

BLM Fire Training Officer Committee

Meeting – Boise, ID

Date/Time: 09/13-15/11

In Attendance:

Voting Members:	MT – Michelle Perkins	Guests & Support:
AK – Lynn Standley Coe	NV – Cindy Savoie	BFTU – Jeff Arnberger
AZ – Brian Achziger	NM –	BFTU – Al Olson
CA –	OR/WA – Brian Rindlisbacher	BFTU – Pam McDonald
CO/WY – Kim Bang	UT –	Fire Ops – Sean Cross
EA –	NTC –	FOG – Tom Romanello
ID – Carol McElroy	BFTU – Mike Ellsworth	GBTU – Madonna Lengerich

AGENDA ITEMS:

SEPTEMBER 13, 2011

1. Introductions

(Ellsworth)

Mike Ellsworth welcomed the group to NIFC and made introductions.

Jeff Arnberger (BLM Fire Training Unit Leader) provided the group with a historical perspective of BLM Fire Training Unit and the status of the recent reorganization of NIFC Fire Training that moved the Unit directly under the Division of Fire Operations. He expressed the need to take an in-depth review of the Unit to identify efficiencies and priorities in the face of decreasing budgets and reductions in workforce.

Jeff set forth meeting goals: to formalize a committee charter, establish business practices, possible conversion of the BLM Fire and Aviation Training Information Job Aid into a training and qualifications standards guide, and futuring efforts for the Unit and the Committee.

Sean Cross (Chief, Preparedness/Suppression Standards) welcomed members and commended the members on the valuable support they provide to the field. He expressed the intention for the BLM Fire Training Committee to align with Fire Operations Group (FOG) practices and other FOG subcommittees. The goal of alignment is to provide a clear, comprehensive, and strategic BLM position on issues and concerns.

Tom Romanello (FOG Co-chair) expressed his enthusiasm to stand up the BLM Fire Training Committee under the FOG. As with the FOG and its associated subcommittees, states are expected to fully support committees. Participation in meetings and conference call is essential. Committee members unable to participate should ensure that designees be present during their absences.

2. BLM Fire Training Committee Charter (Arnberger)

Committee members reviewed the draft BLM Fire Training Committee Charter and provided input for changes to be incorporated into the final revision.

DECISION: Mike Ellsworth (FA-320/324 designee) and Cindy Savoie (Nevada) will become the BLM Fire Training Committee Co-Chairs.

ACTION: Formalize the BLM Fire Training Committee charter and submit to committee members for review and forwarding to FOG Co-chairs for presentation to and approval by the FOG at their November 2011 meeting. (Arnberger/Ellsworth)

ACTION: Determine through the Wyoming FOG representative whether Kim Bang continues to represent Wyoming as a BLM Fire Training Committee representative by October 1, 2011. (Romanello/Bang)

3. Fire Operations Website Redesign (Romanello)

Tom Romanello briefed the group on the upcoming launch of a redesigned Fire Operations website on the BLM intranet. The BLM Fire Training Committee will have a presence on this website linking back to the BLM Fire Training Unit's external website.

4. Committee Roles and Responsibilities (Arnberger/Ellsworth)

The Committee discussed previous roles and responsibilities of the BLM Fire Training Unit that the Committee may need to assume. Due to budget constraints Committee members may be asked to participate in pre- and post-season meetings by providing Committee updates and fielding training and qualifications questions. BLM Fire Training Unit personnel will provide talking points for use during presentations.

Committee members are expected to maintain their relationships with their FOG representatives. Providing regular Committee updates and ensuring open lines of communication are critical to the success of the Committee.

5. BLM Fire Training Program Review (Ellsworth)

Mike Ellsworth briefed the Committee on a recent review of the various duties performed by and programs managed by the BLM Fire Training Unit. The review looked at programs, staff responsibilities and established priorities. The Committee provided their input of the review.

Higher Education Opportunities

Committee members expressed a need for NIFC Human Resources to provide better direction on courses that meet professional series education requirements. Inconsistent acceptance of college courses by HR Specialists within the same state and between states (e.g., what is accepted by one state may not be accepted by another) has created much frustration in the field.

