

**Northern Rockies Coordinating Group
Training Committee Meeting
Feb 28, 2005-March 1, 2005**

Attendance: Bob Cunningham, Frank Waterman, Tim Murphy, Maggie Doherty, Laura Dooley, Tim Crosmer, Rick Lang, Kitty Ortman, Judy Heintz, Gail Thurston, Larry Elder, Andrew Randall, Sally Estes, Gaylen Yeates, Jim Clairmont, Neil Nelson, Bryan Connelley, Mike Kopitzke, Lily Huskey, Jim Blankenship, Dale Glenmore, Ronald Burns, Rosie LeMire

Effects of Training Program from the Implementation of the 401 Series – Frank Waterman

- Look at bumping courses up to avoid bottleneck.
- Don't shut out State folks who aren't under the same requirements for 401.
- Newer folks need definitive guidance.....will affect them more.
- Be patient....will be 3-4 months before we get some hard questions answered.
- What dollars will be available and how will they be distributed/implemented?
- Will make the federal agencies more professional in being able to respond. It's out of our control, is going to happen, in long term will be positive.
- What are we going to do with the NWCG curriculum? Training committee will need to take this on. Need to have discussions with agency administrators. There is the need to take courses to qualify for 401 series for some folks, but others need the courses to be qualified to do their job in the field.
- We can develop an issue paper, and at the next NRCG board meeting, ask them for their guidance.
- We have some flexibility right now, due to lack of 401 applicants, to open jobs to both 401 and 462. If a 462 series person were selected, they'd need to sign an agreement that they will qualify for 401 series within 5 years.
- Need to encourage dual career paths so we don't end up with a surplus of some positions and deficit in others (i.e. ops vs. finance)
- Concern that everything will be put into the 401 series, and the non-federal folks will get left behind. Costs of center will be going up to meet 401 requirements, and non-feds will pay more to get less. Center is not there to meet 401 requirements.
- Need to really think hard about prioritizing our people to be selected for these courses.....be sure they really need the course, not just want it. If we do this, maybe we don't need to add courses.
- When IQCS gets up and running, it will greatly help the needs analysis process.
- Remember most locals are volunteers, have other jobs. The harder we make it for them to get the required training, there will be less and less players.
- May need to get tied in with UM, MSU, other colleges to establish new curriculums to meet quals.....could get qualified faster. Still need to meet pre-requisites, but they are easy to meet.

- There are a lot of efforts nationally to develop partnerships with higher education. Still a lot of uncertainty nationally in Human Resources on what classes qualify.
- Be patient, we'll get a lot more clarification in the next few months.

IFPM Concerns:

- States/rurals may not get into the classes if not enough slots
- Additional classes

Bob Cunningham is willing to put together an issue paper for the board.....draft by March 9.

Needs Analysis – Bob Cunningham

Handout: NRCG Training Needs Analysis

Rx310 Intro to Fire Effects....Risa figures we can hold 2 sessions for a total of 76 persons due to cadre limitations. (this year we had 3 sessions)

Fireline Leadership L-380....limitation due to cost (\$450?)...only open to FS folks unless it doesn't fill up. Not meeting needs of Bureau? Issue is safety for the kids out there. BIA feels they are good....may have some slots to help get other folks trained. BLM may look at hosting an interagency session on east side. NPS...so small they can't host their own....slowly but surely trying to get people through. Right now we have only 1 vendor for this course.

Rx300 Prescribed Fire Burn Boss....Risa feels one session, 40 total. There is pre-work, which disqualifies some. Is it feasible to put this on at the zone level? Can certainly be done, but there is some complexity there. Zone would have to work with and get concurrence of training specialist responsible for that course (in this case, Risa). There are a number of training providers interested in putting on this course....more discussion on this with Tim Murphy later in this session.

Rx410 Smoke Management....high need course. There is a mechanism to get private operators in.

FL210 Wildland Fire Origin and Cause Determination....is this an NRTC course? There are some field exercises.....not a complex course. Propose that NRTC does it this spring, then turn it over to zones.

