

# NWCG Fuels Management Committee

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## Meeting Notes and Decision Log

Microsoft Teams Meeting

Date: April 13, 2022

Begin Time: 1300

End Time: 1700

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## Attendees

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### FMC Members

**Present:** Mike Van Hemelryck (NPS) Chair; Andy James (NASF) Vice Chair; Mark Jackson (BIA); Angie Simpson (BLM); Jon Larson (FWS); Deb Fleming (NWCG); Frankie Romero (USFS)

**Absent:**

### Guests

Larry Mastic (Coordinator, Northeast Region National Cohesive Wildland Fire Strategy Wildland Fire Leadership Council), Mark Melvin (Prescribed Fire Management Specialist, Jones Center), Gary Wood, Jonathan Stober, Jim Prevette, Doug Havalina, Pete Lahm, Kim Ernstrom (IFTDSS), Eric Hughes (IFTDSS), Henry Bastian (IFTDSS), Chris Marks (incoming FWS Fuels Lead), Casey Boespflug, Heather Heward, Bre Schueller (Notes), David Celino (DCR)

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## Decision Log

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### **Topic: Role Call**

**Presenter:** Angie Simpson

**Discussion/Considerations:**

### **Topic: Expansion of RXB Quals**

**Presenter:** Andy James/Larry Mastic (and others)

**Discussion/Considerations:** Several non-federal special guests attended the meeting to outline a proposal of expanding Prescribed Burn Boss qualifications to increase capacity of the Prescribed Fire workforce. Collectively, we are not coming close to achieving prescribed fire goals due to lack of adequately trained prescribed fire practitioners. The all hands, all lands goal of the Cohesive Strategy will be hard to achieve if Prescribed Fire Burn Boss qualifications require wildfire experience. The group proposes a path to being a Prescribed Fire Burn Boss that does not rely on wildland fire experience and fire suppression. This would allow non-forestry state agencies to leverage practitioners interested in being burn bosses, but not interested in wildland firefighting, to conduct prescribed burns. The group sees a need for multiple career paths to be facilitated whether individuals are inside or outside of an agency. The program would aim to build out training so all people interested in conducting prescribed burns could be gathered to build capacity and fill gaps to achieve an “all hands, all lands”

approach. Proposals for alternative pathways to becoming a Prescribed Burn Boss Type 3-5 were proposed (RXB5, RXB4, RXB3) that do not require the practitioner to have wildland firefighting experience. Benefits will include an increased number of qualified prescribed burn bosses nationwide, mechanism for states to recognize standards and incorporate into liability rules and regulations, eliminate variety and inconsistency among state level CPBM programs, and facilitation of reciprocal recognition of prescribed burn boss qualifications. The group that presented the proposal is looking for guidance and support from the FMC and are committed to making this work. They offered to help the FMC in any way they can to keep this effort moving forward. The FMC believes this is an important issue. The presenting group will take a staged approach and creating an outline/path forward from the White Paper and PPT that the special guests presented.

**Topic: SmoC Field Guide-Timelines**

**Presenter:** Doug Havalina/Pete Lahm

**Discussion/Considerations:** Pete Lahm was in attendance to discuss timing of getting the SmoC Field Guide out to the fire community by the end of the summer. Dave Mueller is on contract to help finalize the document but needs the FMC to review the draft and provide feedback. It was agreed that the guide would be reviewed by FMC members or by proxy by the end of April.

**Topic: RXB1 and RXB2 Standards Document**

**Presenter:** Heather Heward

**Discussion/Considerations:** Heather presented an update on the RXB1 and RXB2 training material she has been working on. She has a draft of the standards document which contains duties and responsibilities for the two positions and would like the FMC to comment on what complete looks like for the standards document. Deb Fleming feels that these standards are at a good point for the FMC to do a quick check to make sure there aren't any red flags to move this forward. Casey Boespflug mentioned that the FUSC is comfortable moving this forward for the FMC's final review and approval. Heather will send the standards out to the group for final review and would like comments back by the end of April. Mike VanHemelryck agreed to set up an additional meeting with Heather if need be.

