



# Notes

## November 2, 2022, MNICS Task Force Meeting

**Task Force Attendance:** William Glesener, Cory Berg, Greg Carlson, Mike Rice, Seth Grimm Jacob Beauregard, Kelvin McCluskey

**Non-Task Force Attendees:** Mike Mackey - MNCC, Leanne Langeberg, - Notes, Kevin Carlisle, Adam Cook, Robert Gotchie, Phil Millette, Zach Saumer

DISCUSSION ITEM	NOTES
<p><b>Building and Budget Update</b></p>	<p><b>Building Update –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recently, an individual attending a training session at MIFC tripped on a sidewalk chip outside the training room door and sustained a minor reportable injury. The chipped cement is repaired, and an estimate was requested for replacing the sidewalk.</li> <li>- Forest Service engineer visit went well, and several projects were discussed, including the LED lights and battery pack issues.</li> <li>- Training room door keypad continues to stop working and may be related to the generator reboot or outdated software.</li> <li>- Due to power outages disrupting critical MIFC systems from rebooting properly, Task Force requests assigning a MIFC employee to check power is restored, and thermostats are working properly throughout the building after a power outage.</li> <li>- The new fire panel is scheduled for installation on November 14.</li> </ul> <p><b>Budget Update –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reviewed the current budget and available coop funds. Projects completed include the all-in-one copier printer installation on the second floor, and the annual check of the air handler.</li> <li>- The budget spreadsheet does reflect the funding set aside for the L-380 class.</li> </ul>
<p><b>T2 IA Crew Program review and planning</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Task Force invited members from the Operations Working Team and MNICS Type 2 Initial Attack Hand Crew (Type 2 IA Crew) subcommittee to review the 2022 season, and to help identify strategies to improve recruitment, retention, and setting up the program for success to provide stronger support of the crew bosses and their crews.</li> <li>- Adam Cook represented the MNICS Operations Working Team as the chair. Phil Millette, BJ Gotchie, and Zach Saumer represented the MNICS Type 2 IA Crew subcommittee and Crews.</li> <li>- When the MNICS Type 2 IA Crews initially formed, there was strong followership and support. At the peak, MNICS supported up to four crews that took on 20 or more assignments each year. Over the years, commitment to the program has noticeably declined to a point it is now a challenge to form two fully rostered crews.</li> <li>- The Task Force acknowledges similar concerns are happening throughout the nation. They also recognized the impact of postponing the crews during the height of the COVID pandemic.</li> <li>- The Task Force recognizes the tremendous value the MNICS Type 2 IA crews provide to interagency relationships and training opportunities. They are committed to finding workable solutions to temporary program challenges. The Task Force looks to those most closely involved with the program to share recommendations for meaningful improvements to promote interagency representation, support, and participation.</li> </ul>



# Notes

## DISCUSSION ITEM

## NOTES

### **Notable concerns expressed by the MNICS Type 2 IA Crew representatives**

- Challenges with recruitment and rostering crews reflects the declining interest and agency's prioritizing non-crew training assignments over crew member roster commitments.
- Successional development of squad bosses and crew bosses doesn't appear to be a MNICS priority.
- The lack of MNICS/MIFC support has left crew bosses feeling they are completely on their own to navigate internal crew challenges (crew member self-sufficiency, equipment, multiple agency human resource policies), and acknowledged the Standard Operating Guide, which was provided to all crew members at the beginning of the season, was the only interagency resource they had to support decisions made this year.
- Time-consuming rostering efforts are falling solely on the crew boss.
- The crew bosses did not understand the decision to pause the program this season, nor the expectations moving forward.
- The subcommittee feels it is an unachievable expectation that all crew members come fully equipped with agency purchase cards or a personal credit card that will cover all travel expenses. Having at minimum an agency representative who can support these crew members is critical.
- The crew cohesion meeting was coordinated by the crew bosses this year and was hosted virtually. The subcommittee feels the cohesion meeting is beneficial but needs additional coordination support from a MNICS/MIFC representative, as had happened in the past.
- While these challenges present temporary hardships, the crew bosses represented at the meeting feel the amount of development that occurs through the crew assignments is valuable to all MNICS partners.