S400 Advanced Wildland Fire Behavior Calculations....propose having 2 sessions rather than 1. This would help with the IFPM process. Bob will visit with Risa about this. Folks are willing to offer their cadre folks.

I400 Advanced ICS....1 session of 45 students. No need to do additional sessions. Session is in revision. May have new product to look at next year.

S491 National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS)...Qualifying course for 401 series. Very technically challenging course.....laptops required.....tough pre-work. Waiting list, but not more than 8-10 (after pre-work).

M581 Fire Program Management....used to be a 2-week course. Not been put on in Northern Rockies in 4 years. Being tested at NAFRI in next few weeks.....hoping to get a new certified package. For federal agencies, although others have sent attendees. Is a required class in IFPM.....should be a best-seller course for years to come. Class size will be around 45. There will be a tuition cost . Week-long course. Lots of pre-work (each of the 17 sessions has pre-work). All instructors will be agency folks. If they are there as substantial instructors, they can get credit as well.

Managing Wildland Fire for Resource Benefit.....only put on every other year. Next year this will not be offered.

S339 Division/Group Supervisor....still a valuable course.

Local Fire Management Leadership....expensive, but good course....steering group makes the selections. Costs are transparent, not out of the training budget.....high cost to taxpayers. Line officers need to go to this course.

Aviation Conference and Education (ACE)...expect decision to be made soon. A work in progress. If session is put on in Northern Rockies, need to block out that week to avoid conflicts.

S420 Command and General Staff.....This year we sent a few folks to Pacific NW. With numbers, and our commitment to Boise, not sure we can put together a course for Missoula. Bob recommends we continue with our normal rotation.....we'd host in in FY07. Safety, Operations, and Information are the 3 areas it's hard to get folks into. Encourage folks to get nominations in early so we can outplace them to other sessions nationally.

Intermediate Air Operations (formerly S370).....is primarily an information sharing course. If it's not required for anything, why are we putting it on? Folks without aviation background go to it and are getting good information. No place else in the identified curriculum meets that need. Consider not offering it every year...make it a bubble/swing course. There will be higher priorities with the 401 series issue.

S372 Helicopter manager.....no discussion.

I401 Multi-Agency Coordination.....will be put on concurrently with I400 or will go away.

S404 Safety Officer.....huge number of open task books out there....bottleneck. Can be type 3 safety officers.

Train the Trainer Simulations.....great course. First year with significant training needs. Make it a bubble/swing course.

D310 Support Dispatcher.....

Aviation COR.....still have a need.....course is contracted out and they guarantee a minimum for the contractor....we are below that right now. Be sure needs analysis is correct. May be paying for the slots whether folks attend or not. Look at offering every other year.

Smoke Modeling.....contracted course. \$250-\$300/person. Not required for anything....a nice-to-have course. Very technical course. Take it out.

Incident Medical Specialist.....we don't have a choice on this.

S371 Helibase Manager.....lot of open task books out there. Been putting it on every other year. Skip it, and go with every other year.

S378 Air Tactical Group Supervisor.....yes, keep it.

Weather Station Maintenance.....speaks specifically to Handar unit this year. Teaches folks to set up weather station.....not troubleshooting. Felt they were misled about this course. Need is for troubleshooting/maintenance. Bob recommends NRCG board be aware of this, so we are sure they hear what we're talking about. **Frank will take it forward.**

Fire Computer Applications..... Steve Simon put it on based on needs at the time. What is in this course? The IQCS classes and I-Suite packages are being offered separately. Don't have a need to put on this course. Little workshops are put on locally, continue with that.

Fire Procurement.....no choice on this.

S403 Information Officer.....hard to get the folks we have through 420. Don't feel there is a need to put this course on.

S346 Situation Unit Leader....Should do the Planning Section curriculum this year.

S348 Resource Unit leader.....same as above

S430 Operations Section Chief....low numbers....remove?

M480 Multi-Agency Coordination Group.....valuable course....keep it.

S375 Air Support Group Supervisor. Delete

S390 Intro to Wildland Fire Behavior Calculations. Delete

ACE Train the Trainer.....informational. Very disconnected with the NWCG training and Bureau & FS training qualifications. But need it if going to be teaching their courses.

