



Notes

October 6, 2022, MNICS Task Force Meeting

Task Force Attendance: Greg Carlson, Chase Marshall, Cory Berg, Jacob Beauregard, Seth Grimm, Darren Neuman

Non-Task Force Attendees: Mike Mackey - MNCC, Kevin Carlisle, Shelly Greniger

Notes prepared by: Leanne Langeberg

DISCUSSION ITEM	NOTES
Building and Budget Update	<p>Building Update –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The Cache to the training room floor elevator is out of service. Due to the age of the equipment, the recommendation is to replace the elevator.- A service provided has been called to determine why the front entrance keypad has stopped working.- The cleaning contract for the Minnesota Interagency Fire Center (MIFC) facility was awarded to Busy Bee cleaning service and included a five percent increase.- A j-hook safety valve was installed on the new sprinkler system.- The active-shooter simulation training for the MIFC facility was conducted on September 15. Several areas to improve employee safety were identified, including staff education and structural improvements.- The Forest Service's regional facilities project manager and the Superior National Forest engineer are planning to tour the MIFC facility on October 20. Both will be briefed on the current roof, elevator and security concerns. <p>Budget Update –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Reviewed the current budget and available coop funds. Many pending projects were not reflected in the budget spreadsheet.- Due to retirements and many program areas moving to digital record keeping, Shelly Greniger recommended setting aside \$250 to hiring a shredding service open to all MIFC staff. No final decision made.
Air Quality and Open Burning Permits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Allissa Reynolds, DNR Fire Prevention Supervisor, shared an update on the DNR's recent changes to the current burning permit system to allow more control on turning off burning permits during Commissioner-ordered burning restrictions and fire weather and air quality alert events.- Allissa advised that a memo will be sent to partners explaining the new requirements and process. The changes will also be incorporated into the Burning Permit System manual and Smoke Management Plan.
T2 IA subcommittee meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The Task Force had initially planned to meet with the MNICS Operations Working Team's Type 2 IA subcommittee in October. The meeting was postponed and will be a part of the November Task Force meeting.- Chase Marshall, Task Force representative for the Operations Working Team, will coordinate inviting the subcommittee to the meeting.



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Air Ops WT CISM training funding request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Air Operations Working Team is working with the Great Lake Forest Fire Compact (GLFFC) to offer a three-day Critical Incident Stress Management training. The three half-day sessions will be incorporated into the GLLFC spring meeting and be open to MNICS and GLFFC air operations personnel. - The Air Operations Working Team feels the training will benefit the MNICS partners and prepare aviation managers with tools for navigating challenging situations, including mishaps that result in downed aircraft. - The Switchback OS organization is a nationally recognized leader in these types of CISM training. The cost to hire Switchback is \$18,000. Region 1 fire and aviation and at least one Hot Shot crew have participated in Switchback's training and felt it was highly beneficial. - The proposed cost would be split in half by GLLFC and MNICS. The proposal to the Task Force is \$9,000 from the MNICS coop funds for MNICS participation. - Task Force approved the funding and recommended the working team explore how to involve members from MNCC.
MNCC Hiring Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MNCC continues to push forward with efforts to fill dispatch vacancies on the MNCC floor. There are currently two advertised positions through DNR – one in aviation and one in operations. DNR is converting Jake Serfling's air desk position to full-time status. - The Forest Service may be able to fill a temporary position with a Job Corp candidate as a temporary hire. - The announcements for the Assistant Center Manager and the two lead operations positions are now closed, and all will move on to the hiring phase. Depending on the applicants and their qualifications, all three positions could begin on December 3.
MNICS Active Wildfire Communication Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leanne Langeberg, Public Information Officer at the Minnesota Interagency Fire Center, presented a communication plan for active wildfire response. The plan provides goals, target audience, concerns, communication tools, key messages, talking points and deliverables to support interagency communication during an active wildfire. - Task Force will review the plan and revisit the topic for discussion on plan approval in November.
Annual MNICS Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A final draft agenda was presented to the Task Force. Leanne Langeberg made the recommendation the Task Force develop discussion points for their leader's intent meeting with the Working Team Chairs. - Leanne Langeberg reported that only three Working Team chairs responded to the email sent the week prior requesting a list of in-person attendees for their working teams. She is waiting to send the hold-the-date announcement and MNICS award nominations request until she has a complete list. - The meeting facility is out for bids, awaiting final bid approval. Registration and lodging information will be communicated when the location is confirmed. - To help improve the challenges associated with planning the MNICS meeting, the Task Force will discuss the vision, purpose and length of the MNICS Meeting in January.



