



Notes

September 7, 2023 MNICS Task Force Meeting

Task Force: Greg Carlson, BJ Glesener, Cory Berg, Seth Grimm, Mike Hill, Patrick Johnson

Non-Task Force Attendees: Ryan Kingsley - MNCC, Leanne Langeberg – Notes, Kevin Carlisle, Shelly Greniger, Ben Roy, Mike Rice, Caleb Schreiber

AGENDA ITEM	NOTES
<p>Budget Update</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Task Force reviewed the budget spreadsheet. The Minnesota Interagency Fire Center (MIFC) building security project line item has yet to be divided by agency funding contribution. - The security window film project has been completed, and the Forest Service requested the funds be obligated by the end of the current fiscal year (FY). - The MNICS Board has approved the security system upgrade project for the MIFC building of Directors. The percentage each agency will contribute has yet to be tallied. When completed, it will require an amendment to the current FY 2023 financial plan to add the project and financial contribution. - The Federal MNICS partners expressed concern about the funding not carrying over as the amendment coordination coincides with the end of the federal fiscal year, and a continuing resolution will likely be in place for the next fiscal year. - The DNR will talk with Jody Wagner about the option to pursue a local Grand Rapids contractor to secure a contract. - The DNR will talk with Jody Wagner about pursuing a local Grand Rapids contractor to secure a contract. - A clause in the financial operating plan states that the task force may approve additional projects during the year and shall become part of the current financial operating plan. The task force must include a plan addendum noting the board of director’s approval of the breakdown on July 11, 2023.
<p>Building Update</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kevin Carlisle has sought bids for the annual sprinkler system inspection and the security plan. Several bids have been turned in with incomplete documents, and he must reopen the bidding process. - The monthly generator test failed this month. Carlisle will contact the company that previously inspected the generator and ask them to investigate the failure. - The installation of the MIFC building paging horns is estimated to cost \$4,300. - Carlisle is forming a new MIFC building committee to discuss agency workspace needs. - There are no new updates on the progress of the elevator or roof projects. - The MNCC electrical light project will proceed in December during MNCC’s holiday schedule. - The roof project will disrupt the MNCC dispatch floor and may require temporary relocation of the MNCC dispatchers to Ely, Walker, and the tanker bases during construction. Carlisle is working with the tanker bases to determine how many people they can accommodate at different times of the fire season. The Task Force should prepare for additional travel expenses from temporary relocation. - Because no bids have been received on the incident management team trailer renovation, Carlisle proposed MIFC staff can work on the key components – window and floor installation, in late fall or early winter and using the cache space during a weekend. The heaters in the trailers are working but are on the list to be replaced.