S347 Demobilization Unit Leader.....need to do.

S358 Communications Unit Leader.....based on need, would appear we should cancel. Some feel we should leave it in there. Bubble/swing course.

S440 Planning Section Chief.....do it.

S470 Air Operations Branch Director.....delete

S357 Food Unit Leader.....delete

S443 Infrared Interpreter....delete

S460 Finance Section Chief.....bubble/swing course

S445 Training Specialist.....low numbers. If get 20-30 trainees, should have one. Many attendees are folks who want to learn more about training requirements....training reps, etc. Not a required course. Could shake the bushes and get additional nominees. Keep it in and see how it goes.

D311 Initial Attack Dispatcher.....alternate with D310, so would be in '05 and '07. D310 in '06.

S400 Incident Commander...put it on the last few years, so delete.

IQCS Training....Account managers, training coordination/delivery, fire management officers. Only training currently in existence is for account managers. When get up and running, will be a need for training coordinators and FMO's to get training. May be an individual unit responsibility.

Summary....listed 28 courses, with 2-3 bubble courses.

Contracting officers and equipment inspectors should assess needs for training. Or can it be done through this group? Business committee is meeting Wed & Thurs....just need to know how they want to handle it. Should be able to go to one website for all. They need to get their dates in to us in good time so we can avoid conflicts.

Fire procurement is a workshop this year....but does require nomination and tuition.

Leadership curriculum.....break out nominations by agency. Expensive curriculum. Non-feds not often willing or able to put up the tuition money. States might be able to find money to fund a few people through the grants and agreements process. Then evaluate the curriculum on its merits after sending some attendees. Bob is willing to set up more sessions of the curriculum if needed. It's not an issue from Bob's perspective if some zones prioritize their folks and non-FS personnel end up getting some of the slots.

5109.17/310-1

310-1 (Mike):....update every 5 years. We're in the process now. Looking at training requirements that support the positions. Will be a lot more positions in the new 310-1 and will be broken out differently. Support positions, tech specialist positions, rx positions, etc. States have said they won't accept additional training requirements in the 310-1. If agencies want to put additional training into their folks, they should go ahead. 310-1 should be kept at minimum standard. IOS working team and training working team are meeting week of March 14 in Boise. Should have a draft out to public for comments shortly after that. Implementation date of Jan 1, 2006 is what they're shooting for. Will be much larger, more comprehensive document than we have now, but without a lot more training requirements. Will try to clarify training that supports the position, etc, but nothing substantial. Move afoot to combine with standards of 5109, but doesn't think it will go anywhere. Is there a group that will modify the 6 self-study modules? Anticipate it will happen, but not right away after release of new version. Will be some clarification on certifications, but will leave some ambiguity in there. When the draft is released, Bob suggests we collect the comments and agree on collective response.

5109.17 (Bob): Each agency has a little different twist on their training requirements. 310-1 is the parent document.....start there before going to agency-specific info. The 5109.17 is the one that differs the most from 310-1. Lots of meaningful discussion over the past several years on the benefit of combining 5109.27 with 310-1. 5109.17 was developed to add additional safety training requirements after the South Canyon Fire. National direction is we will not see 5109.17 go away in the future. We're all really busy, but this is an area we cannot change.....it's not going away. We need to get comfortable with it. There are other proposals out there which will affect our requirements...specifically Homeland Security, etc. There's a national assessment group looking at our fire mgmt training in general, from advanced incident mgmt and area command, down to geographic area level. Why are we getting people into 520 and 620 when they are near the end of their careers? There will be more info coming out on these recommendations. Hopefully they will affect us in a positive way. Change is the order of the day.

There will be an update to the 5109.17 sometime this coming spring.....not a lot of changes, but some clarification and additional required training for some of the leadership positions.

Are agency administrators familiar with 5109.17 and supporting what's going on? We need to be sure they are aware and educated on this issue.

How's it coming with scanning the old 5100-17's for our review? Should be on the national web site in March.

