# EVOLVING INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

## A Recommendation for the Future

# Fire season is getting longer.
# Skilled people are retiring.
# The climate is changing.

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## How will the Incident Management Organization respond?

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Executive Board, recognizing that the current workforce management and succession planning for wildfire response is not sustainable, chartered an interagency team in 2010 to develop a new organizational model for incident management. The new model, which proposes some significant changes to the current way we manage incidents, is designed to make the most efficient use of the workforce to manage incidents in an interagency, multi-jurisdictional environment. The model takes into account the decrease in Federal capacity and the increase in state and local government IMTs since 2001.

Designed for implementation within 5 to 10 years, the model will require all those involved with incident management to recognize and address in practical ways how individual choices and human factors and behaviors affect the future of the IMTs—particularly workforce management and succession planning. For example, a manager might be reluctant to send an employee to an incident because of priorities on the home unit. Or a manager staffing an IMT might overlook a new person or a trainee because they staff the IMT with those with whom they are already familiar. The recommendation is summarized as follows.

**Number of Teams.** The target number of federally sponsored IMTs is 40.

**Typing of Teams.** Merge all federally sponsored type 1 and type 2 teams into one type of IMT. There would be one type of federally sponsored IMT under the recommended organizational model.

There will be four National Incident Management Organization (NIMO) teams supervised and managed by the USDA Forest Service.

**Incident Complexity and Scalability.** There are three response levels: Initial attack (type 4 and 5 incidents), extended attack (type 3 incidents managed by type 3 IMTs) and complex incidents managed by IMTs.

Federal agencies address complexity through use of the organizational needs analysis to identify the resources needed to manage the incident, and the size of the incident management organization is scaled up and down in response to incident needs.

**Geographic Distribution.** The current geographic distribution of federally sponsored IMTs is maintained in the recommended organizational model. NWCG should consider redistribution of IMTs during the implementation phase to make more single resources available and to meet workforce succession objectives of the agencies.

IMTs sponsored by states would provide surge capacity at elevated geographic area and national preparedness levels under the recommended model.

**Team Management and Dispatching.** Geographic area coordination centers would manage IMT rotations for their geographic area until the national preparedness level reaches 3. At preparedness level 3 and above the National Interagency Coordination Center coordinates the IMT rotation in consultation with the geographic area coordination centers. NIMO teams are part of the geographic area rotation to which they are assigned, and may also be assigned by the USDA Forest Service as needed. The state-sponsored IMTs will be typed according to national standards for mobilization outside of their state.

Local and geographic areas are responsible for monitoring the current status and composition of IMTs through geographic area coordination centers in cooperation with incident commanders (ICs). Oversight of size, composition, and trainee make-up on rosters is accomplished by geographic areas.

**Team Funding.** Each IMT would receive an established amount of support funding provided by the agencies in their home geographic area. Teams are provided with administrative staff support to support ICs with management of their team rosters and other logistical needs.

**Team Size and Configuration.** IMTs are composed of 27 members and 14 trainees in the recommended organizational model. The IMTs are available in short team and long team configurations.

Each IMT roster would include three positions at the discretion of the IC and the geographic area. The final response configuration would be determined through coordination with the requesting unit based on the complexity and characteristics of each incident.

**IMT Participation.** Team members should be drawn from the broadest possible range of qualified participants, including NWCG-represented agencies and qualified personnel from other governmental agencies. Personnel in professions other than fire management (militia) should be encouraged to participate. The IMT selection process must include both agency administrators and coordinating groups to make sure interagency and agency specific succession planning efforts are considered.

**Trainees.** Each team carries 14 trainees.

Each command and general staff member would have a trainee assigned by the geographic area. These eight trainees would be assigned with the IMT for the entire fire season and would be deployed with both the long team and short team configurations.

Six additional trainee positions are designated by the home geographic area coordinating group in response to interagency successional planning priorities in the geographic area. These trainee positions would be filled only with the long team configuration, and are assigned from a pool maintained by the geographic area.

**Modules and Service Centers.** Modules are organized to meet the specific needs of complex incidents and should be designed to promote efficient use of scarce resources.

Support centers are recognized as ad hoc organizations established to meet the needs of multiple incidents at a central location. Support centers may work for geographic areas, area command, or other groups depending on the situation.

**Area Command.** Short-term recommendations (2012–2015) include (1) maintaining four area command teams, and (2) formalizing the current management of the four area command teams as a pool of interchangeable personnel sufficient to staff four teams.

Long-term recommendations (2016 and beyond) include transitioning area command teams to strategic management teams. This would more accurately reflect the changing demands for an oversight group to provide strategic planning, risk management, command, control, coordination, information management, and preparedness support. This transition would also be the source for innovative processes, procedures, and technology to support incident objectives.

**Performance and Accountability.** All wildland fire-funded employees would have incident management responsibilities built into their position (job) descriptions. All agency administrators in units with wildland fire programs would have a performance standard or element for fire management. Expectations for each agency's level of participation should be developed based on their percent of wildland fire workload.

**Incentives.** Incentives for participation should be a part of the implementation plan for the recommended organizational model. Disincentives should be identified and reduced or eliminated.

**Financial Practices.** Efficiency of large wildfire management could be significantly improved if

standard business practices were applied to incident management.

**Workforce Development.** Develop a robust and coordinated succession planning system linking workforce development to staffing of IMTs. This would include the following.

- Accelerate progress towards integration of National Incident Management System and the National Interagency Incident Management System through the development of crosswalks between the systems.

- Explore ways to credit employees for past experience in the qualification system.

- Develop alternative qualification pathways.

- Review and streamline qualification requirements in PMS 310-1 Wildland Fire Qualifications System, USDA Forest Service 5109.17 manual, and other agency policies.

- Review Training Courses S-620 Area

Command, S-520 Advanced Incident Management, CIMC-Complex Incident Management Course, and S-420 Incident Management (resident and on-fire deliveries) to meet new training and assessment requirements consistent with the PMS 310-1 modifications for the new IMT model.

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THOUGHTS FROM AGENCY LEADERS...

**Area Command**—*Current area command centers could serve as the location for the decision support center where electronic data is generated, compiled, and distributed as needed. This should be done in partnership with regional research stations for informing analysis of management actions and generating monitoring and research questions/protocols for institutionalization of mechanisms to incorporate adaptive management principals into the decision making processes. (Federal–National, Agency Administrator/Line Officer)*

**Culture**—*Too often, the cost of fire fighting is driven by personal preferences. This begins with the Agency Administrator (and local political factors) down to teams wanting to do things the same way regardless of their incident. Ex. I challenged a T1 team from out of region on why they spent so much money on one aspect of their suppression--the short answer was "because we are a T1 team and this how we do it... (State Agency/State Fire–Agency Administrator/Line Officer)*

**Compensation**—*I've participated in IMT's for over 15 years now because I loved doing it, not for the compensation or any "prestige". Recently, I've grown increasingly disturbed by an emerging "elitism" from the ranks of the fire community. We need to be good at what we do. We do not need to be viewed as good because of what we do or how much we are paid. (Federal–Local, Agency Administrator/Line Officer)*

*—Pay and power have become the motivators for wildland fire participation. What happened to the love of wildland firefighting? Having said that, I realize that today the individual motivation has changed. We need to implement a system that fairly compensates without bastardizing the pay system. We must stop the practice of falsifying timesheets and claiming hours worked when individuals are sitting in camp or disengaged in the field. (Federal–Local, Agency Administrator/Line Officer)*

THOUGHTS FROM AGENCY LEADERS...

**Compensation (Continued)**—*The current pay system penalizes federal employees. There is no incentive to leave your happy home and go out to a fire and sleep in the dirt for your normal salary. You would be willing to take assignments if you received fire pay that would put new shoes on the baby. Supervisors would be willing to let employees train and accept fire assignments if they were compensated for letting their folks respond to fires. It is all about incentives. (Federal–Local, Agency Administrator/Line Officer)*

*—I am not convinced that IMT participants are under-compensated. (Federal–Local, Agency Administrator/Line Officer)*

*—We don't need to pay people more, and we already have the employees. This is a Line Officer commitment problem. (Federal–Local, Agency Administrator/Line Officer)*

**Incentives**—*Provide incentives for Agency Administators to support IMT's and reduce the risk of not meeting other targets. AA's should be rewarded for supporting IMT participation. (Local Government/Local Fire–Agency Administrator/Line Officer)*

*—Emphasis on getting militia involved. Why just incentives for fire personnel? For instance, if fire could use preparedness funds to pay for training (salary, etc.) for militia to get involved, more militia would play. Incentives for fire and not others causes resentment. (Federal–Local, Agency Administrator/Line Officer)*

**Participation**—*Also it is critical that all disciplines within federal land management agencies have the opportunity and expectation of being exposed to fire so the structure needs to be set up for broad participation. if all employees are required to participate then we will end up with individuals that don't want to be there and that can cause chronic complacency and potentially unsafe situations. there should also be a mechanism for mandatory non participation in some or all aspects of fire management for situations where individuals are not capable of implementing locally identified principals and practices in a safe, effective, and ecologically appropriate manner. (Federal–National, Agency Administrator/Line Officer)*

*—I think the best fire suppression management comes from employees of federal land management agencies. We need to make this work part of everyone's job again. Each unit (Forest, BLM District, etc.) should be required to maintain a Type 3 Team to manage low-complexity incidents without calling in off-unit Teams. (Federal–Local, Agency Administrator/Line Officer)*

*—We will fail at managing FOREST fires if we don't embrace all those that work in a forest - biologists, hydrologists, recreation specialists, foresters, etc. A forest is the sum of its parts - it's not just fire, like it's just not a flood. Thinking about the evolution of ICS, I would hate to adopt any model that is not inclusive, adaptive, and flexible. We must keep all our parts, or risk being severed apart. Rather than look for the easy way, we (line officers) must return to being responsible for providing a trained, seasoned workforce from across all disciplines to manage wildland fires; i.e. it should be the responsibility of all that manage forests to manage fires. Let us not use "specialization" as an excuse to exclude - diversity, inclusion, and opportunity must frame our future. (Federal–Local, Agency Administrator/Line Officer)*

*—Today, most managers did not grow up in the organization fighting fire so there isn't the life experiences to draw from and to help relate. Since we have created a professional fire fighting corp, we don't use summer seasonals to help man an engine or be on a 20 man handcrew. So when the seasonal starts their professional career they are already behind the power curve wanting fire quals or to acquire fire quals. This is especially true for offices that aren't co-located with a fire organization associated with the office. I'm a Type III IC, but if I was trying to get that qualification today and hadn't started as a fire seasonal, it would be very hard to reach that goal compared to 15-20 years ago. (Federal–Local, Agency Administrator/Line Officer)*

THOUGHTS FROM AGENCY LEADERS…

**Compensation (Continued)**—*The current pay system penalizes federal employees. There is no incentive to leave your happy home and go out to a fire and sleep in the dirt for your normal salary. You would be willing to take assignments if you received fire pay that would put new shoes on the baby. Supervisors would be willing to let employees train and accept fire assignments if they were compensated for letting their folks respond to fires. It is all about incentives. (Federal–Local, Agency Administrator/Line Officer)*

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**THOUGHTS FROM AGENCY LEADERS...**

**Participation (Continued)**—*One of the great strengths of our current IMT structure is that each IMT is able to develop a sense of team unity which serves that team well during an incident. (Federal–Regional, Agency Administrator/Line Officer)*

**NIMO**—*I have yet to see the NIMO concept work as it is stated and promised. (Federal–Local, Agency Administrator/Line Officer)*

**Overview of Effort**—*The Type I and II team concept works fine.  Leave it alone and scrap all 6 options. Focus on streamlining our training and qualifications system to "feed" our teams, and develop a national strategy that will compel line officers to support these teams. Fix what is broken, don't break what is already working. (Federal–Local, Agency Administrator/Line Officer)*

# INTRODUCTION

On January 15, 2010, the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Executive Board issued a memorandum initiating the Incident Management Organization Succession Planning Team (IMOSPT). The Board recognized:

- The need to update the current business model to address incident management needs in the future. Any update to the current model would require a planned implementation and transition process that would take place over a period of years.

- That the current workforce management and succession planning for wildfire response is not sustainable for the future.

- That the increasing fire season length requires staff to be away on fires for longer periods of time. This leaves less time for staff to accomplish their normal job duties, which hampers the ability for the agencies to accomplish their core missions.

- The need to review and analyze alternatives addressing the appropriate number, type, and configuration of national IMTs (type 1, type 2, and area command).

IMOSPT members, listed on the right, were interagency professionals chosen to represent broad stakeholder groups internal and external to the wildland fire community.

The IMOSPT project includes two phases—analysis and implementation. This document presents the results of the analysis phase. The NWCG requested three products as part of the analysis phase; these were:

1) Identify and develop alternative organizational configuration and management oversight for the management of national wildfire incidents.

**IMOSPT PROJECT MEMBERS**

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Tamara Neukam, Bureau of Land Management

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Roberta D'Amico, National Park Service

**Communications & Project Support**
Bonnie Wood, National Wildfire Coordinating Group Manager

2) Develop change management strategies for leading the understanding and acceptance by all stakeholders of the planning process, alternatives, and decisions.

3) Develop strategic recommendations for interagency implementation of the preferred alternative. These recommendations would include transition strategies from the current to future incident management organization.

Recognizing the importance of stakeholder input, IMOSPT proposed, and the NWCG Executive Board approved, an engagement process. This process was implemented with the assistance of Organization Development Enterprise (ODE), a USDA Forest Service Enterprise Team, under the guidance of Dr. Anne Black, Social Science Analyst with the Rocky Mountain Research Station. The engagement process involved presentations and deliberative workshops (about 40) and webinars (about 10). Feedback was gathered through online surveys, online survey open-ended comments, and an e-mail inbox set up by ODE to accept comments. Organized and analyzed by

ODE, IMOSPT used the feedback to help craft the final recommendations.

