemi

Diversity Committee – Bob Little

- **Election of New NSC Chairman**

MDB nominated Rich Dolphin as the new NSC chairman. Dave Niemi seconded the nomination. Rich accepted the nomination. All members voted unanimously in favor of **Rich Dolphin being elected as National Steering Committee Chairman.**

Shane Greer nominated Mike Beckett for deputy chairman. Mike declined the nomination. Mike nominated Randy Anderson. Marshall seconded the nomination. Randy accepted the nomination. **Randy Anderson was unanimously voted in as deputy chairman of the national steering committee.**

- **Advisor Group Member Elections**

Tom Suwyan – Utah State BLM Fire Director as *possible* member of advisor group

Karen may not attend as often as Alice did.

Additional discussion to follow on advisor group tomorrow.

Bin of Action Items for 1/17/07:

1. Crew Type Letter to IOS Working Team

Crew type chart will be produced crew type chart. Draft being developed by Rich Dolphin.

2. SME Position Paper

JC and RA will write a position paper on feedback on the S-234 course.

3. S134 representative to work with BLM training committee

Ted Mason from BLM training group will be in San Diego.
Randy will talk to Tom Bates to coordinate issue.

4. PTB review SME

Kurt will get more info. A representative from the NSC was not found.

5. Staff Ride for Battlement Assistance

JC will send out message

6. TDGS Development Representatives

JC will send out message

7. Diversity Committee Representative

BL will be the representative for the IHC and NSC to the Diversity Committee. MDB will write a letter to the committee outing BL's involvement.

8. Accident Investigation SME Team Member List

MDB will sent around solicitation letter to regional reps

9. NSC letter to Region 8 and Region 9

MDB will write letter

10. Crew Survey Collation

SG and KC will collate. Shane will present revamped survey sheet.

11. Advisor Vacancies and Liaison Contacts

National Operations Liaison – Chairman – Rich Dolphin

Incident Operations Standards Working Team Liaison – Deputy Chairman – Randy Anderson

Incident Commanders/ Area Command Liaison – Mike Beckett

NFES Cache/ Equipment Liaison – Matt Hoggard

National Logistics Group – Carlos Nosie

Interagency Business Management Practices Working Team – Randy Lehman

Safety and Health Working Team – Dave Niemi

Diversity Committee – Bob Little

12. IHC Off Season Survey for Fire Program Support

Will review form on 1/18/07