



# NOTES

## March 2021 MNICS Task Force Meeting

3/4/2021 - (0930 – 12:30)

**Attendance:**

**Task Force:** William Glesener, Kurt Fogelberg, Cory Berg, Seth Grimm, Roy Holmes, Chase Marshall

**Non-Task Force Attendees:** Mike Mackey (MNCC), Leanne Langeberg (Notes), Kevin Carlisle, Shelly Greniger, Travis Verdegan, Scott Weyenberg

Discussion Topic	Notes
<p><b>MIFC Building and Budget Updates</b></p>	<p><b>Building update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No new items to report.</li> <li>- An additional repair vendor quote for the MIFC elevator has been requested.</li> <li>- The contract for the C-Soft update for MNCC is in process with DNR.</li> </ul> <p><b>Budget</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No additional expenses were incurred beyond the monthly expenses.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2021 MNICS Annual Meeting Coordination</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MIFC Public Information Officer (PIO) Langeberg requested an interagency planning team be developed for MNICS Annual Meeting planning efforts.</li> <li>- Meeting coordination occurs throughout the year. A team of four to five interagency members will help keep planning efforts on target and distribute the work involved (e.g., lining up guest speakers, developing agenda topic, sending updates to all MNICS members, coordinating MNICS awards).</li> <li>- MIFC logistics and PIO will continue to support coordination efforts.</li> <li>- Task Force supports developing a MNICS Meeting Working Team and will reach out to their agency staff, targeting those already serving on MNICS Working Teams.</li> <li>- Task Force will identify representatives and invite them to join the April 2021 Task Force MNICS meeting discussion.</li> <li>- Task Force requests the MNICS Meeting coordination agenda topic be a continuous meeting agenda item moving forward.</li> <li>- Task Force approved the 2021 meeting dates December 6 – 9, 2021.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2021 MNICS Planning Calls</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2021 MNICS planning calls will begin Tuesday, March 16, 2021.</li> <li>- The Friday MNICS planning calls are will occur when the preparedness level reaches PL3 or higher.</li> <li>- Mike Mackey will develop two separate calendar requests. The Friday calendar requests will include use instructions for preparedness level 3 or higher.</li> <li>- The National Weather Service is a part of MNCC coordinator’s mailing list for the MNICS planning meetings and will be included for the March 16, 2021 planning call.</li> </ul>



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<b>MNCC Calling Tree (Mike Mackey)</b> <b>MNICS Planning Calls Startup</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The main call-in line used for MNCC (218-327-4558) is a phone number assigned to logistics.</li> <li>- MNCC is developing a main MNCC call-in line with a menu tree for operations, aviation, logistics, intelligence, and information</li> <li>- A new phone number is needed for logistics. To set up a new line includes a one-time set-up fee and increases the monthly phone bill by approximately \$55.62.</li> <li>- 24-hour response - operations, aviation, and logistics can forward their lines to the duty officer outside of operation hours and not be affected by the phone tree</li> <li>- Mike Mackey will work with Joel Perrington to determine if the 24-hour check-in phone number for MNICS resources in travel status is separate from the main logistics line and if there is room to add the line to the phone tree menu.</li> <li>- Task Force approved moving forward with setting up the phone tree and adding the extra line.</li> </ul>
<b>NWS AOP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The National Weather Service released their Annual Operating Plan to Minnesota wildland fire agencies for edits.</li> <li>- All agencies must verify their agency contacts are correct. MNICS agencies will send edits to Travis Verdegan, Minnesota DNR.</li> </ul>
<b>MNICS Type 3 Incident Management Team updates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Pre-order plans</b> - Task Force reviewed and approved the MNICS Type 3 Incident Management Team equipment requirements (generators, trailers, and computer kits) and pre-order plans for overhead and remote work considerations.</li> <li>- William Glesener will notify the Type 3 IMT Working Team of the approval and follow up on the MNICS Type 3 Teams final decision on national availability for the 2021 season.</li> </ul>
<b>Incident Management Team Trailer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two trailers have been brought into the state and temporarily stationed at General Andrews.</li> <li>- One trailer is a former hazmat trailer that could be retrofitted to replace the oldest communication trailer. The second trailer is a large semi-trailer.</li> <li>- DNR will inspect the trailers and decide whether it is cost-effective to repair and outfit. If not, they will be placed back on the available surplus list.</li> </ul>
<b>Smoke Management Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Scott Weyenberg, National Park Service, provided an update on the Minnesota Smoke Management Plan and confirmed Minnesota Pollution Control Agency was involved with editing the plan.</li> <li>- Task Force reviewed changes in the plan and the signatory page.</li> <li>- Task Force recommends moving forward with the Memorandum of Agreement and sending it out for signatures.</li> <li>- Scott Weyenberg will complete final edits and send it to Leanne Langeberg, MIFC PIO to set up the final pdf with the signature page. She will send the final pdf to Seth Grimm, who will coordinate the final signatures.</li> </ul>