IMOSPT also identified 11 areas—called "Overarching Principles"—critically important to the future of incident management. Significantly, these have much in common with the "Nine Key Recommendations to Ensure Success" proposed in the National Interagency Complex Incident Management Organization (NIMO) study finalized in February 2005. The NIMO study was chartered by NWCG to, among other things, examine organizational alternatives to balance both local resource management work and complex incident management responsibilities. Several of the key recommendations (Improved Capacity and Capability, Training, NMAC IMT Management, Non-Traditional Hiring Authorities, and Standardized Contracts) have not been fully implemented because of the considerable coordination and work needed to accomplish them. Since then, the urgency to deal with these issues has only increased. IMSOPT believes the Overarching Principles must be foundational elements in the types and configurations of

**SIGNIFICANT CHANGES PROPOSED IN THE RECOMMENDED ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL**

- Reduce IMT size.
- Reduce the number of IMTs.
- Increase the minimum number of trainees assigned to IMTs.
- Configure IMTs to be responsive to incident needs.
- Increase the number of personnel available for assignment as single resources.
- Eliminate distinctions between type 1 and type 2 qualifications for command and general staff and transition to one type of federally sponsored IMT.
- Manage IMT trainees at the geographic areas. Trainees are assigned to IMTs based on interagency successional planning needs.
- Implement the national rotation of IMTs at national preparedness level 3.
- Utilize support centers to provide centralized services remotely that are shared between incidents.
- Fold NIMO teams into the geographic area and national rotations with the other IMTs.
- Provide target relief to units that provide staffing to IMTs during periods of high fire activity.
- Develop language regarding appropriate use of Federal ADs in AD pay plan.
- Review the PMS 310-1 Wildland Fire Qualifications System Guide and make training and experience adjustments for the new IMT model.
- Develop an integrated succession plan to be used as a guide by NWCG partners. Individuals at the national and geographic areas should be designated to provide guidance, monitor standard implementation, and maintain the plan.

future IMTs.

In February of 2011 IMOSPT proposed seven potential organizational models for consideration. Following six months of stakeholder input (over 850 responses), the results were tabulated and the recommended organizational model was developed based on the best elements of each model and the Overarching Principles. The recommended model includes significant changes (summarized at the bottom of the previous page) and is designed to provide a sustainable incident management organization.

Eight goals for implementation of the recommended model were developed during the model selection and refinement process. These goals, listed at right, emerged from feedback from stakeholders, NWCG, and participating agencies.

The recommended model proposes some significant changes to the current system. IMOSPT based the recommendation on the analysis of fire activity patterns and IMT utilization. Human factors were also considered. The model is designed to make the most efficient use of the workforce to manage incidents in an interagency, multi-jurisdictional environment. It takes into account the decrease in Federal capacity and the increase in state and local government IMTs since 2001. The model is designed for implementation within 5 to 10 years.

Finally, the most important factors in the realm of incident management are clearly social, although some of the proposal is objective and quantitative. How and why people do or do not participate on IMTs is still open to discussion and speculation, but the results of the stakeholder engagement provide some valuable insight. The quotes interspersed through the document come directly from the hundreds of pages of stakeholder comments. These quotes, presented just as submitted, demonstrate a wide range of diverse opinions and motivations.

**EIGHT GOALS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDED MODEL**

1) Create and implement a strategy to ensure that interagency wildfire staffing needs are met.
2) Increase efficiency in meeting wildfire staffing needs.
3) Establish and maintain a qualified workforce to meet wildfire staffing needs.
4) Increase oversight of and accountability for IMT management by agencies and geographic areas.
5) Manage IMTs (team selection, trainee selection and IMT rosters) to actively support NWCG agency goals for workforce succession management, employee development, and workforce diversity.
6) Take advantage of increased capacity developed by states and local government to staff IMTs.
7) Utilize non-fire IMT personnel trained in incident command system under HSPD-5 on IMTs for non-wildfire specific positions.
8) Employ a crosswalk of incident command system courses to eliminate redundancy and move toward a single National Incident Management System incident command system qualification system used by all incident types.

THOUGHTS FROM THE FIELD…

**Need and Approach—***First I would like to say that I think you are going about it all wrong. I think you should have gone through the stakeholder process BEFORE you developed the models.*

*—If we fail to adapt, we will be replaced with something that does.*

*—The current system we have works, and works well. It just wasn't built to be used or abused how it has been.*

*—The current IMT organizational model is recognized as one of the most Highly Reliable Organizations in the country. Request that NWCG embrace, enhance, protect and not change it.*

*—It seems as if there is a big "rush" to fix the problem when it appears little effort has been applied to what the actual problem really is. This problem didn't appear overnight. Wouldn't it be prudent to analyze the situation in both depth and breadth using independent folks – NOT agency personnel? The folks in Washington and Boise might be great federal workers and might be good fire people as well…but…they all have a vested interest in, and a bias for, a particular outcome.*

*—I feel that there is a huge need to link the DHS IMT effort with this effort with the push by the NWCG… This is perhaps one of the best answers to solving the personnel shortage issue which is at the heart of this IMO effort.*

*—Folks are freelancing for several teams and NIMO so there may not be a true accounting of how many people are really needed for workforce development.*

# OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

The Project and Task teams identified 11 areas critically important to the future incident management program. Regardless of what changes are made within the incident management community, these principles represent the foundation all future incident management organizational models must consider. As previously mentioned, the Overarching Principles have much in common with the "Nine Key Recommendations to Ensure Success" proposed in The National Interagency Complex Incident Management Organization study finalized in February 2005. The February 18, 2011, project report documents recent accomplishments towards applying the Overarching Principles. It is clear, however, some of the concepts first identified in 2005 (Improved Capacity and Capability, Training, NMAC IMT Management, Non-Traditional Hiring Authorities, and Standardized Contracts) would take considerable coordination and work to accomplish.

The Overarching Principles were presented and explained to stakeholders in presentations to groups, in workshops, through the online survey and online survey open-ended responses, and comments to the e-mail inbox. The team met twice to analyze the stakeholder feedback summary statistics, which were compiled by ODE. A detailed analysis of these responses is contained in the "Executive Summary" of the Incident Management Organization Succession Planning Stakeholder Feedback Analysis Report (2011).

The feedback affirmed the importance of the Overarching Principles, and we modified them as the result of feedback.  These 11 principles are described thusly.

## 1. Succession Planning

The current system relies on voluntary participation and cannot be sustained due to a lack of sufficient incentives and accountability measures, and the length of time it takes for employees to gain position qualifications. Success of the IMOSPT recommendation depends on the development and use of interagency workforce development and succession plans at the national, geographic, and local levels through an accelerated program over the next 5 years.

Succession planning in the wildland fire service will ensure a cadre of highly qualified professionals in all positions, not just today, but for many years to come.  Proper succession planning involves maintaining a process to recruit employees, develop their skills and abilities, and prepare them for advancement, while retaining them to ensure a return on our investment.

## 2. Single Qualification System

A common wildland fire qualification system will be used in support of interagency workforce development and succession planning strategies. Progress on the completion of an all-hazard qualification system applicable across emergency services must be accelerated, as should the progress on the integration of the National Incident Management System and the National Interagency Incident Management System.

## 3. Agency Accountability

The incident management organization must be supported by both agency leadership and supervisors to be successful.

## 4. Incident Complexity/Scalability

All incidents will be evaluated using specific criteria to assess the difficulty associated with accomplishing the objectives. This complexity analysis will guide agency administrators in selection of the appropriate management organization for the specific situation, regardless of whether it is escalating or moderating. The automatic dispatch of full teams should be discontinued.  Instead, IMTs will respond in

configurations of teams as requested or negotiated, commensurate with incident complexity. In other words, the recommended organization model will represent a system that allows team size to be adjusted by managers, rather than maintaining a fixed configuration for the duration of the assignment.

## 5. Modules and Support Centers

Modules are organized to meet the specific needs of complex incidents and should be designed to promote efficient use of scarce resources. Modules can be formed as needed to meet functional needs, including but not limited to planning, operations, and aviation and logistics, and may be disbanded when their mission is accomplished.

Support centers are ad hoc organizations established to meet the needs of many incidents at a central location. Support centers can utilize modern methods of sharing information to communicate with incidents and to provide the products and support needed.

## 6. Responsiveness to Jurisdictional Policy

IMTs will be accountable for ensuring a high degree of responsiveness to the policies applicable to the jurisdiction where the IMT is assigned. IMTs have the necessary knowledge, expertise, and capability to implement all management responses and oversee management actions consistent with the affected jurisdictions.

## 7. Compensation Strategies, Incentives, and Accountability

The recommendation includes compensation systems with incentives and accountability measures sufficient to sustain the organizational model. The model provides for individual participation on IMTs through robust agency support and accountability measures.

## 8. Standard Operating Procedures for Incident Management Teams

Standard operating procedures incorporate concepts contained within the recommended organizational model to improve the consistency of service provided by IMTs. These operating procedures should be developed jointly by geographic area, states, and national coordinating groups. The development and adherence to standard operating procedures for maintaining team membership, roster size, and trainee selection are an important part of governance.

## 9. Support of Agency Administrator and Incident Management Team Decisions

The organizational model will provide for strong agency support by agency administrator in IMT decision making. Agencies should address deep-seated concerns regarding personal liability that discourage the participation of employees, especially as ICs.

## 10. Interagency Cooperation/ External Considerations

The recommended organizational model is an interagency structure where teams are comprised of Federal, state, and local government agency personnel. This will require coordination with external partners to establish or extend agreements, operating standards, and procedures to promote an interagency structure.

## 11. Consistent Business Management Practices

The recommended organizational model requires compliance with local, state and Federal statutes, and consistent business management practices. Federal agencies will operate under a single set of practices, especially in regard to how salaries are charged for participants during incidents.

# ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL RECOMMENDATIONS

## Section 1: Team Make-up and Management

### Number of Incident Management Teams

*The target number of federally sponsored interagency IMTs is 40.*

**Feedback Themes:** Feedback received indicated the need for a workload analysis to determine the optimal number of federally sponsored teams to meet interagency needs for wildfire.

**Rationale and Discussion:** Peak workload is the maximum number of IMTs (type 1, type 2 and NIMO) mobilized at one time during each fire season. Mobilization records have been kept by the National Interagency Coordination Center since 2004 (the coordination center is steadily improving record keeping as more IMT mobilizations are recorded in ROSS [Resource Ordering and Status System]). Figures 1 and 2 display peak workload for 2004 to 2010. The maximum number of all types of IMTs deployed at one time during the 7-year period was 45 (this does not include all mobilizations of state-sponsored teams).

As shown in figure 3, the number of type 1 IMT mobilizations has increased steadily since 1990, a trend which correlates closely with a rise in acres burned. While comparable long-term data for type 2 and NIMO IMTs is lacking, tendencies are similar.

The number of federally sponsored IMTs has remained fairly stable since 2004, whereas state capacity has increased markedly (table 1). NWCG has some flexibility regarding the number of

IMTs. NWCG could reduce the number of teams to 40, and still meet demand under most circumstances. Peak demand could be met through use of state sponsored teams during exceptionally busy periods. Peak demand for IMTs typically lasts for 5 to 10 days in a year. During the implementation phase of the recommended organizational model NWCG should evaluate the relative benefits of cutting the number of federally sponsored IMTs and making more single resources available, versus striving to maintain more IMTs.

When the number of IMTs approaches critically low levels, managers compensate by grouping incidents together under single IMTs in complexes. Management of low priority incidents is deferred until higher priority wildfires are contained and IMTs become available. When firefighting resources (crews, engines, helicopters) are in short supply there may be less need for IMTs to manage low priority incidents until activity slows and resources are available.

The use of IMTs on non-wildfire assignments has dropped markedly since peak utilization in 2005. Concerns over competing priorities for wildland fire-funded IMT have decreased since 2004 when the issue was raised in the 2004 Quadrennial Fire and Fuels Report. The capacity of state and local governments to respond to all-hazard incidents has increased under the national response framework and there is less reliance on wildland fire-funded IMTs for non-wildfire assignments. NIMO teams have also taken on non-wildfire mobilizations since 2007 (table 2).

## Peak Wildfire Workload
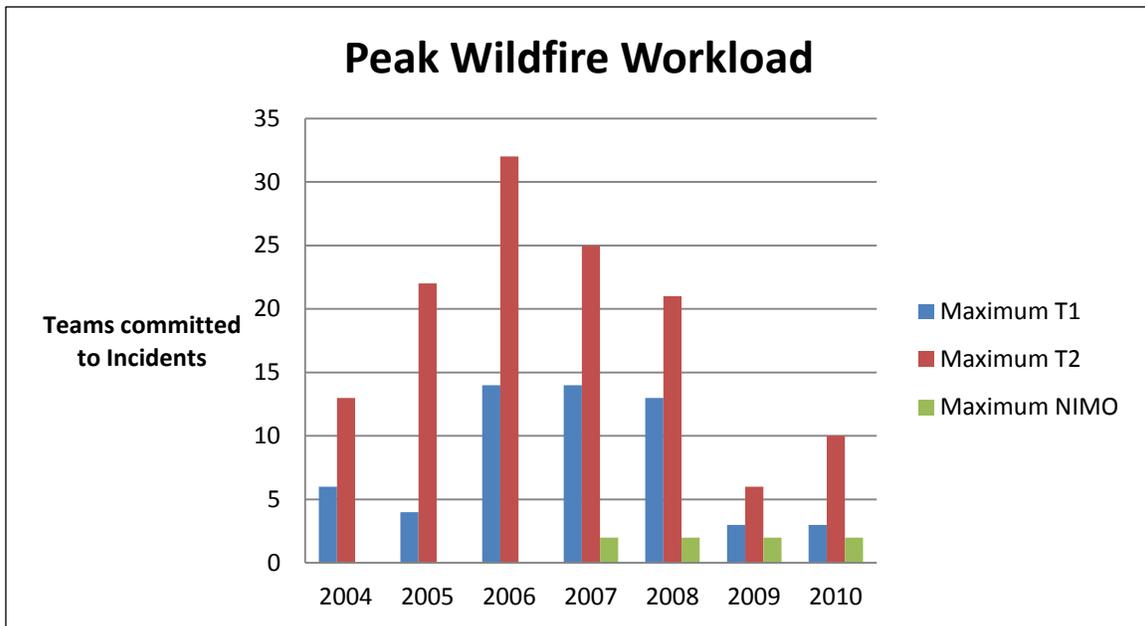


**Figure 1. The annual peak workloads—measured as the highest count of concurrent assignments—for type 1, type 2, and NIMO (2007−2010 only) IMTs from 2004−2010**

*Note:* The peak workload was determined independently for each type of IMT. Peaks for each type of IMT almost always occur on different dates. This chart was derived by analyzing incident records for overlaps in IMT assignments.