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<p>MNICS Meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The task force approved August Stovall with Code 4 for the 2023 MNICS Meeting guest speaker engagement. The presenter is local to Grand Rapids and will not require travel or lodging expenses. Carlisle will set up a contract agreement. - The task force reviewed the tentative MNICS meeting agenda. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Monday – weather meeting and meeting setup o Tuesday – meeting include the board of directors, task force and MNICS type 3 incident management working team o Wednesday – task force leader’s intent meeting with working team chairs, followed by working team meetings. Kevin Carlisle is coordinating meeting space with the working team chairs. - The general session will be a one-day session from 08:00 to 17:00. - The morning session will include MNICS Updates from the Task Force, a season review from the incident management teams and crew mobilizations this season, and an update from Jason Riggins, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, about the Eastern Area Coordination Group and CIM. The task force members were assigned to coordinate with their agency staff crew leaders and incident commanders to present on the season highlights they were involved in. Langeberg request presenters be confirmed no later than October 15. - The afternoon session will include the MNICS award ceremony, The USDA Forest Service connection to MNICS, a presentation and group discussion on managing Minnesota wildfires with drone technology, and the MNICS working team reports. - Carlisle is working on seeking bids for the 2023 MNIC meeting venue in Duluth. He will also coordinate with the working team chairs on their meeting time, room needs, and any other logistical equipment they may request. - The evaluation this year will include a vote for next year’s venue. Carlisle will use the results to begin his process to bid out the location based on the highest vote. - The MNICS planning committee participation was challenging this year, with half or fewer assigned committee members attending planning meetings. The assignments for 2023 and 2024 were reviewed and included membership for 2023 from Air Ops, Sandie Youngblom, Dispatch – Jake Serfling, Information – Tim Engrav, Logistics – Joe Weflen, Prescribed Fire and Fuels – Carl Crawford and Training Mike Rice. On deck for 2024 is Communications – Joe Theisen, Finance – Kristi Henderson, Operations – John Furr, Prevention – Mike Palmer and Type 3 Incident Management Dan Paulson. The task force will renew the working team assignment to establish the 2025 planning committee members and reach out to the 2024 members to remind them of their expected support and participation.
<p>The Nature Conservancy MIFC office space</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Nature Conservancy (TNC) plans to organize a burn crew that the Chippewa National Forest will fund. - The newly formed burn crew requires office space, and the Chippewa National Forest is open to offering their office space at the Minnesota Interagency Fire Center (MIFC) if the MNICS partners are open to providing space to the group. - The building committee will consider staffing plans before offering an official answer.
<p>Minnesota North College</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tom Remus signed the MNICS agreement with Minnesota North College, and a letter of support expressing appreciation for the college’s continued support with MNICS training and fire management was signed and delivered to the college.