ACE Training Updates – Buttercup

Aviation training on-line modules handout

Module descriptions handout

On the module description handout, note the significance of asterisks or lack thereof....gives you the status of the course (whether available online, classroom only, not developed yet, etc).

Some ACE courses have pre-requisites.

Is there a cost for these courses? No, just the cost of getting there, which can get expensive in itself. How can we suggest the most useful courses to folks? IAT Requirements Matrix handout helps show what courses are required for each position. There is currently no documentation, other than what's listed in the 5109.17, on what's required since IAMS was replaced. There is a crosswalk in IQCS between IAMS and the ACE curriculum. To be a wildland fire helibase manager, for instance, don't need to attend courses listed in ACE. They are more geared to project type helicopter operations....wildlife surveys, trapping, etc.

A221....Advanced Trainer Competency....try to get more people qualified so we don't have to send folks so far away to get ACE training.

NRCG Mobilization of Private Fire Suppression Resources – Tim Murphy

Contractor Liaison

Northern Rockies Strategic Plan for Contractor Services handout

Driving Factors.....

- USFS; OIG Audit (EERA's, Contracting)
- MT DNRC, Legislative Audit (Contracting)
- IDL, Fire Program Review
- BLM, 2004 Congressional
- Governor Schweitzer & Senator Burns

Contentious issue.....contractors vs. fire departments/cooperators

Best Value.....allows awarding contracts based on impartial consideration of various factors such as experience, training, and past performance of personnel and capabilities and condition of equipment.

Timeline.....we're just starting into this process.

These documents are available on the NRCG website.

NRCG Strategic Action Committee....

Equipment – Kevin Erickson

Training – Nancy Gibson

Operations – Mark Romey (alt. Edmond0

Business – Bruce Swick, Kathy Benson, Marci Giblin, Roberta Whitlock

Dispatch – Kathy Elzig

Facilitator – Tim Murphy

Minimal number of EERA's when done with this?

No limit on number of Best Value Contracts

NR broken into zones

Contractors assigned a response zone timeframe

Availability list if no BVC

Explore contract equipment inspections and training verification

There would be no minimum guarantee

9 contractor associations in the Northern Rockies

Training provider MOU's.....to find a list/contacts/websites/phone numbers of providers.

http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/fire/nrcg/training_mou_index.htm

We usually have 35-40 MOU providers....need a cap? Tim thinks so.

Tim is willing to work with this committee to define a sideboard to decide how many MOU providers we want. Also need to determine what other positions should be considered inherently governmental.....avoid AD's going through the training to be, for example, a Type 3 IC when there is very little chance they would be hired to do that job. This would need to be brought to NRCG.

Bob suggests one way to self-cap this would be to have provider ante up some money to have us look at their material.....and have an on-going fee for the maintenance.

Maybe funnel the above funds into an administrative assistant for Tim to pull all this stuff together and get it out of the dispatch centers.

There is a significant need to train private sector persons, and the best avenue we have to do this is through private providers. Workload on dispatch centers is a problem.

Recommendation: *Frank and Tim present to the board a proposal to fund the administration of training provider MOU's.....Gail Thurston, JudyHeintz, Maggie Doherty, and Sally Estes volunteered to help.*

AD/EFF draft guidelines have been given to the board.....should have comments back by May 17 ???

15-20 cdritical positions hard to fill....those are the only ones we'd hire under AD/EFF. That would be the standard for the Northern Rockies

Handed out calendar showing all the provider training scheduled. Will provide to each zone training coordinator.

Training provider audits.....

Tim is going out and doing problem ones.

Neil.....all audits are done.

Frank....one scheduled. Should be done by end of March.

Gaylen.....two scheduled, with commitments by cooperators to do the other two.

Kitty.....

Maggie....

Rick.....nothing set up yet.

N.Dakota doesn't have any.

Audit form is on the NRCG website....there are 4 parts....record keeping, instructor qualifications and currency, training session audit, recommendations and actions. Field manager's course guide is clear on what qualifications they need to stay current.

Mobilization of Private Fire Service (Contractor) Resources handout

The above is a done deal for 2005. Tim wants to improve some stuff for 2006.

