

FEWT MEETING
April 23-24, 2002

Introductions by the FEWT team members and guests:

George Jackson, Program Leader /Fire, at MTDC welcomed us to the new building. Dave Aicher, Center Manager stopped in to welcome the group to Missoula MT.

Kim Christensen, NIFC, gave update on personnel at NIFC. Kim moved into Center Manager acting for Neal Hitchcock. Neal is acting Assistant Deputy of Fire and Aviation, Operations. (Vice Alice Forbes) Alice Forbes is acting Deputy of Fire and Aviation, Operations since Dennis Pendleton retired. NIFC helped support New York City, Pentagon and in home- land support in the area of crew movement.

Bill Hicks, Lead Program Specialist, Engineering Branch, GSA attended the meeting in the place of Larry Camp. He works in the engineering group that works with both technology centers.

Ken Bulter, BIA works with the native American groups and with the use of SEAT's. BIA's computer (e-mail) is still down. It is creating a safety problem and there is no coordination of air planes vs. crews.

Robert Stroud is from NIFC/BLM and works on the construction and development of equipment. They have built 40 units and are now up to 180 units. They are working on the re-design of the batch mixing equipment.

Brian Hutchins is from State of Michigan, DNR he handed numerous business cards. And ended up handing out his personal card as he is going to retire in July. He does qualify for an extension but this maybe his last meeting. Brian has always liked the group and has served on the FEWT for **twenty + years**. Has attended more meetings than anyone. His most disappointing moment on the team was the failure with quarter turn. He has always served the people and when he goes that is it! He will miss the robotics and its future with fire.

JP Greene from the State of Florida, reported that they have 19 fixed wing aircraft, 9 helicopters and numerous pieces of fire fighting equipment. JP felt that he brought balance to the group. Florida is testing the Cobra with 360-gallon retardant tank this week. Missoula will be doing some testing soon with CDF and Canada and could test this aircraft if there was a need. JP passed pictures around of the helicopter and stated that the tanks fill in 30 seconds. They have acquired 29 of them and there is lots of interest from other parties for the Cobra. Trying to work out a demo with the west for the Forest Service. Reimbursement is an issue. It has been a big job to convert them over. The cost to retro fit to have basically a new helicopter is 250K.

Capt. Marshall G. Malhoit and Jennifer Kelberer representing the USAF attended the meeting. Marshal is the Robotics Project Officer/ System Engineer with the Air Force

Research Laboratory, AFRL/MLQF Force Protection Branch at Tyndall, Florida and Jennifer is an engineer from their fire lab (contractor) from the Deployed Base Systems Branch, AFRL/MLQD. They want to see what our problems are. Her work has been mostly with fire crash rigs. They were attending just to listen and learn what we are about. There is a lack of dollars in the area of Research and Development.

Paul Solarz, FEWT Chair, announced that he has been the Branch Chief for Equipment and Chemicals since December 4th, 2001. He sponsors both of the technology and development centers. He is also chair of the FEWT which is part of NWCG, which has 14 groups underneath them. He also told us that the Fire Lab is also located in Missoula and that it has a burn chamber. They are doing testing for countries all over the world. Brian asked if we could have a tour of the lab (given the next morning). Paul explained the workings of the group including chemicals and equipment.

Marshall questioned what we did with Aussie's last December because of the help they gave us the year before. We told them we are available and they said would call when they needed us. They have lots of resources available state-wide and through their country and the season they were having was more of a normal season.

Jim Olson, BLM is now working at MTDC with the Smokejumper and fire equipment development. They are working to find a parachute that both can use.

The group reviewed the charter. It was decided that a task group needed to be established to look at the tara-torch/batch mixers, heli-torch, etc. Need to establish standards for ground only. Need to look at the batch mixer first. Aerial program is OK but Batch mixer might present additional problems for the aerial program.

A good place to test fire robotics would be at a prescribed burn most conditions exist.

Membership on the FEWT is still eight with advisors. Paul will put out a call letter for agenda items one month prior to meetings, in the future. A strict formal process for meetings is not necessary. The group mainly decides on a consensus of the group and this process is working well and will continue.

Paul will get clarification on the status on the quarter turn or what decision has been made from NWCG. It appears there are different opinions on the information that is out.

Brian said that all states are different and don't like letterhead from the government. So we need to find a different approach when we send out questionnaires or surveys.

JP would like to see more content on the web page that shows what we do. Need to get as much information on the web that we can. How far will NWCG let us go? Each of the group chairs will be meeting with NWCG in October. Paul will go over issues such as the charter and the web page. We need an active web page. Our notes will be put on the web by submitting them to NWCG executive secretary Jim Stump?

Who from the Forest Service is looking at the Cobra? Morgan Mills?

George Jackson and Mary Trankel developed a web page survey. Brain stated the web page should be advertised, there is a need to put the survey on several web sites. Need to reach county and rural fire departments. What about Hotshots? Do we want all to respond or just one representing the consciences? We should not limit who can fill out the survey and we cannot force anyone to take part in the survey. Need to emphasize the more responses we get the better. Need definitions to fill out the survey. There are many places we can post the survey. Maybe should send out at the end of the field season and we need to be more responsive. The survey software program can be very useful on a number of issues that we deal with, i.e. form. Maybe we should look at pre-paid postage responses.