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Eastern Area CIMT Planning Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As the Eastern Area Teams look toward rostering complex incident management teams (CIMT), concern remains on the ability to roster two full teams. The silver team has been challenged with rostering a fully committed IC. While the goal remains to maintain two fully rostered teams, the recommendation is to move forward with one fully qualified CIMT in the short term. - Recruitment for Eastern Area incident commanders and deputies has started.
Master Cooperative Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Caleb Schreiber with USDA Forest Service joined the task force’s master agreement discussion and shared no notable changes were made to the MNICS master agreement. - The national team is considering official language changes to the template for the master agreement proposed by the Department of the Interior. - Schreiber also shared southern Oregon and northern California national forest’s concerns about forest boundaries crossing multiple state and regional lines and wanted to make the task force aware of the concerns as similar boundaries are present with Minnesota and adjoining states. The Task Force acknowledged that agreements with the Great Lakes Forest Fire Compact cover the borders with Wisconsin, Manitoba and Ontario, and having the partnership with HSEM allows agreements through FEMA and ESF4 requests when the national response process doesn’t fit the response need. - Schreiber acknowledged challenges the group was experiencing with the document share platform and will look at the option to set up a shared document through the established MNICS FireNet channels. In the meantime, task force members are asked to pay attention to the role they are working in – editor or review – as that may impact the ability for automatic saving when changes are added. - The fiscal year 2024 Financial Plan updates should roll over with the Master Agreement without any additional addendums. - With the changes to the Complex Incident Management Team coordination, any language in references to the type of wildfire response, the traditional Type 1 or Type 2 level of complexity is the preferred language.
GLFF/FBX Calculator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Great Lake Fire and Fuels website plans to work with the predictive services from the Bureau of Land Management, Alaska, to combine data sets and rebuild the fire behavior calculator. The rebuild should improve functionality, including loading data directly into the calculator, producing indices based on the data inputs, and allowing the data inputs to be downloaded to Excel spreadsheets. - One expected benefit will be a persistent forecast that can be uploaded to get calculations. - The group is exploring possible grant funding to support this upgrade. They are looking for support from the geographic area coordinating group. The task force is asked to think about any potential funding opportunities within their agencies that could support the effort. Currently, the compacts support improving the fire behavior calculator through the Great Lakes Fire and Fuels website.
MNICS T3 out-state assignment review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overall, the MNICS out-of-state assignment to the Bowles Creek fire in Montana went well, and the local agency appreciated the team’s support. The team’s after-action review recognized communication was often vague, whether it involved operations, plans work on the 209, or public information. The team did utilize the Remote Incident Support Team (RIST) for planning support
MNICS Type 3 Incident Management Working Team proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The MNICS Incident Management Working Team proposed February 14 – 15, 2024, for the 2024 MNICS Type 3 Incident Management all-team member meeting to be held in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, at the Timberlake Hotel.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The group is considering two options to involve agency administrators during the meeting. The first option would involve qualified and trainee agency administrators from the MNICS partnering agencies who hosted a Type 3 or larger fire during the 2023 season to discuss their experience and lessons learned. The second option is to conduct a general round table with questions and answers with the agency administrators. - The MNICS team’s plans section and incident commanders presented to the working team their request to add a plans unit leader deputy and a deputy incident commander to the MNICS rosters. - The task force expressed concern that the requests for additional command and general staff positions no longer reflect a Type 3 organization. The task force supports filling the needs with trainee positions, and when trainees are no longer available, the additions will be discretionary.
<p>Agency Updates</p>	<p>BIA – Fire occurrence has been slow, though the agency will likely start working on a long-term severity request based on the drought code. Several resources have returned from assignments, and the agency has sent some resources to support Oklahoma. The BIA/Tribal Type 2 IA hand crew has returned and reported a good assignment. One crew boss task book was completed, and there was ample opportunity to rotate several folks through the firefighter 1 position. The crew recognized there are still some learning curves to work through, including having a package of agreements identifying the crew as an agency crew prepared ahead of the next BIA/Tribal crew mobilization.</p> <p>DNR – The fire program is filling three advanced training specialists focusing on incident command systems, prescribed fire, and aviation. MNICS Team B was ordered to take control of the County Rd 11 fire. The agency is working through the final details of the Tribal agreements and should be handing them over to the BIA soon. The DNR’s fire tower and fire prevention booth at the State Fair reported great attendance numbers this year. Minnesota is hosting the Great Lake Forest Fire Compact meeting in mid-September and will showcase the FyreBx tank attachment for the front-end skid loader with a 300-to-500-gallon tank. Larry Himanga announced his retirement and will be working through a gradual retirement process starting next year.</p> <p>FWS – Seth has accepted a new position as the zone fire management officer with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He will start his new job on September 25. Jason Westholter has expressed interest in filling Seth’s role as task force representative on the MNICS-prescribed fire and fuels working team. Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge has hired a new fire apprentice. The window for prescribed fire has closed for the season. Troy Boschee conducted a 100-acre biological technical burn on the Morris Wetland Management District and reported great results. Darrin Franco is set to lead the S-219 fire operations course in October.</p> <p>HSEM – No update</p> <p>NPS – Several Voyageurs National Park (NP) fire folks are returning from fire assignments. The last season position at Voyageurs NP will be done on October 7. One small fire reported on Voyageurs NP and one on Isle Royal NP. Voyageurs NP is planning to advertise a 13/13 seasonal forestry technician position.</p>
<p>Agency Updates cont.</p>	<p>FS – The agency has three engines and miscellaneous overhead on fire assignments. The fire hire event announcement was distributed last week and will remain open through September 28. Engine modules will be filled a permanent GS-7, and the GS-5/6 will become permanent full-time positions. The GS-09 prescribed fire and fuels position has been advertised, and the helitack positions in Ely are now open. The expected outlook for the Forest Fire Management Officer is November or later, likely requiring</p>



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	<p>one additional detail to fill the vacancy temporarily. Some pile burning on the Superior National Forest has started, with the west zone expecting more pile burning next week.</p> <p>MNCC – WildCAD e is now loaded to the air desk and several area offices, including Cloquet. All dispatching for the County Rd 11 fire is being fulfilled under one incident profile.</p> <p>PIO – There has been a fair amount of media and public interest on the County Rd 11 Fire, and a communication strategy, including a daily update and social media posts, is underway and will be transitioned to MNICS Team B. The PIO is one of the cadre members on the upcoming M-410 facilitative instructor course planned for mid-October.</p>

Next Task Force Meeting will be October 5, 2023, in-person at MIFC.