

## ***National Predictive Service Subcommittee (NPSS) Meeting***

### **Meeting Notes**

**Location:** Video/Teleconference

**Meeting Dates:** April 28-29, 2009

#### **Members Present:**

- Tom Wordell – FS/NICC – Fire Analysts Representative – NPSG Chair
- Rick Ochoa – BLM/NICC – Fire Weather Program Representative – NPSG Vice Chair
- Susie Stingley-Russell – ONCC – GACC Center Managers Representative
- Kim Runk – NWS, National Weather Service Representative
- Marva Willey – FS/ONCC, Intelligence Coordinators Representative
- Daniel Chan – Georgia Forestry Commission, NASF Representative
- Tim Mathewson – BLM/RMCC – GACC Meteorologists Representative
- Charlie Leonard – FS/NICC – Intelligence Program Representative
- John Barborinas – BIA – Field Level Fire Managers Representative
- Rex McKnight – BLM/NV State Office, Geographic Operations Group Liaison

#### **Members Absent:**

- Kim Christensen – FS/NICC Manager – NICC Representative
- Neal Hitchcock – FS/NIFC – NMAC Representative
- Dan Smith – NASF, NWCG Liaison

#### **Guests:**

- Robyn Heffernan – Meteorologist - NICC

**Notetaker:** Lani Williams – Boise Dispatch Center

#### **Meeting Agenda Topics:**

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Update from Meteorologist and Intelligence Working Groups (including Intelligence Training)
3. Review of Seasonal Assessment Workshop
4. Predictive Services Handbook Final Review
5. Predictive Services Brochure – Final decision for printing costs
6. NPSG Action Item Progress
7. NPSG Budget/Funding Updates and Final Decisions
8. Federal Fire Policy and NWCG Restructuring Updates
  - a. Impact to 209, dispatch and Predictive Services
9. Future NPSG Chair and Vice-Chair Positions

10. Fall 2009 Annual Meeting Discussion
11. Future Meeting Logistics and Bin items
  - a. Southern Area Fire Intel Viewer

**Exhibits:**

- A. Action Items, Decisions and Meeting Topics
- B. NPSG Project Funding
- C. ICS-209 Changes
- D. SIT Changes

**Tuesday – April 28**

**Agenda Item: Welcome and Introductions and Meeting Logistics – Rick Ochoa**

Rick welcomed everyone and covered the agenda.

**Agenda Item: Update from Meteorologist and Intelligence Working Groups**

Meteorologist Working Group – Tim Mathewson

- *Geographic Area Visits* – Tim has been travelling to other Geographic Areas meeting the Meteorologist and learning about their programs. He has visited the Eastern Area, Southern Area and Northern Rockies Geographic Areas. He would like to visit Western Great Basin prior to the start of the fire season. While in the Northern Rockies he visited with Matt Jolley and they discussed the use of National Digital Forecast Database (NDFD) generated National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS) and Dryness Levels for use in generating the 7 Day Product. They would like to go forward with the proposal and are in the process of identifying four Geographic Areas that would be available to participate and perform the verification that would be needed.
- *Lightning Workshop* – The Lightning Workshop is scheduled for next week in Portland, Oregon. A lot of work has gone into this workshop, including assembling 10 years of lightning data for each of the Geographic Areas. The goal of the workshop is to be able to quantify lightning levels in terms of fire potential.
- *Marketing Team* – The Marketing Team (Tim, Marva Willey, Brenda Belongie and Steve Marien have completed the brochure. Further discussion is needed regarding the publication. A marketing video is planned for 2010. The group is also assisting with planning the 2009 Annual Predictive Services Meeting, to be hosted by Western Great Basin.
- *National Weather Service Union* – A small group worked to develop a response that was requested by the National Weather Service regarding a letter issued by its Union.

Intelligence Working Group – Marva Willey

- *Vacancies* – Tami Buchanan has recently been hired to fill the Intelligence Coordinator vacancy at the Southern Area Coordination Center.
- *SIT/209* – The Group is currently working on a new SIT/209 User's Guide. There is a 209 questionnaire being circulated. They currently have over 100 responses.

- *The Intelligence Support Specialist (INTS)* – The INTS training was hosted by the Rocky Mountain Geographic Area in March. There were 29 students that attended the course. The course received a majority of positive responses. The next course will be hosted by the Pacific Northwest and Alaska in 2010. The course will also be revised and updated. The INTS Task Book has been accepted by the Forest Service and there is now an AD Pay Rate established for the position.
- *FamWeb* – The FamWeb site implemented a required security changes on April 9, 2009. This required that all users have individual accounts. Currently the Intelligence Coordinators at the Geographic Areas are the system administrators for the program and as such their workload increased exponentially.

