

**NRCG EQUIPMENT COMMITTEE
FALL MEETING
October 19-21, 2004
GLACIER NATIONAL PARK
Minutes of Meeting and ACTION ITEMS**

Tuesday – October 19, 2004

ATTENDEES: Ann Vogt, Robert Bell, Mike Frislie, Tim Crosmer, Mark Sherburn, Bruce Mottern, Tim Murphy, Rick Seidlitz, Richard Grady, Kevin Erickson, Scott Kuehn, Jim Reuter, Roberta Whitlock, and Sue Beron.

Welcome from Steve Frye, Glacier National Park expressing his appreciation as a Type I Incident Commander on a national incident management team the efforts of the committee regarding equipment standards, inspection and training these past two years.

Rick Grady passed around the plaque that he received from the NRCG Board of Directors at the spring 2004 meeting recognizing the efforts of the committee.

A review and update was made of the committee membership, along with technical specialist and liaisons.

Action item:

The updated membership list with the agency representatives will be posted on the NRCG web site by 12/30/04. The committee will keep a list of those individuals that serve as technical specialist and liaisons, which will not be posted on the NRCG web site.

After Action Review (AAR) - 2004 Equipment Inspector Workshops:

- Grady passed out the report to the NRCG Board of Directors regarding the workshops at the spring 2004 meeting
- Need to improve how the information about the workshops is distributed in the future
- Improve the hands-on inspections during the field day and limit the size of the inspection workshop to insure a good instructor student ratio.
- Improve the communications with the local contracting officers regarding the equipment inspection process.
- Conflict with the local RTA needs to be better coordinated.
- Billings had each inspection set up in stations so each inspector did one job
- Pre-season inspections went well, some inspectors are black & white in how equipment is passed or not.
- A bus company that provided equipment during the workshop and wanted to be paid after the fact. The forest ended up paying even though the bus was on the way to town for a mandatory safety inspection and did not incur any extra cost
- Discussion regarding where to hold future inspection workshops and certification of attendees; contractor versus government inspection; status of other geographical areas and zone inspection processes, sign-up processes, etc

Action item:

The NRCG Equipment Committee will be sponsoring the following workshops and committee members to help with the coordination of the workshops, with assistance from the committee and technical specialist.

Advance Equipment Inspector Workshop - Helena:

An advance equipment inspector workshop will be held in mid March of 2005 in Helena. Grady will work with Darrell Folkvord, Lewis and Clark County Public Works Department, and George McLaughlan to set up an instructor cadre for the workshop. One day classroom and 1 day field is being proposed that would involve two sessions that would be Monday through Thursday. A maximum of no more the 30 - 35 students per session would be proposed.

Proposed ideas for the workshop:

- CSVA out of service criteria
- ROPS/FLOPS/Brush Guards
- Fuel Truck inspections and Hazmat review
- Transport and heavy equipment inspection training
- CDL and medical
- Load sedcurement requirements and tie-downs
- Train-the-trainer program

Equipment Inspector Workshop – Kalispell

Mike Frislie and Jim Reuter will take the lead in establishing an instructor cadre for the workshop. The committee decided to hold the workshop the week of April 18-22, 2005.

Specialized Equipment for Fire line, Fuel Modification and Rehabilitation Workshops:

Big Iron will be change to Specialized Equipment for Fire line, Fuels Modification and Fire Rehabilitation Workshop

- In 2005 it was not well attended by agency personnel. There were 25 pieces of equipment there and mixed review on the overall evaluation of the workshop. We need to have a greater degree of agency fire and fuels personnel to understand use of Specialized Logging equipment for fire suppression and other uses.
- Obie O’Brian and Kevin Erickson are working with the Forest Service and DNRC to find a parcel of land to use as a field demonstration area for 2005. Kevin listed types of equipment that will be available next year. Target audience for the workshop is individuals overseeing fuels management, operations, foresters, resource advisors, equipment inspectors, and contracting officers.