## Peak Wildfire Workload
## Total Number of IMTs Committed
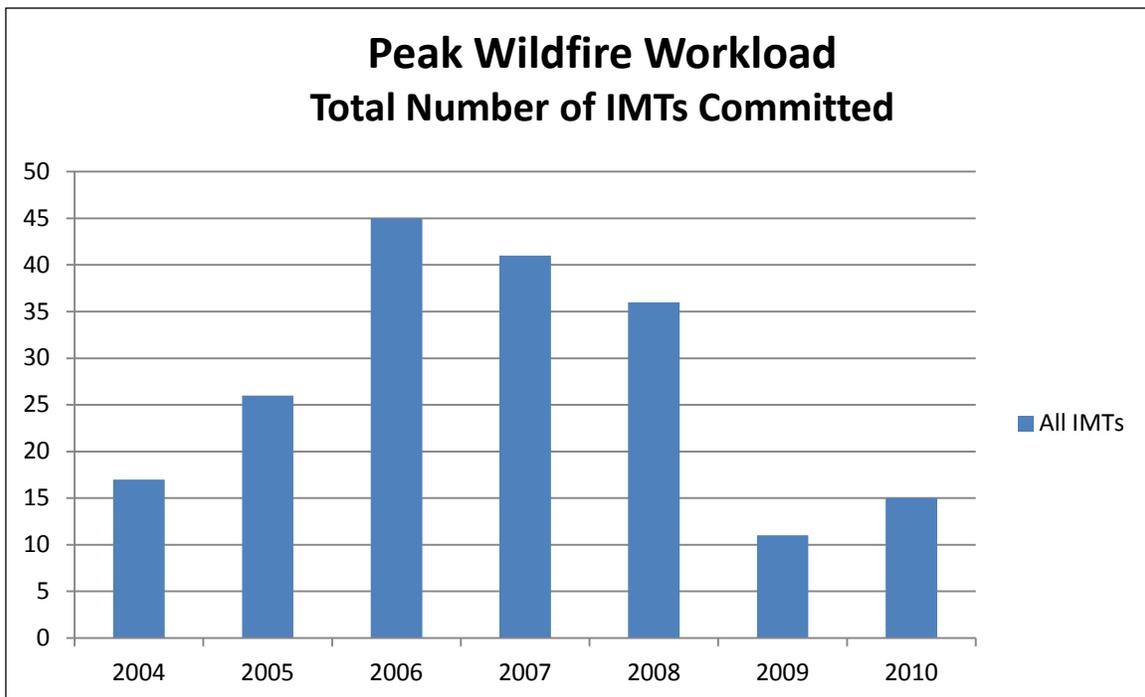


**Figure 2. The cumulative peak workload—maximum number of all of IMTs (type 1, type 2, and NIMO) concurrently assigned during 2004−2011**

# Total IMT Wildfire Assignments 1990-2010
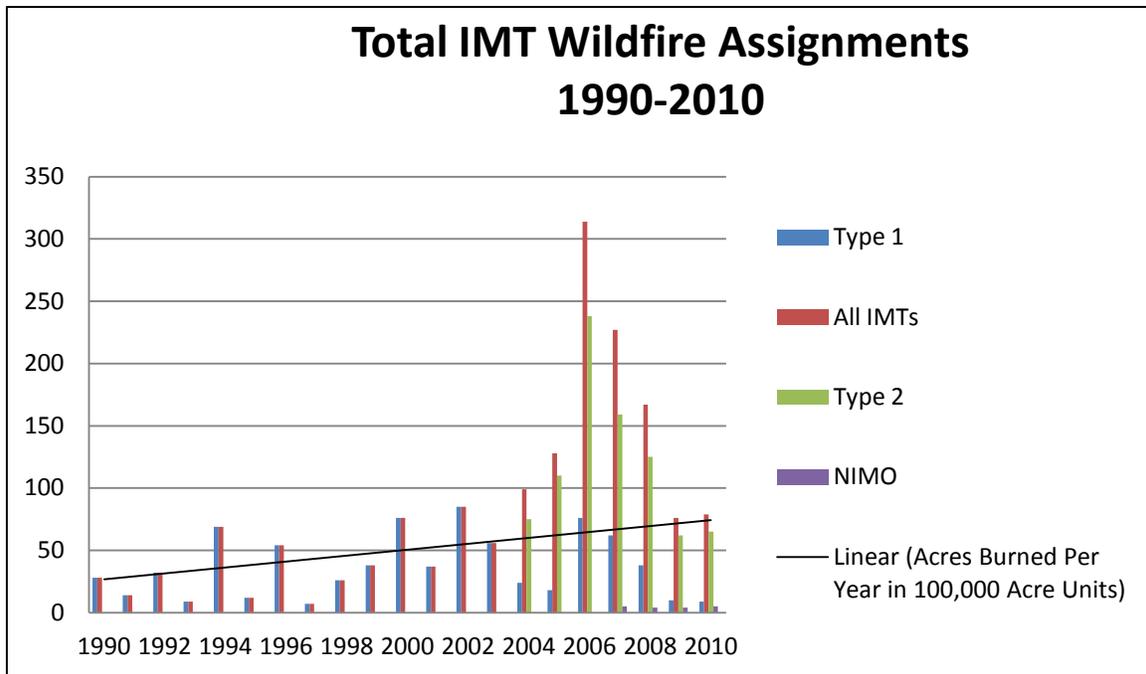


**Figure 3. The number of type 1 (since 1990), type 2 (since 2004), and NIMO (since 2007) team mobilizations per year**

**Table 1. Counts of Federal and state-sponsored IMTs by type in 2004 and 2011**

| IMTs by Type | 2004 | 2011 |
|---|---|---|
| Type 1 Federally Sponsored IMTs | 17 | 16 |
| Type 2 Federally Sponsored IMTs | 35 | 33 |
| State-sponsored IMTs (Type 1 and Type 2 Qualified) | 22 | 34 |
| Fire Use Management Teams (Short Teams) | 7 | 2 |
| NIMO (Short Teams) | 0 | 4 |
| Area Command Teams | 4 | 4 |

*Note:* The 2004 data is from the National Complex Incident Study.

The current IMT rotation system works well to distribute assignments amongst the type 1 IMTs. The number of assignments for type 2 IMTs fluctuates more because:

- The number of teams differs between geographic areas,

- the level of fire activity changes from year-to-year and between geographic areas, and

- type 2 IMT assignments are made by geographic areas; geographic areas decide when to request type 2 IMTs from the National Interagency Coordination Center and this may not occur until national preparedness level 4 or 5.

The total number of IMTs needed would probably be less as IMTs are deployed more equitably and efficiently.

**Table 2. Non-wildfire IMT assignments 2001—2010**

| Year | Number of Type 1 IMT Assignments | Number of NIMO[1] Assignments | Number of Type 2 IMT Assignments | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2010 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 8 |
| 2009 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 7 |
| 2008 | 3 | 10 | 3 | 16 |
| 2007 | 0 | 6 | 2 | 8 |
| 2006 | 0 | NA[2] | 4 | 4 |
| 2005 | 38 | NA | 50 | 88 |
| 2004 | 16 | NA | 3 | 19 |
| 2003 | 13 | NA | MD[2] | 13 |
| 2002 | 0 | NA | MD | 0 |
| 2001 | 5 | NA | MD | 5 |

[1] All-risk assignments with support or consultation to USDA Forest Service agency administrators in a category called "Other Assignments"; the NIMO assignment tally in table 1 only includes incidents.

[2] NA = not applicable; MD = missing data.

## National Incident Management Organization

*Four NIMO teams will be maintained under the supervision of the USDA Forest Service.*

**Feedback Themes:** Comments and feedback on the NIMO program from the feedback survey do not support expansion of the program—many recommend eliminating it. The comments indicate a lack of understanding of how NIMO is deployed and the role of NIMO when not assigned to incidents. There were concerns over the use of wildfire emergency funds to fund the year-round program.

**Rationale and Discussion:** NIMO has evolved into a year-round program funded by wildfire emergency funds. Priorities for deployment of the four NIMO teams to incidents are determined by the USDA Forest Service. The National Mobilization Guide contains a section on NIMO, but the section does not fully describe the range of NIMO deployments. NIMO is assigned to a mix of wildfire and non-wildfire assignments. These include the management of long duration wildfires, management of all hazard incidents, mentoring of IMTs, decision support to forests or geographic areas, and area command-type assignments.

## IMT Typing

*Merge all federally sponsored type 1 and type 2 teams into one type of IMT. There would by one type of federally sponsored IMT under the recommended organizational model. There are three response levels: Initial attack (type 4 and 5 incidents), extended attack (type 3 incidents managed by type 3 IMTs), and complex incidents managed by IMTs.*

**Feedback Themes:** Agencies must continue efforts to maintain type 3 capacity at the local level to manage fires that escape initial attack. The type 3 organizations are essential to maintaining a pool of skilled early to mid-career fire managers. The type 3 teams are the feeder group for the IMTs.

Respondents pointed out that IMTs are scalable in size under the current situation, but that this rarely occurs because of the desire to respond with all IMT members and to keep them on the incident for the entire assignment.

**THOUGHTS FROM THE FIELD...**

**Number of IMTs**—*A study needs to be done to identify how many teams we need and where they are located. To me this is basic info that is missing from this study. We don't staff for huge years on engines/crews, why would teams be different.*

*—With the number of State IMT Type 2 and 3 being trained and qualified I do not see the need for additional interagency teams.*

*—Folks are freelancing for several teams and NIMO so there may not be a true accounting of how many people are really needed for workforce development.*

**IMT Typing**—*As time passes, and energy on the landscape increase, an evolution has taken place. Some see it and some do not. The old Type 1 Teams no longer manage fires of hundreds or thousands of acres. They manage mega-fires of tens to hundreds of thousands of acres that occur in or near very populated landscapes. The old fairly local Type 2 Teams of old are stepping up to fires in the interface of sizes that reach upwards of 20 and 30 thousand acres, in places well beyond their historic Regional neighborhoods. Meanwhile Type 3 Teams are being formed and learning to work in local partnership with state and local resources, to manage the small local fires.*

*—Type positions, not teams.*

**IMT Size and Configuration**—*It would be nice to clarify what you need rather than getting a 60 person type 1 team.*

*—Regardless of what approach is taken, holding the teams to a set number of people is a good idea and will save money. All the teams have gotten too big, which drives up large fire costs.*

*—IMTs can currently be scaled up and down – we just don't do it! No one wants to send team members home or not order them in the first place.*

*—Our experience has been that many of the Type 2 Teams are better equipped to handle our local needs than the large Type 1 teams and more approachable.*

**Rationale and Discussion:** The difference in complexity of incidents staffed by type 1 and type 2 teams is difficult to discern under the current situation, given the overall increase in complexity of incidents. During busy periods type 2 teams are regularly assigned to complex incidents when type 1 teams are scarce. The difference between type 1 and type 2 assignments is not clearly defined in the 2011 Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations, beyond the qualifications for command and general staff.

Efforts to coordinate IMT types with the Department of Homeland Security and states must continue during the implementation phase.

## Distribution of IMTs Throughout the Geographic Areas

*The current geographic distribution of federally sponsored IMTs is maintained in the recommended organizational model. NWCG should consider redistribution of IMTs during the implementation phase to make more single resources available and to meet the agencies' workforce succession objectives.*

**Feedback Themes:** There are a number of comments that support local IMTs because they can be deployed quickly, have knowledge of the local area, and have relationships in the area.

**Rationale and Discussion:** The present distribution of IMTs by geographic area, type, and affiliation are shown in table 3. This distribution is expected to adjust as the organizational model

is implemented.  This would occur as assignments are more evenly distributed amongst IMTs through the use of a national rotation at

preparedness level 3 and other aspects of the recommendation.

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**THOUGHTS FROM THE FIELD…**

**Surge Capacity**

*—Teams need to be integrated with state/local government personnel – they bring a wealth of knowledge to the fire ground.*

*—I think it's important to know that in today's world, IMTs must be integrated with local government. A lot of money and effort has gone into training and qualifying local responders and we must use them for all the right reasons.*

*—It would be important to have IMTs, regardless of association, be interoperable with other IMTs; USAR Incident Support Teams, FEMA IMTs, State IMTs etc. All Risk Incident will require an interface between the personnel assigned to manage a multitude of disciplines.*

*—Review and amend the Legislative authorities regarding responsibilities and authorities for the fed agencies and ensure that they address the use of our state and local interagency partners to respond to, support and manage fire and non-fire incidents.*

*—Type 2 contract teams performed excellently during Katrina. However, they need to have a reasonable expectation of being utilized.*

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**Table 3. Current distribution of IMTs by geographic area, type, and affiliation**

| Geographic Area | Type 1 | Type 2 | WFMT[1] | NIMO | State-sponsored Type 1/Type 2 Qualified | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northern Rockies | 2 | 5 | 1.5 | – | – | 8.5 |
| Rocky Mountain | 1 | 2 | – | – | – | 3 |
| Southwest | 2 | 4 | 0.5 | 1 | 1 | 8.5 |
| Great Basin | 2 | 6 | – | 1 | – | 9 |
| California | 4 | 2 North; 5 South | – | – | 10 CALFIRE | 21 |
| Northwest | 2 | 6 | – | 1 | 5 WA, 3 OR | 17 |
| Alaska | 1 | 2 | – | – | – | 3 |
| Southern | 2 | 1 | – | 1 | 10 | 14 |
| Eastern | – | – | – | – | 5 | 5 |
| **Totals** | **16** | **33** | **2** | **4** | **34** | **89** |

[1] Wildland Fire Management Team.

Decisions on the future geographic alignment of IMTs would require close coordination with geographic areas and states during the 5-year implementation phase.

## Surge Capacity

*IMTs sponsored by states would provide surge capacity at elevated geographic area and national preparedness levels under the recommended model.*

**Feedback Themes:** Several proposals for surge capacity were considered, including: contract teams, local government teams (type 3 Department of Homeland Security teams), and state-sponsored teams. The feedback, although varied, was more supportive of the use of state-sponsored teams than other options.

**Rationale and Discussion:** The number of state-sponsored type 1 and type 2 IMTs has increased by one third since 2004. State-sponsored teams provide a trained, professional workforce that meets interagency standards. These teams are generally available within their state or geographic area for assignment to wildland fires. Agreements and business practices are in place to reimburse states for cost incurred outside of their jurisdictional areas.

Implementation efforts should focus on procedures for expansion or development of agreements and business practices to provide for more use of state-sponsored teams outside of their home states or geographic areas at national preparedness level 4 and 5.

