

## ***Interagency Dispatch Improvement Project Meeting Notes***

**Location:** USFS Chief's Conference Room, Yates Building, Washington DC  
**Meeting Dates:** April 22, 2010

### **Members Present:**

- Jim Douglas, Project Chair: Asst. Director F&AM, BLM, Washington DC
- Tom Wordell, Project Coordinator: BLM, Boise, ID
- Vaughn Stokes, Chief Information Officer: USFS, Albuquerque NM
- Kim Christensen, NICC Center Manager: USFS, Boise, ID
- Dean Ross, Branch Chief of Emergency Services: NPS, Washington DC

### **Members Joining by Conference Call:**

- Corbin Newman, Regional Forester, USFS, Albuquerque, NM
- Kim Thorsen, Director of Law Enforcement, DOI, Washington DC
- Jim Kenna, Arizona State Director: BLM, Phoenix, AZ
- Vicki Christiansen, Arizona State Forester, Arizona State, Phoenix, AZ
- Dan Smith, NASF Fire Director: NASF, Boise, ID

### **Guests (Present or by Conference Call)**

- Bob Kuhn, Program Analyst: USFS F&AM, WO, NIFC, Boise, ID
- Bruce Marto, Supervisory Special Agent: DOI, Washington DC
- Kolleen Shelley, IIOG Program Manager: USFS CIO, WO, NIFC, Boise, ID
- Peter Roehrs, Senior Special Agent: USFS, Arlington, VA
- Carroll Alexander, Radio Program Manager: NPS, Denver, CO

### **Members Absent:**

- Tim Lynn, Assistant Director of Investigations: USFS, Arlington, VA
- Cam Sholly, Natchez Trace Parkway Superintendent: NPS, Tubelo, MS

### **Meeting Agenda Topics:**

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Background/Purpose
3. History of Fire Dispatch Management Efficiency Study & Major Recommendations
4. Types of Solutions Available – Fire and Non-Fire
5. Current Efforts in Support of Dispatch Improvement Recommendations
6. Issues Not Addressed by Current Activities
7. Priorities and Dependencies
8. Recommendations and Discussion
9. Defining Success

### **Exhibits:**

- A. IDIP Agenda
- B. IDIP Steering Committee Meeting PowerPoint/PDF

**Agenda Item: Welcome and Introductions – Jim Douglas**

Jim welcomed the steering committee members and guests. Everyone introduced themselves. Jim then covered the meeting objectives and briefly went over the steering committee membership explaining why various members were selected.

**Agenda Item: Background and Purpose – Jim Douglas**

Jim provided an overview of how the project came to be. He also reviewed the Project Charter wanting to ensure it covered what the steering group wanted. Jim asked for input and feedback from the steering committee members. Comments included:

- Ensure we only tackle as much as we can successfully handle.... take small steps for success and focus on HOW we do business.
- IIOG initially struggled with governance issues. Project tracking and management has improved and continues to evolve. This may happen with IDIP as well.
- State Foresters were not a part of Mgmt Efficiency Assessment and their concerns and requirements were not well addressed. State Foresters are also not currently signatories on the IDIP charter.
- The connection with LE/EMS is why this effort is not being chartered under fire program leadership
- NASF only represents the fire perspective from the States. There are broad differences across the country on how states and the feds interact.
- It was noted that the steering committee is missing Vicki Christiansen's counterpart for LEI.
- This project should provide a broad framework for solutions that can be implemented locally
- Utilize pilot areas where the scale of the effort is reasonable. Focus on Federal Dispatch Centers to help limit which issues can/should be addressed
- Do no harm in the process – work towards seamless operations
- Concern that if we pick it apart into small components, not much will get accomplished

Jim agreed to add a signatory line for NASF.

- ➔ **Action Item#1 :** Finalize Charter: Add signatory line for Chair of State Foresters, send Charter out to steering committee for final review, route for signatures
- Responsible:** Jim Douglas
- Due Date:** June, 2010

Jim then asked the steering committee whether the IDIP project should be formally managed as part of the IIOG portfolio of projects. The steering committee felt this would be important so it could be tracked and managed appropriately.