Kevin Erickson, Scott Kuehn, Bruce Mottern and Obie O’Brian will be taking the lead in establishing an incident management team organization utilizing ICS due to the safety concerns with the specialized equipment and the large coordination that will be needed for two workshops.

The dates have been set to hold the workshop in two locations which will be in Missoula, Montana and Coeur d’ Alene, Idaho. The two workshops are scheduled for the week of May 2-6, 2005.

Nominations for all the workshops will be completed on the NWCG training nomination forms working with the NRCG training committee, zone representatives, along with the agency public information officers.

Tim Murphy – NRCG Private Contractor liaison

Tim gave an overview of the work he has completed this past summer regarding his position with NRCG, and the efforts of visiting with the various private contracting associations, NRCG standing committees and work plan objectives over the next year.

Tim also presented a power point presentation on the strategic plan proposal regarding some of the contracting issues that he will be presenting to the Executive Board Session of NRCG Board of Directors on November 4, 2004.

Equipment Inspector Workbook

The committee broke into small working groups on segments of the equipment inspector workshop. The committee's goal is to have a student and instructor workbook to use as a basis for training to obtain certification for contract inspection/administration.

- Follow up will be needed with Roberta and Sue to do the final format by the committee winter meeting in 2005.
- We need to get narrative and power point from John Dreadfulwater for Transports (**Mottern**)

Wednesday – October 20, 2004.

Attendee's to the meeting were Brett Waters from NRCG Board of Directors, Duane Turk of the Central Montana Contractors Association and Michael Landon of the Cabinet View Volunteer Fire Department.

Action Item:

- Will ask the NRCG Training Committee to forward onto the Zone training representatives training needs analysis for the NRCG Equipment Committee by October 1, 2005. What type of workshops, etc that the equipment committee should be looking at for 2006?

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Action item:

The following individuals are currently liaisons and will be updated pending changes this fall from the various committee meetings:

Liaisons to the NRCG Equipment Committee:

- Business: Roberta Whitlock
- Training: Mike Kopitzke
- Operations:
- NRCG Board of Directors: Brett Waters

Liaisons to other NRCG and DNRC Committees

- Business – Ann Vogt
- Training – Sue Beron
- Operations – Kevin Erickson
- Aviation – Sue Beron
- Prevention – Mike Frislie
- DNRC Fire Business Committee – Richard Grady
- Fire Use – Mike Frislie
- Strategic Action Planning Group – Kevin Erickson

Liaison to NWCG Committees/Task Groups

- Potable Water – Bruce Mottern
- Engine & Crew Contract Specifications – Kevin Erickson
- Forms Task Group – Sue Beron
- NWCG COTR Administration – Roberta Whitlock

Report from NRCG Business Committee – (Roberta Whitlock)

- Need to get a class breakdown for equipment (feller bunchers, skidgines, etc)
- The Committee will have two retirements so will be looking for new members.
- Report on the audits being conducted by Montana and Federal level regarding private contracting utilizing Emergency Equipment Rental Agreements and efforts in the future through the strategic plan proposal with all agencies in Region 1 over the next year.
- They need input from Equipment Committee by mid-January 2005 in order to have Chapter 20 Supplement by 3/1/05. Goal is to try having a two-year supplement.
- The USFS Regional Office employee who finalizes the publishing of supplements will be retiring – so the sooner the better.
- Classification of Water Truck plus a Water Tender is still being discussed – lots of issues but feedback from Operations is unclear, water trucks are being used as tenders, tenders as engines, multi-typing of engines and tenders; do we need T-7 Engines, Eastside uses them a lot.
- Review of Transport Inspection Form and attachments that have been developed last year. Would like to have added to NRCG Chapter 20 Supplement and forwarded to NWCG Task Group

Action items:

