



Notes

August 6, 2026, MNICS Task Force Meeting

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

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

Guest: Taylor Schenk, Ryan Williams

DISCUSSION TOPIC	NOTES
MNICS Budget	- The Task Force reviewed the monthly budget expenses and uncommitted funds - MIFC building expenses pending or paid noted on the spreadsheet include the HVAC repair, the sprinkler system alarm diagnosis and repair. - The MNCC dispatch floor monitors remain in an out-for-bid status. - The annual federal contributions were not included in the current spreadsheet. - The funding set aside for the Fire Danger Operating plan salary costs will be reallocated to other MIFC or MNICS project work.
MIFC Building	- The NEK Interagency Support Cache is fulfilling the July fire response request orders. - The ADA accessible door contract for the lower-level administrative area has been extended to September 30 due to a delay in door parts. - The open Minnesota DNR Resource Assessment area will meet the radio shop's office and workspace requirements pending the HVAC system improvements and finalizing the rental agreement with DNR's Management Resources (MR). - Kingsley, Cache Manager, informed the Task Force that the vacant property west of the cache and south of the dentist office has been approved for a 90-unit apartment complex, and advised that security will need improvements at the gated truck entrances. - The MIFC building committee is looking into a copper test for the facility following a notification from the City of Grand Rapids about the potential for high-level copper.
MNICS Annual Meeting	- The planning committee has struggled to meet consistently as a full group, with many committee members involved in wildfire response and assignments. - The keynote speaker has been found for the general session. - Bids for the meeting location are expected to go out in the next month. - The agenda is planned to end the general session by 14:00. - Recommendation made to add a 30-minute presentation covering air attack, mission ordering processes, and product review—helpful for IMTs and Duty Officers. - Based on the level of wildfire response in Minnesota this year, and the MNICS Team A's desire to recognize those who supported the team with challenge coins, Langeberg asked for the Task Force's support laying out time on the agenda that provides appropriate time and space for meeting attendees to reflect on the season and recognize key contributors. The Task Force will dedicate additional time at the September meeting for strategizing. - The call for MNICS awards will be sent out at the beginning of September.
MNICS & MIFC Future Planning	- Due to the ongoing July Lighting Incident coordination, the Task Force will meet with the Board of Directors to discuss the future of MNICS at a later date, tentatively in October. - Discussion topics will focus on important decisions regarding the future of MNICS membership and representation, as well as the MIFC facility. A follow-up discussion agenda item will be added to the joint meeting of the Board of Directors and the Task Force scheduled for December.



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July Lightning Incident	MNCC Coordination - Masher effectively coordinated the center manager role during 14-day detail, and Mackey has assumed the center manager detail, bringing experience leading the expanded dispatch, through Johnson's return. MNICS Type 3 AAR Highlights - Incident Commander Hill shared key highlights from the MNICS Team A's July Lightning Incident mobilization. - The July Lightning Incident was an unusually complex assignment for a Type 3 team, involving 11 fires across multiple jurisdictions. Despite challenges, the team performed strongly and identified several areas for future improvement. - The team was originally prepared with a full roster for national mobilization but remained in Minnesota due to emerging conditions. Early coordination with the Agency Administrator helped establish clear objectives. - Managing 11 fires over 6.5 shifts complicated cost tracking and raised unresolved questions around complexing. Communication gaps with St. Louis County Emergency Management and delayed establishment of a JIC affected public information coordination. Confusion over the State EOC JIC roles highlighted the need for unified messaging. - Resource allocation and information flow were inconsistent, and this event highlights the importance of preloading IROC orders. - Branching the team under the complex organization worked but lacked a clear playbook. - Improving county partnerships, refining JIC processes, and compiling takeaways from multiple AARs will be important next steps. Presenting "What to Expect When a MNICS Team Arrives" at the AMEM conference may help strengthen local integration.
July Lightning Incident Management Team Coordination	- Currently, MNICS IMTs are unavailable to roster a full team, as many key team members are supporting the Eastern Area team. - Extending the Eastern Area CIMT is the Forest Service's preference but also considering other alternatives including rotating personnel or supplementing with a NIMO team. - The Task Force is okay with delaying the MNICS team rostering rotation when more resources are available to ensure consistent team coverage.
Wildland Fire Service Updates	- WFS is still awaiting an official budget as the organization continues to evolve. - A mission statement was issued yesterday. - The Chief Budget and Business Officers start August 9, and the Chief of Operations will start the next pay period.
USWFS Unit Changes	- The map of the proposed three units for the Eastern Region being presented to Boise was shared with the Task Force. - The Task Force members will draft a unified MNICS letter in support of continued statewide interagency coordination. Berg and Franco will draft a version for the Board of Directors, that incorporates DOI talking points. Individual agency letters are also encouraged - Clarification is needed on board representation for FWS, BIA, NPS, and FS and ensuring emphasis is placed on MNICS representation for all wildland firefighters in Minnesota. - An exercise to test coordination scenarios was suggested for future planning. - The Forest Service expects its feasibility study will be completed in February.



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TF/BOD Meeting reschedule	- Berg will send a message to Lundgren and Stansberry to schedule a joint meeting to discuss MNICS's future before the MNICS meeting in December.
Communication Interoperability Workshop Request	- HSEM requested that MNICS radio communications representatives present at the upcoming communication interoperability workshop on September 20, 2026. - Berg will tie in with Olson to determine the appropriate representatives.
Agency Updates	- BIA – BIA reported conditions are dry, but the Mille Lacs Area is the driest. Presently, Mille Lacs has an 8-person module from Michigan available to assist partners with initial attack, if needed. A 16-person module is in Ely and may reform when they time out. Most resource support is focused on Grand Portage and Bois Forte, while the BIA still manages tribal fire agreements. The geographic area's aviation supervisor position is being advertised with Bemidji or Grand Rapids listed as a duty station - DNR – Glesener is serving as Agency Administrator for DNR in Ely. The communications coordinator and the UAS positions have been filled. The assistant aviation supervisor position has been advertised. The driest conditions range from south of Grand Rapids to the north Twin Cities metro area and east. DNR is working on pulling together modules to support efforts in northern Minnesota. - FWS – Efforts are ongoing to advertise and fill a GS-11 fire management officer position in Litchfield, and the agency is still looking into creating a GS-08/09 logistics dispatcher position for MNCC. Current 2 S-MODS are supporting the Superior, and a few resources are supporting out west. The Wildland Fire Service has a severity package in place and is working to extend the package. The Fergus Falls GS-08/09 position was filled. - HSEM – The peacetime emergency expires August 11 and will not extend. The State EOC plans to deactivate next week but will continue to support as needed. An offer has been made for the Region 2 coordinator position. - NPS – Agency fire staff are assisting with local firefighting efforts in the BWCAW and working on a rotation schedule to maintain a small local response contingent. The park is still in long-term drought.
Agency Updates Cont.	- USFS – The July Lightning Incident still has 378 miles of uncontained fireline. The agency is considering options as the Eastern Area team nears its time-out date. The Forest has been approved for 30 days of severity funding. Coordination with Canada is ongoing. The IA dispatcher position at MNCC was filled. There are a couple of Forest Service vacancies in the NEK cache that the forest is considering including in the next national fire hire event. Discussion on BWCAW reopening is occurring daily. - MNCC – Expanded dispatch has set up in the MIFC training room. MNCC is now conducting daily dispatch floor briefings. The Forest Service recently conducted an emergency alert through all phone contacts.

The next Task Force meeting will be held on September 3, 2026, at MIFC.