



Notes

April 2, 2026, MNICS Task Force Meeting

Task Force: Cory Berg (Chair), Taylor Schenk (acting), Darrin Franco, Jennifer Olson, Nick Petrack, Greg Carlson

Non-Task Force Attendees: RJ Johnson (MNCC), Leanne Langeberg (Notes), Kevin Carlisle, Shelly Greniger

Guest: Ignis Tech representative Jordan Treasure and Shawn Scott

DISCUSSION TOPIC	NOTES
MNICS Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Task Force reviewed the monthly budget expenses and uncommitted funds. There were no notable expenses incurred beyond the monthly utilities and regular building expenses.
MIFC Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The contractor has completed the MIFC elevator project, and Summit Fire will install the sprinkler system above the elevator sometime next week. Carlisle will meet with the Forest Service engineer on the elevator warranty and inspection schedule - A grounding wire was installed for the MIFC antenna. - The MIFC phone system conversion will start next week with the Cache phones and then progress throughout the MIFC building. - The initial NEK Cache gate system controller unit and eye replacement bid was over \$12,000, and additional bids will be sought. - The MNCC monitor project is delayed as a new DNR contract needs to be written. - The MIFC downstairs all-in-one photocopier will be replaced by a Canon 6160 at an estimated cost of \$17,000. <p>NEK Cache Kevlar fire pant replacement update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The USDA Forest Service distributed a memo to its regional directors instructing them to proceed with replacing the Kevlar fire pants with traditional wildland fire pants. The memo only covers the USDA Forest Service. The NEK Cache manager will send out an email to Forest Service staff.
MNICS Annual Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The committee did not meet in March. - Oen sent an email to the group with a proposed guest speaker, Bre Orcasitas, a former hotshot, heli-rappeller, and smokejumper, who now works in a consulting and teaching capacity with the wildland fire agencies on work/life balance, stress management, critical incident response, and hospital/family liaison - One proposes having Bre speak on initiating and facilitating difficult conversations (getting through “Minnesota Nice”), specifically on performance and giving critical feedback, behavior change, confronting poor behavior and communicating bad news.
USWFS Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The agency is working on filling the upper-level management position. - The 2026 Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations, or Red Book, is expected to be released next month. The DOI fire programs were combined into one chapter, and Tribes have their own chapter. - Fire budgets currently remain with their legacy bureaus. - The Forest Service rolled out a reorganization plan, which will impact the Washington Office and Regional Offices. Currently, there are no projected National Forest impacts for the 2026 fire season.
Working Team Report out plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The task force will conduct the MNICS working team chairs' spring report-outs on May 6. - Johnson will distribute the meeting invite and agenda to the chairs.



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Ignis Technologies - Next- Gen Wildfire Tech Product Briefing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Berg attended a Wildland Fire Service Aviation meeting last month, where he met with George Violante, BIA’s acting Fire Director, and representatives from Ignis Technologies and Bridger Aerospace. They discussed an app-based tool currently being tested on air attack platforms with Oklahoma Tribes that can share real-time maps, videos, and imagery with ground fire crews via cell phones. The tool is expected to become an industry standard within a few years. This spring, Ignis Technologies plans to test the tool with the BIA’s air attack platform and the Minnesota Tribal fire agencies. To brief the Task Force on this tool and its potential to benefit wildfire response in Minnesota, Berg invited Ignis to present to the Task Force. - Jordan Treasure and Shawn Scott with Ignis Technologies presented a slide presentation highlighting the Bridger Aerospace Ap, how it uses GIS technology and real-time data sharing to relay aerial detection mapping, imagery and live-stream video to the ground firefighting responders. - The tool has two levels of sharing data: an organization level and a team level. At the team level, a direct link and a special 6-digit authentication code allow access to the team for real-time data sharing. The tool can help support earlier tactics planning. - During the Task Force discussion, some members expressed concern about app saturation and which apps to prioritize, while also recognizing the potential benefits the tool may offer for sharing real-time data with ground resources.
Bemidji Fire Prevention Team	<p>BIA is taking the lead on organizing a Prevention Team that will include a public information officer. The team will help promote awareness of the fire danger concerns in the blowdown area and expand communication efforts. The specialized team will coordinate with the interagency group comprised of BIA, the Leech Lake and White Earth Tribal programs, the Chippewa National Forest, and the MN DNR, Northwest Region and Bemidji Area.</p>
FDOP Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The task force discussed ongoing challenges with the Minnesota Fire Danger Operating Plan (MN FDOP) and coordination across the participating MNICS agencies. - The new matrix developed by Glesener and Verdegan was shared with the task force, but the Forest Service does not plan to pilot the matrix, as there are concerns with the Fire Danger Rating Area (FDRA) in the Arrowhead region, and the Forest Service feels they need more long-term data. Currently, they do not have sufficient staffing to identify a point person to take the lead on further development of this project. - The task force recognizes that the prescribed fire and fuels working team no longer has the capacity and expertise it once had when Glesner, Jenkins and other stakeholders were involved. Back then, the group had a clearer vision when they pulled together the initial MN FDOP. - The task force agrees it would be unwise to abandon the project, and as a group, they need to dedicate time to assess each agency’s direction, define mission intent, and outline a task list for completing updates. The Task Force will add this to their June meeting agenda.
MNCC Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MNDOT request - Staffing - Onboard status for 	MNDOT Request <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The task force wrote an official request letter to the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) requesting a statewide analysis of radio communications. The letter was submitted to Paul Lundgren at the MN DNR for review. The MIFC radio



