

# MNICS *Newsletter* *Spring 2015*



## Palsburg Fire

MNICS IMT C (Brian Pisarek, incident commander) was on call for the season's first Type 2 incident, the Palsburg Fire, which began Wednesday afternoon, April 15, a few miles east of Hayes Lake State Park in northwestern Minnesota.

Winds of 30-40 mph quickly pushed the fire into dense pine forests in Beltrami Island State Forest near Warroad, MN.

MNICS Team C, with 35 overhead, took over management of the Palsburg Fire at 0800, April 16 and transferred management of the fire back to the local area on Monday, April 20. The incident command post was at the Warroad Forestry Office.

The fire burned 4,550 acres primarily in the pine forest on state forestry land. Some scattered Red Lake Band of Ojibwa tribal lands also burned.

Two Minnesota National Guard Black Hawk Helicopters and over 120 firefighters were on site to fight the fire. No structures were burned.

Cooperating agencies included US Forest Service, US Fish & Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Roseau Fire Department, Warroad Fire Department, Roseau Sheriff, and Minnesota National Guard Black Hawk Helicopters.

– Lisa Radosevich-Craig



Palsburg Fire. Photo by Tyler Fish

## MNICS IMT Meeting

This year the Incident Management Team meeting moved from December (jointly with the MNICS Annual Meeting) to a separate meeting in February. This put the IMT meeting closer to the start of fire season when team rosters have been finalized.

This year's IMT meeting was hosted by Team B and held Feb. 11-12 at the Breezy Point Convention Center in Pequot Lakes. Most team members and alternates were in attendance, a very good turnout.

This year's meeting included informational presentations and a team exercise. The exercise provided an opportunity for team members to respond to an incident within an incident. It was not a test to see how well team members do, but rather an exercise to help them do well.

Topics included: Evolving Incident Management, team roster updates, E-ISuite, the new 9-Line Medical Report, NWCG GeoSpatial Portal, Emergency Support Function Four, the spring outlook for Minnesota and the aviation transition plan.

The meeting included section breakouts and ended with section and team reports.

– Greg Peterson

# Working Teams

## Communications

The Communications Working Team has been busy with one assignment to the Palsburg Fire where surge support proved its worth, with the timely installation of the 50-foot trailer antenna and C1 command net. While on this assignment personnel designed and developed a way to attach a secondary antenna to the portable 50 and 100-foot antennas to allow future expansion and linking capabilities with proper space to avoid frequency collision issues.

Kuddos to Steve Mortensen for his engineering and the build out of (photo right) this device. This is a true sign of how communications is looking out for

the IMTs and everyone's safety on the fire line.

The group has plans to meet June 3 at MIFC for our annual internal spring refresher, where Pat Coughlin, Kevin Throop and others share knowledge, updates, issues and other items of concern for the group.

This year Pat Coughlin has coordinated a virtual training with the Office of Emergency Communications, US Department of Homeland Security, which will prove useful in our interoperability skillset with 800 MHz working in harmony with VHF.

– Mike Hamilton



*This tool allows placement of multiple antennas on the 50 and 100-foot portable towers with proper spacing to avoid frequency separation issues when using multiple command or link repeaters.*

## Dispatch

The Dispatch Working Team worked on two events this year, the D-110 Expanded Dispatch Recorder (EDRC) and Basic ROSS which were held June 1-5 at the Wildfire Academy at Itasca Community College.

March 18 was the spring Dispatchers Meeting and retirement party for Trudy Fagre.

The Dispatch Working Team is once again looking at hosting an Open House at MIFC during the Fire Prevention Week the first week in October. This will be a joint effort with the Prevention Working Team.

Having Lead dispatchers from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Northeast and Central regions, statusing their own resources has worked out well. This practice will continue this year.

### **MNICS DWT Chair Rotation**

2015 Chair DNR Lonnie Lilly, VC BIA Ronda Estey

·2016 Chair NPS, VC DNR Lonnie Lilly

·2017 Chair FS, VC NPS

·2018 Chair FWS, VC FS

·2019 Chair BIA, VC FWS

·2020 Chair DNR, VC BIA

– Lonnie Lilly

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# Working Teams

## Air Operations

MNICS had a very busy spring fire season for interagency air operations. Our pre-work paid off and so did hard work and dedication from all aviation managers and support personnel.