**Topic: IFTDSS Burn Plan Writing, RXB1/2, and Updates**

**Presenter:** Henry Bastian/Kim Ernstrom/Bre Schueller

**Discussion/Considerations:** Kim Ernstrom and Henry Bastian, from the IFTDSS team, presented information with updated IFTDSS user statistics as well as an overview of current IFTDSS tech transfer efforts and training. The IFTDSS team has been taking efforts to train users how to leverage the application for prescribed burn planning thru online courses, via the USFS Fuels Academy, the USFS Fuels Community of Practice webinar series, Burn Boss classes, the Wildfire Learning Portal, and thru USFS R4 workshops. The team is accomplishing other tech transfer efforts specific to Wildfire Hazard and Risk thru the USFS Shared Stewardship pilot project, OWEC Risk Mapping efforts, and the USFS Fuels Community of Practice. There was discussion by the group on how/if NFPORS will be linked to IFTDSS as well as continuing discussions about creating more robust tools in the system to aid users with prescribed burn planning. Discussions with the IFTDSS team, the FMC, the NFPORS group, and other oversight groups need to occur to ensure proper connections are made. Frankie mentioned that using IFTDSS during the USFS Fuels Academy was a huge success. The IFTDSS team would like to continue to leverage the Academy to teach practitioners how to leverage the system for fuels planning. Kim Ernstrom also mentioned that the Academy is a great venue to get feedback from participants to guide what the IFTDSS team builds next which helps the application better meet the needs of the field. She said that currently, the online "IFTDSS for Burn Plan Writing" course helps to identify and close some of the gaps in existing NWCG course work for burn boss and burn planning courses. Despite all of

the IFTDSS tech transfer efforts, which are primarily led by Kim Ernstrom and Josh Hyde, there still remains a need for additional support. There is a question about where the best place is to build capacity for IFTDSS tech transfer. The DOI has not shown much interest, but Angie Simpson mentioned that interagency participation in the Fuels Academy could be a great start to getting more DOI folks on board. Henry Bastian has been talking with Tim Sexton about leveraging a network of universities via agreements to do this work. Frankie would like to continue the conversation of IFTDSS tech transfer as there should be more opportunity within the USFS to channel funds to build capacity via universities in the future.

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## Action Items or Assignments

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**Name(s):** Mike VanHemelryck

**Action/Assignment:** Get the white paper and PPT from the Prescribed Burn Boss expansion proposal group and distribute to the FMC.

**Name(s):** Andy James

**Action/Assignment:** Act as conduit between the FMC and the Prescribed Burn Boss expansion proposal group to keep the effort moving forward.

**Name(s):** All FMC

**Action/Assignment:** Review the SmoC Field Guide draft and provide feedback by the end of April for Pete Lahm to pass off to Doug Havalina so he can complete the final version for release by the end of this summer.

**Name(s):** Heather Heward/Mike VanHemelryck/All FMC

**Action/Assignment:** Heather will send the RXB1 and RXB2 Standards document out to the FMC after the meeting for their review. The FMC agreed to get comments back to Heather after 1-2 weeks. If anyone has an issue, let Mike VanHemelryck know and he can set up a meeting with Heather to discuss. Otherwise, they will give her the thumbs up to move forward on taking the Standards to the NWCG.

**Name(s):** Mike VanHemelryck

**Action/Assignment:** Send Angie and Frankie a link to the information about who SOPLs should be reporting to on incidents as this may not be a cut and dry answer as it used to be. Angie and Frankie will review.

**Name(s):** Mike VanHemelryck

**Action/Assignment:** Find a note taker for the next meeting on May 11, as Bre will not be in attendance due to the Spring WFMEDA Staff Meeting.

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## Date, Time and Location of Next Meeting

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**Date:** May 11, 2022

**Time:** 1300-1700

**Location:** Microsoft Teams