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<p>Deer River & Voyageurs NP</p>	<p>communications program has compiled data for the MNICS radio infrastructure and is working to input it into a shareable spreadsheet.</p> <p>Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MNCC is utilizing a detailer rotation to cover dispatching shortfalls. The expectation is that folks from Montana will continue to support as detailers unless they enter into an early spring season, which based on recent trends is likely to occur. - The Forest Service position has closed, and a list of potential candidates is expected by next week. Once received, interviews will proceed. - The DNR aviation dispatcher position announcement has closed, and interviews will start next week. The DNR is also working through a special hiring authority to fill the logistics dispatcher position. - The MNCC has a possible candidate for a 120-day detail as assistant center manager logistics and is working with BIA. BIA is considering the option to work with U.S. FWS to advertise the logistics assistant center manager because the agency has already centralized human resources and may be able to advertise the position sooner. This option will keep the position within the Department of Interior. <p>MN DNR Deer River and Voyageurs National Park MNCC onboarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Voyageurs National Park’s fire program dispatch transition to MNCC is still in progress. The park is awaiting hardware installation to connect and communicate with MNCC. - Deer River is now dispatching out of MNCC operations. Their equipment set up is still in progress but expected to be fully operational by next week.
<p>MNCC Morning Report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MNCC operations is requesting to streamline some of the intel products shared MNICS-wide as they address staffing shortfalls. The change will help to maintain continuity of services between both functional areas. - The proposed change would be most noticeable in the daily intel report, which would replace daily screenshots of web-based products with the current weblink to the product.
<p>Academy Update</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The training working team chair reported that several of the Minnesota Wildfire Academy Courses are starting to fill up; however, current registration numbers for the L-130/190 and L-180 course are low.
<p>Ops Working Team request – State Fire Marshal Office or</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Board of Directors hasn’t officially confirmed the request to add a State Fire Marshal’s Office or State Fire Chiefs Association member to an operations working team. - Berg will send a follow-up with an email to Lundgren and Stansberry.
<p>Aviation Tanker Base updates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Forest Service is transitioning to a powder-based fire retardant. The new powder is disrupting the pump systems at the local tanker bases. - The powder-based formula will be available at Brainerd this year, and the other tanker bases will be largely supplying Blaze Tamer. The task force will notify their agency fire programs that the powder option can be requested but will be limited this year. - A recommendation was made to list what each tanker base can offer, such as a LAT or SEAT reload, in the comments section of the aircraft status report.
<p>MNICS Type 3 IMT SOPs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The MNICS Type 3 incident management teams are finalizing the appendix and will send the final draft to the task force for approval.



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<p>Agency Updates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BIA – The aviation resources expected to start next week will be temporarily delayed. The following week, the BIA expects the contracted scoopers to be brought on. Fire activity picked up during the last weekend of March, especially in the White Earth and Red Lake, and the BIA and tribes have accomplished quite a bit of prescribed burning. With the transition to the Wildland Fire Service, there is an effort to stop name requests, which will likely become more pronounced moving forward. The agency is also pushing for a national registry for EMT-qualified overhead. - DNR – During the last week of March and the recent Red Flag Warning conditions, fire activity increased, but the forecasted snow is expected to slow this trend. DNR now has two contracted SEATS and 2 helicopters in the state, both available. The DNR approved an operational order and policy for the UAS program and is working to purchase two UAS for the fire program. - FWS – Locally, FWS reported the first fire of the season on April 1 and has made progress on completing prescribed burning. The agency is planning to order detailers again this year to help out with prescribed burning. The Prescribed Fire Training Center (PFTC) will be in the area this year and will serve as a resource for local FWS. Locally, three fire vacancies have recently been filled. - HSEM – Interviews for the Northeast Region program coordinator have been conducted. The radio board plans to meet next month to discuss the low spot in the Northwest where firefighters are experiencing radio communication challenges. HSEM has been provided with a list of Type 3 team sponsorship applicants and is working on inputting their IQS records and training certificates. - NPS – NPS is working on a planning project with the local Volunteer Fire Departments and is completing work capacity testing. The park completed a 30-acre cattail burn. The advertisement for the AFMO position in Medora has closed, and staff are awaiting the applicant list. - USFS – Resources from the forests have been assisting the Mark Twain National Forest, and this current assignment will be the final rotation. The Forest Service has received its annual budget. Forest Service staff recently exercised CIMS support due to a firefighter injury. Petrack plans to share lessons learned with the Task Force. - MNCC – MNCC plans to bring in a 120-day detailer this spring to help support logistics. The dispatchers are working on operations guides and daily operating guides. The center manager is preparing dispatchers for 7-day staffing.

Next MNICS Task Force Meeting and Working Team Chair Reports scheduled for May 6 -7 2026, at MIFC.