MNICS agencies flew 480 aircraft requests on over 200 fires as of May 15. We had no accidents or incidents – a tribute to our pilots and crews – even though we flew a total of 782 hours on fire suppression and over 1,900 hours for detection.

Each MNICS partner contributed to making this a successful season. We were able to dispatch aircraft to every fire that they were requested for.

### Suppression Aircraft 2015

#### DNR

- 4 FireBoss
- 2 SEATs
- 8 Type 3 Helicopters
- 4 Air Attack Platforms
- 1 State Patrol Type 3 Helicopter
- 6 Type 1 Helicopters (National Guard Blackhawks)

#### BIA

- 1 FireBoss
- 1 SEAT
- 1 Type 3 Helicopter

#### USFS

- 2 Type 3 Helicopters
- 1 CL-415
- 3 Large Tankers, P2V, C-130, BAe146
- ASM's / Lead Planes

#### Shared – DNR/BIA

- 1 Type 3 Helicopter (Park Rapids)

#### Shared – DNR-BIA-USFS

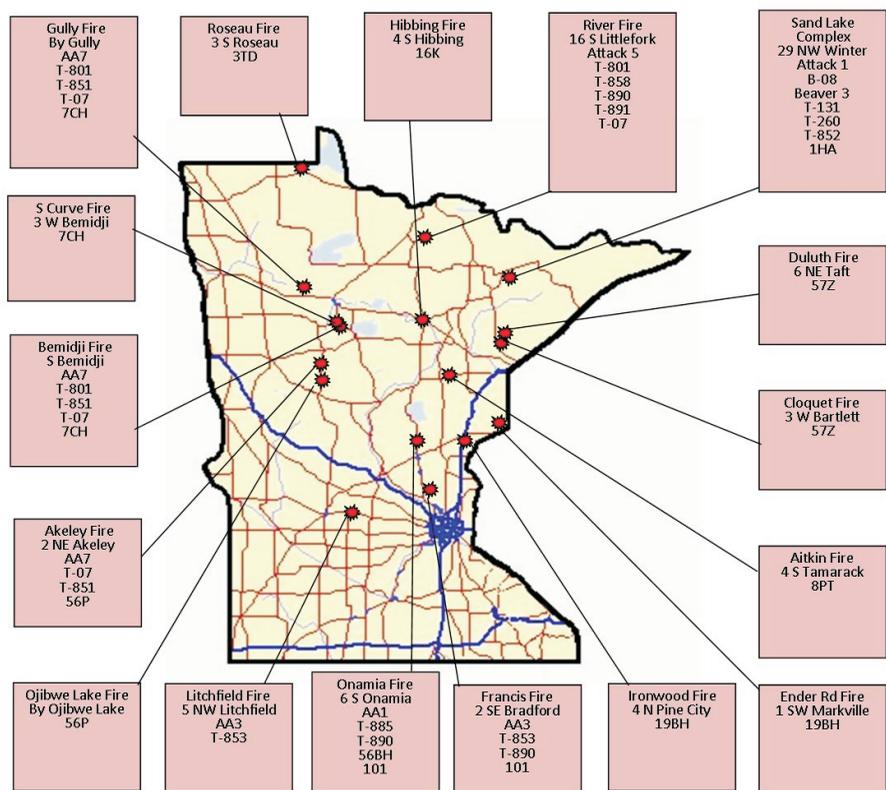
- 1 Type 2 Helicopter (Orr)

– Tom Schackman

### MN DNR Aviation Responses to Wildland Fires

May 2, 2015

50 Aviation Dispatches to 17 Fires



## Operations

The working team took nominations for Type 2 IA Crews. Leadership has been determined. There will be four teams. The four shared crew leader positions are: Chippewa National Forest, Superior National Forest, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Department of Interior agencies.