ACTION: Create a FOG briefing paper on the need for consistent direction on courses that meet professional series requirements and submit to Jeff Arnberger by October 2011 for presentation at the November 2011 FOG meeting. (Savoie)

Technical Fire Management: The Committee discussed the viability of Technical Fire Management (TFM). The Committee feels that due to the availability of other, often less expensive, educational opportunities, TFM is but another option that employees may pursue for higher education.

DECISION: Since a few BLM students remain who need to complete TFM requirements, the BLM Fire Training Unit will provide assistance as needed. However, TFM Advisory Committee representation and future support of the program needs to be evaluated.

ACTION: Develop alternatives to managing the BLM TFM Advisory Committee for the BLM. (Ellsworth)

UNLV GS-401 Education Program: The Committee discussed whether or not BLM Fire Training Unit administration of the UNLV GS-401 Education Program should be maintained. The Committee expressed strong support of the program due to its modular-based approach and out-of-state tuition waivers through the MOU.

DECISION: The Committee determined that the UNLV GS-401 Education serves a purpose and supports keeping the program viable with BLM Fire Training Unit oversight.

Prescribed Fire On-the-Job (RX-OJT) Training Program

Al Olson provided a historical background of the RX-OJT program. This program, once funded nationally, requires a significant workload by the BLM Fire Training Unit Program Manager. Applications to the program dropped significantly when the IFPM deadline passed and national funding was removed. Due to the funding issues and reduction in staff, the BLM Fire Training Unit no longer has the capacity to keep the program viable at a national level.

DECISION: The Committee recommends that local units work with their State Fuels Manager to provide RX-OJT opportunities.

ACTION: Brief the FOG on the Committee's recommendation regarding the RX OJT program at the November 2011 meeting. (Ellsworth/Arnberger)

Operations OJT (Ops-OJT) Program

Mike Ellsworth provided a background of the Ops-OJT program. Funding of the program comes from severity and preposition funding. Successful coordination of the program requires knowledge of operations trainee opportunities as well as an ability to work within the dispatching system when competing with GACC trainee placements.

Committee members are encouraged to notify Mike Ellsworth of possible opportunities as well as ensure that managers are aware of the program and submit applications for their subordinates.

Within the context of the OJT discussion, the Committee voiced concern about workforce development and succession planning. Some members of the Committee have found great difficulty in developing training plans for various reasons including a lack of direction in order to properly plan for future training needs, inability to use the IQCS workforce planning function, etc.

DECISION: The Committee acknowledges the need to develop our workforce and believes that support of workforce development and succession planning direction is needed to a level manageable at the local level. A clear national focus and plan would be ideal.

Jeff Arnberger noted that a new software program under development for use with initial attack needs may assist local units with a needs analysis tool for workforce development and succession planning.

Lynn Standley Coe discussed Alaska Fire Service's Allocation of Forces model which is connected to employee IDPs as a possible tool that could be adapted for use in the lower 48.

ACTION: Send a copy of Alaska's Allocation of Forces model to all committee members by October 1, 2011. (Standley Coe)

ACTION: Brief the FOG on the Committee's position on the Ops-OJT program at fall 2011 FOG meeting. (Arnberger/Ellsworth)

ACTION: Create a FOG issue paper regarding the need for more formal workforce succession planning direction and submit to Jeff Arnberger for presentation at the November 2011 FOG meeting. (Perkins and Bang)

ACTION: Contact the IQCS Administrator regarding the workforce planning function located within the IQCS system. (Ellsworth)

FAM Mentoring Program

National funding has been approved to support the FAM mentoring program. Rollout for the BLM is forthcoming. The initial rollout will include formal briefings to the FOG and Fire Leadership Team (FLT) by BLM Fire Training Unit personnel.

ACTION: Brief the FOG and FLT on the FAM Mentoring Program at their fall meetings. (Arnberger/Ellsworth)

Wildland Fire Apprenticeship Program (WFAP)

National funding for WFAP has been significantly reduced and applicant submissions from areas outside the California area have decreased. The future of national BLM involvement in the program is under review.

Class A, B, C Faller Position Task Book (PTB)

The BLM Fire Training Unit currently supports the maintenance of the Class A, B, C Faller PTB. There is a push by our federal agencies partners to review the PTB. The Committee discussed options for BLM participation in the review:

- Keep under BLM Fire Training Unit purview.
- Delegate SME representation on a federal agency revision team to the BLM hotshots.
- Assign to the Risk Management saw group task group.