### **Considerations for improvement**

- Assign a MNICS liaison to help crews coordinate issues that arise during a crew assignment.
- Agency support with identifying, promoting and recruiting for successional crew membership.

### **Tasks**

- Identify key concerns that now fall on to the crew boss role that a local MNICS/MIFC coordinator can handle.
- Develop a list of critical crew liaison role requirements the Task Force can use to identify key agency representatives to fill the liaison role.
- Review and revise the MNICS Type 2 IA Crew Operating Guide to be relevant to current expectations and interagency relationships.
- Identify possible constraints that may be impacting people from applying and rostering with the MNICS Type 2 IA crews.
- Clear guidance and leader's intent from the Task Force when making decisions leading to forming non-MNICS interagency hand crews. For example, what parameters must be met to form an ad hoc interagency crew? Which agency guidelines will the crew follow? What MNICS representative will be available to support the Crew Boss when forming a non-MNICS ad-hoc interagency crew?



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<p><b>Type 3 IMT national availability and recruitment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The MNICS Type 3 Incident Management Teams have reached a level of experience and cohesion, which the Task Force feels has prepared them to pursue the next goal of rostering teams for national availability.</li> <li>- National availability will not be a requirement but will be viewed as an opportunity to provide additional assignments to exercise the MNICS Team members during periods of slower fire occur in Minnesota, mainly at planning level 2 or lower.</li> <li>- The Task Force discussed a couple of options when a Team can roster for summer national availability. All options require the team be pre-identified before making themselves available for a rotation.</li> <li>- The first option - form an ad hoc team filled with qualified MNICS Type 3 IMT participants for a rotation starting at the beginning of each month.</li> <li>- The second option – each MNICS Type 3 Team rotates availability throughout the summer rotation between June 15 through August 15, with Teams pre-identified by the start of the rotation.</li> <li>- Recognizing that not all team members will be available to fulfill the summer rotations due to commitments to other Type 2 Incident Management teams or their primary job responsibilities, the first option is the most flexible option.</li> <li>- The option to roster for national availability will come down to having three fully rostered teams for the year, and prioritizing meeting Minnesota preparedness needs first.</li> <li>- There is some concern that an ad hoc team’s membership will be comprised predominantly by a single agency.</li> <li>- Task Force agrees, that before national mobilization can occur, MNICS must have three fully rostered teams in place (ad hoc teams acceptable), Minnesota preparedness level must be satisfied (preparedness level will be a 2 or lower), and a team must have a full roster selected before going available for a national assignment.</li> </ul> <p><b>Recruitment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Task Force will work with the Board of Directors to identify ways to improve recruitment, including considerations that encourage supervisors to allow their staff who hold IMT position qualifications more flexibility to be available to support the MNICS Teams.</li> </ul>
<p><b>MNICS Active Wildfire Comm Plan</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cory Berg will work with Leanne on a few edits to the BIA section.</li> <li>- Task Force approved the communication plan.</li> </ul>
<p><b>MNCC and MIFC Hiring Updates</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The hiring process is progressing, and the MNCC coordinator is expected to make soft offer soon. MNCC also is working with a seasonal hire that brings with some curricula that will be beneficial MNCC. While individual is aware of the seasonal position opportunity, it’s likely they will pick up a non-MNCC permanent position before the MNCC seasonal position opens.</li> <li>- Several candidates applied for the MIFC front desk position, and applications are being reviewed.</li> </ul>