## Size and Configuration of IMTs

*IMTs are composed of 27 members and 14 trainees in the recommended organizational model. The recommended size and configuration of IMTs (see figure on following page) consists of both a short and long team with respective configurations identified. Federal agencies address complexity through use of the organizational needs analysis to identify the resources needed to manage the incident; the size of the incident management organization is scaled up and down in response to incident needs.*

**Feedback Themes:** We received many comments on team size and configuration. One-half of responders favored IMTs smaller than those currently; they also favored IMTs to be highly flexible in their configurations. Approximately one-third of responders favored long teams configured as described in the current National Mobilization Guide. Comments varied depending on the kind of involvement the commenter had on IMTs.

**Rationale and Discussion:** The recommended IMT size and configuration is designed to provide IMTs that provide core functions, yet can be scaled up and down to meet the changing needs of incidents. The recommendation reduces the total number of personnel committed to federally sponsored IMTs and makes more qualified individuals available for assignment as single resources. It allows for more mixing of resources from different agencies and geographic areas on assignments.

## Discretionary Positions

*Each IMT roster would include three positions at the discretion of the IC and the geographic area. The final response configuration would be determined through coordination with the requesting unit based on the complexity and characteristics of each incident.*

## Trainees

*Each team carries 14 trainees. Each member of command and general staff would have a trainee assigned by the geographic area. These eight trainees would be assigned with the IMT for the entire fire season and would be deployed with both the long- and short team configurations.*

*Six additional trainee positions are designated by the home geographic area coordinating group in response to interagency successional planning priorities in the geographic area. These trainee positions would be filled only with the long team configuration, and are assigned from a pool maintained by the geographic area.*

## RECOMMENDED SIZE AND CONFIGURATION OF IMTs

### Short Team Positions (9)

- Incident Commander (IC)
- Safety Officer (SOF)
- Public Information Officer (PIO)
- Operations Section Chief (OSC) (2 each)
- Air Operations Branch Director (AOBD)
- Planning Section Chief (PSC)
- Logistics Section Chief (LSC)
- Finance/Admin Section Chief (FSC)

### Long Team Positions (27)

- Incident Commander (IC)
- Liaison Officer (LOFR)
- Safety Officer (SOF)
- Public Information Officer (PIO)
- Operations Section Chief (OSC) (2 each)
- Air Operations Branch Director (AOBD)
- Planning Section Chief (PSC)
- Logistics Section Chief (LSC)
- Finance/Admin Section Chief (FSC)
- Facilities Unit Leader (FACL)
- Supply Unit Leader (SITL)
- Food Unit Leader (FDUL)
- Communications Unit Leader (COML)
- Resource Unit Leader (RESL)
- Situation Unit Leader (SITL)
- Fire Behavior Analyst (FBAN)
- Training Specialist (TNSP)
- Division Supervisor – (DIVS) (2 each)
- Air Support Group Supervisor (ASGS)
- Cost Unit Leader (COST)
- Time Unit Leader (TIME)
- Procurement Unit Leader (PROC)
- Discretionary Positions (3)

### Trainees

- 8 permanently assigned trainees (C and G)
- 6 rotating trainee positions

*Note:* See following discussion under "Trainees" subheading

**Feedback Themes:** Respondents support a fair, objective system for assignment of trainees to IMTs. Comments were received about the long tenure of trainees on IMTs and favoritism in trainee selection. Respondents from geographic areas with less fire activity had particular difficulty in obtaining trainee assignments.

## IMT Membership

*Team members should be drawn from the broadest possible range of qualified participants, including NWCG-represented agencies and qualified personnel from other governmental agencies. Personnel in professions other than fire management (militia) should be encouraged to*

*participate. The IMT selection process must include both agency administrators and coordinating groups to make sure interagency and agency specific succession planning efforts are considered.*

**Feedback Themes:** There are qualified employees who would like to participate, but are not selected for IMTs.  There is widespread perception that Federal retirees assigned to IMTs block participation of younger, less experienced employees.  Other feedback recognizes the essential role employees hired under the Federal AD authority play on teams. The feedback shows strong support for interagency participation in IMTs.  Most current members of IMTs expressed support for larger teams and emphasized the value of team cohesion.

**Rationale and Discussion:** IMT members would be drawn from Federal and state agencies, local government, fire departments, compacts (see figure at right), local government, and qualified personnel hired under state EFF or Federal AD authority. IMT membership is governed by agency administrators and coordinating groups with oversight from NWCG.

New ways for including qualified personnel (not currently available through agreements with NWCG-member agencies) should be developed to expand the pool of personnel for teams and individual assignments. These agencies include state and local law enforcement, public works employees, Coast Guard, EPA, and others. Training through the National Response Plan makes this much easier. In 2000 Public Law 106–558 authorized full time-and-a-half overtime for employees of the USDI and USDA Forest Service while engaged in emergency wildland firefighting. Other agencies are not covered by this law. Extension of this provision to other agencies would encourage participation.

Most IMT members are approaching retirement age (see figures 4 and 5). Many have retired and participate in assignments as AD employees or in second careers as employees of state and local

government where mandatory firefighter retirement does not apply.

Official advertisement of IMT opportunities is generally accomplished through a vacancy

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**FOREST FIRE COMPACTS**

▪Forest fire compacts were established in the U.S. when Congress approved the formation of the Northeast Forest Fire Protection Compact in1949 (Public Law 129 [81st Congress]).  The intent of forest fire compacts is to promote effective prevention and control of forest fires in multiple state areas or regions of the U.S.  In 1952, Congress approved the addition of adjacent provinces in Canada to become members of established forest fire compacts (Public Law 340 [82nd Congress]). The first provinces to join a Compact were Quebec in 1969 and New Brunswick in 1970 when both joined the Northeastern Forest Fire Protection Compact.

▪Each forest fire compact is governed by an interstate or international commission appointed by the member agencies. Compacts are recognized as governmental entities by the U.S. and Canada.  Today there are 8 forest fire compacts in the U.S. consisting of 43 states and all of the Canadian provinces except for Prince Edward Island.

▪The mission of forest fire compacts is to coordinate the sharing of member agency information, technology, and resources in order to prevent and control forest fires in an effective and efficient manner throughout the established compact area.  Resources can also be shared between compacts.

▪Participating members provide mutual aid among its members, establish procedures to facilitate aid; support the development of integrated forest fire plans, maintain appropriate forest fire fighting services by and for its members, and establish a central agency to coordinate the service needed by member states and provinces.

announcement.  Recruitment and development of IMT membership is managed by ICs. The amount of oversight of IMT recruitment varies between geographic areas.

Although the number of IMTs has remained relatively stable since 2004, the composition of teams has changed. The Federal workforce has shrunk, especially in some parts of the country. For example, the USDA Forest Service workforce in Oregon and Washington has gone from 7,893 employees in 1990 to 3,630 employees in 2010. IMT make-up has shifted from Federal militia to a higher percentage of state, local government, and retired Federal (second career and AD) participation. Figure 6 shows participation in California and the Northern Rockies.

There is a high percentage of overlap between IMT rosters, especially for scarce positions. It is doubtful that 45 federally sponsored IMTs could currently be fielded simultaneously.

## Age Distribution of C and G Qualified

■ 18-23 ■ 24-28 ■ 29-33 ■ 34-38 ■ 39-43 ■ 44-48 ■ 49-53 ■ 53+

0% 0% 0% 2%
6%
8%
17%
67%
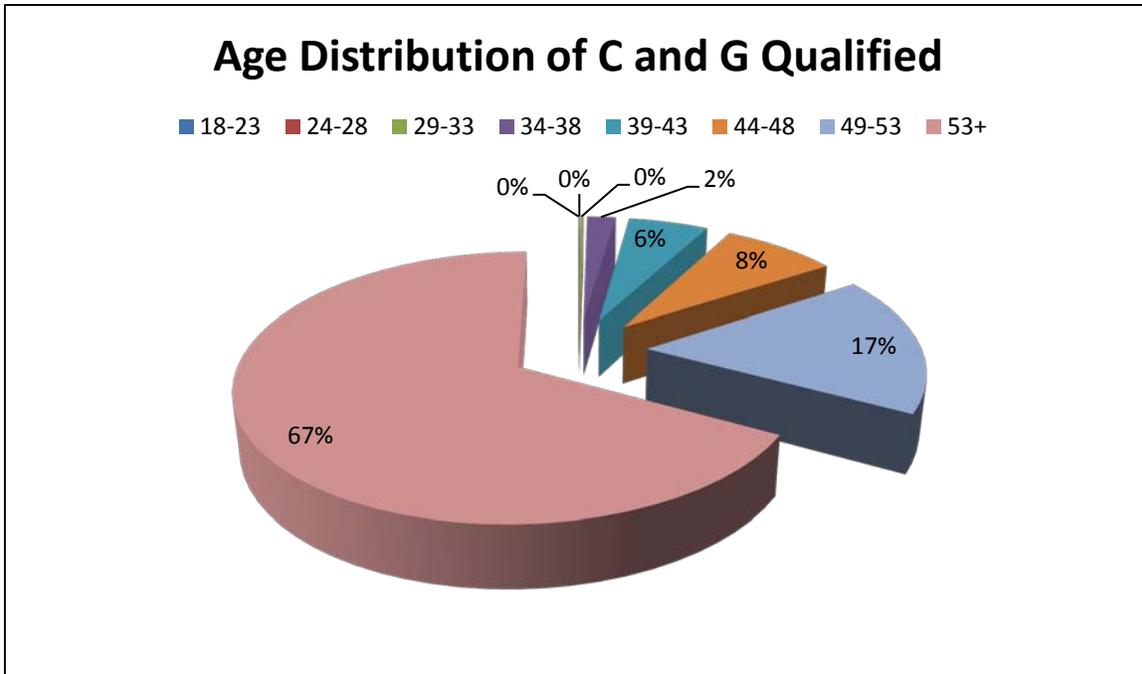
**Figure 4. In 2011, the majority of type 1 and 2 command and general staff qualified slots are filled by persons aged 53 or older (data for Federal employees in IQCS only)**

*Note:* This chart illustrates the total number of qualifications and is higher than the number of participants because many hold multiple qualifications.

## Age Distribution of C and G Trainees

■ 18-23 ■ 24-28 ■ 29-33 ■ 34-38 ■ 39-43 ■ 44-48 ■ 49-53 ■ 53+

1% 1% 2%
6%
15%
16%
20%
39%
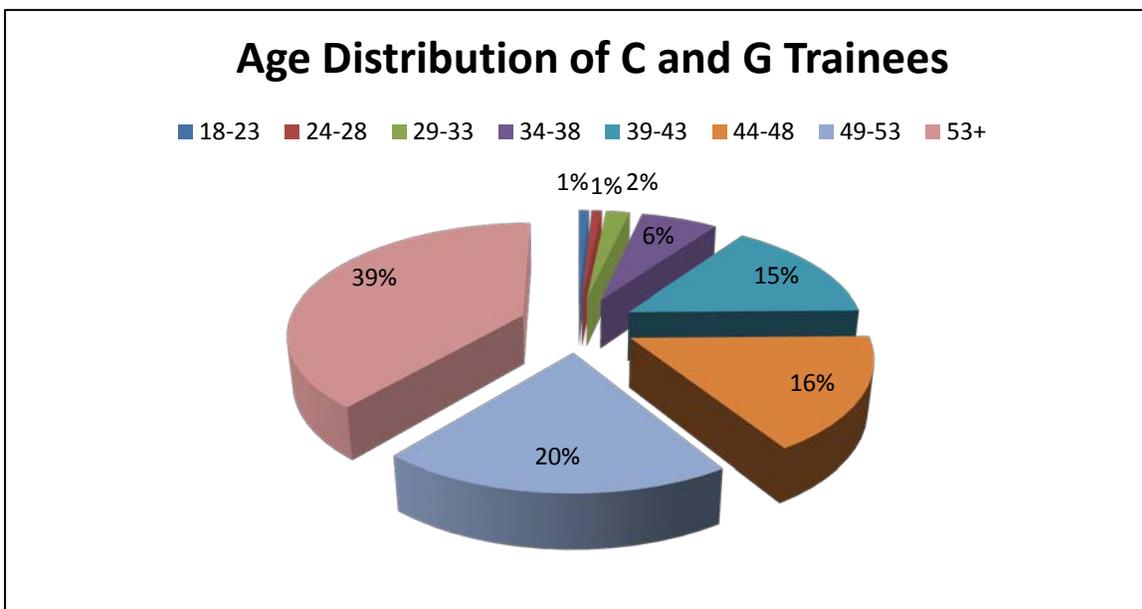
**Figure 5. In 2011, over 50 percent of trainees for type 1 and 2 command and general staff positions are 49 or older (Federal employees in IQCS only)**

*Note:* The numbers upon which these charts are based may include multiple trainee qualifications for individuals.

California Type 1 and Type 2 IMT Composition


Northern Rockies Type 1, Type 2 and FMT Composition
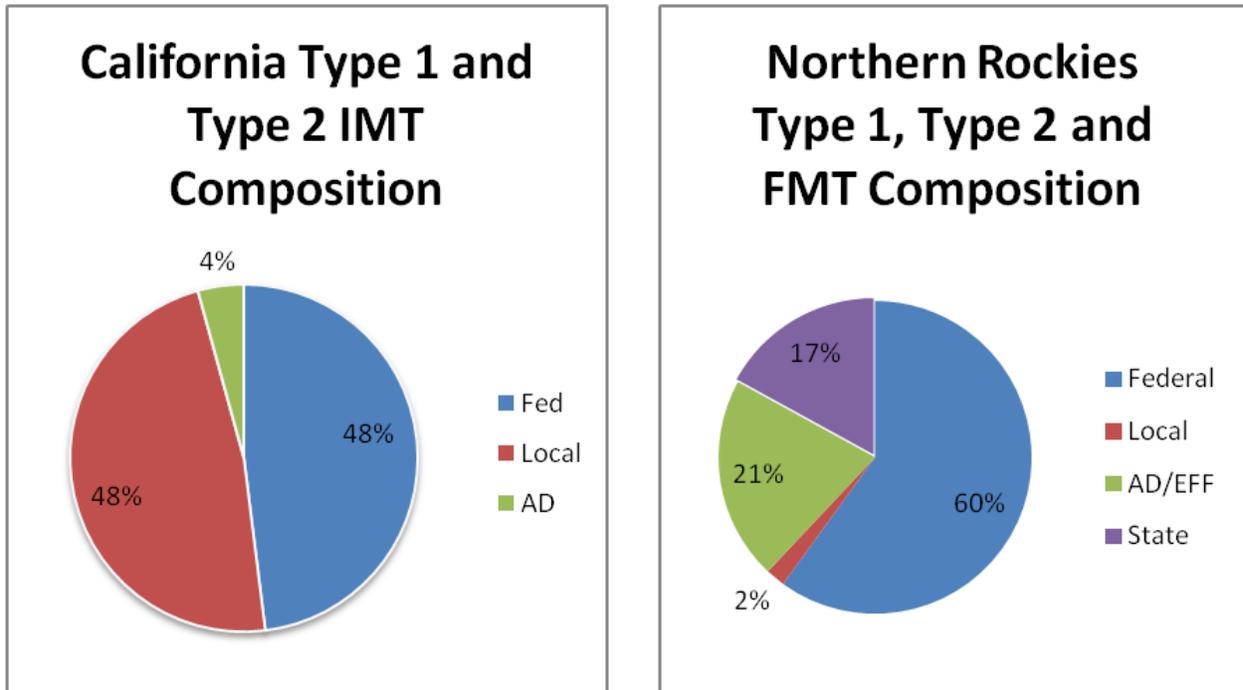
**Figure 6. Distribution of participants by agency type during 2011**

*Note:* This figure does not include personnel assigned to CALFIRE IMTs. California statistics include 52 IMT members, mentees and trainees. The Northern Rockies IMTs include members hired under both state and Federal emergency firefighting hiring authorities.

