

# California Operations Committee and Incident Commander Meeting

## McClellan Training Center

### October 27, 2009

---

#### Attendees:

Paul Bannister – BLM/CWCG Ops  
Christie Neill – NPS/CWCG Ops  
Joe Millar – ONC/CWCG Ops  
Ralph Domanski – OSC/CWCG Ops  
Jack Froggatt – KRN/CWCG Ops  
Sue Husari – NPS/CWCG Liaison  
Jessica Wade – FWS/CWCG Ops  
Brenda Seabert – CalFire/CWCG Ops  
Scott Vail – Cal EMA /CWCG Ops  
Willie Thompson – FS/CWCG  
Kent Swartzlander – FS/NorCal Team 1  
Jeanne Pincha-Tulley – FS/CIIMT3  
Mike Dietrich – LVN/CIIMT5  
Joe Molhoek – NPS/Nor Cal Team 2  
Carlton Joseph – FS/SoCal Team 1  
Tim Fike – NCC/NorCal Team 2  
Dennis Stevens-FS/CIIMT3  
Mike Wakoski – FS/SoCal Team 3  
Sid Beckman – NPS/ CAWFMT  
Bill Molumby – FWS/CIIMTeam2  
Jerry McGowan – FS/CIIMT1  
Alan Johnson – FS/CD Team 2  
Ron Woychak – BLM/SoCal Team 2  
Jim Smith – FS/CC Team 7  
Dana D’Andrea – FS/CC Team 7  
David Cooper – FS/CS Team 2

---

#### Notes:

- ✓ Review CWCG Ops Group Charter and agenda items
- ✓ GACC perspective of 2009 season
  - North Ops: about 4,000 fires, about 100,000 acres, 16 IMT deployments (10-yr ave is 25), 3 NIMO deployments, 341 jumps, staging was beneficial and only spent 3 mil in staging to better mobilize. All teams got mobilized except for Beckman. NO/SO supports each other throughout the season. Participated in “pilot” Aircraft process where command and control of aircraft location. However, GACC is not managing aircraft on incidents.
  - South Ops: Early start with the Jesusita fire. 17 team fires (11 fed, 6 state) 4,243 fires (which is average), 300,000 acres. Used prepositioning and asset movement and worked well.
- ✓ Incident Commander round robin/perspective on 2009 season

- Swartzlander – Did not have to rely on contractors at all this year since resources were available. Saw a need for more heavy equipment operators (WT/Dozers). WFDSS was somewhat problematic since strategic objectives generally do not match the fire area. Cost containment measures and KDLs seem duplicative. Lessons learned: Good to have one person inputting KDL where the team communicated the important/significant decisions that affect the outcome of the incident. On Backbone fire, team lost effectiveness working under NIMO and communications were an issue. Need to communicate NIMO protocols upon mobilization.
- Smith – Team Evaluation process is broken and has concerns with the “60 day clause” Emphasized the importance of having signed agreements with cooperators to help local forests and does not agree with quota limits on local government personnel. D’Andrea wants to have clarification regarding who the IMT sounding board is (i.e. CWCG and/or GACCS, etc). Need backing from CWCG regarding pressure and use of short-teams or ICT3 teams regarding cost and quick ramp-up and ramp-downs.
- Pincha-Tulley – LeBrea fire NIMO was mobilized for support to the agency administrator and then the role changed to help the team. NIMO’s role in-between line officer and IC really impacted the relationship/communication between agency administrator and IC and unified command with CalFire added a complication. Would like CWCG direction regarding how NIMO is to be used in CA. ICs have very little input into process when NIMO is assigned to work for the Line Officer.
- Molumby – The assignment to Canada was great. It was a front-country fire that was 185 acres and very costly. Air assets are 60% of their suppression costs. Regarding air, everything is controlled by pilots including load calculations and briefings and no helitack. Also commented that the danger tree program is good.
- Woycheck – 3 team deployments and almost went to Saipan. The surprise order for a Type 2 team on an international FWMA assignment is a heads up for all Type 2 teams (get your passports). Had concerns with WFDSS because he thought it was not usable because it is too broad. LA County aircraft forced onto IC, IC not involved in decision. Had concerns with having the Station fire for the first two days as “a branch” and when in unified command with LAC that situation was very confusing/uncomfortable. Very glad to see Dietrich. Would like further clarification with Fireline paramedic, ordering structure protection, and team involvement with multi-agency accident (TC) investigations.
- Allen Johnson – ½ of the 4 assignments were short team assignments which worked out well. Unified command with Cal Fire on the Knight Fire which worked well. The Big Meadow fire went to type 1 because of structure protection/threat. WFDSS on landscape scale is good and doesn’t seem to be such a tight pressure to keep the fire within “the box”, since there isn’t one anymore. Would like clarification regarding whose responsibility of structure protection when on FS DPA.
- McGowan – Had one deployment to Yosemite (Big Meadow); steep learning process to understand hierarchy of NPS. Did a KDL but did not put it on-line. Level of service is an issue –in relation to cost containment and conflicting direction (i.e. Saw shops,