- ➔ **Action Item#2:** Add IDIP to IIOG portfolio
- Responsible:** Kolleen Shelley
- Due Date:** June, 2010

**Agenda Item: History of Fire Management Efficiency Assessments – Bob Kuhn**

Bob provided a historic overview of the management efficiency assessment effort, which began with a 5-year plan in 2004. These assessments began under the OMB Circular A-76 to help determine which positions could be competed. Due to this, there were limitations imposed on the studies. In 2008, competitive sourcing studies were prohibited, but the data information was used to complete the Management Efficiency Assessment of the Interagency Wildland Fire Dispatch and Related Services report. One key difference in this study versus previous studies done by FAM is that the results were reported back to FS Business OPS rather than back to S&PF. He stated that follow-on work from these assessments is critical to the continuing efforts to meet the original Congressional and OMB direction to make the Federal wildland firefighting program safer and more efficient. Recommendations from the Dispatch Assessment were accepted by FS and DOI FAM leadership and transmitted to OMB and the Secretary of USDA. The timelines for implementation in the Dispatch Assessment study were crafted from old OMB rules and have past. FAM was also concerned about other interconnecting stakeholders (states, law enforcement, etc).

Further studies continue and Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) efforts are planned. One of those efforts is expected to center around dispatch workload, scope and center location optimization. Key point is that FS made a management decision to go forward with BPR. BPR studies will be able to address workload, optimization protocols, authorities, governance, operational standards (training and qualifications), etc.

**Agenda Item: Types of Solutions Available: Fire and Non-Fire – Tom Wordell**

Tom briefly went over 4 broad areas where he felt solutions were available. These included:

- Information Technology and Applications
- Organizational and Staffing Efficiencies
- Governance
- Business Practices

**Agenda Item: Current Activities in Support of Dispatch Improvement Recommendations – Tom Wordell**

Tom then briefly discussed some current activities the IIOG were undertaking as well as some efforts the fire management program is undertaking to help resolve some of the dispatch issues identified in the management efficiency assessment. The primary focus of this discussion was to point out areas where efforts are already moving forward that our project may simply need to support or endorse.

**Agenda Item: Issues Not Addressed by Current Activities – Tom Wordell**

Tom discussed a number of dispatch issues where little, if any, progress has been made to resolve them. These included issues like:

- Interagency (including non-federal) understanding of how dispatch should be managed in the future
- Understanding law enforcement's unique needs and requirements
- National, standardized CAD
- Governance structure and funding strategies
- Standard preparedness and drawdown policies

- Workload, organizational structure, staffing and facility optimization (including co-location opportunities with other functional areas)
- Standard performance and quality assurance metrics
- Integration / coordination of federal and non-federal entities
- Consolidation of expanded dispatch functions

Jim asked the steering committee if they felt these issues covered the range of things the project should cover. Some additional issues were identified including:

- Ensure the technology issues identified during the “sojourn” are covered
- Ensure IA management and safety issues along boundaries/interface areas where multiple jurisdictions are addressed (address the “who’s in control” issue)
- Ensure Federal/State/Local coordination
- Make sure scope is defined – e.g. there are issues within NPS that may or may not be within scope of this project

➔ **Action Item#3:** Get copy of technology issues from original “Sojourn” meetings.  
**Responsible:** Tom Wordell  
**Due Date:** May 30, 2010

### **Agenda Item: Priorities and Dependencies – Tom Wordell**

Tom reviewed the list of priorities the Geographic Area Center Managers identified in March 2009. This list of priorities was used as guidance by NWCG, who then issued a summary paper to FEC in July 2009 identifying what they felt was practical to pursue. The summary paper identified two concepts:

1. Highest priority was placed on Information Technology, with implementing standardized CAD at top of list
2. It was *not* feasible to evaluate mission, workload or logical re-structuring of dispatch centers until information systems are integrated and streamlined.

Tom then reviewed a matrix he created to help highlight dependencies, or tasks that would be needed to be accomplished, in order to help develop a sequencing strategy. There was considerable discussion related to this matrix. Some of the issues brought forward included:

- Understanding Emergency Services needs and requirements are just as important as Law Enforcement
- Legal authorities ultimately dictate what dispatch can be used for. For example, USFS cannot use appropriated funds for search and rescue
- Don’t get overly consumed with EMS. We may need to split out functional needs.
- Law Enforcement/EMS needs to look at priorities and dependencies related to dispatch too.
- Governance is critical to determine priorities (e.g. to schedule out how radio system upgrades will be scheduled for implementation across the country). *Note: There was strong agreement on this point*