**THOUGHTS FROM THE FIELD…**

**IMT Membership—***The current system is broken. ICs have individual control over team make-up, so the buddy system wins.*

*—Team selection is a very closed process & you have to be part of the in crowd to become part of the team.*

*—The process of recruiting IMT members is ineffective because there is no one at the field level responsible for it. NWCG puts out the annual call for nominations, some managers and FMOs mention it at staff meetings and then it is up to the individual to carry through.*

*—It is not that the current IMT system is broke regarding the on the ground incident management, it's that the current system cannot be sustained.*

*—As proven by most sports teams, the more the same individuals practice and play together, the better the team gets.*

*—Find a way to make participation easier. Why the shift to dedicated teams instead of making it easier for other employees to assist. I do not feel an active move to engage militia.*

*—Consider a limit to the number of years you can be on any given team in the same position. I won't apply for a team because it is just the same people that get selected every year.*

*—I applied to teams in the SW, East, and Southern Regions and was turned down by all three, therefore I can conclude that these teams were not short of candidates or only wanted to fill within region.*

*—Groom all employees w/ potential to excel instead of the good old boy system where you have to know someone to get ahead, or get on a team.*

*—I feel that team cohesiveness at all levels of an IMT is critical for the team's success, NOT just at the C and G level.*

*—Although the retirees are highly competent and good at what they do, the personnel coming up are unable to fill those positions, thus unable to achieve the same level of competency as the retirees.*

*—As an AD, you are correct that you cannot count on us to be there forever, and some of us may only do it for a few years as we may wish to actually vacation during August.*

*—Looking around the room…the average age of IMT participants is a lot closer to 50 than 30 and ADs make up a high percent of the teams. There are multiple reasons for this. Aging population, lack of management support, stagnation in the top IMT positions, qualification systems and work/family time constraints.*

*—The AD program has held fire together for many, many years, but, it is very obvious that upper management is now further trying to get rid of the AD program…The dedicated AD's have been, in many instances, the stable force to the fire program for a number of years.*

*—The use of AD hires to supplement team positions should continue but not at the expense of developing qualified agency individuals. Nationally or at the GACG level criteria need to be developed that limits the percent of ADs in C&G and favors the use of agency people.*

## Modules

*Modules are organized to meet the specific needs of complex incidents and should be designed to promote efficient use of scarce resources.*

**Feedback Themes:** Many comments were received in support of large teams because of the value of team cohesion in developing working relationships between team members. Permanently configured modules were not supported by most respondents.

**Rationale and Discussion:** Modules may be ordered at the time of initial dispatch of an IMT by the IC with the concurrence of the requesting unit. They may also be mobilized or demobilized at any time during the incident as incident needs change. Modules are organized by the geographic areas as a unit and include leadership. The modules are organized to meet the needs of the incidents and do not contain permanent membership.

Modules are ordered separately from IMTs. Each would be defined by a national standard in the National Mobilization Guide, but the geographic area coordination centers would retain some flexibility to deviate from the standard based on geographic area needs. Modules are managed by IMTs on the incidents where assigned. Below are some example of modules that could be formed to meet specific needs.

**EXAMPLES OF MODULES DESIGNED TO MEET SPECIFIC NEEDS**

**Finance**
- Finance Section Chief (FSC)
- Time Unit Leader (TIME)
- Procurement Unit Leader (PROC)
- Equipment Time Recorder (EQTR)
- Cost Unit Leader (COST)

**Technology Support**
- Computer Technical Specialist (CTSP)
- Geographic Information Systems Specialist (GISS)
- Geographic Information Systems Spec Trainee (GIST)
- Technical Specialist (THSP)

**Helibase**
- Helibase Manager (HEB)
- Helicopter Manager (HCEB) (2)
- Take Off and Landing Coordinator (TOLC)
- Aircraft Base Radio Operator (ABRO)

**Air Operations Overhead**
- Air Support Group Supervisor (ASGS)
- Helibase Managers (HEB) (2)

**Information**
- Public Information Officer (PIO) (2)
- Documentation Unit Leader (DOCL)
- Technical Specialist (THSP)

## Support Centers

*Support centers are ad hoc organizations established to meet the needs of multiple incidents at a central location. How support centers are governed depends on the situation; they may work for geographic areas, area command, or other groups. Examples of support centers under the recommended model include:*

### Wildland Fire Decision Support Center

*Team Lead (qualified as a Long-term Analyst or Fire Behavior Analyst [LTAN/FBAN] plus Geospacial Analyst [GSAN], or Long Term Analyst trainee/Fire Behavior Analyst trainee [LTANt/FBANt]), depending on organizational needs and complexity. Additional positions could be ordered to assist from a centralized geographical location or off-site location. Positions that would work in or provide support to these centers include LTANs, FBANs, GSANs, and geographic information system specialists (GISSs), in addition to personnel experienced with decision support documentation. The organizational structure of the center would be developed based on the needs of the ordering unit. These centers can quickly increase or decrease capacity depending on fire activity, complexity, and political sensitivity, etc. In addition, these centers would provide training and mentoring opportunities for field units to help build local knowledge and expertise.*

### Finance Support Center

*With E-ISuite coming on line in May 2013, the procurement, cost, time, and some compensation/claims functions can be accomplished in a support center for multiple incidents. The suggested configuration is procurement unit leader (PROC), cost unit leader (COST), personnel time recorder (PRTC), and time unit leader (TIME).*

## Governance of IMTs

*Geographic areas coordination groups would govern federally sponsored IMTs under the recommended organizational model.*

**Feedback Themes:** Respondents favored governance based at the geographic area level.

**Discussion and Rationale:** Under the recommended model governance is strengthened and tied to National Mobilization Guide standards. Geographic areas work with NWCG to develop and enforce a single set of standard operating procedures for IMT management formalized in the National Mobilization Guide. Team selection, roster composition and team size, number and type of trainees, tenure on teams, and relationship of teams to interagency successional planning are monitored by coordinating groups through geographic area coordination centers or coordinating group working teams at the geographic area level. Rosters are periodically audited by the National Interagency Coordination Center.

## Dispatching of IMTs

*Geographic area coordination centers would manage IMT rotations for their geographic area until the national preparedness level reaches 3. At preparedness level 3 and above, the National Interagency Coordination Center coordinates the IMT rotation in consultation with the geographic area coordination centers. NIMO teams are part of the geographic area rotation to which they are assigned, when not on special assignments for the USDA Forest Service Washington Office.*

*Local and geographic areas are responsible for monitoring the current status and composition of IMTs through geographic area coordination centers in cooperation with ICs. Oversight of size, composition, and trainee make-up on rosters is accomplished by geographic areas.*

**Feedback Themes:** Agency administrators expressed concern with shortages of duty officers during high fire activity because they are committed to IMTs managing fires on other local units.

**Rationale and Discussion:** The shift to national management of teams at national preparedness level 3 (preparedness levels as currently defined in the 2011 National Mobilization Guide)

> **THOUGHTS FROM THE FIELD...**
>
> **NIMO—***I know a lot of people don't like the NIMO model, but if it was implemented as originally intended, and was assigned a dedicated geographic region to operate as a team for that region, it would be a lot more valuable and palatable.*
>
> **Dispatching of IMTs—***Don't forget the home unit. We have to keep the units staffed with duty officers, engines and crews. Some units are shorthanded with overhead; you cannot strip the district of its overhead to make a team commitment and then who takes care of the district?*

promotes the more efficient use of federally sponsored IMTs and increases opportunities for assigning and using teams from areas with less fire activity. It reduces the pressure on busy geographic areas, since unit fire managers/fire chiefs and local type 3 organizations can focus on managing emerging incidents, rather than being deployed with IMTs within the geographic area. This addresses concerns expressed by agency administrators that their FMOs/duty officers are on IMT assignments when they are most needed to manage fires on their home unit.

Inclusion of NIMO in the geographic area rotations would make more efficient use of this valuable resource and build relationships between NIMO teams and the interagency fire service at the geographic area level.

## Strategic Management Teams (formerly Area Command Teams)

*Teams formerly known as area command teams have been evolving a unique set of roles and responsibilities. In addition, they are experiencing the same trends in personnel availability and workforce succession as IMTs. The following section provides recommendations to revise the current area command's role and function to better meet future incident management needs.*

*The recommendations are divided into short term and long term. Short-term recommendations involve immediate responses to maintain the program, while long-term recommendations refer to the overall IMOSP timeframe with implementation in 2016.*

*Short-term Recommendations (2012–2015)*

- *Maintain four area command teams.*

- *Formalize the current management of the four area command teams as a pool of interchangeable personnel sufficient to staff four teams.*

*Long-term Recommendations (2016 and beyond)*

Name. *Transition area command teams to strategic management teams. This will more accurately reflect the changing demands for an oversight group to provide strategic planning, risk management, command, control, coordination, information management, and preparedness support. The oversight group will be the source for innovative processes, procedures, and technology to support incident objectives.*

Role and Function. *Future roles and functions are defined as follows.*

- Agency Administrator Support—*The incident commander (formerly area commander) of the strategic management team will, under a delegation of authority, work directly for one or more agency administrators. The IC will take direction throughout the course of the assignment from the agency administrator(s), providing direct support as needed.*

- Command—*Oversee incident commanders and incident management teams to ensure that all management actions meet defined objectives within limitations and constraints identified in "Delegations of Authority from Agency Administrators."*

  o *Establish business practices for teams to meet local, regional, and national needs.*

- o *Develop overall strategies for the assigned area(s) based on the current and anticipated fire situation.*
- o *Have the ability and authority to make changes and implement them regarding the management responses and resource uses.*
- o *Monitor cost management and reduce expenditures.*

- Control—*Serve as the essential management mechanism for incident management team oversight:*

  - o *Provide delegations of authority to incident commanders. Exercise mission prioritization and resource allocation according to these delegations.*
  - o *Direct firefighting activities within the designated area(s): (1) set priorities among incidents and teams, as appropriate, (2) utilize best available information, science, and technology to make decisions, including predictive services and WFDSS (Wildland Fire Decision Support Center) products; and (3) allocate and reallocate firefighting resources among incidents and teams as appropriate.*
  - o *Ensure all tactical actions are based on sound risk management: (1) advise teams on tactical options as appropriate; (2) ensure decisions reflect goals of using available resources to manage situations in the most effective, efficient, and safest means possible over long durations; (3) ensure response actions consider the full range of options based on the objectives in land, resource, and fire management plans; (4) ensure action plans are dynamic and reflect considerations of changing situations and the likelihood that tactics will be successful and recommend adjustment of those tactics not delivering results; (5) ensure risk management processes are utilized to aid in decision making, and as a basis for*

*resource ordering and resource allocation.*

- Coordination—*Serve as a source for coordination among agency administrators; incident commanders; partners including states, tribes, local governments, and other affected entities; and provide support to local units, geographic areas, and national offices as appropriate.*

  - o *Assist local units and coordinating groups in establishing and maintaining ready reserve forces according to weather forecasts and other intelligence.*
  - o *Manage critical national resources for maximum flexibility.*
  - o *Maximize opportunities to organize resources into modules, task forces, support centers, or other mobile tactical units to support the accomplishment of priority objectives on multiple incidents, and support and inform coordinating groups in these activities.*

- Information Management—*Ensure the maximum flow of intelligence, reporting, and required information both upward and downward.*

  - o *Inform geographic area coordinating groups on resource needs, availability, incident priority, and changing situations.*
  - o *Support geographic and national resource allocation processes by monitoring effects of short-term and cumulative fatigue.*
  - o *Balance assignment opportunities for tactical resources on need, opportunities for success, and ability to return local resources to local units.*

- Preparedness Support—*Provide annual support to incident management preparedness by completing high priority tasks, developing and delivering advance incident management training, and completing strategic coordination of workforce succession to ensure a continual*

*infusion of qualified personnel for these activities.*

Team Oversight and Program Management. *Strategic management teams will be managed at the national level.*

Team Numbers. *Maintain four standardized, national strategic management teams.*

Team Size. *Maintain strategic management teams at ten positions, with expansion possible through individual resource orders, module use, and support centers, as warranted.*

Team Configuration. *All teams will have a short configuration, will strongly rely on expansion and contraction as warranted by the incident complexity and agency/unit needs, and maintain a strong training program. The national training course for strategic management teams may need to be combined with a national IMT training course, re-structured in content, and re-numbered at an appropriate level to be consistent with the other part of this report. Develop a program where four national teams can be fully staffed and maintained (this may take a longer achieve while succession is built for IMTs).*

*The core strategic management team would consist of seven positions. Three discretionary positions would be available. Teams may expand and contract depending upon the situation. Team positions are listed in the figure to the right.*

**Feedback Themes:** The area command concept and function is supported, but with greater emphasis on strategic planning and risk management.

**Discussion and Rationale:** The number of area command teams has remained stable since 2004, but the composition of area command teams has changed. Area command teams rely largely on retired personnel who are mobilized as AD (administratively determined) hires. It is not clear that the pool of qualified personnel is sufficient to staff four area command teams simultaneously.