Crews expressed interest in helmets, shirts and/or door magnets to identify crews. After the Wildfire Academy, there will be red helmets available and decals to put on the helmets.

A crew cohesion meeting was held the week of May 25.

# Working Teams

## Finance

- Finance courses at the Wildfire Academy in June 2015 were:
- S-261 **Applied Interagency Incident Business Management**, Instructor: Larry Himanga.
- E-ISuite Instructor: Kevin O'Brien.

Finance sought out trainees for FSC, COST, and TIME or PTRC for assignment during the Wildfire Academy

Tasks assigned:

- Record time for the academy instructors and IMT members (E-ISuite will be up and running).
- Provide for local purchases of support material as needed while the academy is in session (accounts set up at different stores).
- Process medical claims related to injury or illness of students or instructors that occur during the academy.
- **Maintain a general expense record of academy related expenditures (As a COST exercise, this can be made fairly detailed)**
- Resolve payment student/local vendor payment issues if necessary (we will facilitate resolving issues, but without expectation, we pay for only legitimate DNR purchases.)

The team mobilized Thursday, May 28 and demobs Saturday, June 7. Trainees were needed throughout.

– *Cristine Basina*

## Logistics

The focus for the Logistic Working Group this year and years to come will be on recruitment for the Logistics Section and other positions on the Minnesota Incident Management Teams (IMT).

There are several IMTs that do not have a listed team member for the positions of Supply Unit Leader, Ground Support Unit Leader, Ordering Manager, and Communications Technician.

The group at the MNICS Annual Meeting came up with several ideas for recruitment including updating the MNICS website Logistics page to include recruitment opportunities with the MNICS IMTs.

Another goal is to encourage mentoring opportunities with MNICS Priority Trainee's to match them with a qualified member of the group to answer questions, providing resources, and help guide them through the process.

The group will also try to prepare an outline for a panel display that can be set up at training sessions, meetings or other events that might attract future team members.

The Logistics Working Group's meeting at the MNICS Annual Meeting was very productive with nearly all members attending. The group also added several new members with good experience and skills that will help the group for years to come.

– *Don Lantz*

## Prevention

In past years the team worked mostly on large events. This year, so far there have been more smaller events like county fairs.

The team is looking into getting more exposure in the southern part of the state and increasing exposure in larger markets.

The Fire on Ice event was very successful. Prevention had a large presence there.

The Prevention Working Team will coordinate with the Dispatch Working Team to plan a Prevention Open House at MIFC.

# Working Teams

## Information Management

GJS

Minnesota PIOs kicked off 2015 with a February 11 meeting in Brainerd where we learned about new developments and discussed priorities for this year.

Among other topics, the group focused on the continuing need to track changes in qualifications and training, the transition to FEMA courses and the continuing need to encourage new PIO recruits. We all went away with commitments to seek out and mentor candidates to expand our capacity to support the IMTs and provide essential information about incidents in Minnesota.

**Like us on Facebook!** The working team proposed and received approval from the Task Force to establish a Facebook account for MNICS.



Facebook helped distribute information during the Palsburg Fire in April with nearly 500 "Likes" on our posts. We are looking to other MNICS functions for story ideas to help build our on-line connections during "off times" with topics like prevention/

preparedness, prescribed fire, behind the scenes at MNICS, etc.

The team is also exploring auto-posting to prepare posts and set-up posting at predetermined times.

The addition of Facebook is one of the ways the Working Group is looking to increase the effectiveness of our internet outreach.

A webinar on March 13 provided a refresher regarding posting to [www.mnics.org](http://www.mnics.org). The team is also updating the Standard Operating Guide and MNICs Website User's Guide to include tips on using social media in incident information. We are also considering how "virtual PIOs" working under a lead PIO may contribute to incident information.

We sadly bid farewell to Jean Goad as she retires and leaves her current position as the lead PIO at MIFC. We are happy she will remain as a member on MNICS Team C.