Bob encourages folks to check the bottom of page 4.....document is silent on a lot of what Tim is doing and what his position should be doing.

Template for National Crew Contract is almost ready. 10 crews in 2005 (was 8 last year)

National Engine contract is going away for 2005. Expectation is you'll use the national template if you are going to contract an engine. National template is 80% complete.

Will have 3 new mobilization boards.....Miles City, Lewiston, Billings.

Big Iron workshop still tentatively scheduled....Missoula 5/2-3 and Coeur d'Alene 5/5-6

Public notification for hiring process and timeframes.

In the long term, what level of training are we going to allow our contractors to do? At some point in time, may be some competition between the private sector and the training

that's being put on at the NRTC. If the private sector can be put on quality training cheaper than the agencies can do, that's probably a good thing. If at some point in the future, we see we are losing our agency instructors due to moonlighting for a contractor, then we need to have a discussion on that to see what NRCG wants to do there.

Could we make it a requirement that, before a contractor provides a 300 or 400 level course, it would have to be signed off on by NRCG. We actually have that system in place through our audit process. Then we should not say that contractors cannot do certain courses.

Contractor issues with M410.....they can't get in to it, so can't teach 200+ level courses. NWCG has a policy that says the government is not to be putting on training for private people. If we start to let in a private contractor or two, would need to let them all in.

NRTC Update – Bob Cunningham

A lot of our problems, especially in the Forest Service, have been with Type 3 incidents. Type 3 IC's concerned about their status. NRTC is going to bring together a working group to help them recognize they are critical.

Want to look at all the various products and procedures available to us in the Northern Rockies and try to identify and package these products and get them sent out to the field by late spring. Would have a chance to look at these products and see which ones might be used at your own unit.

There will be a link on the Lessons Learned website as well.

Bringing in some legal counsel to determine where we are from a liability aspect. Do I need liability insurance? What will it buy me?

Recently hired a BIA employee to replace Jim Steele.

Staff Rides: a powerful and effective tool, long used by the military. Would like to develop some. What kind of staff rides do we need? Prescribed Fire? Fire Use? All-risk? Type 3 complexity level? Needs feedback.

Video: Dude Fire Staff Ride

IQCS Implementation Plan Report.....handed out copies to folks for the night, and will discuss in the morning.

Committee Reports

Gail Thurston – Prevention Committee Northern Rockies will be hosting workshop in Bozeman.

Lily Huskey – Business Ops Business Mgmt handbook updates....a lot of small changes and a few major ones. One is the new AD pay plan. Business committee will not be able to set AD rates for technical specialists in the future. New handbook update should be out soon.

Dale Glenmore – the only courses the BIA can deliver to AD's is the ones required in 310-1. A few exceptions....power saw course is one. Big push from national office to put sideboards on the increasing amount of training being required. Rookie training for AD's....costs keep going up. Need to get a handle on it....cost containment. Each unit will put on the courses, but not in a camp setting ... so no catering, camp setup, etc. But will put on the classes at each agency. May do a staff ride. There's a possibility they may have internet access – yes! IT guys are ramping up....getting hardware up to speed. Hopefully around April 1 they will turn the switch on.

Larry Elder - Operations Will be 5 type 2 teams in the region this year. May lose a Type I team due to lack of being able to fill positions.

Mike Kopitzke – Equipment Big Iron concept is maturing.

Sally - (401 series) Deadline looming over us to have all our records in order by June 30. Have a letter in each individual's file. Can be a form letter, but needs to have the person's name, as well as an original signature. If anyone comes up with a good draft cover letter, please share with Sally.

Adjourn until 8:00 a.m. tomorrow.

Tues, March 1, 2005

IQCS Discussions – Blair Young

Interagency application that tracks incident responder certifications and provides workforce analytics for Wildland Firefighters from multiple entities.

Partner agencies.....BLM, USFS, BIA, FWS, NPS, TNC

Have migrated 40,000 USFS records, 30,000 DOI records

IQCS Help Desk....full time contractor for support, approx. 20 calls/day
Main reasons: password reset, training/instruction, data migration issues

50 training sessions completed, 1000 account managers trained Oct 2003-Oct 2004

29 sessions scheduled for 2004-2005

Primarily directed at account managers so far

Refresher session in development, online training component being revised, evaluating a sandbox/training environment

Blair Young hired in January from AFS (Alaska).....is the business steward.