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**Strategic Management Teams**
**(Standard Team Positions [10])**

- Area Commander (ACDR)
- Public Information Officer(PIO)
- Assistant Area Commander Plans (ACPC)
  - Plans Support (RESL, SITL)
- Assistant Area Commander Logistics (ACLC)
  - Logistics Support
- Area Command Aviation Coordinator (ACAC)
- Discretionary Positions established by ACDR (3)
- Trainees; Area Command Positions (ACDR, ACPC, ACLC, ACAC) (4 minimum):

*Note:* Because the current training course only addresses four positions, these four positions need training assignments with area command teams. This is vital to maintain a continual infusion of qualified individuals into the program. Other positions will obtain training on IMTs or other assignments.

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Area command teams have been short teams historically. They were utilized during the 1980s on an ad hoc basis, and then became more formalized, evolving in full team operations that varied widely in configuration during the fire seasons of the late 1980s. Short, core teams comprised the initial staffing, but support positions were assigned as deemed appropriate. With the acceptance of the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, area command teams, consisting of four, four-person teams, were formally established as a national resource and managed through the National Interagency Coordination Center. Initial configuration consisted of an area commander, area command planning coordinator, area command logistics coordinator, and area command aviation coordinator. Additional positions were ordered as needed and in the late 1990s and early 2000s, teams on individual assignments ranged well into the double figures and as high as 40 individuals.

In 2004, the four area commanders, in collaboration with the National Incident Information Center Coordinator, set area

command teams at a standard size of 10 positions. These positions were area commander, assistant area commander plans, assistant area commander logistics, area command aviation coordinator, resource unit leader, and five discretionary positions. The discretionary positions were determined by the area commander and at times, included public information officers, safety officers, technical support specialists, human resource specialists, incident business advisors, fire behavior analysts, GIS specialists, and trainees.  Additional positions were ordered on a case-by-case basis, depending on incident complexity.

S-620, Area Command, is the keystone national training course for area command.  However, this course is attended by only those individuals pursuing certification as area commander, assistant area commander plans, assistant area commander logistics, and area command aviation coordinator.  Qualifications for all other area command team positions are acquired through other training courses.  Recent trends in attendance at the S-620 course are a clear indicator of the current overall issues facing the IMT program.  Attendance is decreasing, numbers of employees moving into the qualified area command ranks are decreasing, average age of individuals completing the course is increasing, and available time for qualified individuals to perform on teams is decreasing.  Consequently, the number of area command team positions staffed by retirees is increasing.

## Section 2: Management Support and Accountability

### Accountability

*Under the recommended organizational model all wildland fire- and hazardous fuels-funded*

*employees would have incident management responsibilities included in their position (job) descriptions.  Those agency administrators having responsibility for fire and hazardous fuels programs would have a performance standard or element for fire management.  Expectations for each agency's level of participation should be developed based on their percent of wildland fire workload. Table 4 summarizes accountability measures and implementation needs that are part of the recommended organizational model.*

**Feedback Themes:**  Many practical and creative solutions were suggested during the stakeholder engagement process.  Respondents questioned the ability of NWCG to push through recommendations that would result in agency accountability and management support, largely because there has been little progress towards implementation of similar recommendations in the past.

**Rationale and Discussion:**  Every study and recommendation regarding the wildland fire workforce written in the last 10 years has grappled with the need to increase and sustain participation in the program. In the future the type of employee participation may differ and range from incident support on the home unit to participation on IMTs.  Consistent individual and performance evaluation requirements are needed.  Incident performance evaluations for individuals with wildland fire responsibilities would be considered when rating an employee's regular job. IMTs are evaluated by agency administrators on incident performance, and consistency is needed between geographic areas.

**Table 4. Accountability and management support recommendations**

| | Accountability Measures | Federal Legislation Needed | Federal Policy Change | State-level Legislation Needed | State Policy Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Additions to position descriptions and performance standards that include participation in wildland fire for agency employees. State and local government fire employees are already expected to participate in incident management at some level (not necessarily on IMTs). | No | No | No | Depends on State |
| 2 | Individuals taking training should agree to serve in the target position and this reflects in the individual developmental plan. | No | No | No | No |
| 3 | All agencies agree to a formal fire mentoring program (e.g., USFWS and NPS mentoring programs). | No | No | No | No |
| 4 | All agencies agree to follow national policies for management of Federal ADs and state EFFs (emergency firefighters) that set priorities for their use on teams. Formalize through the National Mobilization Guide and Federal AD pay plan *Note:* Be careful to consider state/local government who can only participate while on leave and employed as Federal ADs. In other states timber industry employees fight fire using the Federal AD authority. | No | No; Current Policy | Maybe | Depends on State |
| 5 | Encourage all agency employees to take a role in supporting wildland fire incidents. This could include supporting from the home unit or filling in behind those assigned to fires. | No | Yes | Maybe | Depends on State |
| 6 | Provide opportunities for employees to work from the home unit in a support role (e.g., finance positions using e-ISuite). | No | No | No | Depends on State |
| 7 | Agencies to enforce requirement of Fire Management Leadership Course training for agency administrator(s). | No | No; Current Policy | No | No |
| 8 | Add a critical element to Agency administrator's performance measures addressing the need of their duties and responsibilities as outlined in the "Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (Red Book). | No | No | Maybe | Depends on State |
| 9 | Encourage agency administrators to have a number of employees trained and available for fire assignments and trained and available to participate on IMTs. Expectation based on large fire workload and agency size. | No | Yes | No | Yes |
| 10 | Acknowledge agency administrators who are top performers for providing IMT members and other incident personnel (e.g., performance rating with cash or step increase). | No | No | Maybe | Depends on State |
| 11 | Oversight by geographic area coordination centers on size of IMTs (e.g., not allow ICs to manage roster). | No | Yes | No | No |
| 12 | Relief given to targets when fire is the first priority. | Yes | Yes | Maybe | Depends on State |
| 13 | Allow units to use suppression funding for backfill on home unit work when qualified employees are called to provide IMT work or support. | Maybe | Yes | Maybe | Depends on State |
| 14 | The ability to pay "Base 8" dollars out of suppression consistent across Federal agencies. | Maybe | Yes | Maybe | Depends on State |

**THOUGHTS FROM THE FIELD...**

**Accountability—***Many employees in all agencies these days have a different set of values and working away from their family for 14 to 21 days and sleeping in the dirt is not something they really want to do no matter how much you paid them and that includes full time fire employees.*

*—As a Forest Service employee with over 25 years invested in the fire arena, all employees (including militia) were expected/required to support fire. This is no longer the case.*

*—They all say "I support you" but as soon as the callout comes something is always more important and I have to beg to go.*

*—95% of my fellow agency administrators feel no responsibility to provide their employees as team members much less field a team.*

*—I expect that the higher levels in the agencies will say "not true" but having been a manager in three different offices, it is my observation that there is actually little real support for the IMTs at the field level...Field managers have nothing to gain from having staff on IMTs. On the contrary, they are usually held to their annual work plan commitments regardless of what kind of fire season there is.*

*—Integrating firefighting as part of federal employee's every day job is more efficient and practical as all you baby boomers retire.*

*—Development of an aggressive Interagency program to market IMT participation that recognizes, understands and reflects generational differences, priorities, and employment expectations should begin immediately.*

## Section 3: Incentives

*Incentives for participation should be a part of the implementation plan for the recommended organizational model. Disincentives should be identified and reduced or eliminated.*

**Feedback Themes:** Feedback was mixed on the question of incentives. Respondents believe that employees should be compensated commensurate with the work performed while on incidents, but some believe that existing premium pay and uncapped overtime are sufficient compensation.

A portion of the feedback dealt with non-monetary incentives that would make participation more compatible with participants' home and work responsibilities. Much of the feedback linked to the previous section regarding management support. Many comments addressed disincentives to participate on IMTs because of lack of agency and supervisory support.

Many respondents are concerned with personal liability while engaged in wildland fire response and believe it has a major impact on ability to recruit and retain qualified participants, especially at upper incident command system levels.

**Discussion and Rationale:** Elimination of disincentives to participation is more important overall than the creation of monetary incentives. NWCG should carefully consider the pros and cons of adding more pay incentives, since this typically creates additional pay inequity between agencies. The IMOSPT, like the rest of the workforce, has a range of opinions. The shaded options at the top of table 5 are part of the recommended organizational model. The upper, shaded portion of the table is the highest priority for implementation. NWCG should certainly consider the adoption of a daily rate. This single change would produce a safety benefit by encouraging employees to reduce shift length, rather than maximize hours worked.

**Table 5. Incentives and implementation options**

| Incentives for Participation or Support of Wildland Fire Activities | Implementation Requirements |
|---|---|
| Cash awards (paid from suppression) | This would require a change to DOI and USFS appropriation language (if allowed); consistent interagency application processes would need to be developed to use suppression funding. |
| Daily rate | *Contractors*: This process is currently in place for most contracts.<br><br>*Casuals*: The authority for the AD pay plans allows for a high degree of flexibility when determining pay rates. This effort would have to be coordinated and supported by DOI and USFS human resources departments.<br><br>*Federal employees*: This would be a significant change to current Federal pay scales and would require change in pay regulations through legislation. |
| Recognition for home unit personnel who cover duties | This could be implemented immediately—some home units have this in place already. Recognition could be in verbal form, written recognition, monetary or non-monetary awards, etc. |
| Sharing IMT positions | This is a current practice for many IMTs, but could be advertised more widely and encouraged more by ICs. Formal practices for job sharing would provide an incentive for many younger employees with young children to participate. |
| Personal liability concerns | Recommend agencies determine sufficient policies and procedures to ensure adequate support of incident personnel decisions. Could require legislation to ensure adequate legal representation of agency employees. Some states already provide this for their employees. |
| Provide compensation or temporary promotion for the duration of incidents based on incident assignment duties/positions | This would require a position description to be developed and classified for all IMT positions. Items to take into consideration before implementing include the impacts of employees who do not meet the time in grade requirements for a temporary promotion to a higher IMT grade level. Conversely, consideration of the impact and application for those employees who perform in IMT positions lower-graded than their position of record. |
| Temporary promotion during fire season based on incident assignment duties/positions | Requirements same as above, as well as the following:<br><br>Time restrictions; 120 days is the maximum allowed for non-competitive process.<br><br>Concern regarding compensating employees for duties they are performing when not assigned to an incident that do not meet the basis of the temporary promotion. |
| Lifting annual salary cap | This would require coordination with agency human resources departments and legislation to allow for this capability within the code of Federal regulations. |
| Ability to charge 50% extra of salary to suppression above regular duty hours charged | This would require a change in DOI and USFS appropriation language in regard to charging to suppression accounts for hours worked that are not directly related to suppression. |
| Overtime compensation that counts toward "High-3" for retirement | This would need to be coordinated by agency human resources departments and would require a change in legislation. |
| Make income exceeding salary cap tax-deductible | This would require a change in legislation (and perhaps in IRS law). It would require tracking of hours earned by an employee that they were not compensated above the annual cap level, but could be claimed as a tax deduction. |
| Portal-to-portal pay | Requires legislation to allow compensation for non-work hours. |

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**THOUGHTS FROM THE FIELD...**

**Incentives—***We feel strongly that all agencies with IMTs should promptly address the deep-seated concerns regarding personal liability that can discourage IMT participation by agency personnel.*

*—All IMT members compensated by duties (positions) based on nationally recognized scale.*

*—Compensation while on fires should be consistent with fire position held.*

*—You have got to be kidding. Getting paid overtime after 8 hours should be sufficient. Why try and deplete fire funding anymore than you have to?*

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## Section 4: Funding and Business Management Practices

### Funding

*Federally sponsored IMT participants are base funded by their agencies. Their base pay is shifted to fire suppression funds while on incidents.*

*NIMO teams are base funded from emergency funds.*

**Feedback Themes:** Feedback from many respondents indicates confusion regarding NIMO's role and function. Feedback indicates widespread concern regarding their assignments and financing year-round with emergency suppression funds.

### Standard Business Practices

*Efficiency of large wildfire management could be significantly improved if standard Federal-wide business practices were applied to incident management.  See appendix A for business management practice recommendations.*

### IMT Support Funding and Staffing

*Each IMT would receive an established amount of support funding provided by the agencies in their home geographic area.  Teams are provided with administrative staff support to support ICs with management of their team rosters and other logistical needs.*

**Feedback Themes:** Many comments were received from respondents regarding the considerable workload for ICs associated with managing rosters, tracking availability, notifying team members of changes, finding substitutes, and other logistical tasks.

**Discussion and Rationale:** The team management workload is frequently cited as a justification for full-time IC positions. This workload would be addressed by providing additional IMT support positions at the geographic area coordination centers. This support would include management of rosters in ROSS, updating the availability of team members, management of trainees, and notification of call-out status. This administrative capacity could be shared and has the added advantage of consolidating governance and roster oversight at the geographic area coordination center level.

### Estimated cost of the Recommended Organizational Model

*A final estimate of the cost of the recommended model is included in appendix B.*

IMSOPT compared the cost of the seven proposed organizational models as part of the analysis prepared in February of 2010. The same assumptions and methods were used to determine the cost of the recommended organizational model.

The cost of funding the base salaries of the 40 federally sponsored IMTs is approximately 119.3 million dollars per year. The cost of base funding the NIMO program from emergency funds in the recommended model is 2.6 million dollars per year.

Appendix B includes detailed cost estimates for base salaries and incident costs for the recommended organizational model.

# Section 5: Incident Capacity/Workforce Development/IMT Succession

## Succession Planning

*The overall objective is to develop a robust and coordinated succession planning system which develops our workforce to ensure a steady supply of IMT members commensurate with a predetermined national average volume of business (table 6).*

**Feedback Themes:** The feedback is overwhelming in its support of a more organized and focused approach to succession planning and workforce management.

ICs or their section chiefs have had responsibility for the composition and management of IMTs. ICs make decisions based on legitimate short-term needs to staff IMTs with qualified people who are consistently available for assignments. In the past, ICs have not been assigned the responsibility to manage their teams to meet the larger strategic goal for workforce succession. Coupled with the demands of their home unit full-time jobs, they have very little time to actively emphasize workforce succession.

**Discussion and Rationale:** The agencies must link the management of IMTs to overall employee development and succession planning. Most assignments and training beyond the type 3 level can only be gained on assignments on wildfires being managed by IMTs.

Succession planning is a strong thread throughout all components of the recommendation. Specific recommendations related to succession planning are found in the "Governance of IMTs" and team "Size and Configuration of IMTs" portions of section 1. Employees are not able to participate without the management support and accountability described in section 2. Greater attention to the management of IMT rosters, training, and team trainees by agency administrators and coordinating groups is essential. Participation by fire-funded and militia employees must be supported by agency administrators if future staffing needs are to be met.