#### Discussion

- As an interagency program there is an expectation that changes to the program would come through NWCG and advanced planning/notice would have occurred.

#### **Agenda Item: Review of April Seasonal Assessment Workshop – Robin Heffernan, Tim Mathewson and Marva Willey**

##### Discussion:

- Overall received positive feedback.
- Improvements could be made logistically, the breakout rooms located closer together.
- Coordination with the Eastern and Southern Geographic Areas, for their latest assessments would be beneficial.
- Inclusion of Canada and Mexico was beneficial.
- Evaluate opportunities to include discussions of random topics (monthly calls) to allow the focus of this meeting to be the Seasonal Assessment.
- Assess opportunities to provide GIS skills for the workshop; skills may be available locally.

#### **Agenda Item: Predictive Services Handbook Final Review – Tom Wordell**

The Handbook was sent out for review, NWCG requested some edits to the funding page to remove the actual figures and replace with funding percentages. Discussion continued regarding the daily supervision of the Predictive Services staff and the link between the Coordination Centers and their respective Coordinating Boards. The current language in the handbook reflects the direction issued by National Fire and Aviation Executive Board (NFAEB) regarding daily supervision.

- ➔ **Action Item 210:** Add language to the Predictive Services Handbook, Section 30.5 – “The role of the GACC Center Manager is to *serve as the point of contact with the Geographic Area Coordinating Group and to provide management...*”  
**Responsible:** Tom Wordell  
**Due Date:** May 30, 2009
- ➔ **Action Item 211:** Meet with the National Park Service Director to seek resolution regarding supervision of Predictive Services staffs.

**Responsible:** Tom Wordell and Rick Ochoa  
**Due Date:** June 30, 2009

**Decision:** *Once the Handbook is signed, 100 copies will be printed for distribution. It will also be posted on the NPSG Website.*

**Agenda Item: Predictive Services Brochure, Final Decision for Printing and Costs - Tim Mathewson**

The Marketing Team has worked hard on this project. The brochure has been reviewed by NPSG and the Meteorologist and Intelligence Working Groups. They have decided on a four-panel design. The graphics have been updated and the 7-Day Product reflects the new color scheme. Gold was chosen as a color for lettering as the best choice from palette they were given to select from.

Discussion:

- The photo on the front of the brochure will need to be replaced.
- Need to determine how many brochures should be printed.

➔ **Action Item 212:** Obtain a quote for 2000 brochures and set up an agreement for transfer of money to fund printing.

**Responsible:** Tim Mathewson and Tom Wordell  
**Due Date:** June 30, 2009

**Agenda Item: Bin Items**

- *Pins* – Larry Van Bussum was unable to obtain a bid; Tim Mathewson will pursue a quote for the pins.
- *7-Day Product* – Dan Ervin has developed a script to capture the single observations for the last 10 days that key into the 7-Day Product. Files can be used to build FireFamily Plus runs. The file is located on the ftp2 site.

**Wednesday, April 29, 2009**

**Agenda Item: Federal Fire Policy and NWCG Restructuring Update – Impacts to 209, Dispatch and Predictive Services – Kim Christensen and Tom Wordell (Exhibits C and D)**

Through conversations with Tim Sexton, George Wheldon, Rich Lasko, Tom Zimmerman and others regarding Fire Policy and Fire Use, it was determined that references to Wildland Fire Use would be removed from the ICS-209 Program; the three suppression strategies will remain.

- *ICS-209 Program*
  - Block 6 – Wildland Fire will change to Wildfire; the three strategies will remain the same:
    - Full Suppression/Perimeter Control

- Point or Zone Protection/Limited Perimeter Control
  - Monitor/Confine/Contain
  - Encourage additional remarks especially when multiple strategies are being utilized and resource benefits are being considered.
- Block 17 – Applies to WFUs. Currently the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WRDSS) terminology is “Response” instead of “Stage.” This block will likely be eliminated when all agencies adopt WFDSS.
- *Sit Report Program*  
Direction has been that it is no longer important to break out fires and acres under varying management strategies. It is suggested that units maintain an informal tracking mechanism for their agencies.
- *NWCG Restructuring and Federal Fire Policy*  
The Charter for NPSG has not been signed. When chartered, it will be under FENC and the name may need to be changed from Group to Subcommittee (NPSS). The organization of the substructure under Working Groups or Subcommittees has not been finalized.
- *Efficiency Studies*  
The Branch Coordinators have taken the key recommendations from the three studies (Dispatch, Aviation and Training) and are reviewing the proposed actions. They will develop an approach and work with NWCG in developing a strategy to implement selected proposals.