Looking at:

IFPM requirements

Standardized fire/incident number integration

ROSS-IQCS data evaluation & improvement

IQS and non-Federal entity integration

310-1 and 5109.17 updates

Field requests: always evaluating and prioritizing

<http://IQCS.NWCG.GOV>

Contacts: BlairYoung-business steward, Rick Jensen-business leader. Both at BLM, NIFC

Need to get a better handle on who is inputting incidents.....right now, the system is open and makes it confusing.....several people in different locations can input the same incident.

Will IQCS ever acknowledge the changing course numbers? Courses should all be tied properly together. Goal is that every course that a person had in the past will be properly recorded (competency).

Hope to be able to “marry up” the competencies to courses as they are updated, rather than having to enter separately.

To give someone a competency, do we need to “give” them the course? Agency needs to look at this....need to be able to give them the competency without having to have the course falsely show up in their records.....they should be able to get the competency from “life lessons”.

What’s the status of getting the nomination forms loaded? Security upgrade and accreditation process started to cause errors. Trying to get the programmer out to review it. Still investigating....target is to have it tested, up and running for fall nomination deadlines.

Bob feels the nomination process is a high priority....need to get it functioning. This is a deliverable under the contract, but the contractors are working on other projects and we are at their mercy.

Account managers training session week of May 23 in Northern Rockies. When do you anticipate rolling out the module for training officers? Still in planning phase...unsure of a date. Anticipate geographic areas doing their own account manager sessions starting next year.

Were any people lost in the migration? As far as we know, no, although some account managers insist they were. Haven’t been able to verify any cases. Some may have been put in with wrong organizational code, which you don’t have access to. Blair can check, or they can go back to the programmer to check. It’s probably in there, but the person just hasn’t known where to look.

For the states to get onboard, they would have to find the funding. A lot of states are interested, but the feds are not going to pay for them.

A lot of contractors are using the state’s IQS as their red-carding system. IQS has been funded for another 5 years. Need to be consistent in our nomenclature, etc, so that when the time does come to migrate the data to IQCS, it will be more easily done.

Dept. of Homeland Security is currently assessing software options, and whatever system they choose to adopt, there would be advantages to us looking at the same product.

Link between Firecode and IQCS? Is considered vital data, but not a good identifier in general.....it’s not applicable to prescribed fires, just wildfires. We’re entering the information 3 times....IQCS, ROSS and Firecode. Would be nice to have it integrated.

NRCG – IQCS Draft Implementation Plan Review – see separate document

Implementation Committee: Carrie Errecart (chair), Neil Nelson, Larry Elder, Rosie LeMire, Jim Clairmont, Frank Waterman

Tasks:

Issue Paper to NRCG.....Bob will have it to Frank

Weather station maintenance.....Frank will get info on whether it will be Handar only or FTS and Handar.....also maintenance/troubleshooting vs. just setup.

Equipment inspection group.....Bob and Frank will work with them to be sure they have a full understanding of the nomination process and timelines and how it will be handled. Discuss whether private individuals will be allowed into the equipment inspection classes or not.....we don't accept their inspections, it must be an agency person who does the inspection. Maybe they could audit it to understand what agency inspectors will be looking for. Maybe a misunderstanding where those individuals believe they are fully qualified to be an equipment inspector and offering their services. As a training committee, is this something we need to discuss before it becomes a problem. The course is listed as a workshop, but you come out of their certified to inspect. More flexibility to allow them in since it's called a workshop. Suggest we have our equipment rep (Mike Kopitzke) take it back to their committee to address this. Letting the private folks in would help us in the long run, since they would be aware of what they need to do to meet inspections. Just need to be sure it's clear that they will not come out as certified inspectors, and would need to run them through the nomination process to keep the numbers manageable. The problem would be trying to handle the nomination process for privates....not prepared to support that. Frank will contact Mike and have this discussion and go from there.