

- National Predictive Service Group (NPSG) -

Meeting Notes

Location: Palm Desert, California

Meeting Dates: January 20 – 22, 2004

Members Present:

- Gerry Day – NWCC – GACC Managers Representative
- Kim Christensen – NICC Manager – NICC Liaison
- Bill Plugh – CDF – State/NASF Representative
- Tom Wordell – JFSP – PS/Fire Analysts Representative
- Gwenan Poirier – RMCC – Intelligence Coordinators Representative
- Chip Collins – Grand Teton NP – Field Level Fire Managers Representative
- Rick Ochoa – NICC – GACC Meteorologists Representative
- Rusty Billingsley – NWS – National Weather Service Representative

Members Absent:

- Alice Forbes

Guests:

- Ron Hamilton – CA-OSC Meteorologist
- Tim Chavez – California Division of Forestry, Fire Captain (Fire Behavior Analyst)
- Steven Beach – California Division of Forestry, Fire Captain (Planning Section Chief CDF)
- Tom Sherman – California Desert District, Fire Operations Supervisor

Notetaker: Lani Williams

Meeting Agenda Topics:

1. Introductions & Meeting Logistics – Gerry Day
2. Review and approve Portland meeting notes
3. Review and revise agenda
4. Project updates – Tom Wordell
 - a) Cheetah, version 2 (Beta)
 - b) Estimate daily maps of departure from norm (Haaiganoush Priesler)
5. Update on National Predictive Services Framework – Gerry Day
6. Firestorm 2003 – Southern California – Ron Hamilton CA-OSC
7. CDF BI Project – Ron Hamilton CA-OSC
8. Discussion with visitors of lessons learned related to Predictive Services – Gerry Day
9. Updates and reports
 - a) NWS Fire Weather Program report – Rusty Billingsley
 - b) Intelligence Coordinators report – Gwenan Poirier
 - c) Fire Weather Program report – Rick Ochoa

- d) Center Managers report – Kim Christensen/Gerry Day
- 10. Standardized products – Tom Wordell and Gerry Day
 - a) Criteria to assess needs
 - b) Process to establish standardized products
 - c) Criteria to evaluate products or product components
- 11. Standardized weekly and monthly fire weather/fire danger outlooks – Rick Ochoa
- 12. Bin Items
 - a) Future meeting preparations – Bill Plough
 - b) FCAMMS – Rick Ochoa
 - c) Budget (Funding mechanisms, link to proposal)
 - d) National Assessment Workshop
 - e) Group Funding criteria (Proposal Criteria)
 - f) Lessons Learned from the 2003 Season, Items 3 and 4
- 11. Closeout

Exhibits

A.	Pending Action Items Tracking Table	2 pgs
B.	Completed Action Items Tracking Table	2 pgs
C.	Issue Paper, RAWs Data Quality Oversight	1 pg
D.	Firestorm 2003 – Southern California, Ron Hamilton	4 pgs
E.	CDF-BI Project, Ron Hamilton	2 pgs
F.	GACC Intell Workload and Staffing Questionnaire	3 pgs
G.	SIT Reporting Requirements and Recommended Mob Guide Changes	2 pgs
H.	Intelligence Working Group Operating Plan	3 pgs
I.	Intelligence Working Group Task Groups for 2003-2004	1 pg
J.	NPSG Presentation to Center Managers, Gerry Day	4 pgs
K.	AWIPS Project Charter	12 pgs

Tuesday – January 20, 2004

Agenda Item: Review and approve Portland meeting notes

Task 2 – Topic Request Form: The agreed upon process to build the meeting agenda is not working properly. Everyone was reminded to use the form and to forward a copy of the completed form to everyone in the group.

Task 4 – NPSG link on the NICC Webpage: It was brought to the attention of the group that the webpage contained an incomplete list of the group members, with contact numbers. It was also noted that the posted Group Charter is an unsigned version. Both issues will be corrected.

Funding Priorities and Decisions: Group funding decisions and priorities, including end of the year available funding were discussed.

- Funding mechanism in place?
- Other sources of funding/redirecting

Will be revisited as a Bin Item.

Lessons Learned – Predictive Services 2003 Season, Items 3 and 4: These items will be revisited as a Bin Item.

Pending Actions Table:

2003-1 and 2003-3 – Drafts are completed

Decision: Drafts needs to be turned over to the Task Group to incorporate into framework document.

2003-6 – This list of projects is a dynamic document; while more information concerning the proposals is needed the process for prioritization is still evolving.