**Agenda Item: NPSG Action Item Progress – Tom Wordell (Exhibit A)**

The Action Item Table was reviewed and has been color-coded. The blue indicates actions that are on-going and not yet completed.

- Action Item 154 – Completed, Matt Jolley attend the Western Seasonal Assessment Workshop and gave a presentation on the integration of non-RAWS into WIMS. Additional Action Item may be needed to develop a Plan of Action to integrate additional stations.
- Action Item 160 – Unit Award, Change Due Date to Fall Meeting 2009
- Action Item 183/186 – Pete Lahm has been engaged. A team is working on an automated process.
- Action Item 185 – Direction was integrated into the Handbook.
- Action Item 193 – Completed, a letter was issued by Kim and sent to the Center Managers.
- Action Item 195 – Programmatic Performance Standards; working with RSAC to develop a report that will be sent out on a monthly basis depicting how frequently Geographic Areas are producing the 7-Day Product in accordance to their work schedules.
- Action Item 196 – Tom is waiting to hear from Chuck Maxwell. The survey that Marva Willey and Shelby Sharples conducted may be related.
- Action Item 197 – This questionnaire may tie in with the survey that Marva Willey and Shelby Sharples are conducting.

- Action Item 198 – Assistance from NPSG to develop tutorials and Geographic Area Workshops for Fire Behavior; rotate Geographic Areas – coordinate with Ed Delgado and Shelby Sharples for Eastern Great Basin in 2010. With the combination of Long Term Risk Assessment (S-492) and FARSITE Fire Area Simulator (S-493) into Geospatial Fire Analysis, Interpretation and Application (S-495), the potential to have S-495 available electronically as a self base tutorial needs to be investigated.
  - Action Item 200 – Completed, Pins will be ordered through Tim Mathewson.
  - Action Item 201 – Basically completed, the Handbook has been approved, with a few minor edits. The NWCG Chair will sign.
  - Action Item 202 – Finalizing now, need to provide a response to Denver Ingram.
  - Action Item 203 – A WIMS Task Group has been assembled and they are going to talk to Larry Bradshaw regarding the status of the automated 1300 reading; sounds like it may be close.
  - Action Item 204 – Completed, a contact list for NIMO was provided to Tom Cable.
  - Action Item 205 – Completed, the Strategic Plan Action Plan spreadsheet was sent out.
  - Action Item 206 – Shelby Sharples and Marva Willey sent out a survey last week.
  - Action Item 207 – Tim Mathewson and Marva Willey will work on this task; potentially combining G2P2 and G4P2.
  - Action Item 208 – The costs section of the Predictive Services Handbook was updated, NWCG would like to see reflection of percentages for costs rather than the figures.
  - Action Item 209 – Tom will continue to follow-up with Dan Smith to make Dan Chan's position more effective.
- ➔ **Action Item 213:** Discuss the development of a Plan of Action to incorporate non-RAWS into WIMS at June Fire Environment Committee (FENC) Meeting.  
**Responsible:** Robin Heffernan and Tom Wordell  
**Due Date:** June 2009
- ➔ **Action Item 214:** Circulate the Intelligence Officer Training Requirements for concurrence to be inclusion in the Predictive Services Handbook.  
**Responsible:** Charlie Leonard  
**Due Date:** Mid-May 2009
- ➔ **Action Item 215:** Follow-up with John Barboronas regarding the posting of the S-495 course information (related to Action Item 198).  
**Responsible:** Tom Wordell  
**Due Date:** Fall 2009

**Agenda Item: Future NPSG Chair and Vice Chair Positions – Tom Wordell**

There is a potential for both Rick Ochoa and Tom to retire next year (Rick in March and Tom in February). This would leave both the Chair and the Vice-Chair positions vacant. Tom has expressed an interest in extending and Rick has not made a decision yet.

