



Notes

January 2021 MNICS Task Force Meeting

1/7/2021 - 0930 – 14:30

Task Force: William Glesener (Chair), Kurt Fogelberg (Vice Chair), Cory Berg, Seth Grimm, Roy Holmes, Chase Marshall

Non-Task Force Attendees: Mike Mackey (MNCC), Leanne Langeberg (Notes), Brian Wise, Kevin Carlisle, Shelly Serich, Travis Verdegan, Jared Culbertson

DISCUSSION ITEMS	NOTES
Building / Budget Update	<p>Building update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Task Force reviewed the building report submitted by Brian Wise (NEK Cache). - There were no new updates to the report. - Task Force reviewed the future projects list and decided the Minnesota Interagency Fire Center roof replacement project is the priority over the HAVC sensors for the dispatch area and paving the gravel overflow lot. - NPS will be asked coordinate the radio shop deck project (est. \$1000 for materials). Kurt Fogelberg will reach out to the NPS crew. - Funding for the NEK Cache interior wall painting project be covered by the NEK budget and not the MNICS coop budget. <p>Budget update</p> <p>Task Force reviewed the MIFC expense report. Shelley Greniger noted there were no new significant expenses incurred in the past month.</p>
MNICS – Assessment of Communication Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revisited the MNICS radio communications systems external audit discussion. - The previous MNCC Coordinator - Rebekah Luedtke - looked into the process before her departure in 2019. She couldn't recall the vendor, but advised MNICS to reach out to Stan Gruska, DNR, for vendor contacts. - The MNICS Board of Directors supports contracting outside of MNICS. - Chase Marshall requested a copy the White Mt. National Force communication audit and will share with it the Task Force when it is received. - Cory Berg will write up objectives and intent for the request the Task Force review before sending to the National Interagency Fire Center radio shop for recommendations.
MNICS Mobilization Guide Digital Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MIFC PIO requested to begin publishing the MNICS Mobilization Guide in digital format and stop printing copies. - The reasons include the closure of the local Presto Print shop and challenges distributing during the pandemic have shown the value in digital only distribution. - Task Force approved the request.



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MNICS Working Teams General

- Communication Working Team Charter
- Assignment Tracking Tool
- Aviation A/G frequencies
- Trailer Update
- Agreements - MOU's for frequency sharing.

Communications Working Team Charter

- Communications Working Team Charter awaiting Team Chair and Task Force Chair signatures. MIFC PIO will post the signed copy to MNICS.org – Communication Working Team Page.

Task Force Assignments

Tracking Tool Spreadsheet

- A spreadsheet to track Working Teams assignments was developed by previous MNCC Coordinator.
- Task Force acknowledged it is a useful tool. They give free reign to current MNCC Coordinator to manage the spreadsheet as a tool to communicate with the Task Force on the state of Working Team tasks as necessary.
- The Task Force will work directly with their working team chairs to develop tasks. When the task is agreed to, the Task Force rep will share the task with the MNCC Coordinator, who will then to enter the task into the spreadsheet.

Aviation Air-to-Ground Frequencies

- Minnesota Federal Partners have three Eastern Area Initial Attack frequency zones assigned for use during wildland fire incidents. MNCC coordinator requested background on how air-to-ground frequencies are assigned and used.
- The MNICS Master Agreement allows MNICS agencies to share these frequencies.
- Despite no established use guidance, the frequencies are assigned when needed through MNCC dispatch.
- Air Operations Working Team (AOWT) has recently taken leadership in deciding how best to use the frequencies and the guides and code plugs to use.
- Task Force will request the AOWT and Communications Working Team to establish written guidance for assigning frequencies, and MNCC Coordinator will continue to work with the established process.