- All committee members will work on getting input to Roberta Whitlock by **January 14, 2005** on updates to Chapter 20 for review at the January 18-20, 2005 NRCG Equipment Committee winter meeting in Helena.
- Review of 2005 Work Plan Matrix that will be provided to NRCG Board of Directors on November 3, 2004.
- Equipment Committee will develop specification / class for Feller Bunchers, Super Skidgine (Moxy, Forwarders, Proteus, etc), Harvester, KMC – Soft Track formula and class – **(Kevin & Scott)**
- NWCG Fireline Handbook – Dozer Classifications – **(Mottern/Grady)**
- FOPS/ROPS and brush guards – There is a task group working on these issues and Kevin Erickson has talked to private industry regarding a woods package available from manufacturers. Until the task group comes up with something more concrete we should not do much more on this and OSHA is looking at changes for 2009.
 - Anything with a 360 degree swing has to have FOPS and brush guards (per OSHA); Oregon OSHA has a ROPS requirement but it is limited to that area
 - There are different FOPS ratings for construction and woods work
 - Brush Guards are not clearly defined – what is it; what is the minimum required; what after-market certification is needed;
 - Equipment Committee will wait until larger picture is addressed
- Gas Prices (Business Committee)
- After-market certifications – when is this needed, what modification to trucks or equipment would require this? Will work with the Business Committee this winter regarding equipment inspections for 2005.

Tire Depth and Windshields

Grady passed out the letter that he sent to Bruce Suenram, President of the Northern Rockies Wildfire Contractors Association (NRWCA) upon review and input by Scott Kuehn, Kevin Erickson and George McLaughlan.

- NRWCA does not believe the 6/32 depth reduces tire damage or increase safety, and does not believe the standard is reasonable
- Scott Kuthen shared that the logging industry swaps out tires long before DOT requires it because they find the DOT standard is too lenient.
- Region-2, 4, & 6 all require 6/32 tread depth
- The committee based this on safety of operation on roads commonly used in wild land fire (extra wear due to opening of old roads, increased use by large equipment, etc.
- Windshield – NRWCA does not believe that chips in the driver's line of vision are not practical in this Geographical Area because there are a lot of dirt roads in this area. Repaired rock chips in that area does not interfere with driver's vision.
- We have not received any comments on this issue, therefore did not find it unreasonable.

Action item:

The committee went on record supporting the letter to the NRWCA that had input from Kevin Erickson, George McLaughlin and Scott Kuehn that was prepared and sent by the Chairperson Richard Grady as the committee's position on the issue of tire tread depth and windshields.

Tie-Downs and load securements:

- We have only looked at DOT standard for slip-in tanks placed into a dump truck.
- The concern was raised when a water tender was rejected because it had a tank attached with tie-downs instead of frame mounted.
- DOT requires tie-down on 4 corners; strap is rated for load being secured (1 ½ x the load).
- Chains or straps attached to flat bed instead of being attached to frame – is this acceptable?
- We looked at Region -6 contract – they have an illustrations of what is acceptable
- DOT book states the security must be sufficient for the load

Action items

- Grady will contact George McLaughlan in Helena to work with Ann Vogt and Mark Sherburn in establishing some type of standards
- We may need to develop illustrations that can be handed out at workshops, distributed to Contractors, and added to Chapter 20

DNRC Fire Business Committee Report and NRCG Equipment Committee input:

Grady reported that this past year he has worked with Marci Giblin, Chairperson of the DNRC Fire Business Committee on the efforts of the NRCG Equipment Committee regarding the updates to some of the DNRC internal operation and finance manuals that has incorporated some of the inspection forms of the equipment committee.

Bruce Swick, Procurement and Contracting Bureau Chief with the DNRC state office in Helena is working with the DNRC Fire Business Committee regarding DNRC request for proposals on Water Handling equipment.