– Kris Reichenbach

### GIS Training and Preparedness

In preparation for the spring fire season, the MNICS GIS Working Team sponsored a GISS refresher for IMT support. The refresher was held in conjunction with a similar CTSP refresher and the two groups combined during an afternoon session to troubleshoot incident scenarios and set up IMT network hardware.

Spring fire season incident support was limited to the Palsburg Fire. Several Situation Unit Leaders and Planning Section Chiefs were also in attendance at the refresher, which helped in team building and coordination for future mobilization efforts. The teamwork necessary to support fast moving or large incidents benefits from preseason exercises, training, and coordination.

### NIFC FTP Site Replacement

For incident GIS users, the biggest change expected this season is the retooling of NIFC's FTP website access in mid-July. The change will bolster security measures. Users who previously had access to the FTP site will maintain that access through a new [NAP](#) account and group assignment.

Some data will remain available for public download as before, but all data uploads will require new NAP accounts and group assignments.

– Chris Mursu

## Prescribed Fire & Fuels

Smoke Management Plan edits are done, one final review is necessary before the plan goes out for signatures.

MPCA wants more input on indices, so that is in a separate document.

Minnesota State Parks will host the summer meeting at St. Croix State Park

# Working Teams

## Information Technology

### Leadership

Meggan Nadler and Shelly Sentyrz were selected as the IT Working Team co-chairs for 2015-2016.

### Annual CTSP Refresher Highlights

- CTSP roster finalized: A fully qualified CTSP and a CTSP trainee remain assigned to each IMT. There is a scarce pool of alternates.
- CTSP recruiting efforts are the most promising in several years
- E-ISuite: Discussion on installation, troubleshooting, and how it may change the nature and duration of CTSP work on incident.
- Concerted effort is underway to refurbish our oldest network kits with new technology.
- Laptop kit computers: DNR approved a new disc image that avoids software that hampers IMT

deployments. (Tradeoff: Removing this software means kit computers must be re-imaged every three months to maintain valid Microsoft licenses.)

- Data security: Minnesota is in line with national data and application standards.

### E-ISuite

E-ISuite went into production April 28. ISuite will be decommissioned December 31. CTSPs are expected to know both E-ISuite and Isuite in 2015, as IMTs can choose when during the year they transition to E-Isuite. Meggan Nadler will instruct a portion of the E-Isuite course at Wildfire Academy in June.

### 2015 IMT Incidents to Date

Team C CTSPs were assigned to the

Palsburg Fire near Warroad. A third CTSP was there the first day of operations to set up demonstration wireless mesh network equipment. (Wireless mesh “drapes” Wi-Fi service over an area using multiple access points instead of a single one.)

CTSP work went smoothly. Wireless mesh equipment performance was promising, but needs more testing before a recommendation is made to the Task Force.

### Training Opportunities

Several CTSPs and trainees will assist at Wildfire Academy. Discussion has begun on offering a tentative mid-summer “Day in the life of a CTSP” webinar for new recruits.

– Meggan Nadler

## Training

The Training Working Team has been working on preparations for the Wildfire Academy at Itasca Community College June 1-5. This year's Academy is proving to be the largest to date.

This year, for the first time, the Academy will be run like an incident, complete with Incident Commander (Jim Hinds) and an overhead team. The working team hoped that this arrangement will provide good training opportunities to support roles, to get task books signed off and gain valuable experience in a “non-emergency” setting.

One of the highlights of the Academy this year is the June 3 (midweek) evening buffet followed by a presentation on Highly Reliable Organizations by Pete Lesckak. Pete is an author and firefighter with over 33 years of firefighting experience, who has written several books and articles about fire management and successful fire leadership. Pete's entertaining presentation and take away message were outstanding.

The Training team is also working on a number of upcoming training courses, including a great opportunity to take the L-380 Fire Service Leadership

course at Camp Ripley in October, and an upcoming “Section Chief Academy” planned for the second week in February in Duluth. Look for a brochure on this similar to the Academy brochure.

Visit the MNICS website for additional information and a listing of all the upcoming MNICS sponsored training opportunities. If you have suggestions for training wants or needs, please contact your agency training working team representative.

– Robert Lintelmann