paramedics on every division, laundry, etc. ) what is a proper level? Reviews – NPS cost review is already completed which was very transparent and quick. Great process!

- Dietrich - Station fire was very complex, the first two operational periods there were 65 miles of WUI. All evacuations handled by sheriffs dept and the MAST coordination. Lessons learned: Ensure the reentry protocols are established at the same time that evacuation plans are established. Further knowledge of agency hierarchy (i.e. LA County Emergency Management Services and entities like this...OES/OEM), should be further worked into our trainings as a cooperator. Very good process for the cost share agreement where everything was documented up front and agreement was signed within 3 weeks of fire start which was good. Need Regional IBA to help with cost share/apportionment. If there is a big night operation, need to have a C&G staffing at night. No time to do the KDL. Had two 747 drops, 31 loads of DC-10 retardant. Agency frugality guidance did not mesh with the guidance to protect Mt. Wilson communication site where there was brush growing right to the base of the sites, lots of money was spent here and on infrastructure (power lines, etc). Cyanide exposure, night mop-up, from possibly gold mining operation. Will share cyanide exposure info with group if we want. Also has a concern with the IMT evaluations and evaluators. Did receive a FOIA request from LA Times that included emails, text messages, etc.
  - Joseph – Team did not mobilize this year. But did work on Station fire as DIC. 3 different camps, plus one spike. Local unit and IMT perspectives were not in alignment regarding the evaluation.
  - Woykoski – Lessons Learned: in the future, will be carrying both a Liaison Officer and a Human Resource Officer on type 2 fires. External forces on air operations were distracting (i.e. infrared flights, retardant, etc). There is a broad spectrum of line officer experience out there, (some good, some very inexperienced) which is a concern. Team was on the station fire at the end – documentation was an issue. Instructed to produce 4 different doc packages, but finally decided to only do one. Fire started to flare up below Mt. Wilson, and SOPS was very helpful in aircraft facilitation. NIMO worked on the fire in the BAER capacity. Received no performance rating on Station fire.
  - Molhoek – A shortage of Resource Advisors in NOPS. Has concern with inconsistency of the rating format, recommends a standardized format. Transitions and building capability, DFMO should facilitate this process when often times they are not assisting or involved.
- ✓ Transition support –
- Comments regarding the agency pushing too fast to get from a Type 1 to a Type 3 organization. Challenges with quick ramp-up and ramp-downs and recognizing the capacity needed.
  - There is some confusion regarding the turn back standards and who does this (entire team, other team, short team) and who builds this organization (team vs. home unit).
  - The DFMO should be more involved in the process of transitions and building the organizations.
  - There seems to be a shortage of resource advisors in NOPS.