Mr. Swick is planning on attending the upcoming NRCG Business Committee and Equipment Committee meetings to discuss establish specifications, best value, contractor performance evaluations, standards and regulations for all agencies. Some of the issues that the committee had regarding the procurement process with state and federal agencies will be forwarded onto the NRCG Business Committee as needed in the future.

Radios for private contractors:

Grady reminded the committee that this issue was discussed at the fall meeting in 2003 with an action item of it being forwarded onto the NRCG Operations Committee for input and direction:

Action item:

- This will be incorporated into the work plan to be addressed to the NRCG Board of Directors as an action item for them to forward onto the NRCG Operation Committee for 2005.
- Need to involve USDA and DOI Communications Specialists to determine what is going to be used (narrow/wide bands; analog/digital; programmable; etc)

Equipment Typing/Numbering Systems

- Homeland Security has requested the Coast Guard to type excavators. We need to pay attention to any change they make
- NIMIS numbering system – mandate to have all agencies use the same typing
- Some local governments are changing agency equipment to this numbering system
- How will this requirement be used with contract equipment?

Action item:

Committee will continue to monitor the changes regarding NIMIS and Homeland security over the next year as it affects the operations and equipment specification.

Training Matrix in the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook (IIBMH)

- Has been revised by Training Committee & Business Committee :Fire Crew Member, Water Tender, notes revised to training required and level or fitness testing required
- Roberta will send to Sue before next weeks NRCG Training Committee meeting so we can assure it is clearly stated
- Question raised on why fire line personnel have to be tested as arduous, but sawyers and water tenders are only required to be tested at light level
- When levels of fitness testing were established by MTDC they only researched fire fighters using a shovel and carrying a pack. No scientific data to determine what level is needed of other types of ICS positions.
- How many hours of fire line safety is needed for contractors? Chapter 20 Supplement states 4 hours for contractors; and up to 8 hours for agency hired casual employees
- Is deployment practice required? Yes, See Chapter 20 Supplement

Action item:

Sue Beron and Roberta Whitlock will forward the committee comments and input to the training matrix through the NRCG Training Committee for updates to the Chapter 20 Supplement.

Updates to the Equipment Inspection Forms:

The committee will continue to work on equipment inspection forms that are attachments to the OF-296 form that helps enhance the equipment inspection process of various type of equipment:

Action item:

Specialized Equipment – Mike Frislie, Scott Kuehn
Transports – Grady, Sherburn,
Fuel Trucks – Mottern, Willoughby
Heavy Equipment – OF-296 - Mottern
Sedans – Willoughby
Potable Water Trucks – Erickson and Beron

Specialized equipment developed by private contractors:

- Encourage companies with new ideas to work with the contractor associations to develop a web site to post new developments in equipment
- The Government websites have links to associations and to national fire websites

Thursday – October 21, 2004

John Bras, Forest Service joined the meeting.

Private Contractors Presentation

Duane Turk –

- The inspection and sign-up process is not always consistent.
- Perception is the longer it takes the higher the standard being imposed or inconsistency/inefficiency in the administrative process.
- Equipment in full compliance at the inspection and the rest of the process took a long time

(Group discussion)

- Need feedback that includes reasons the process took a long time (i.e. did contractor have all documents with them at time of inspection, was a CO at the inspection, were training completed and documented, etc).
- We also shared common reasons this can happen – training or documentation was not brought to the inspection/sign-up, did they really pass inspection, was there a Contracting officer on site, CCR done, etc?
- Also this is a national issue due to CO non-fire workload, agency retirements and downsizing, along with the large number of private fire contractors. Requested more details so we can look at what the problem is at the local level and working through the mobilization boards

Mike Bournazian, Bush Fire Service

- Concerns are with the Unimogs and how they fit into the system, how it may work in ROSS. Another concern is how CO's verify the training records. EERA is being used out-side the scope of its intent – consider issuing real contracts.
- Foam - CAFFS does not require a metering devise and blue pages does have an adjustment of 10%; metered system allows a 5% adjustment of price. He has both so should the adjustment be 15% - we said only 1 adjustment.