Kim reported on the NFES meeting. We asked GSA to stock a bare Mark III pumps in addition to the pump with all accessories. They also are looking at putting 10 to 12 pumps with remote start at each cache. They said to move ahead on Hot Line hose, should have by 2004. Cost may double but in the long run it will be a cost savings. They gave the okay to remove items that expire from the first aid kit.

Security issues at airports have become greater. Sigg bottles, fuses, strike less matches, Badges with straight pins, and chain saws can cause many problems and there are fines that will be enforced on those who violate these rules.

George Jackson gave a tour of the new facilities and Paul gave a tour of the fire lab.

Capt. Marshall G. Malhoit gave a presentation on the robotics program that the Air Force Research Laboratory is conducting. Lots of information that is useable to our application. They are not creating the wheel, they use existing technologies, purchase of the shelf stock. The question was asked if they are testing an internal combustion engine in a depleted oxygen environment? Will engine still run? He realizes it is going to be a "hard sell" but we can use this technology, alternative fuel sources. Paul asked about using robotics to read bar codes? It can be done and there is some work already being done on this item. Robotic equipped P-19 Crash vehicle is a line of sight vehicle. It could be used with the MAFFS system. Capt. Malhoit said they could put robotics on anything we want. Application could be used in prescribe fire as well as wildfire. Capt. Malhoit left copies of his cd presentation for the group.

Jennifer Kalberer is an engineer with the fire lab. She talked about a liquid and dry chemical compressed air unit the slips on a truck. Consortium trying to get funding to develop wildfire, structural, and ARFF vehicle. (\$35.5 million). They are trying to make it a line item with the congressional funding over the next four years. It failed in FY02 and they are trying again in FY03 budget. Paul said the Ceci Johnson and Shirley Zylstra, from the chemical lab at MTDC would be contacting them to exchange ideas.

Judy Crosby and Jerri Billard came to represent the NWCG Data Stewardship. They gave a presentation on why they exist and what their goals are. They are trying to do

away with a stove piping. They provided the group with a hand-out of their charter and a brochure. AMC is going to NWCG to ask to be recognized and to establish a link. We have to decide what is important and need to look at definition. The ICBS/ROSS charter needs to be reviewed by the IRMWT. ROSS removed the charter, as they stand-alone and ICBS will stand-alone. The team needs more time to review charter. There is some concern that ROSS is contacting the contractor before problem is truly identified. Need a generic charter and look at the business system first. Charter didn't have commitment. We don't want to bring ROSS down. There is a potential for protest from vendors with the continued use of this program. NWCG wants data standard created and published. Standards for ROSS need to be reviewed by FEWT. The training for train-the-trainer is being done this week. Program will be used by all agencies by FT-03 and the group will be gone in FY-04. IRM working team is a silent partner with FEWT.

**Paul made copies of the cd presentation for the group and handed them out.

Ralph Taylor, SDTDC presented video on Super Tank for information only.

Ground Ignition Task Group needs to be established as soon as possible. Need to look at batch mixer, tara-torch and any ground ignition out there. Need to train people and have them certified. Robert Shroud and Wes Troop are working on the project now. Dispose of all bad items out there. George Jackson wants drawing established and there won't be any changes at all. We are directed by the manual to be compliant with DOT regulations. There is not a group to develop and standards. We need to re-visit what was designed in the past and have it made to our spec. The group needs to decide what we need. Proposal was made to establish a sub-committee to look at ground ignition devices. BLM Operations is looking at stopping any ground ignition that is not certified. JP expressed his dislike for that proposal as far as the states were concerned. Need to establish a charter and decide what it will say. Look at all ground ignition devices, cost, etc. Bring in the group who responds that they have an urgent need. There is a need for standardization as well as training. Do we need to store things in the fire caches or make them portable? What is the time frame? All this needs to be done as soon as possible.

1. Name a committee
2. Report at the fall meeting
3. Take forward to next spring meeting
4. Funding

Group agreed to subcommittee. Robert Stroud, (leader) George Jackson, Wes Throop said they would be on the committee. Ken Butler will forward a name from agency. Ralph Taylor said his representatives would be Joe Fleming (Mechanical Engineer) and a fuels specialist (to be selected in two weeks). JP has several people he would like to nominate

By June 1st view web base survey for equipment.

Tim Lynch presented Lessons Learned, CD product in development, from the Thirty Mile Incident.

Next meeting is to be September 16-20, 2002, Ken Butler to host location to be determined.

Respectively submitted,

Ricki Miller
Secretary

ATTENDEES

Kim Christensen	NFES/NIFC BLM
Bill Hicks	General Services Administration
Ken Bulter	BIA/NPS
Robert Stroud	BLM/NIFC
Brian Hutchins	Roscommon Equipment Center/Mich DNR
J.P. Greene	Florida Division of Forestry
Ricki Miller	USDA Forest Service
Capt. Marshall G. Malhiot	AFRL/Force Protection-Robotics
Jennifer Kalberer	Air Force Research Lab Fire Research
Paul Solarz	USDA, Forest Service WO F&AM
George Jackson	MTDC
Judy Crosby	NFIC - Forest Service
Jerri Billard	NFIC
Ralph Taylor	SDTDC
Wes Throop	MTDC
Jim Olson	MTDC/BLM