NWCG CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT ISSUE PAPER #61
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COURSE EQUIVALENCY AND COURSE CRITERIA APPROVAL

BACKGROUND

With the development of the Leadership curriculum (L-380, and L-381) through contractors, the problem of how to allow different vendors and agencies develop and deliver a standard course became apparent. In response, the Leadership Committee developed a set of course criteria that spells out the course content and expectations. The criteria are not a course outline and are not like a standard course package. Therefore, no comparison can be made to determine a point by point equivalency as is described in Wildland Fire and Prescribed Fire Qualifications Guide, PMS 310-1.

The course criteria provide instructional design guidance to a course developer. It assures the elements, topics, and activities that would comprise the course to be delivered by the vendor meet the requirements. This means that selected vendors or agency instructors must have the experience in the subject area and capability to develop all the materials, presentations, and supporting products to deliver a complete "standard" course.

ISSUE

The use of course criteria is a departure from the normal course development standard used for "on-the-shelf" training package that has been the standard for the NWCG. This change was necessary to provide a more complete and well rounded training experience for leadership training. Developers wanting to meet or exceed the criteria in order to present the leadership training packages or any criteria based program must fulfill all the described elements. The big difference between equivalency and criteria assessment are:

- Equivalency: compares course and unit objectives, activities, and content
- Criteria certification: requires a review of course presentation of materials and cadre by a committee.

It is expected that the criteria certification assessment review group be comprised of 3 individuals having expertise in the subject area. One person is from the respective agency, one is an NWCG committee representative from a related committee (i.e., leadership) and the third is an evaluator from any NWCG participating agency. The approval would follow the agency (s) approval process and the results would be provided to the NWCG Training Working Team to share with all participating agencies.

RECOMMENDATION

NWCG participating agencies should develop criteria approval procedures and forms for vendors or agency instructor(s) to assist with the criteria approval process.

ACTION REQUIRED

The Leadership Committee will develop a recommended criteria certification form and process.

APPROVED/DENIED

SIGNATURE

Renee M. Johnson (Acting) 5/6/04

TWT CHAIR **DATE**