

Hazard Tree and Tree Felling Sub-Committee

Fall Meeting Notes

November 4, 5, 6, 2019

Boise, Idaho – NIFC Campus – Snake River Room

Meeting attendees:

Mack McFarland – Chair

Pete Duncan (USFS)

Godot Apuzzo (USFS)

Randy Anderson (BLM)

Brian Burbridge (USFS)

Aaron Pederson (USFS)

Mike Black (BIA)

* Apuzzo Monday only, Duncan and Pedersen left midday Tuesday.

Monday, November 4

Following introductions, the group watched the WFSTAR video “Hazard Trees – Communication, Decision making, and Risk Management”

The group made some suggested adjustments regarding specific pieces of footage related to Fireline Explosives, titles of speakers, and discussed some of the shots regarding numbers of people working at the stump.

Travis Touchette was present for the review and took notes to make requested adjustments.

The group then worked on developing the facilitators guide to accompany the video. This consisted of developing an “Intent” statement and a list of 5-8 questions to facilitate group discussions.

Mike Black will work with Travis to finalize the guide with formatting to match the standard. The questions centered around continuing to develop understanding of the pressures sawyers face on the fireline, decision making, and why we cut the trees we cut.

Documents created via Firenet to facilitate group editing:

1. “***Human Factors Facilitation Guide” – Intent statement and follow-up group discussion questions.

Group switched focus to the Ferguson Fire Corrective Action Plan and received a briefing from Pete Duncan on the status of the USFS Thinking Sawyer training program.

Pete described the modular approach to developing the training and we watched a couple unit videos highlighting human factors as presented by “Switchback” and Steven Faulk. These units discussed brain function and shifts from cognitive to fight/flight thinking and actions when sawyers are under stress. The modules were well done and the presenter (Faulk) clearly understands the job of the sawyer. The group felt these videos were a good demonstration of how human factors affect sawyers.

The USFS is still moving forward with beta testing the basic sawyer training this spring and Pete was traveling to Washington DC to present his product later in the week. Discussion about adopting all or part of the USFS efforts were robust. It was decided to request guidance from the NWCG Executive Board and NPS and USFS fire directors tasked with tracking Ferguson Fire Corrective Action Plans regarding how NWCG wants to move forward with updates to current S-212 curriculum. Those discussions are still ongoing.

Tim Blake (NWCG rep on the RMC) visited the group to help answer questions about how course re-writes are prioritized by the NWCG Executive Board and described high levels of support for bringing S-212 updates forward. Additional descriptions of the NWCG position standards management cycle were presented on 11/5.

Roy Hauser owner of “The Art of Felling Timber” presented his course outline and methodology for instructing advanced sawyer skills. Roy has been teaching these courses to federal, state and private sawyers for several years and has been seeing an increase in desire for these classes. Roy handed out student manuals to all the sub-committee members.

Following Roy’s presentation the group discussed some of the merits of his program and some of the challenges that NWCG would face if it is decided that a working agreement would be entered into with Roy and his company. No decisions were made to take any further action with Roy’s curriculum. Any decisions regarding Roy’s material would have to move through formal agreements and involve copyright issues etc.

Sean Cross (Chair of the NWCG Executive Board) visited the group and encouraged us to continue to find opportunity to create consistency across all agencies with our efforts. He recognized the complexity of this task with agencies at different phases in updating saw curriculum and standards. Sean encouraged the sub-committee to develop options and alternatives to present to NWCG so that decisions could be made on how to proceed.

Tuesday, November 5

Mike Black presented the NWCG Standards Management Cycle that now directs how training courses are developed, evaluated and updated for the various positions. This was helpful to understand and the group was encouraged to focus on the FAL3,2,1 Incident Position Descriptions and Position Standards. With Position Standards and IPDs established the group will be well positioned to move forward with recommendations to update curriculum.

The bulk of the morning then focused on writing Position Standards and IPDs for the faller positions. These have been rolled to Firenet in an effort to allow ease of sharing for editing across agencies.

Several documents were created to begin this process:

1. “Faller Standards and IDP” – begins to differentiate standards between the various faller levels
2. “FAL3 IDP Spaghetti plate” – This is a policy review of all sources that discuss the FAL3 Position. References are listed and then relevant citations cut and pasted to this document as a first step in describing the position.

Tuesday afternoon focused on updates to the HTTFSC website. Mike Black will communicate with Nancie Turner to remove/update links and Mack will work with Mike and Nancie to update the committee member list. Mack will work with Kristen Chadwick to see if there are updates to the Field Guide for Danger Tree ID and Response and/or other pathology links from Kristen.

Wednesday, November 6

Group was smaller with Mike, Randy, and Mack focusing on finishing up web page review and working on IDP and Standards shared documents.

Mack was able to meet with Bill Kaage (NPS Fire Director) regarding the need to coordinate multi agency efforts to update chainsaw training, and to give an update on accomplishments to the Ferguson Fire CAP tasking. Kaage requested a one-page briefing sheet regarding the committees efforts for the Federal Executive Council so they become aware of the multiple saw training initiatives going on currently and perhaps help provide some direction to better synchronize efforts across agencies.