

NWCG Fuels Management Committee

Meeting Notes and Decision Log

Microsoft Teams Meeting

Date: Nov. 13, 2024

Begin Time: 12:00

End Time: 13:44

Attendees

FMC Members

Present: Mike Van Hemelryck (NPS); Andy James (NASF); Mark Jackson (BIA); CHAIR--Chris Marks (FWS); David Schultz (NWCG); VICE CHAIR--Jamie Tripp (USFS); Laura Harger (DoD); Pat Hardy (BLM); Bradley M. Shoemaker (OWF)

Absent: Angie Simpson (BLM)

Guests

Casey B. Boespflug (Fire Use Subcommittee Chair); Todd R. Rankin (Fire Use Subcommittee Vice Chair); Kevin M. Maier (Training Specialist); James (Matt) Dunn (Training Specialist)

Decision Log

Topic: FUSC Update

Presenter: Casey B. Boespflug (Fire Use Subcommittee Chair) & Todd R. Rankin (Fire Use Subcommittee Vice Chair)

Discussion/Considerations:

- The Fire Use Subcommittee is working on revisions to the PMS 430 (NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Module Operations) following changes to physical fitness standards.
- FUSC is tracking the S-219 (Firing Boss) taskbook update, specifically regarding the shift to include both in-person and virtual training options. The committee will be looking at what options are available for in-person training to address the desire from the Executive Board.
- The RXB-1 (Prescribed Fire Burn Boss) taskbook is currently on hold.
- The RT300 (Burn Boss Refresher) video was finalized and uploaded to YouTube and the Learning Portal, though utilization is mixed. The committee is requesting feedback to determine if the video is used effectively.
- The subcommittee has applied for FY26 funding for the RT300 video but did not get funding in FY25 and is seeking more funding.

- Recruitment efforts are ongoing to gain additional members to the Fire Use Subcommittee.

Topic: Budget Guidance FY26

Presenter: David Schultz (NWCG)

Discussion/Considerations:

- The FY26 budget guidance and project request forms are available on the NWCG website.
- The deadline for submitting project requests is January 24th.
- The process includes review and prioritization by parent committees before going to NWCG.
- Funds are primarily for project work done through contracts. No salaries, labor, travel or training delivery.
- Steering committees for NWCG courses (RX510 and M580) are eligible to apply for funding if there are specific project needs.

Topic: S-219 Firing Boss (FIRB)

Presenter: Kevin M. Maier (Training Specialist); James (Matt) Dunn (Training Specialist)

Discussion/Considerations:

- The Firing Boss task book was discussed extensively.
- The Executive Board expressed that there should be an in-person component to the Firing Boss training, in addition to the online training.
- The committee is working with the SME group to design a 1-day in-person training component, which may be a field day or scenario-based training.
- The group reviewed a list of potential new SMEs, addressing agency representation gaps. Four additional members were approved. They are:
- Brandon Corbett (Forest Service); Richard Smith (Florida Forest Service); John Haskins (Council of Western State Foresters); James Champ (National Park Service)
- The new SME group will review existing online materials, and then create the in-person content.
- The removal of S-230 (Single Resource Boss) was discussed, with a new, consolidated online Single Resource Boss module set to be required as part of the new Firing Boss qualification.

Topic: Interagency Declared Wildfire Guide and Template

Presenter: Jamie Tripp (USFS); Pat Hardy (BLM)

Discussion/Considerations:

- The committee discussed the need for an interagency declared wildfire guide and template, recognizing the complexities of differing agency requirements.
- The Forest Service has a draft template and process that is currently at the Office of General Counsel (OGC) for review in response to the Chief's Prescribed Fire Review.
- BLM is in the process of updating their handbook, which includes their guide and guidance around declared wildfire reviews.

- Most agencies present expressed interest in a standardized interagency document but recognize it may be a lengthy process.
- The committee agreed that the Forest Service should proceed with their agency-specific document and share it once OGC review is complete as a potential starting point for a larger NWCG effort.

Round Robin:

- BIA: Notes that some tribal and BIA units are still recovering from the national prescribed fire pause. There has been some prescribed fire in Arizona. The BIA has hired a new national aviation manager, John Cervantes. Aviation are collaborating with fuels on the use of UAS and have halted new UAS purchases until a plan is in place for replacing aircraft. They are also sending BIA staff to Agency Administrator and prescribed fire training at PFTC.
- BLM: Notes that Angie is meeting with the Air Force in San Antonio, TX. BLM has seen limited prescribed fire activity this fall due to resources, drought, and planning levels. They are transitioning to IFPRS. There is some pile burning beginning in South Dakota.
- FWS: Reports that they are focused on carryover planning and FY25 fuels plans. They are conducting fuels work across most regions, except for Oregon, due to recent weather events and fires in the northeast. A memo was released requiring firing/burn bosses to attend S-219 and burn bosses to attend RX-300.
- NASF: Reports that Oklahoma experienced extreme drought followed by record precipitation in November. There were 434 fires in October, but the weather changed dramatically, with up to 20 inches of snow in some areas. The state is now focused on recovering and getting back to training and mitigation projects
- NWCG: Announces that the NWCG annual meeting for chairs and vice chairs will be virtual on February 13th. The NWCG office is moving buildings, causing some disruption.
- USFS: Reports that prescribed fire activity has decreased, except in Region 4, due to weather, hurricanes in the Southeast, and wildfires in the Northeast. Additionally, the Forest Service is occupied with responding to the Chief's review and a related GAO audit. There is light burning occurring and it is also annual leave season
- NPS: Conditions are similar to other areas, with limited burning. There was a recent shuffle in overhead, with Jim Schultz moving to a new position (All Risk) and Chuck Russell becoming the new operations program lead.
- OWF: Reports that funds were pushed out for fuels and post-fire, which should meet the bureaus' needs through the continuing resolution. Leadership was attending the IPC meeting in California.

Action Items or Assignments

Name(s): FMC

Action/Assignment: Provide feedback to the Fire Use Subcommittee on the utilization of the RT300 video to either increase it's use or reprioritize the funds the FUSC will request for FY26.

Name(s): FMC

Action/Assignment: Subcommittees must finalize their FY26 funding requests by January 24, 2024, and ensure that the proposals are reviewed and prioritized by the FMC.

Date, Time and Location of Next Meeting

Date: Pending confirmation the meeting will be Dec. 11 or Jan. 8, 2025

Time: 1300-1700

Location: Microsoft Teams