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<p><b>MNSCU Partnership Potential</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- DNR has an opportunity to partner with Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MNSCU) and establish an agreement with Pat Kelly (Mankato) to offer training courses at Minnesota Technical Colleges.</li> <li>- Pat Kelly was a former Forest Service employee but he is now more involved with developing courses focused on structure fire.</li> <li>- The opportunity could be developed to meet MNICS training needs, and where there is additional interest outside of MNICS MNSCU would be able to coordinate all of the logistical requirements - partner with instructors and charge tuition.</li> <li>- The Forest Service has a similar agreement with Vermillion Technical College, and it has helped in recruiting temporary seasonal fire staff.</li> <li>- Task Force supports DNR looking further into the opportunity.</li> <li>- William Glesener will reach out to Pat Kelly to discuss a framework and map to move forward through MNSCU.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Aerial Ignition for RX Fire (BJ Glesener)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minnesota DNR Leadership decided not to allow use of aerial ignitions for prescribed fires on state managed land this spring. When the pandemic concerns diminish, the agency will return to normal operations.</li> <li>- A DNR memo on prescribed burning will be coming out soon. It is expected that ground support of prescribed burning will continue.</li> <li>- US Fish and Wildlife (FWS) acknowledged the State's decision has been well communicated.</li> <li>- FWS is looking into opportunities to use drone ignitions, but waiting on FWS agency approval. For large scale burns, FWS will work with the local DNR manager to seek exemption approval early in the planning stage.</li> <li>- FWS is considering bringing in additional FWS support for prescribed burning in northwest Minnesota at Agassiz and Glacial Ridge.</li> <li>- BIA expects 80 percent of prescribed burns this year will be completed with hand ignitions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Agency Updates</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>BIA</b> – Some prescribed burning will begin as snow melts. RT-130 training sessions are being delivered, but no Work Capacity Tests (WCT). BIA is close to completing two fixed-wing aircraft contracts. BIA hoping to continue using Forest Service and BIA Badger State Type 2 wildfire module that was certified last year by the Eastern Area Air Operations Working Team. Due to Red Book changes, the organization will now be a suppression module. Vaccinations continue for BIA wildland firefighters.</li> <li>- <b>DNR</b> – Conducted several virtual RT-130 sessions, practice fire shelter deployments to be conducted locally. DNR's suggested RT-130 syllabus is posted to the MNICS website and includes closed-captioned videos from DNR sessions. Going through the planning process with the Canadian partners. The type 6 engines out of Canada are available again this year, and DNR will set up an emergency rental agreement. COVID restrictions remain in place. Awaiting agency direction for vaccines, no limitation for DNR fire staff who have alternate access to the vaccine.</li> </ul>



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### Agency Updates

- **Forest Service** – The agency is experiencing hiring hurdles nationwide. Regionally there are 59 vacancies to fill, including 14 vacancies between the Superior and Chippewa National Forests. Tom Roach is acting in vice Rova’s Assistant FMO position. The assistant FMO for the east zone is retiring. The Forest Service Supervisor is making recommendations for the dispatcher positions. The third beaver pilot position is filled. Region 9 is planning to hire four total unmanned aircraft system coordinators. Agency has finalized the four AD hiring hubs for Region 9, and ADs hired for National Forests in the lake states will be coordinated out of Milwaukee. The agency has not made a firm decision on prescribed burning on the forests. Forest Service firefighters have been working with local counties on firefighter vaccinations.
- **Fish and Wildlife Service** – A handful of stations are conducting cattail and pile burning, mostly in northwest Minnesota, and then after today, will put into monitor status. We are expecting to complete 2000 acres of cattail burning this year. There is a potential some cattail burning work will occur north of Highway 2 this weekend. Agency is conducting many virtual refreshers, and WCT’s are being planned for March. There are six employees out of state helping Region 4 in Florida with prescribed burns, also Missouri. Vaccinations for firefighters are occurring through the counties. DOI workforce transformation has dedicated 36 million to wildland fire, which will increase hiring.
- **HSEM** – Continues to focus on needs pertaining to public safety and COVID-19 vaccine distribution.
- **NPS** – Hired three seasonal staff. The refreshers and pack tests are being planned. We are working on plans to burn cattails and 75 piles. There has been an increase in fire activity at Theodore Roosevelt National Park. The agency will not be conducting prescribed burning this summer but will focus on mechanically protecting historic structures.
- **MNCC Coordinator** – Eastern Area Dispatch Working Team workshop had large participation from the MNICS and several presenters from MNCC. Mike was on the hiring panel for two operations lead dispatchers. The aviation dispatcher position has been posted, resource request orders are coming through, and the NMAC COVID checklist letters are being prepopulated. I am working with DNR and the Canadian partners on pre-planning discussions for border crossings.
- **MIFC PIO** – Conducted an interagency media interview with a freelance writer working on a feature story for a local Grand Marais magazine focusing on the Minnesota 2021 fire season.

Next Meeting April 1, 2021 hosted on Webex