- NOPS was a lot of help when dealing with agency administrators. Hosting units are hesitant to take a fire back too soon or are too anxious to ramp-down quickly.
- ✓ CALEMA involvement in cost share-
  - There is confusion on authority. They made decisions for the local chief regarding what they will pay for and what they will not pay for. The local agencies may not have experience with cost share and CALEMA will help with this. Need CWCG clarification of CALEMA role in cost share process and reimbursements?
- ✓ NIMO Recommendations/2010 Lessons Learned -
  - In CA, CWCG does not manage NIMO, but in NW, they do work for the coordinating group. Some confusion exists regarding the expectations of the NIMO teams in California compared to other geographic areas.
  - For 2009, there were poorly defined roles, slow season, and NIMO working for one agency. FS's idea of how to use the NIMO teams and the ICs idea is very different.
  - Roles, relationships, and responsibilities of NIMO need to be identified at the very beginning of the incident and communicated to all parties involved.
  - NIMO team to share all NIMO protocols with non-NIMO teams and team members up front (i.e. risk sharing protocol) so there is a better understanding and fosters better communication.
  - Some of the NIMO protocols did not facilitate quick decisions and action within a window of opportunity (i.e. risk sharing).
  - If IMTs are working for NIMO, encourage more communication and two-way dialog where ICs have input. Need open and honest dialogue between the Team and the agency administrators.
  - Often times the intent of mobilizing a NIMO team is to help the situation and in fact, they often times created confusion, blocked communication, and hindered efficiency.
  - The "stacking of teams" with one trumping another causes problems, decreases efficiency, adds a layer of second-guessing, and decreases team cohesion.
  - When assigned at a strategic role, the specific objective of the NIMO team was undefined and unclear.
  - The agency administrator is encouraged to ensure both NIMO and the traditional IMT are both at the table and all parties are communicating and interacting in a two-way manner.
  - When the NIMO team is working for the line officer as an extension of management (helping with decisions), the agency administrator are not communicating with the ICs and instead communicating with the NIMO team only. The Agency administrator became less or non-involved with the IMT and very involved with the NIMO, when major communication breakdowns happened. This can be fixed when communication is fostered for a two-way communication between NIMO and IMTs.
  - When NIMO is allowed to or encouraged to trump an IC, it is not a good operating practice.

- Need to factor in the fires that are in unified command. The use of NIMO teams confuses the roles and responsibilities when working with cooperators.
  - Confusion occurs regarding mobilizations since it is unclear where the NIMO teams are regarding a rotation.
  - ICs would like meeting with the agency administrators, CWCG, NIMO team, and CA ICs to discuss the 2009 lessons learned.
- ✓ Team roster location –
- CALEMA FTP site. There has been concern that non-fire folks cannot access the FTP site. This is a common fire storage place for CWCG Operations.
  - Decision is that where it is located is fine for that snapshot in time (February).
- ✓ Resource Ordering
- How resources are ordered (i.e. CFAA / MMA / Local agreements). CA ROSS business practice regarding local government IMT members is that they need to have a local agreement, and non-team members go thru CFAA agreement. Sub team members/Alternates are technically not stated with the team and will require a name request thru CFAA. Often times this name request gets held up and kicked back. Name requesting under CFAA is allowed.
  - CFAA is a one-way agreement between federal and local government – only fed use at this time.
  - Need to look at the mission and ask is it for the cost-share agreement. Additionally, we need to ensure the human element of ROSS is in place for facilitating the processing of these orders for IMT mobilization.
  - State whose mission resources are ordered (fed, state, local gov), for tracking and cost-share documentation.
  - Follow ROSS protocols to mobilize resources correctly
  - Joe/Ralph will ensure that ROSS users understand that they need to process this more efficiently.
- ✓ IMT succession planning –
- Are we collectively doing a good enough job creating a secession plan for our IMTs (transitioning IMT member's from Type 2 to Type 1)? Can we create any incentives? Where are we going to go in 5-years? What about 520 applicants? Can we create opportunities that are not traditional? All teams are interconnected – Type 3- T2, T1, etc.
  - Need to figure out how to target individuals, create opportunities for these people and fill the holes
  - Cost containment directions of no local government trainees allowed will hurt the attrition of local government to help federal teams. FS standard template agreement has numbers of trainees.
  - Table until CWCG Ops group and ICs can do research and make proposals.