DECISION: The BLM Fire Training Unit will monitor the progress of review efforts and report back to the Committee.

ENOP/FEMPR/Refresher Training

The Committee discussed the proper oversight body for engine training and supporting products.

DECISION: The Committee recommends transferring oversight and maintenance of Engine Operator and other engine training and products such as the FEMPR from the BLM Fire Training Unit to the National Fire Equipment Committee.

ACTION: Recommend to the FOG that the Committee recommends that the National Fire Equipment Committee assume oversight of engine related training and products. (Arnberger)

Annual Fireline Safety Refresher

Mike Ellsworth challenged Committee members to develop BLM-specific modules and solicit hot topic ideas for inclusion in Annual Fireline Safety Refresher products.

ACTION: Brainstorm ideas for soliciting Annual Fireline Safety Refresher ideas from the field and report to the Committee during the November 2011 conference call. (McDonald/ Ellsworth)

Preparedness Review Training Checklist

Jeff Arnberger notified the Committee that the Preparedness Review Training Checklist will be revised in the winter. Committee members will be asked for their input and assistance.

IMT Succession Plan Update

Tom Romanello briefed the group on the status of IMT succession planning. There seems to be a lot of the BLM's recommendations for succession planning being included in drafts.

SAI Subject Matter Course Development and Line-of-Duty Death Response Handbook

Jeff Arnberger briefed the Committee on efforts to design a shorter, more support-level course for serious accident investigation response. The BLM Fire Training Unit will coordinate with NTC and SMEs on course development.

The BLM Fire Training Unit and the Office of Law Enforcement and Security are partnering together to create the BLM Line-of-Duty (LODD) Response Handbook. The publication provides managers with procedures responding to a line-of-duty death.

SEPTEMBER 14, 2011

1. BLM Fire Training Committee – Request for Change Process

Jeff Arnberger proposed that the Committee adopt a request for change process similar to that implemented by the Operations and Workforce Development Committee (OWDC).

ACTION: Revise the proposed BLM Fire Training Committee – Request for Change Process by November 2011. (Standley Coe/Ellsworth)

2. BLM Fire Training and Qualifications Standards Guide

The Committee discussed creation of a guide focused on BLM fire training and qualifications standards. This guide would incorporate and possibly replace information found within the BLM Fire and Aviation Training Information Job Aid.

ACTION: Create a BLM Fire Training and Qualifications Standards Guide draft and report progress to the Committee on the December 2011 conference call. (Ellsworth/BLM Fire Training Unit)

3. BLM Fire and Aviation Training Information Job Aid

The Committee reviewed the BLM Fire and Aviation Training Information Job Aid and tasked out final revision of specific chapters.

ACTION: Revise the BLM Fire and Aviation Training Information Job Aid and submit revisions to Al Olson by November 1, 2011.

Chapter 1 – Brian Rindlisbacher

Chapter 2 – Michelle Perkins

Chapter 3 – Mike Ellsworth

Chapter 4 – Kim Bang

Chapter 5 – Mike Ellsworth/Jeff Arnberger

Chapter 6 – Jeff Arnberger

Chapter 7 – Michelle Perkins/Kim Bang/Mike Ellsworth

Chapter 8 – Mike Ellsworth

SEPTEMBER 15, 2011

1. Action Item Review

The Committee reviewed and clarified action items from previous days.

ACTION: Create a BLM Fire Training Committee Report for presentation at the November 2011 FOG meeting. (Savoie/Ellsworth/Arnberger)

2. Round Robin

Nevada (Savoie)

- Nothing to report.

Arizona (Achziger)

- Trying to get the Southwest Training Committee stood up.
- The travel ceiling is having an effect on training.

ACTION: Speak with Grant Beebe the BLM budget chief to discuss options to address the travel ceiling impact on training and report on the October 2011 conference call. (Romanello/Cross/Arnberger)

ACTION: Send the Forest Service's travel ceiling/training exemption issue paper to Jeff Arnberger by October 1, 2011. (Kim Bang).

Alaska (Standley Coe)

- Working to fill Tony Doty's position.
- Looking for an instructor for this spring's IQCS training session.
 - Montana is suspending IQCS training until the new software is launched.
 - Ellsworth reminded the group that there will be a freeze on using the training database portion of the software this fall.