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<p><b>Annual MNICS Meeting</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The MNICS Meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn downtown Duluth. Meeting room space is being coordinated.</li> <li>- To reduce some of the last minute coordination, the plan next year will be to book the venue by early August.</li> <li>- Joel, Leanne and Kevin met to plan the hybrid meeting options for the general session. WT Chairs have been asked to coordinate their own hybrid online meeting rooms.</li> <li>- Distributed the MNICS award nominations. Task Force approved the nominations. Task Force members requested to have their retiree names in to Leanne Langeberg no later than Nov 9, 2022.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Leader's Intent meeting with the Working Team Chairs</b></p>	<p><b>Agenda Topics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Task Force Rep Introductions</b></li> <li>- <b>MNICS Working Team history</b> – who do working teams support and why?</li> <li>- <b>What role do Working Teams play today?</b></li> <li>- <b>Staying informed</b> – how to use the Task Force meeting agenda request form, and a brief review of the FireNet Teams demonstration for the MNICS Working Team's members.</li> <li>- <b>Working Team assignments</b> – The intent and benefit, who issues, who maintains record, and who completes assignments.</li> <li>- <b>Working Team Charter expectations</b></li> <li>- <b>Working Team collaboration</b> – The expectations for assignments and projects involving more than one working team, and how to keep the Task Force informed.</li> <li>- <b>What's working well for you, what can the Task Force help improve?</b> Working Team chair's Round Robin to learn more about the improvements necessary to implement. Are the chairs feeling they are getting the guidance and support needed from MNICS Leadership and Agencies to succeed?</li> </ul> <p><b>General Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Task Force reviewed the current representatives for each working Team and will adjust representation to assure working teams have proper support and guidance.</li> <li>- Task Force will prioritize availability to the working teams they represent or delegate representation to another MNICS member.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Agency Updates</b></p>	<p><b>BIA</b> – The fall season has been slow, though 66 fires were reported across Red Lake and Minnesota Agency on November 1. Most of the resources that supported Oklahoma returned. Minnesota Agency's new Superintendent, Eric Bruguier, was announced. He brings a lot of experience working within BIA and with tribal governments.</p> <p><b>DNR</b> – There's been a noticeable increase in wildfire activity throughout the Central and Northwest regions. DNR is moving resources to meet the need. Greg Vollhaber plans to retire soon. Jon Handrick is transitioning into the forestry enforcement coordinator position, and the Region 2 fire specialist position Jon leaves behind will be opening soon. The responsibilities of this position will mirror the other two regions, including fire and enforcement support to the areas. The MIFC reception position announcement has closed. The position will now include region support dispatcher responsibilities for approximately 25 percent of the time or three months of shared responsibility with the Northeast region. DNR plans to hire a training coordinator and an advanced training specialist, similar to what Brian Pisarek's role involved, that will focus on coordinating prescribed fire training.</p>



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	<p><b>FWS</b> – The regional leadership meeting was held last week. Starting to move into the typical fall preparations for the spring prescribed fire season and targeting high-capacity units. FWS is starting to double up on responding resources due to the ongoing dryness and fire preparedness needs. The GS-8/9 fire operations position at Minnesota Valley NWR is now open and is planned to be located at the Carver location.</p> <p><b>FS</b> – The vice Debbi Hahn position closed, and the candidate list should be available soon. There are no immediate plans to advertise the program specialist position. Thank you to the DNR and GLFFC for extending the invitation to Forest Service staff to attend the CMIC course this winter. Forest Service and MNICS agencies are discussing maintaining the Forest Service's aviation position at MIFC. Both National Forests remain on pause for prescribed fire, and it is unknown what impact the pause will have on pile burning.</p> <p><b>HSEM</b> – Interviews completed for the national assistant coordinator position. There are now nine Governor's emergency declared disasters for the state and three federal public assistance disasters. The new State Emergency Operations Center completion date is projected to be completed by the fall of 2024. There has been a big push for cyber security, and each state will receive funds to bolster critical infrastructure security programs. A Minnesota Cyber Security Task Force will administer the program funds coming to Minnesota. Minnesota election security is being monitored.</p> <p><b>NPS</b> – Transitioning into the end of fire season and starting to winterize equipment and working to fill the engine module leader position.</p> <p><b>MNCC</b> – Awaiting information on the five pending career seasonal positions. We saw a lot of heavy resource engagement to assist with the rise in fire activity. EACC is not planning to be represented at the MNICS meeting due to a conflict with the National Center Managers meeting occurring at the same time, but Mike and Tasha plan to attend the MNICS meeting. The Rocky Mountains Type 1 Team invited Minnesota and ADs to participate in the 305 course. MNCC intends to send out the MNCC office closure announcement next week, noting closures on November 11, the week of Thanksgiving, and December 19 through the New Year.</p>
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*Next Task Force Meeting will be December 5, 2022, Holiday Inn Duluth.*