- ✓ 2010 Number of CA federal teams' recommendation to CWCG –
  - We just don't have the personnel to bring into the IMTs from the federal system. There are rumors of agency perspectives of a target of "20% cap on local government" and that may not be attainable with no pool of federal personnel to take their place.
  - Quality vs. quantity. CWCG wants teams that can do a quality job.
  - May not be able to do this exercise until we get the team nominations and do the math.
  - Regardless of the makeup of the teams, the Operations Group with the ICs need to identify how many teams and propose to CWCG.
  - Suggest a c-call with ICs early February after nominations are in. Want IC involvement in this decision.
  
- ✓ Future of CA Wildland Fire Management Team –
  - Goal of fire use teams was to take fires and produce a long-term strategy. Originally there were 7 WFU teams on national rotation.
  - With the new 2009 policy, all GACCS except SW/NR (share one team) and CA consolidated their fire use teams into other capacities.
  - The current mgmt idea is that local type 3 teams with fire behavior support, a SOPL, and misc type 1 or 2 capabilities intertwined can efficiently manage fires for resource benefit. WFDSS took the place of stage III planning.
  - Many Forests do not have the public support to allow for some landscape-level (WFU) fires. How do we maintain this expertise?
  - Option 2 is good, but where are we going to get the people? Sid leans toward reallocation of the team to help develop other teams.
  - Proposal:
    1. No action - Stick with current 2009 Mob guide positions (7 core plus 3 positions)
    2. Reconfigure adding positions to make type 2 team
    3. Reallocation of team to other teams. No action is not a valid alternative because hard get resources as WFM team.
  
- ✓ Non-federal IC's on Federal IMT's. challenges/constraints - No issues today
  
- ✓ IMT evaluation –
  - The GB format was passed around last year to IC group and most of the ICs agreed that it was a good evaluation form.
  - The problem is not the form, it is the agreement up front to agree on what the ICs will be evaluated on by the agency administrators.
  - ICs asked where the evaluations go at their final state and asked intent of all of the reviews.
  - Consistent process that is identified up front, objective and qualified evaluator (by someone with fire experience), also use input from an evaluator that is independent from the forest that helps the agency administrator with the final performance rating.
  - Agency administrator need to understand to not bring up surprises in the end and instead work through these throughout the incident.

- Suggestion that GACC is involved in the writing of the evaluation too since they are involved from mobilization to demobilization.
  - Evaluations go to GACCS within a certain date, per CA mob guide. At end of season, the evaluations will be sent to CWCG Ops Group and then to CWCG. The point of sending evaluations is so that GACCs, CWCG, or Agencies can follow-up will occur if there are concerns with the evaluations.
  - Possibly CWCG can help the agency administrator with the rating criteria and process pre-season.
  - CWCG Operations needs to come out with a CA standard for evaluation form and process for 2010 into CA mob guide. Memo goes out to all agency administrators requiring new format. (Does this include a finance “delay” by 3-12 months?) Need to establish the appropriate finance delay timeframe in CA.
  - Address process on dealing with the really high and really low evaluations and let the ICs tell their side of the story. The ICs need a forum to be able to tell their side of the story because there are always two sides.
  - Operations group to propose incentives for good team performance.
  - Evaluation processes will be outlined in the agency administrator memo to be distributed spring 2010.
- ✓ KDL and other decision support value to ICs, GACCs, and CWCG in 2009/2010 seasons and role of large fire cost review teams by CWCG S – Not specifically discussed
  - ✓ WFDSS and FSPro support 2009/2010 seasons – Not discussed
  - ✓ H1N1 vaccine for IMTs – Not discussed
  - ✓ IMT Management –
    - The discussion has taken place over time regarding the T2 IMT working for provinces and confusion still exists.
    - CWCG management is written in the CWCG Charter and in the FS BOD notes several years ago.
    - Pro of IMT working locally is that In past, has more ownership and were able to recruit more people and have more agency administrator buy-in. The con is that CWCG is the conduit to the NWCG and national support.
    - Official direction from CWCG is requested to clear up any confusion, especially to the province agency administrators. Memo to agency administrators on how teams are managed, team assignments, guidelines, mobilizations. Be clear that IMT management is CWCG but mobilizations are still the GACCs.
  - ✓ Line Officer communication –
    - Proposal is to have discussion with Agency administrator to discuss the history and where we are now. Have lots of new agency administrator.
    - IMT management and experience
    - IMT Evaluations