**Table6. Succession planning components**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Planning** | Succession Plan | An integrated succession plan should be developed for IMTs to be used as a guide by NWCG partners.  Individuals at the national and geographic areas should be designated to provide guidance, monitor standard implementation, and maintain plan. |
| | Needs Assessment | Identify needs of the wildland fire organization by position.  Ensure management is directing the development of employee qualifications based on national IMT position targets and not solely on individual employee desires. |
| | Linkage Between Planning Efforts | Develop linkage for individual development plan processes to be integrated into geographic area and national succession planning efforts. |
| | Reports to Assist Workforce Development | Establish standard tracking of qualified individuals by position, number of experiences obtained each year, positions with shortages, etc., to provide better training and experience-needs analysis in the geographic areas and nationally, using the Federal incident qualification and certification system (IQCS) and state incident qualification systems (IQS) and ROSS, and data obtained by incident training officers. |
| **Qualifications** | Integration of NIMS and NIIMS Qualification Systems | Develop integration of the two systems, including the use of common qualifications, training, experience, and workforce development processes. |
| | PMS 310-1 Wildland Fire Qualifications System | Review and streamline qualification requirements and agencies' policies.  Adopt the PMS 310-1 as the single standard for all NWCG member agencies so that employees moving from one agency to another are not required to meet additional requirements for the same position. |
| | Alternative Qualification Pathways | Develop alternative qualification pathways for positions in the PMS 310-1 to streamline system and mitigate roadblocks. |
| **Training** | Training | Review training courses to streamline process and revise courses to be more effective, interactive, and to inspire learning. Review S620 Area Command, S520 Advanced Incident Management, CIMC Complex Incident Management Course, and S420 Incident Management courses to determine whether they are applicable and relevant to the new IMT model. |
| | Experiential Training | Expand opportunities for experience-based, task book completion through learning technologies such as simulations and by maximizing the opportunities when on assignment as a trainee. |
| | Wildfire and Incident Management Academies | Increase support and use of geographic area and state interagency academies to provide access to consistent and expanded training opportunities. |
| | Refresher System for Command and General Staff, Unit Leaders and IMTs | Develop interactive, scenario-based refresher or continuous learning which teaches current information and skills, and tests and grooms new leaders. |
| | Human Factors Course Curriculum | Develop human factors-related course content to be incorporated throughout the curriculum (similar to what has been done for leadership content) that focuses on principles related to personal and corporate ethics, financial integrity, cost effectiveness, and personal responsibility and accountability. Include the need to maintain recruitment and retention practices on IMTs. |
| **Experience** | Position Task Books | Review position task books to reduce duplication, ensure incident type for experience is appropriate, and streamline the process.  Strengthen language in the PMS 310-1 to support greater flexibility for certifying officials related to task book certification.  Improve language in the PMS 310-1 related to the role of the position task book evaluator, to support a less conservative, restrictive, and risk averse role.  Develop a crosswalk between NWCG and DHS All-Hazard IMT position task books. |
| | Previous Experience Credit | Expand recognition/credit in the qualifications systems for experience and training received on day-to-day jobs and previous related experience.  Expand recognition of experience and training received on day-to-day job in non-operational positions.  Include clear language in the 310-1 that provides certifying officials the authority to make good decisions with greater flexibility. |
| | Mentoring Programs | Increase use of interagency mentoring and trainee programs to accelerate the attainment of competencies and qualifications. |
| **Operations** | Use of Retirees | Use retirees to fill gaps during cyclic surge years rather than as permanent team members.  Make sure opportunities are taken to mentor and train new members. |
| | Increase IMT Participation | Actively promote and market IMT participation through agency channels to encourage recruitment of new talent into various aspects of the fire program. Include strategies for reaching younger employees and non-fire employees. |
| | Team Limits | Establish team membership term limits so new talent has the opportunity to fill IMT positions occupied by legacy team members. |
| | Position Qualification in More Than One Functional Area | Encourage qualifications in at least two functional areas (particularly for operational positions). |

### THOUGHTS FROM THE FIELD…

**Succession Planning**—*Need to create multiple pathways to positions and remove the glass ceilings to positions such as Planning Section Chief requirements to be STL. Create incentives for folks to move out of Operations into other functional areas.*

*—The rigidity of our training and qualifications system is the problem…Find a way to train people where it doesn't take 20-30 years for a C&G position.*

*—One of the problems we have now is that we train people and even get their task books completed, and then they decide they do not want to participate or are not available the majority of the time. Then what in the world did we train them for?*

*—Current recruitment for training doesn't provide good context for where we have deficits.*

*—Many Type 1 and Type 2 position task books are identical, and this training redundancy creates an extra time-consuming step…*

*—It's about time that fire and all hazard got together. It's a pain to ask if the I-400 class I'm taking is NWCG or NIMS because NIMS doesn't qualify for fire. Command is command.*

*—Training and personnel succession management need to be an incident objective on all fires.*

*—Young people in fire positions need to get involved with incident management teams at a much earlier time in their career and not wait until late 40's and 50's before they become section chiefs and IC's.*

*—Use the gray-haired personnel to train the younger personnel. Actively recruit team members in the off season by paying for training and picking up base 8 savings.*

# Appendix A: Business Management Practices

Consistent business practices may include, but are not limited to the following.

## Consistent Use of Suppression Funding

**Charging Base 8 to Suppression for All Employees.** Currently USDA Forest Service allows for charging of base 8 hours to suppression for all employees. USDI only allows it for non-fire-funded personnel. USDA Forest Service also allows charging to suppression for base 8 hours worked in conjunction with an all-hazard incident.

**Consistent Backfill Procedures Based on How Base 8s Are Funded.** Some units will backfill behind personnel who are assigned to an incident. They should only be allowed to charge to suppression if the incident assigned personnel is not charging their base 8 hours to suppression.

## Consistent Timekeeping Practices

**Coding of Mandatory Days Off (Regular Time or Admin Leave and Which Funds Are Used).** USDA Forest Service codes the two mandatory days off at the end of an incident to regular hours code, while the USDI bureaus code it to an admin leave code. BLM charges these hours to a project code while all other agencies charge these hours to the incident.

**Consistent Use of Full Overtime Versus Exempt/Nonexempt in Wildland Fire Situations Where the True Overtime Law Is Applicable.** There is currently unclear direction and application within each agency whether exempt employees working on a wildfire code their hours to "true overtime" payroll code all the time, or if they still need to distinguish when they are working in a nonexempt position on the fire and should code their hours as regular (capped)

overtime and notate "exempt working in non-exempt position" on their timesheet. This requires an HR determination of the appropriate practice.

## Consistent Contracting Practices

**Use of Pre-Season Solicitations Across All Federal Agencies.** It is in the best interest of the government to provide a competitive pre-season process for incident support equipment.

**Allowing Interagency Use of All Agreements and Avoiding Duplication of Work.** Coordination between agencies should take place where agencies are not competing solicitations for the same type of equipment. This provides inconsistencies in rates and confusion on incidents as to what agreement the piece of equipment has been ordered under. Ideally pre-season agreements would be negotiated by a Federal contracting officer with one of the land management agencies and all other agencies would have the capability to utilize that agreement on their jurisdictional incident.

**Use of Virtual Incident Procurement by All Agencies.** This would provide an electronic pre-season bid and solicitation process to all the agencies. It would provide consistencies for the field in knowing where and how to find agreements and would assist the vendor community in ensuring they have the opportunity to bid on all potential solicitations for incident support resources.

## Appropriate Use of Casuals

**Prescribed Fire—All Agencies to Agree to or Not Agree to.** Currently UDSI AD Pay Plan allows for the hiring of casuals to support prescribed fire projects while the USDA Forest Service AD Pay Plan does not.

**When to Hire Instructors Versus Using Federal or Contracted.**  Both USDA Forest Service and USDI AD Pay Plans notate that hiring ADs as an instructor should be utilized "when all other methods of hiring and contracting instructors have been exhausted".   This is not consistently enforced within each agency, or amongst all of the agencies.

**Travel Payment Process on OF-288 and Not Through GovTrip.**  USDA Forest Service allows for payment of emergency casual travel on the OF-288 when specific criteria are met.  This allows for much more timely reimbursement to the casual, reduces hiring unit work load to process travel through GovTrip, and reduces unnecessary fees charged by the GovTrip system.  This process should be applied consistently amongst all the agencies that hire casuals.

# Appendix B: Cost Estimates for Recommended Organizational Model

Estimates were made of the personnel costs to NWCG member agencies. These estimates are based on 2011 personnel costs. *Note*: Spreadsheets are in a "scanned" format, and hence appear on the following pages in their original (and unedited) form.

The first spreadsheet displays the costs associated with paying team members a base salary by grade level.  The second spreadsheet displays the cost by incident to include base salary, overtime, and travel.  These costs can be compared to the current situation and the six new models in, "Evolving Incident Management: An Analysis of Organizational Models for the Future."

The assumptions are listed at the bottom of both spreadsheets.

## Proposed Model Salary Cost Analysis

| | | Base Hours | 80 hrs x 26 PPs | 2,080 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Overtime Hours | | | | |
| | | | Hourly | Annual Cost/Person | Annual Cost/Team | Annual Cost 4 Teams |
| **NIMO Teams (4)** | | | | | | |
| GS-14/5 (1 IC) | | | | | | |
| Hourly Wage | $ | 52.51 | | 109,221 | $ 109,221 | $ 436,883 |
| OT Wage | $ | 78.77 | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| GS-13/5 (6 C&G) | | | | | | |
| Hourly Wage | $ | 44.43 | | 92,414 | $ 554,486 | $ 2,217,946 |
| OT Wage | $ | 66.65 | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| **Annual Salary Total** | | | | | $ 663,707 | $ 2,654,829 |

| | | | Hourly | Annual Cost/Person | Annual Cost/Team | Annual Cost 40 Teams |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Long Teams - 40 (27 person)** | | | | | | |
| GS-13/5 (1 - IC) | | | | | | |
| Hourly Wage | $ | 44.43 | | 92,414 | $ 92,414 | $ 3,696,576 |
| OT Wage | $ | 66.65 | | | $ - | |
| | | | | | | |
| GS-12/5 (9 C&G) | | | | | | |
| Hourly Wage | $ | 37.37 | | 77,730 | $ 699,566 | $ 27,982,656 |
| OT Wage | $ | 56.06 | | | $ - | |
| | | | | | | |
| GS-11/5 (17 reg) | | | | | | |
| Hourly Wage | $ | 31.17 | | 64,834 | $ 1,102,171 | $ 44,086,848 |
| OT Wage | $ | 46.76 | | | $ - | |
| | | | | | | |
| GS-11/5 (8 trainees) | | | | | | |
| Hourly Wage | $ | 31.17 | | 64,834 | $ 518,669 | $ 20,746,752 |
| OT Wage | $ | 46.76 | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| GS-9/5 (6 rotating trainees) | | | | | | |
| Hourly Wage | $ | 25.77 | | 53,602 | $ 321,610 | $ 12,864,384 |
| OT Wage | $ | 38.66 | | | $ - | |
| | | | | | | |
| **Annual Salary Total** | | | | | $ 2,734,430 | $ 109,377,216 |

40 Teams Long Teams and 4 NIMO Teams

14 trainee positions filled per Long Team

**Assumptions**

*NIMO team grade levels follow current model (IC=GS-14, C&G= GS-13)

*Agency team grade levels based on IC = GS-13;C&G = GS-12

* All grade calculations for each position based on Step 5 rate

**Base salary for Long IMT's out of suppression only while on wildland fire assignment**

*Base salary for NIMO out of suppression year round

## Proposed Model Cost Analysis by Incident

| | Basis for Analysis | 16 Days @ 14hr/days | 224 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | Regular Hours | 96 |
| | | Overtime Hours | 128 |

| **NIMO Teams (4)** | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| GS-14/5 (1 IC) | | | | | |
| Hourly Wage | $ | 52.51 | $ | 5,041 | $ | 5,041 |
| OT Wage | $ | 78.77 | $ | 10,082 | $ | 10,082 |
| | | | | | |
| GS-13/5 (6 C&G) | | | | | |
| Hourly Wage | $ | 44.43 | $ | 4,265 | $ | 25,592 |
| OT Wage | $ | 66.65 | $ | 8,531 | $ | 51,183 |
| **Cost Per NIMO Team w/roster** | | | | $ | 91,898 |
| **Cost for 4 NIMO Teams w/roster** | | | | $ | 367,592 |

| **Other Teams (40)** | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| GS-13/5 (1 - IC) | | | | | |
| Hourly Wage | $ | 44.43 | $ | 4,265 | $ | 4,265 |
| OT Wage | $ | 66.65 | $ | 8,531 | $ | 8,531 |
| | | | | | |
| GS-12/5 (9 C&G) | | | | | |
| Hourly Wage | $ | 37.37 | $ | 3,588 | $ | 32,288 |
| OT Wage | $ | 56.06 | $ | 7,175 | $ | 64,575 |
| | | | | | |
| GS-11/5 (17 reg) | | | | | |
| Hourly Wage | $ | 31.17 | $ | 2,992 | $ | 50,869 |
| OT Wage | $ | 46.76 | $ | 5,985 | $ | 101,739 |
| | | | | | |
| GS-11/5 (8 trainees) | | | | | |
| Hourly Wage | $ | 31.17 | $ | 2,992 | $ | 23,939 |
| OT Wage | $ | 46.76 | $ | 5,985 | $ | 47,877 |
| | | | | | |
| GS-9/5 (6 rotating trainees) | | | | | |
| Hourly Wage | $ | 25.77 | $ | 2,474 | $ | 14,844 |
| OT Wage | $ | 38.66 | $ | 4,948 | $ | 29,687 |
| | | | | | |
| **Cost Per Long Team w/roster** | | | | $ | 378,613 |
| **Cost for 40 Long Teams w/roster** | | | | $ | 15,144,538 |

### Proposed Model Cost Analysis by Incident

|  |  | Basis for Analysis | 16 Days @ 14hr/days | 224 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  | Regular Hours | 96 |
|  |  |  | Overtime Hours | 128 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Travel ($800/person per assignment; 41 personnel total) | $ | 32,800.00 | $ | 32,800 |
| **Travel for 40 Teams** | | | $ | **1,312,000** |
| **Sub Total 40 Teams (27 + 14 trainees plus travel)** | | | $ | **16,824,129** |

40 Long Teams and 4 NIMO Teams
14 trainee positions filled each team (8 assigned for entire season and 6 rotating)

**Assumptions**
* NIMO team grade levels follow current model (IC = GS-14, C&G = GS-13)
* Agency team grade levels based on IC = GS-13; C&G = GS-12
* Rest of Team members grade levels for all IMTs = GS-11
* Trainees = GS-9 and GS-11
* All grade calculations for each position based on Step 5 rate
* Travel estimated at $800/person per assignment
* Entire estimate based on 16 day assignment; 14 hrs/day
*All base salary, OT and travel paid out of suppression

# Appendix C: Review of Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Strategies

Changes to incident management organizations and systems, no matter how gradual and thoughtful, can only be accomplished through the combined efforts of leaders, subject matter experts, and stakeholders. NWCG and the IMOSPT agreed that the engagement and communication process needed to respect established roles and responsibilities for decision-making, and that the entire community of stakeholders be given a voice in the process.