(Group discussion)

- Coordinated effort needs to be established at the local mobilization boards regarding the delegation and responsibilities regarding pre-season inspections, training record verifications and contracting administration.
- A meeting is being scheduled for November 3, 2004 with all the existing training MOU holders with NRCG to discuss certification, audits, etc (**Murphy**)
- What mechanism is there to assure the records are not disposed of or destroyed by the agencies and training providers?
- Long term this can affect private contractor corporate liability. Another factor is while moving up in the system, a trainer that provided private training through a certain point for an individual goes out of business and a new training provider is asked to sign off on a task book for the next level – this places the new training provider in an awkward position and may have to prove or retake courses before being certified.
- Unimogs – local issue Gallatin, FM, and Contractor to resolve. Also address concern with Mob Guide – check with BLM out of Region 4. Concern that a “super-engine” classification would create a new class that may not be required and potentially set the stage for other classes of equipment who want to have special classification.

Debbie Parish –Fire R US:

- Specialty equipment guide to help market contractor’s equipment – how do we get the word out:
- Specialized equipment: issue – How is it entered into ROSS, so far it is inconsistent. How does it fit into rotation? If a specialized piece of equipment is not in rotation can it be named requested?

(Group Discussion)

- Is name requesting of specialized equipment allowed? We all agreed – yes. Name requesting of rotation equipment would not likely work.
- When can a CO negotiate a rate for established class of equipment – referenced blue pages; Been using the EERA process as a national agreement – only national agreements are issued by NIFC and EERA are intended to be local agreements – system allows equipment to travel out of local geographical area and EERA is recognized by all.
- What do operations really need – would a Unimog be an engine or specialized equipment?
- An equipment guide was generated by a Helena based contractor association. Other associations can publish such a guide and if it is loaded on the association website, the NRCG site has a link to them.

Dave Russell - In the Woods Contracting

National Engine Contract synopsis is out. Will R-1 get behind it this time? Engine Bosses need to comply with 310-1 (not the FS manual as FNF requires).

(Group discussion)

- Best value contracting will help address the training inconsistencies. An NWCG Working Team is meeting this week to begin reviewing the 310-1 and the 5109-17 FSH. Send comments regarding the revisions to the NRCG Training Committee.

Gram Nick, Liquid Surge

- New product available called Liquid Surge Stabilizer. Compared to Trail Creek baffles (different models). The product is shipped flat and assembled by snapping together. San Dimas does have the product and may issue a Tech Tip on it.

Questions from group – Trail Creek baffles were flexible to fit into existing tanks, they were also working on baffles that would work with aviation (non-water) applications. How heavy is the baffle/sizes available? What is the water displacement with these? Flexible baffles would also flex inside the tank so they developed a rigid system. Material used in the baffle will hold up in some chemicals, others not. The demonstration model weighs 1.8 lb, assortment of sizes (1575 & 1900) are available. If used properly 2.5% displacement. Cost - \$.80/gallon

Action item regarding the private contractor's issues and comments:

- The NRCG Equipment Committee appreciates the feed back they received today from the private contractors and will continue to pass their specific concerns through the other NRCG Committees (training, business and operations).
- Will continue through the upcoming workshops in 2005 to work with interagency contracting officers, fire management officers, and fire equipment specialists regarding the issues on pre-season equipment inspections, IIBMH, specialized equipment and other issues working with the private contracting associations and local mobilization boards.

