



Notes

August 3, 2023, MNICS Task Force Meeting

Task Force: Greg Carlson, BJ Glesener, Cory Berg, Seth Grimm, Jacob Beauregard, Ben Roy

Non-Task Force Attendees: Ryan Kingsley - MNCC, Leanne Langeberg, Brian Wise, Kevin Carlisle

DISCUSSION ITEM	NOTES
<p>Building and Budget Update</p>	<p>Building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The bid for the window security coating project has been awarded and coatings will be applied late next week. - MIFC roof repair project is in contracting stage. - MIFC elevator redesign project is in contracting stage. The training working team is aware of the elevator accessibility concerns and advised to have a list of alternate accessible facilities to accommodate participants mobility needs when necessary to keep the training on schedule. - MIFC building blue warning light system is out of service. - The key card system upgrade is working well. <p>Budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The budget had not notable changes from the previous month's update. The Task Force members were reminded to submit their MNICS coop funded projects before the end of their fiscal year cycle. - The MNICS Board of Directors Bod approved the MIFC building security upgrade project funding and will split the cost equally among all the MNICS partners.
<p>MNICS Meeting Planning Update</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The MNICS Meeting planning group's last meeting was held before the July 2023 Task Force meeting, and there are no new updates from the group. Their next meeting is August 8, 2023. - A decision was made to follow through with the Duluth location as the purchasing process is already established there and would not require the extensive bidding process that a new location would require. The meeting survey will open the location to an audience poll of specific locations for the next MNICS meeting – Duluth, Bemidji, Brainerd - There is no theme established for the general session. The average cost of the suggested guest speakers – like the former NBA player – is running around \$10,000 for a two hour or less presentation. The Task Force was encouraged to share alternate suggestions. Ryan Kingsley shared a possible guest speaker, August Stovall with Code 4, a local emergency responder mental health advocate. - The schedule change to a Tuesday through Thursday (one day general session) will be implemented this year. The weather meeting will be the only meeting held on Monday.
<p>Master Cooperative Agreement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Caleb Schreiber had sent a link to all the Task Force members to access the Kenyon document share site to review the agreement changes. - Greg Carlson requested the link be resent so he can forward on to his National Park Service contacts. Greg may need to share email addresses with Caleb so he can assign access rights to the individuals.



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Agency Updates

BIA – Mille Lacs is starting to see impacts of increasing drought and noting an increase in occasional fire activity. Other areas are also dry but have received precipitation. BIA has resources in the Southwest U.S., including an engine module, and the Northern Rockies. The agency is hoping to roster a Type 2 IA crew. Human resources is working on the aviation manager position descriptions. BIA plans to implement the new 456 firefighter job series in December, and that is likely to involve job complexity reclassifications. The region is working on fire management plans and a spatial land management plan.

DNR – The agency has sent three crews to Manitoba through the GLFFC compact. The first two crews have returned, and the third crew is expected to return soon with conditions improving on their fire in Manitoba. DNR is starting to mobilize more folks out west supporting aviation and incident management teams requests. Notable media interest in the fire program this year, including a feature article in Minneapolis/St. Paul Magazine and WCCO will be running a wildfire related news series all week. The fire program is working with BIA and the DNR Commissioner’s office to finalize the agreement with Red Lake.

FWS – The region is starting to see heavy mobilization to requests out west. The agency is focused on completing contracting deadlines and year-end spending. The agency is working to implement awarded infrastructure funding contracts locally. Fish and Wildlife stations are still implementing bill projects that involve support from both agency employees and contractors. A recent prescribed burn at Fergus Falls resulted in a very hot burn, a strong indicator of the dryness. Local stations that completed pile burnings are now focusing on mop up those burns. Jason Riggins will be the new MNICS Board of Directors representative for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Department of Interior has adjusted the mandatory rest break upon completion of a 14-day fire assignment to reflect the Forest Service’s fire management board approved the 3-day rest period.

Forest Service – Both national forests are sending employees to support out-of-state assignments. The Superior National Forest and Arrowhead region showing considerable signs of dryness, and the Forest is increasing staffing to a high level, while still allowing staff go off forest. The acting FMO is on an FBAN assignment in Oregon. There was a lack of qualified Fire Management Officer applicants during the last round hiring. The agency will readvertise the position in FY2024, which will delay hiring to January or later.

HSEM – No update.

NPS – Voyageurs National Park reported one small fire within the park, as the park is progressing into a longer duration drying trend. The park has an engine crew on out on a severity assignment. The agency is planning for prescribed burn at Apostle Islands National Lakeshore in September and working adjusting the burn to meet the new T&E Northern Long-eared Bat management criteria. Working on bills fuels projects. Working on year-end spending.

MNCC – WildCAD-e. MNCC Center Manager is meeting with all assistant center managers on the roll out of the one-person on-call for all functional areas.

PIO – There’s been strong media interest in firefighters from Minnesota supporting Canada wildfire response, including a WCCO request that came from NIFC communication. MIFC PIO will be on leave for two weeks in mid-August.

Next Task Force Meeting will be September 7, 2023, in-person at MIFC.