IMOSPT developed general guidance for communications and engagement to support and simplify communications efforts by NWCG member organizations. While NWCG members work together as cohesive and collaborative partners, each agency has its own unique protocol, information distribution methods, and communication systems. To maintain consistent messaging, and to ensure that stakeholders had equal opportunity to participate, agency communicators were provided with tools that adapted to their unique communication environments.

## Communication and Engagement

Incident management affects the safety and property of citizens, and as a result, the stakeholder audience was and will continue to be vast and diverse. While media and elected officials were considered external audiences, members of the public were identified as important stakeholders. Consequently, interested citizens or citizen groups were provided an opportunity to participate. Member agencies were encouraged to manage media contacts and to inform elected officials in accordance with individual agency protocol and procedures.

Most stakeholders for this project consisted of local, state, Tribal, and Federal government employees (both current and retired) (see figure at the top of the next page). These internal stakeholders have widely different professional roles and responsibilities—from militia member and firefighter, to IMT member and state, Tribal, or Federal agency leaders and administrators. Hence, we received a wide variety of perspectives on how IMTs should be organized and managed.

IMOSPT recommended that the NWCG Executive Board use their products to start a conversation with key stakeholders about the role of the incident management organization and how IMTs might best be organized and managed in the future to meet the needs of the public, the agencies, the fire service, and the team members themselves. NWCG Executive Board tasked the IMOSPT to conduct such an outreach and feedback effort.

Subsequently, IMOSPT members worked with Organization Development Enterprise and Rocky Mountain Research Station to develop a feedback system, including an online survey for Federal stakeholders based on IMOSPTs work during calendar year 2010. The State of Texas ultimately used the same survey to provide feedback opportunities for non-Federal stakeholders.

**EXAMPLES OF STAKEHOLDERS**

**Primary Audiences**

- National Fire Leadership
- Agency Administrators
- Federally Recognized Tribes and Native Corporations
- Regional and State Fire Leadership
- National Association of State Foresters and Regional Organizations
- Area Commanders/ Incident Commanders
- Geographic Area Coordinating Groups

**Secondary Audiences**

- Agency and State Leads (Agency Heads and State Foresters)
- National Interagency Fire Leadership (Federal Executive Council, Wildland Fire Leadership Council)
- Local Fire Departments
- Contractors/Contract Associations
- Retirees and Casual Hires
- NWCG Committees
- Incident Management Team Members

**General Audiences**

- Militia
- Other Federal Agencies
- Dispatch and Coordination
- Countries with Whom Our Agencies Have International Agreements
- Professional Societies
- Qualified non-participants
- Universities and Community Colleges
- Researchers (Internal/External)
- Communities-at-Risk
- Elected Officials
- Media
- Non-governmental Organizations

Over the course of winter 2011, members of IMOSPT fanned out across the country to give presentations at fire, IMT, and coordination group meetings and developed and held a series of online webinars with interested members of the interagency fire community. These presentations focused on informing the inter-agency fire community of the working team's activities, current thinking, and opportunities to provide feedback. They also were used to help refine and target the emerging feedback systems—the open-ended e-mail inbox, webinar content, and the survey itself.

The online IMOSP questionnaire was available from March 1 to May 31, 2011. Almost 1,000 responses were submitted by Federal and non-Federal participants.  These data, along with all other submissions including emails, information received during meetings, webinars, and other written proposals, were reviewed and analyzed for consistent themes, implications, and linkages.

The insightful comments we received show that the responders reviewed the material with a critical eye.  Concepts were confirmed or countered, new ideas and insights were presented for NWCG to consider, and a number of outstanding questions were presented for consideration.

## Fundamental Principles

Strategic communication activities were intended to create a climate in which (1) key audiences were thoroughly informed, and (2) stakeholders could feel included in the process to the maximum extent possible. This was created through commitment to the following fundamental principles:

- Process transparency,

- aggressive distribution of information,

- meaningful and timely opportunities for stakeholder involvement,

- sustained collaboration among NWCG member organizations, and

- decision-making empowered by active participation of the entire fire community.

## Communication Activities and Stakeholder Engagement Guidelines

The overall guidelines for this process follow:

- Explain to key audiences (media and elected officials) and to all stakeholders the need to evolve incident management organizations and systems.

- Introduce stakeholders to the Overarching Principles and organizational models under consideration.

- Facilitate a dialogue among stakeholders about the Overarching Principles and organizational models in a manner that elicits the best ideas and recommendations from the entire fire community.

- Incorporate the best stakeholder contributions in subsequent iterations of the original organizational models.

- Ensure organizational administrators and fire leaders have had their concerns and interests specifically addressed.

- Provide decision-makers with alternatives that best reflect the knowledge, experience, wisdom, and foresight of the fire community.

## Strategic Commitments

To achieve these objectives, NWCG member organizations agreed to the following:

- To give due consideration to the best available ideas, regardless of source.

- To communicate objectively about this project within their own agency. An agency-specific communication plan, action plan, or other specific method was developed to document and track activities.

  o Agencies distributed information and conducted "live" (in-person or via electronic methods) discussions to facilitate active engagement of stakeholders.

  o Agency-designated spokespersons were well versed in the history of the project either via participation with the project team or via specific briefings to be provided prior to delivering presentations.

  o Agencies encouraged employees to participate in engagement opportunities.

  o Agencies committed to documenting their presentations (e.g., date/time/audience information is shared) for tracking purposes.

- NWCG and the IMOSPT provided:

  o A "case for change" memo via NWCG protocol.

  o An informational website as well as release of information, documents, and presentations through the use of approved social networking sites.

  o Briefing tools, including PowerPoint presentations and handouts for use by NWCG, project team and task team members, and agency-designated communicators for use in formal and informal settings.

  o Specific project briefings (in-person or via webinar) open to all designated agency communicators.

  o Talking points and/or key messages for each phase of the project which can be

adapted by specific agencies for their use.

o Hosting multiple town hall meetings and/or webinars for the purpose of sharing information with a broad audience.

o Designed, developed, and implemented engagement tools such as deliberative workshops for key stakeholders, the online questionnaire, interactive web exercises, and various other methods to encourage open dialog and feedback.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The following positions had critical roles and responsibilities in this process:

• NWCG Executive Board representatives

• Agency external affairs, public affairs or communication contacts

• Project team participants/agency designated spokespersons

• Project Team Communications Liaison

• NWCG Communications Specialist

## Key Messages

Messages were not intended to be a script, but served as a guide for communicators to focus on the key themes of the project. The messages were presented in a question format to remind spokespeople to use clear text and language and to explain the project using the "five w's and the h" of journalism (who, what, when, where, why

and how), with particular emphasis on the "why" and the "how" for this project.

The overarching messages are presented below in a non-question format. Supporting points were provided for each message theme, but are not included here.

• Address why we need to evaluate the existing IMT organization.

• Identify how the evaluation of IMT options was addressed.

• Update audiences on the status of the IMOSPT activities.

• Indicate when the alternatives would be released for review and comment.

• Describe how the input would be collected, used, and considered in the decision process.

• Advise participants on how to learn more about the project and/or participate.

• Note where information is posted about this project.

## Key Audiences

To facilitate effective and timely presentations, three audience groups were established and designated as primary, secondary, and general audiences. Regardless of the grouping, these stakeholders received the same information. Comments from all of the stakeholders were documented and considered.

# Appendix D: Human Factors

NWCG member agencies rely on IMTs to staff and manage fires that exceed local capabilities.  Most units will need to call on an IMT to assist with large fires, particularly those fires involving multiple jurisdictions, potentially impacting public safety, containing significant natural resources or improvements, or likely to be of long duration.  Historically, many land management units or areas could fully staff type 2 IMTs locally.  For a variety of reasons, including the decline in the size of agencies, increasing workloads and targets, and less ability or interest from remaining employees to participate on IMTs, this is no longer the case.

IMOSPT was charged with recommending a new organizational model to provide a sustainable means of staffing IMTs in the future.  However, any recommendation can only succeed if all involved with the IMTs recognize how individual choices and behaviors affect the teams.  The way IMTs are currently organized, staffed, managed, and used has evolved over the years.  If the current model is to become more responsive to increases and decreases in incident complexity, and generally more cost effective in the way incidents are managed, the firefighting community will need to undergo a change in the way it views incident management roles and responsibilities.

## How Human Factors Impact Team Size

The feedback received from respondents indicates a split preference between large, preconfigured IMTs and smaller, highly scalable teams.

### 1. The Argument for Large, Preconfigured Teams

There are advantages to large IMTs with little turnover from year to year.  IMT members are used to working together and build relationships that support IMT performance.  Large rosters reduce the need to integrate unfamiliar staff into IMTs and reduce the workload for ICs in managing IMT rosters.  Large rosters also reduce the need for that team to order single resources.  Serving on this type of IMT can make scheduling easier for individual members and can usually guarantee additional personal income. Moreover, the satisfaction of being part of a team is frequently mentioned as an incentive and benefit of incident participation.

THOUGHTS FROM THE FIELD…

**Large, Preconfigured Teams—***One of the great strengths of our current IMT structure is that each IMT is able to develop a sense of team unity which serves that team well during an incident.*

*—Within-team working relationships & trust levels are what make teams successful.*

## 2. The Argument for Small, Scalable Teams

Flexibility is inherent in the Incident Command System on which our entire emergency response system is based.  ICS can be used for incidents of any type, scope, and complexity. ICS allows its users to adopt an integrated organizational structure to match the complexities and demands of single or multiple incidents.  Preconfiguring large, emergency response teams to respond to sporadic intermittent events often results in more costly incident management.

The unpredictability of natural disasters, both in scope and frequency, does not economically support the organizing and staffing of large preconfigured teams.  Whereas a structural fire company in a large city may respond to incidents on a daily basis, the call for IMTs to manage wildfire or other events might occur only two to three times annually.

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**THOUGHTS FROM THE FIELD…**

**Small, Scalable Teams—***IMT's can currently be scaled up and down – we just don't do it!  No one wants to send team members home or not order them in the first place.  If they would use the system (ICS) as it was originally set up, there wouldn't be this issue.*

*—Too often, the cost of fire fighting is driven by personal preferences.  This begins with the Agency Administrator (and local political factors) down to teams wanting to do things the same way regardless of their incident.  For example, I challenged a Type-1 Team on why they spent so much money on one aspect of their operation: the short answer was "because we are a Type-1 Team and this is how we do it …"*

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## 3. How IMT Members are Selected

Generally, IMTs and coordinating groups have an incentive to select team members that are reliable and available.  Under the recommended organization model:

- Fire duties would need to be included in more position descriptions.

- Managers would need to be committed to allowing staff to get necessary training and be available to go with their team.

- Managers and supervisors would be evaluated on how they support their employees' development of fire management skills and qualifications.

- Supervisors would have the responsibility for evaluating their IC employee on all aspects for IMT management, including salary costs, mobility of members, willingness to go as short team, inclusion of trainees, and inclusion of employees from other Federal agencies.

- The recruitment process would be opened up by involving agency administrators and human resource specialists.  Ensure that the decision-making criteria are transparent and fall within human resources guidelines.

Part of the difficulty in managing rosters with succession planning principles in mind is that ICs do not have dedicated work duties specified in their position descriptions or administrative support.  Two solutions presented in the recommendation include:

- Allocate 25 percent of each IC's time toward team related activities.

- Provide administrative support to ICs at the geographic areas.

### 4. Use of Retirees

There is currently no formal requirement to ensure that all applicants to IMTs are given equal consideration. Many survey respondents were concerned that AD employees were occupying positions that younger fire service employees could be occupying.  The typical retiree on an IMT is an administratively determined (AD) employee sponsored by a local Federal unit. Other Federal retirees are hired by a city or county fire department, and reimbursed through cooperative agreements.  The intention is to provide wildfire expertise to the department and meet interagency commitments for the department to provide staff to IMTs.

Survey respondents believe that there are numerous instances where retirees occupy the same position year after year, outcompeting younger fire service employees.  Coordinating groups and ICs should consider including the less seasoned team members, and coordinating groups should enforce IMT term limits whenever possible. Turnover and movement of individuals through positions will be key to staffing the teams in the future.

**THOUGHTS FROM THE FIELD...**

**Use of Retirees—***The current system is broken.  ICs have individual control over team make-up, so the buddy system wins.*

- *—Although the retirees are highly competent and good at what they do, the personnel coming up are unable to fill those positions, thus unable to achieve the same level of competency as the retirees.*

### 5. Team Membership and Resource Availability

Large IMT rosters tie up the available workforce when they are not assigned.  IMT members are not available as single resources in all geographic areas, even when their team is not assigned.  Geographic areas with high activity rotate their regional IMTs through the system for multiple rotations while IMTs from adjacent geographic areas sit idle.  This occurs precisely when local units need their employees to serve as duty officers and to support local type 3 incidents.  Two of the solutions presented in the recommendation are to have:

- One type of IMT.

- A national IMT rotation at national preparedness level 3.

### 6. Workforce Development

Participation on IMTs has traditionally been voluntary, with each individual determining the positions in which they are most interested.  Recruitment for IMTs is the responsibility of the geographic areas, and this is usually accomplished through a vacancy announcement and application process.  The ICs and their command and general staff accomplish the informal recruitment. Furthermore, there has been no requirement—and in fact there have been significant disincentives—for supervisors and managers to provide staff for the IMTs.  It has been left to individual agencies and coordinating groups to make decisions about how IMTs are organized and deployed.

There has been no real consistency in who is allowed to participate on teams.  To many supervisors and program managers, IMT participation, and incident management participation in general, is a job "perk." Some supervisors and program managers support this, some support it reluctantly based on workload, and many do not support it at all.  The availability of potential IMT members is based on their supervisor's priorities and the ability of the unit to provide back-up to their regular job duties.