Trailer updates

- MNICS has four trailers total for use during incidents.
- Three are federal surplus – one for general office use and two for communications. All three trailers were last inspected in 2017.
- DNR owns one trailer that is set up as a mobile GIS map or a mobilization center.
- Kevin Carlisle reported all four trailers are maintained, and leaks addressed when identified. Resealing roofs will be necessary for all trailers this summer.
- Task Force discussed the pros and cons of continuing to hold a fleet of trailers for incident management use:
 - o Uncertainly about who is responsible for maintaining the trailers
 - o Delivery to the incident – currently under vendor contract with Figgins Truck and Trailer Repair
 - o Rental trailers are not set up for use like current MNICS trailers
 - o Yurts and tents – expensive and not guaranteed for the full extent of an incident
 - o Outdoor storage at MIFC is not a concern
- The Communications Working Team will maintain the communications equipment tied to radio frequencies housed in trailers.
- Task Force agrees to continue contracting call-as-needed delivery service with Figgins Truck and Trailer Repair. Kevin Carlisle will set up the 2021 contract.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Logistics Working Team is working on a long term plan with Twin Cities emergency management agencies who have offered trailer facilities for MNICS incident use. - Task Force will assign the Communications and Logistics Working Teams to develop a plan that includes the current operation process for ordering, maintenance, and a long term plan for replacement or alternative acquisition. Kevin Carlisle and Mike McLaughlin will be asked to take the lead. <p>Type 3 IMT Working Team Assignment and Communication MOUs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MNCC Coordinator requested Task Force direction for proceeding with the MNICS Type 3 IMT Working Team’s request to the Communications Working Team to create a code plug or to program a statewide group for use on Type 3 incidents. - The Communication Working Team has a tentative plan pulled together, but acknowledge it will not cover everything. - MNICS Type 3 Teams should be establishing radio communications in the Delegation of Authority because the communication plan options vary greatly by area and agency. - Task Force recommends the Communication Working Team create an electronic document for the communications trailer inventory, get an updated 2019 ARMER Fleet Map in electronic format for incident reference, and determine the written process for ordering ARMER radios to a MNICS Type 3 Incident. - While the Master agreement says MNICS partner agencies have the ability to share frequencies, the Forest Service needs an MOU in place. - The Communications Working Team will let the Task Force know what their plan is for tracking MOUs.
<p>T2IA Subcommittee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Operations Working Team (OWT) is seeking Task Force direction on how to proceed with the 2021 Type 2 IA Crew applications and their expected involvement with coordination of crews this year. - Most MNICS agencies will follow a similar COVID-19 module as one best practice similar to last spring, and the Task Force requests the OWT to focus on 2022. - William Glesener, Task Force Chair, will send a MNICS-wide letter (reviewed by the Task Force members) with information on the plans for 2021. - Task Force will be looking to the DNR logistics dispatcher to be involved with supporting the OWT’s coordination of the MNICS Type 2 IA crews, but recognized they do not envision the dispatcher to serve as the sole coordinator. - Task Force wants the planning side of the Type 2 coordination to be handled by the subcommittee, and the actual mobilization to be handled by MNCC and DNR Logistics Coordinator.



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<p>Fire Season Outlook</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Travis Verdegan, Predictive Services, shared current local and national drought monitors. Specific to MNICS agencies, a significant portion of the upper Midwest into Canada are experiencing some degree of drought conditions. - Northwest United States is not seeing the traditional cool and wet trend common during a La Nina. - Nationally, 1995 and 2005 were both historic hurricane years followed by significant wildfire activity. 2020 was a high year for hurricanes, and the expectation is a high fire season nationally will follow. - The outlook for the 2021 Minnesota spring and summer wildfire seasons is trending toward a higher probability for an active spring and summer fire season based to low snowfall totals and persistent drought.
<p>INFORM - fire reporting system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DNR is moving forward with the INFORM fire reporting system. - Task Force is requesting MNICS partners and MNCC to identify a way to establish an interagency approach for 2021 and develop a field guide and protocol for entering information consistently. - Mike Mackey will schedule a meeting with the MNCC assistant managers and Travis Verdegan at the end of January or early February to discuss how to proceed.
<p>TWT coordination and the Minnesota Academy (BJ Glesener)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training Working Team (TWT) advised the Task Force rep the Eastern Area Geographic Area Training Representative (GATR) wants MNICS to start looking into a large compact academy with potential funding through the Wildfire Risk Response (WRR) grant. - A GLFFC compact academy for 2022: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o would open training sessions to outside partners and reduce available seats for MNICS attendees o has potential to reduce training costs for MNICS partners o could offer a longer academy – more than one week – with more options to split low and high level courses, allowing more people to fulfill their training requirements sooner. o would not always be held in Grand Rapids, MN - Concerns that MNICS Federal Partners would be asked to pay a fee because they can only be an associate non-voting member. - A positive element of the MNICS Academy is training and working together, and a compact academy would change this dynamic. - TWT will focus on remote learning as much as possible for 2021. - TWT has the Task Force’s approval to contact GLFFC to entertain the potential opportunity, but any decisions to move forward require formal Task Force approval. - William Glesener, GLFFC executive board member, will notify the GLFFC board about the opportunity and Task Force direction to the TWT.



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Agency Updates

BIA – Last fire reported on December 10 at Red Lake for 30 ac. Many Tribes have started vaccinating some front line workers. Working on a new lease for Bemidji Air Tanker Base. Airport authority significantly increased lease rates, and BIA has requested a reconsideration of rate.

DNR – Spring operations and COVID mitigations will be similar to last spring focusing on a module as one with a tighter rein on weekly scheduling. DNR is pulling together an agency list for vaccines priorities, including firefighters. The logistics dispatch position has been announced.

FS – no report

FWS – There is pending opening for a career seasonal in the northwest part of state. Pile burning projects are happening, and the agency developing RX plans for 2021. Broadcast burning on a large scale is expected for next year, and the agency plans to bring in detailer support this spring. Agency is also working on prioritizing vaccination protocols.

HSEM – COVID 19 and vaccine distribution is the priority focus for HSEM.

NPS – In the fire hiring process. NPS is starting to burn piles. Park staff continues to telework.

MNCC – Working to fill both GS-7 positions. The seasonal hires most likely will not return in 2021, and the Forest Service back-up plan will be to include detailers to fill in the voids. Working on performance plans. MNCC COVID plan for 2021 is to use both trailers again. C-Soft software upgrade:

- Forest Service has most of their equipment waiting for installation
- DNR aviation was approved to get the equipment, and the next step is to get the purchase process organized.

MIFC PIO – MNICS Mobilization Guide update requests going out next week.

Next meeting: 02/04/2021 – WebEx beginning at 9:30 am