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Agency Updates

BIA – BIA and Tribal Agencies continue to support Oklahoma and Alabama fire needs. Fire activity has been low but is expected to change with the drying conditions, and marshlands are being closely monitored. The interviews for the Minnesota Agency line officer superintendent position have been completed, and BIA anticipates it will be another month before an official announcement is made. In addition, Minnesota Agency received the aviation program audit report and started working on a 60-day plan.

DNR – DNR has a few resources supporting out-of-state fire needs. The fire team leaders are working with local contacts to redraw the shared protection agreement lines. The Fire Boss aircraft is on contract through the end of the month, and the helicopter is on contract through Nov 7. Both will be extended as needed. The helicopter is pre-positioned in Brainerd and closer to the areas with conditions more conducive to fire. The agency is outreaching for a Division of Forestry Deputy Director. DNR is working on replacing retardant tanks at Brainerd and Bemidji and encouraged MNICS partners who may have infrastructure funds available to consider supporting these projects.

FWS – Key prescribed fire projects have been completed for the year, and preparations are underway for the spring season. All of the resources that were supporting out-of-state needs have returned. Workforce considerations are being made for fire positions at refuges and WMDs in Minnesota, including GS-5/8 and GS-8/9 positions. Monitoring the growing drought conditions and staffing accordingly.

FS – Tom Hall, the new Superior National Forest Supervisor, is settling into his position and plans to tour the fire center. The November Forest Team Leader's meeting will be hosted at the fire center and will incorporate an introduction to the Minnesota DNR. Rob Heavirland is retiring on October 11. The agency plans are to refill his position without supervisory responsibility, and the duty station will move to Ely, Minnesota. The prescribed fire pause has been lifted, and direction on administrative authorizations has been passed down from the regions to the forests.

HSEM – Interviews for the communications coordinator position were held this week, and interviews for the national qualifications coordination position will be held end of the month. The public assistance specialist position closes on the 19th. The school safety center group has the potential to fill two positions. Currently, two staff members have deployed on EMAC assignments to Jackson, MS. The IMT in Desoto, Florida, timed out. They plan to leave the trailer along with a handful of staff to maintain trailer operations. There are now nine state-declared disasters and three federally-declared disasters in Minnesota. Information on the IMT director track training is expected next week. Emergency managers are working on a state-level special events assessment rating. Joe Kelly will retire at the end of the year.

NPS – The fire season is winding down. A lot of pile-burning projects have been completed. The GS-08 fire position was posted to USA Jobs.

MNCC – MNCC logistics is operating 5-days a week. Operations is maintaining 7-days a week and planning to transition to a 5-day week soon. Aviation is maintaining 7-days per week staffing. Fire intel is operating 5-days per week. Jolene is on extended medical leave, and Diane Nygaard is filling in for her. The National Center Managers meeting is the same week as the MNICS Meeting, and both Tasha and Mike will attend the MNICS meeting. EMT and Ambulance services will likely become part of the VIPR contract next year. Mike Mackey and Anna Hines will be attending the D-510 as training participants, and Tasha Woodwick will be an instructor.

Next Task Force Meeting will be November 3, 2022, hosted in-person at MIFC.