OPERATIONS TEAM MEETING NOTES December 8, 1980 Holiday Inn, Ontario

Attendance:

Griggs Holmes N Barrows Scherr King Borden Halliburton Knieriem Sellers Lund Irwin Masoner Biddison Letsen Land

I. 1970-1980 COMPARISON

The following information was displayed to compare the two fire experiences.

Dates	1980			1970
	Nov. 16-21	Nov. 24-Dec. 1	1980	Sept. 22-Oct. 4
Days	6	8	14	13
Acres Burned	51,000	88,800	139,000	580,000
Struct. Lost	89	370 + 190 damaged	459	722
Deaths]	4	5	16
Costs	?	?	?	\$233,000,000
Major Fires	16	12	28	17

Full weather-factor information is not available for either year at this time. Program Office will obtain data and provide a comparison as soon as possible.

Cost data for 1980 is still sketchy. Decision was made to depend on costs reported to FEMA, rather than have partner agencies make a duplicate effort. Program Office will follow up.

II. 1970 PROBLEMS AND 1980 PERFORMANCE

The eight major problems identified after the 1970 fires were reviewed, and our progress, and performance in 1980 were discussed. This comparison showed:

- 1. 1970: Lack of common terminology and organization.
 - 1980: This was the first occasion of this magnitude where all agencies involved used the same terminology and the same basic emergency organization (ICS). There were varying degrees of success and proficiency, primarily due to differences in training and experience. No system problems were identified.

ICS enabled agencies to work together more effectively, increased trust levels, and improved overall performance.

- 2. 1970: Poor fireline communications between agencies on incidents.
 - 1980: Some reduction of this problem was noted, primarily because of the synthesized radios now in use. The use of "Clear Text" rather than different agency codes also improved interagency communications.

The ICS Incident Action Plan, and Frequency Management Plans facilitated a better understanding between agencies and improved the utilization of available radios.

- 1970: Inadequate joint planning between agencies on the same incident(s).
 - 1980: A brief examination of 11 of the fires, involving two or more agencies, showed
 - Attempts at joint planning on eight
 - "Good" effectiveness of the effort on seven of the eight efforts
 - "Poor" or "bad" performances primarily due to:
 - o Lack of training and/or experience
 - Too much politeness or "pussyfooting" between participants
 - Failure to set total incident objectives for all jurisdictions and then follow through with strong direction
 - 1970: No "big picture," in a single location, of what was happening on a regional, multiagency basis.

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1980:

- There were mixed, and widely separated opinions on this topic:
 - One view: Nore interagency communication and more reporting to the Coordination Center than ever before. Microwave Intercom and the computer system, plus conference calls in Node 3, and an attempt at face-to-face coordination in Mode 4, brought more information together in one place than has ever been accomplished.
 - Opposing view: The information provided was not standardized. It frequently overlapped, and was often confusing. Sometimes valuable information was not provided. The result was one of confusion and frustration. The totality of information did little to improve regional effectiveness.

The conclusion of the discussion brought agreement that, given the tools available to do the job, we performed poorly.

- 5. 1970: Limited capability to predict fire behavior.
 - 1980: The <u>capability</u> to predict fire behavior has been greatly improved with the computer FIREMOD program. However, this capability was not widely used, and only limited value was received.
- 6. 1970: Information used for on-incident and regional planning is "cold" and out-of-date.
 - 1980: As with problems (4) and (5), above, the capability to perform well was available, but not well understood or utilized. The result was "not good."
- 7. 1970: Inadequate resource use coordination.
 - 1980: There was definite improvement in coordination of aircraft and crews. Engine and dozer coordination was "poor."
- 8. 1970: Limited interagency communications on a regional basis.
 - 1980: Definite improvement here. Despite the problems exposed in (4), above, there was a great deal more agency-agency contact and communication. These actions tended to overcome some of the difficulties experienced in other areas.

III. OTHER 1980 "POSITIVES"

A number of "positives", not noted above, were identified:

- Over the total period (November 16 - December 1), more multiagency resources were mobilized and managed faster than ever before.

- Agencies did more "preplanning" to meet regional needs.
- The ICS procedure of typing resources facilitated ordering and incident planning.
- The power and mobility of engine Strike Teams was evident, and probably significant in reducing losses.
- The multiagency sharing of scarce resources was effective.
- Learning was greatly increased
 - o More understanding of the systems
 - o Urban agencies gained appreciation for wildland fire problems
 - o Wildland agencies gained appreciation for urban fire problems

IV. FUTURE DIRECTION

Given the quick review and analysis reported above, the question was asked, "Are we on the right track?". Program plans, Board direction, and MACS goals were briefly reviewed. There was general agreement that our overall direction and purpose is proper, but also that we have a long way to go.

Some of the areas that need attention in the near future are identified below:

- Acceleration of training in all systems
- "Joint" or "Unified" Command needs to be better explained, and special efforts need to be focused on:
 - o Joint planning
 - o Differing political needs
 - Changing Command as incident progresses
- Time loss in changing Incident Command Teams
- MACS functions in Modes 3 and 4
 - o Define management information needs
 - o OES Regions 1 and 6 coordination
 - Information flow from incidents and agencies at all workload levels
 - o SITSTAT and RESTAT staffing and training to improve MACS inputs
- Incident check-in procedures and Division Supervisor responsibilities
- Master Mutual Aid traditions and procedures
- Melding of the four existing resource ordering systems (Forest Service, CDF, OES, and Master Mutual Aid)

Hultiagency fire behavior prediction training

 Ordering to meet objectives, and avoiding blanket ordering of Strike Teams

- o Increments
- o Task Forces

A significant question in the minds of several members was "How fast should we push ahead?". There is strong feeling that we need to consolidate our present position. There was no resolution to this question, primarily due to the nature of Program funding and the necessity to continue implementation on a scheduled basis.

V. IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS

Members felt no need for a more comprehensive analysis of the 1980 experience at this time. Most felt that we know our problems and weak points, and we need to concentrate on resolving them rather than further analyses.

ROBERT L. IRWIN Program Manager

P.S. Attached is another review, from Terry Haney. It is somewhat more specific than our review, but generally supports our Conclusions.

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