## Discussion:

- The current tenure for the positions is a two year term, which can be extended indefinitely.
  - NPSG would make a recommendation for a new Chair/Vice Chair to FENC for approval.
  - Nominations could come from outside the current NPSG Membership.
  - Discussions need to occur regarding the three possible scenarios:
    - Tom extended/Rick retires
    - Tom extended/Rick stays
    - Tom retires/Rick stays
  - Even if both Tom and Rick Stay, it would be beneficial if one of the positions rotated out.
  - Decision should be made for the Fall Meeting for a transition to occur at the following (Winter) meeting.
- ➔ **Action Item 216:** Evaluate the three scenarios related to Tom Wordell and Rick Ochoa's potential retirement and develop alternatives and potential candidates for NPSG Chair and Vice-Chair.  
**Responsible:** Tim Mathewson and Marva Willey  
**Due Date:** October 2009
- ➔ **Action Item 217:** Brief the Center Managers and solicit feedback regarding the potential change in leadership for NPSG, pending the retirement of Tom Wordell and Rick Ochoa.  
**Responsible:** Susie Stingley-Russell  
**Due Date:** Fall, 2009

**Agenda Item: Fall 2009 Annual Meeting Discussion – Fred Svetz**

The Annual Predictive Services Meeting will be hosted by the Western Great Basin. They are still deciding on a venue, but it will likely be located near Lake Tahoe. Fred is requesting one room for 50, with a separate room for 20 for the Intelligence Working Group and two additional rooms. He will send out information when it becomes available. The idea of having a theme for the meeting worked well last year; that group is willing to assist in planning this meeting. Marva Willey is willing to help to.

**Agenda Item: NPSG Budget/Funding Updates and Final Decisions – Tom Wordell**

- Seasonal Assessment Workshops – There was \$3,600 spent on the Eastern Seasonal Assessment Workshop; all of which was for state travel. This should not be an expense for NPSG in the future as there is a separate fund through NWCG to cover state travel costs.
- Verification of the 7-Day Product – This item was not funded in 2009.
- National Fuel Moisture Database – This was funded for \$15,000, the contract has been awarded.

- Remote Monitoring of Live Fuel Moisture – This project was not funded through NPSG, but did receive assistance from the BLM through the Fuels Committee.
- Intelligence Working Group – Approximately \$1,000 was spent for Julie Polutnik to attend the Seasonal Assessment Workshop. Charlie Leonard will submit the final amount.
- Daily Product Template – Te Remote Sensing and Application Center (RSAC) is developing a template based on the Rocky Mountain Fire Consortia for Advanced Modeling of Meteorology and Smoke (FCAMMS) output to post the daily product. There is currently no estimate for time of completion.
- Brochure/Patches/Pins – There is \$3,000 budgeted.
- DRI Maintenance and Back-up – This item was not funded in 2009.
- Web-based National Predictive Services Data Archive – Shelby Sharples should have more information the end of next week.
- Lightning Workshop – There is not a funding need to hold the workshop; however, Tom Rolinski is in need of funding assistance to attend, \$1,500 is budgeted.
- MOS Equations - \$7,600 is obligated to create MOS Equations for additional stations. Modification of existing equations was not funded.
- Server Upgrade at RSAC – Robin Heffernan will follow-up to determine if purchase has been made.

Available	\$122,000
Requested	\$194,000
Budgeted	\$116,000
Expended	\$ 92,000
Balance	\$ 5,000 (Approximately)

The group agreed to fund Matt Jolly to allow him to complete a procedure that will aid in the automation of the RAWS/MOS equations to produce the prototype of the Gridded 7-Day Product. Matt will need to submit a proposal.

#### **Agenda Item: Bin Item**

- *National Weather Service Program Managers Meeting*
  - Incident Meteorologists (IMETS) – The Weather Service continues to recruit IMETS, their goal is to have about 300 service-wide. In order to manage their cadre, they are proposing implement a typing system.
    - Type 1 – Current IMET standards, fire qualified
    - Type 2 – Will have possessed all qualifications, but will be lacking the refresher
    - Type 3 – All Hazard Support, without specific fire qualifications
  - Atmospheric Theodolite Meteorological Unit (ATMU) – These units will no longer be stored in the cache system and the Weather Service will be responsible for ensuring the units are transported to the incidents.
  - Incident Qualifications Cards – Larry Van Bussum and Heath Hockenberry are investigating issuing Incident Qualification Cards to IMETs.



**Agenda Item: Future Meeting Logistics and Bin Items**

Future Meeting Logistics

Fall Meeting

Dates: October 20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> in Colorado

Location: Colorado

Tim Mathewson will be coordinating the logistics.

Winter Meeting

Dates: February 8<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>

Location: Boise, Idaho

Rick Ochoa will secure a meeting room.

**Agenda Item: Bin Items**

- *Southern Area Fire Intel Viewer – Tom Wordell*

Clint Cross has been working on this project; these slides provide a variety of information including fuels and fire location. There is potential to utilize this information for briefings and possibly through Camtasia briefings. Tom will send out the link.

End of Meeting