INPUT TO THE IIBMH FOR THE NRCG BUSINESS COMMITTEE by January 14, 2005

ACTION ITEMS:

SPECIFICATIONS

Harvester and Feller Buncher - Kevin and Scott will follow up on classification, head types, etc
Super Skidgine - Ann will check with BLM (Engineers) to get a current copy of blue book
Soft Track - Sue will pull report of this type of equipment from EERA program

Skidgine/Hydro-horses/Pumper-Cats

- tank size, pump package, and formula needs to be addressed
- Some skidgines are maximizing the amount of gallons but are underpowered because the engine/horsepower will not handle that size tank on steep terrains
- Gallons per horsepower limits
- For 2005 the Skidgine formula will be removed from the Chapter 20 Supplement, and contracting officers can still negotiate if equipment does not fit into a matrix pocket

Weed Washing – Minimum requirement for equipment; what degree of washing is needed? (Erickson)

Water Tender/Water Truck –

- This is the only Geographic Area (GA) in the nation that maintains both classes. Leave for this year unless we get clear direction from the NRCG operations committee. When Strategic Plan is carried forward, we may not have any Water Trucks under a fire agreement or other procurement methods (**Fall of 2005**)
- Scott, Kevin, and Grady will write White Paper to show costs for use, equipment, training, fitness requirement, is the physical for a CDL suffice for the fitness requirement, compare to other GA specifications, pros and cons of having 1 typing. (**Spring of 2005**)

CAFFS and Metered Foam –

- Request Operations Group if there is a preference of type and if we can have 1 adjustment for any type of foam unit? (**Spring of 2005**)

Buses – Amount of storage, hauling of fuel and chainsaws – government furnished chase rig or what? John will research what a minimum amount should be – for gear, tools, food and nourishment. (**Vogt, Sherburn, Speelman**)

Tire Tread Depth and Windshields – Scott will ask MLA's Trucking Committee if they have any research to support appropriate depth; Kevin will check with San Dimas.

Length limits on T-6 Engines – T-6 engines are meant to be small, light, and maneuverable. We have some engines that are 500-gallon tank, but GVWR's have increased on smaller trucks. . Now the newer trucks are 4WD, and heavier duty so can be classed as T-5. We need to educate operations about the change in technology.

Open meeting policy

Action item:

- The equipment committee wants to insure that since it is an interagency committee that we all have a clear understanding of the policies and procedures regarding the opening meeting law, procurement issues, regarding DNRC, Federal Agencies and members of the public.
- Define Open Meeting Policy from State of MT and how it impacts other agency limits for discussion, committee business and decision making process, what happens if we hold the meeting in Idaho or ND but a MT DNRC member is there, procurement decisions, etc.
- Tim Murphy, NRCG Private Contractor will work with the NRCG Board of Directors with the support of the equipment committee to ask for a clear direction and policy regarding the open meeting laws as it applies to the NRCG standing committees at the upcoming NRCG Board of Directors meeting on November 4, 2004.

The committee in accordance to the Charter will have Kevin Erickson as the new NRCG Equipment Chairperson and Mike Frislie was elected Vice Chairperson effective October 23, 2004.

The committee recognized Richard Grady for his two years of service as the Chairperson representing DNRC and dedication too the efforts of the committee; his time in participating as part of the instructor cadre on all of the equipment inspection workshops in 2004, collaboration with the interagency partners as part of the committee and chairperson responsibilities, along with his leadership recognition by the NRCG Board of Directors on behalf of all the committee membership.

Rick thanked the committee for their kind comments and will continue to serve on the committee regarding their efforts over the next year.

The next meeting for the NRCG Equipment Committee will be January 18-20, 2005 in Helena hosted by DNRC (**Grady**). Information regarding the location of the meeting, hotels, etc will be sent to the committee by the middle of December 2004 by Grady to the membership and Chairperson. Will start at 1300 hours on Tuesday 1/18/05 and go through 1300 hours on Thursday 1/20/05. Agenda items need to work on the instructor cadre for the three workshops and action items assigned to the committee to meet the deadlines for the NRCG Business Committee.

Respectfully submitted:

/s/**Richard E. Grady**

Richard E. Grady

Chairperson

NRCG Equipment Committee

October 22, 2004

File copy to: NRCG Web site