**Agenda Item: Recommendations – Tom Wordell / All**

Tom suggested 6 recommendations for the steering committee to consider. They were:

1. Get clear understanding of Law Enforcement and EMS's dispatch needs and requirements
  - Develop performance/functional criteria for effective dispatch support
2. Adopt WildCAD as interim national, standardized Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system for Fire Management
3. Pursue solutions to write once/read often
4. Optimize scope and location of dispatch facilities
  - Address workload, complexity, geography, technology, etc
5. Develop minimum standards for dispatch operations
  - Address staffing, training, qualifications, hours of operations, etc
6. Develop standardized governance policies
  - Address management, funding, supervision etc

After some discussion, the steering committee had several comments about the recommendations:

- Make sure whenever we talk about “Law Enforcement” we include EMS as well
- Develop a follow-on CAD paper to identify the pros and cons of either adopting WildCAD as the national standard for fire management or pursuing a BPR to develop alternatives to develop a new CAD that could potentially serve fire, LE, EMS, etc
- Make sure to include technology and business rules for addressing boundary/multiple jurisdiction incidents in Recommendation #5
- Utilize FS funding and BPR process to address #4, but make sure it doesn't just provide an answer, but results in a set of tools, criteria, and step-wise process that will help determine the best way to optimize dispatch centers so it can be implemented locally.
- Need to get clear on over-arching strategy for this entire project

Jim asked the steering committee if a 2-day face-to-face meeting would be beneficial in order to make sure adequate time and attention was given to how the project moves forward. The group agreed this would be essential.

➔ **Action Item#4:** Set up Doodle Poll to schedule a 2-day meeting in Phoenix or Albuquerque during July.  
**Responsible:** Tom Wordell  
**Due Date:** May, 2010

Jim then asked the steering committee to develop a clear list of deliverables for Tom to work on between now and the July meeting.

➔ **Action Item#5:** It was agreed the following list of deliverables should be accomplished to help address the list of recommendations above  
**Responsible:** Tom Wordell  
**Due Date:** July, 2010 (Outlines/Drafts due by May Conf Call)

1. Write a paper that describes the core functions common to all federal dispatch centers. Outline items unique to Fire, Law Enforcement, Emergency Services, Recreation, etc. in a matrix.
2. Develop a white paper on CAD that outlines the pros and cons of either adopting WildCAD as the national standard CAD for Fire Management or conducting a BPR to develop requirements for a new, more robust CAD that will meet future multi-functional needs.
3. Develop a list of solutions that are either proposed or currently underway and what this project team needs to do to provide support to ensure success
4. Collaborate with Bob Kuhn to ensure the Statement of Work (SOW) for the Workload Optimization BPR includes a clear process to follow (including criteria and protocols) for defining dispatch boundaries or consolidating existing centers. This will provide a standard approach for future optimization opportunities.
  - o IDIP Steering Committee to review SOW prior to solicitation
5. Write short paper that identifies standards needed for dispatch operations and what those standards should address. Include technology issues when identifying boundary issues related to operations (overlaps, gaps, edges).
6. Develop draft list of major governance issues that need to be addressed.

It was agreed that deliverables will be dealt with as they are ready rather than rolling them together in a final report. This will allow the Steering Committee to make decisions and begin to implement solutions throughout the project timeline.

#### **Agenda Item: Defining Success – Jim Douglas**

Due to time constraints, it was decided this agenda topic would be discussed during our face-to-face meeting in July.

➔ **Action Item#6:** Include discussion on “Defining Success” on July meeting agenda  
**Responsible:** Tom Wordell  
**Due Date:** July, 2010

#### **Bin Items and Logistic Discussion: - All**

- Kolleen Shelley and Vaughn Stokes both felt Project Manager support for sub-teams, meeting management, and project tracking was vital for success. Jim felt this issue should be re-visited as the need arises.
- Tom is empowered to reach into respective organizations for SME support, but should generally work through Steering Committee to identify appropriate contacts.
- The steering committee felt that a conference call in late May would be appropriate to review draft papers and other items Tom will be preparing for the July meeting.

➔ **Action Item#7:** Set up Doodle Poll to schedule a 1-2 hour conference call in mid-late May  
**Responsible:** Tom Wordell  
**Due Date:** May, 2010

**Meeting Adjourned**