- Alaska is offering an aggressive training schedule, including S-491 and the Canadian version of S-390.
 - Alaska successfully offered S-491 via teleconference with NAFRI.
 - The Committee discussed the need to remove the WIMS component of S-491.

DECISION: The Committee will monitor the GATR community's attempt to address the WIMS/S-491 issue.

Wyoming/Colorado

- Expressed appreciation to Al Olson for his work with the BLM Fire and Aviation Training Information Job Aid.
- Instructor travel is more of an issue with the travel ceiling than with student attendance.
- Working with Mission-Centered Solutions to present L-381.
- Discussed an increase in Wilderness First Responder Training requests and course offerings. There is no clear management backing and direction for this contractor-provided course.
 - Other states are seeing the need for the course especially in remote areas where 911 responses are less timely.
 - Sean Cross ensured the group that the issue is known and being discussed at various levels and encourages the Committee to keep the issue in their view.
 - Carol McElroy related Idaho's recent move to Red Carding EMT positions. The process identified some qualification issues with relation to state certifications, etc.
- Trying something new with systems training: placing the training at the wildfire academy.
- Still offering an engine academy—struggling with funding and location.
- Has concern regarding PTB management: shortage of Training Specialists on teams and inability for an increasing number of contractors in the system not being able to sign off on tasks. Would like to see the Committee look at creating PTB maintenance training including the possible resurrection and revision of previously-developed training modules.
 - Sean Cross expressed the need for accountability through policy direction.
 - Al Olson provided insight into the pros and cons of the training module approach for PTB maintenance.

ACTION: Evaluate present PTB maintenance training tools and brief the Committee during the November 2011 conference call. (Bang/Ellsworth)

ACTION: Create an OWDC issue paper regarding concerns with the PTB management and submit to Jeff Arnberger by November 2011. (Bang)

- Addressed an issue paper that Kim Bang submitted to the Leadership Subcommittee issue paper regarding formal recognition of leadership curriculum staff rides within the Field Manager's Course Guide as well as identification within IQCS as an "L" instead of "M" designation. As BLM agency representative, Mike Ellsworth will present the issue to the Leadership Committee.

ACTION: Present the staff ride designation issue paper to the Leadership Subcommittee at their November 2011 meeting. (Bang/Ellsworth)

Oregon/Washington

- Brian Rindlisbacher will continue to support Oregon/Washington in Mike Spencer's absence.
- Addressed duplication efforts with Oregon/Washington regarding qualifying Faller A, B, Cs through a yearly State Office certification and through the PTB system.

- Expressed concern over the frequency of engine refresher training and possible defensive driving equivalency.
 - Montana expressed similar issues and concerns.

Idaho

- Lack of funding is affecting training.
- EMT registration and Red Carding was time consuming and frustrating since as it was conducted during the fire season. Lessons were learned.
- Offering a basic supervision course.
- Idaho FOSs created an operational guide that may provide guidance to other states.

ACTION: Provide committee members with a copy of the Idaho Operations Guide by October 2011. (McElroy)

Montana (Michelle Perkins)

- Experiencing training-related funding issues beyond travel ceilings.
- Concerned with limiting training opportunities to only required training.

National Office

- National funding will be provided for purchase and distribution of the 2012 Annual Fireline Safety Refresher DVDs. The process of distribution will remain the same as last year.

ACTION: Send out by November 1, 2011, the 2012 Refresher Distribution list to Committee members and field Training Officers for review/updates and return to Pam McDonald by December 16, 2011. (McDonald/All Committee Members)

- Commended Al Olson for his service to the BLM Fire Training Unit and wished him well as he retires in December 2011.

3. Conclusion

Jeff Arnberger and Mike Ellsworth thanked the Committee for their work and commitment.

Sean Cross challenged each Committee member to brief their FOG representative about the topics discussed at the meeting. He expressed a need to keep relationships current through open lines of communication.

Tom Romanello commended the Committee on their depth of experience and ability to work well with one another. He reiterated his enthusiasm to have the Committee stand up under the FOG and invited Committee members to attend the fall FOG meeting to be held in Boise on November 8 -9, 2011.

4. Next Meeting/Conference Call

The next conference call will be held **October 5, 2011, at 1030 Mountain**. Committee members were reminded of the importance of having a representative on the call.