- WFDSS
- Who IMTs are managed by now
- Making employees available for IMT teams/secession planning
  
- ✓ California IMT Operating Guidelines document -
  - Review and get comments to Chair of CWCG Operations Committee, Paul Bannister.
  - Some of the provinces have Province SOPs that may be useful for the CA guide, the ICs will send the examples to Ops Group.
  - 2010 Team composition and priorities for selection
  - Put sentence regarding Fall IC AAR meeting, as determined.
  - Document will be finalized for the 2010 season after February team selection meeting.
  
- ✓ 2010 Joint CalFire/Fed IC meeting –
  - February 23 and 24 at McClellan Target audience is ICs and Deputies.
  - Suggested agenda items: DPA Challenges, Cost Share, Statewide IMT Vacancies, Contract Counties, WFDSS Process, Transition Briefing Document, Structure Protection/WUI Expectations, Joint Fed-State IMT discussion, Suggestion is to include ICs, DICs, for Fed, State, and Contract County ICs
  - CalFire executives want to know and approve the agenda
  - After the meeting there will be a separate Unit Chiefs/CalFire IC meeting
  - Question was asked why CalFire teams are not under CWCG
  - Need to discuss the possibility of the joint workshop for state-fed.
  
- ✓ CICC –
  - Issue is that retired personnel who are hired by local departments (not Ads) have not been given official direction for following a specific qualification system. There are four qualification systems (310-1, 5106.17, cal fire system, CICC).
  - There are people currently on teams that have never been through CICC process and are not on anybody's system or a peer-review at the appropriate level.
  - ICs should be cognizant of their team members if they are under a system
  - In the IMT announcement will be revised by adding a sentence that requires CICC requirements.
  
- ✓ 2010 IC nomination process and dates
  - Announcement Nov 1 to Dec 1<sup>st</sup>
  - Tenure: If the member applied last year, the three-year commitment started then. There is no retroactive clause, so if applied under the 5-year commitment then fill the entire term.
  - Ops group will work with ICs to identify where the team members are with tenure.
  
- ✓ 2010 Team nomination process and dates
  - Announcement from Nov to Jan 15<sup>th</sup>
  - Encourage agencies to disseminate team nominations through Agency administrator

- Need to target individuals to be on a team (relates to attrition plan).
  - Tenure = 2009 was beginning of the 3 year commitment. Not retroactive.
  - Team selection = February 25<sup>th</sup> at McClellan.
  - CIMT Team Workshop March 29<sup>th</sup> to April 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- 
- ✓ Meeting Dates
    - Joint State-IC Meeting, McClellan, February 23-24, 2010
    - Fed IC Selections – McClellan February 25, 2010
    - CIMT Workshop – Reno, March 30, 31, April 1, 2010
    - Fall Meeting/AAR – Ops Group and ICs – November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010 at McClellan
-