

Memo

To: Great Basin Training Committee

From: ITOC

RE: Issue Paper on Fire Program Analysis, Phase 2: Employee Development Considerations

Issue:

As we move ahead into the development of Phase 2 in a new system of determining our optimum organization and the budget that will support it, consideration must be given to a very important component: Employee Development/Training.

Discussion

The purpose of the Fire Program Analysis (FPA) System is to provide managers with a common interagency process for fire management planning and budgeting to evaluate the effectiveness of alternative fire management strategies through time, to meet land management goals and objectives. FPA will be driven by quantified fire objectives and performance measures for the full scope of fire management activities. According to the FPA Website, Phase II will address:

Phase II – estimated deployment FY09

- Extended Attack, Large Fire Support, and National Resources
- Prescribed Fire and Fuels Management
- Prevention & Education
- Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation

Employee development not only involves technical training, but must also include continuing education, mentoring and coaching activities. Up to this point, training of fire employees has been a component of the resource and had only taken into account the cost of technical training to do a particular job (e.g. firefighting). For those managerial and support positions that do not have a “production rate”, an effective manner of budgeting for employee development has been non-existent.

In addition, the implementation of the Interagency Fire Program Management Standards and Guide, the expectations from the President’s Healthy Forest Initiative and the 10 Year Cohesive Strategy (NFP), as well as information generated from Workforce Planning analysis make development of our current employees as well as future leaders of our organizations a priority.

As in the past, the dollars allocated to employee development will continue to shift to meet other shortages in time of shrinking budgets, times when development is even more critical.

As we move forward in the management of the lands using fire as a tool, the traditional method of determining training costs is no longer valid. In order for the agencies to meet land management goals and objectives, more consideration must be given to employee development as it relates to competencies required to function in an interagency, interdisciplinary environment.

Impact/Consequences

We have a concern, in light of ongoing initiatives and increasing expectations of the fire community that the budget allocation to employee development is not sufficient nor is it supported. In addition, we are concerned that the employee development needs of managerial and support positions will not be considered as they do not have a production rate tied to them.

Our organizations have not and will not be able to meet the employee development needs as required by the land management goals and objectives as well as the workforce projections. In addition, the dollars allocated to employee development will continue to shift to meet other shortages in time of shrinking budgets, a time when development is even more critical.

Recommendations

We recommend that FPA develop a separate module for employee development. This will allow adequate planning and budget to meet the requirements for *all* Fire and Aviation Management positions. In this module, technical training, continuing education, coaching and mentoring would be addressed.

Have a cadre of subject matter experts from the training community involved in the development of this module in phase 2. This cadre would not only look at the technical training involved, but also continuing education, mentoring, and coaching activities as well.