Decision: Revisit this list following discussion on the Project Proposal Bin Item, perhaps at the Portland meeting.

2003-7 – An issue paper addressing RAWs data quality oversight was presented to the Meteorologists Group at the Whitefish meeting. (Exhibit C). No comments were received. (This issue was revisited on Wednesday).

Additional information is needed, including

- Current status of the system
- Data reliability
- Strengths/weakness of the system
- Minimum standards
- Expectations in terms of timelines

Decision: Rick and Gerry will develop an issue paper to be presented to the Fire Directors then out to the Coordination Groups for implementation.

2004-5 – For projects the NPSG denies funding, a letter of support for the project, stating its value and usefulness may be of assistance as projects seek alternate funding sources.

Decision: Letters of support will be written on a case by case basis.

2004-7 – The use of teleconferencing the Spring 2004 Seasonal Assessment Workshop was discussed. It was determined that while there may be interest, the needs of the audience may best be served by distributing a written summary with associated PowerPoint presentations.

Decision: Distribute summary and PowerPoint presentations.

2004-8 – Task Force selected:

Ed Delgado – EB

Tom Rolinski – SO

Mike Fitzpatrick – NW

Bill Fletcher – NICC

Larry VanBussum – NWS

2004-10 – There are still some issues concerning the standardization of the Predictive Services Webpage. Currently the task force is soliciting comments on webpage design.

The standardization includes a common banner and navigation bar, the interior of the page will be at the discretion of the GACC. However all products will have the same name. It is still unclear as to what degree all GACC Predictive Services WebPages will be the same. Some GACCs are unable to format their WebPages due to agency constraints. To overcome this, NIFC has agreed to host the websites. There was some concern that many of the customers are not being included in design process. This would include IMT members and local dispatch centers.

Decision: Gerry will contact Jay suggesting that the review be opened to larger audience. This solicitation would go out through Kim to the Fire Managers, Incident Team members and field dispatchers. A statement of the objective and explanation of why the project is being undertaken will be included.

(Note: Completed 1/21/04)

Wednesday – January 21, 2004

Project Updates:

Cheetah, Version 2 (Beta) – The Cheetah program allows GACCs to analyze fire occurrence and correlate it to resource needs. The original version was of a simple structure and did not offer the capability to manipulate the data. Version 2 will allow GACCs more flexibility. Fire occurrence data will be supplied through FAMWeb. Each GACC will be required to load and validate their own data base. They will then have the flexibility to save subsets of their data. Once the data has been validated the GACC will have the ability to run reports to determine resource needs.

- This version is ready for beta testing to a select number of people.
- There will be “Hand-off” training when the program is ready for release.
- Goal is to be ready for field use by April 30, 2004.

Firestorm 2003 – Southern California: (Exhibit D)

Southern California completed an analysis of the conditions and factors contributing to the firestorm that was experienced during October 2003. This analysis looked at variety of different factors, including precipitation, temperature, fuel moisture, BI and ERC. It was concluded that the Firestorm was a result of a number of different factors:

- The major factor was the source of a relative large number of ignitions within a relatively short period of time.
- Fire intensity and spread were a combination of both long and short term weather, fuel conditions and drought.
- Many of the previous record ERC’s were set in 1999, 2001 and 2002. This tells us that the fuel conditions were mainly the effects of generally dry, mild weather conditions over the past five years.
- The worsening of fuel conditions has been an ongoing process.
- Much has been written and talked about regarding tree mortality. One of the contributing factors for much of this Firestorm was brush mortality.

- Another factor in 2003 that was not prevalent in the previous four years was an abundance of dead light fuels, caused by a wet spring.

CDF BI Project: (Exhibit E)

CDF is faced with the responsibility of an Executive Order that mandates staffing with additional resources when Severe Fire Danger conditions exist. In 2002 Severe Fire Danger was defined as temperatures at or above 100 degrees and relative humidity at or below 20 percent at Riverside OR LAL of 6. In 2003 the Severe Fire Danger was redefined as being when the BI for the following day is expected to be at or above the 97th percentile. Once the BI has been calculated this information is emailed to counties and posted to the web to assist managers in their staffing decisions.

- Ron Hamilton shared examples of some of the products that are supplied by South Ops through their Predictive Services Webpage.

Discussion with visitors of lessons learned related to Predictive Services:

Gerry presented the Predictive Services PowerPoint presentation that was presented to the Center Managers at the December meeting in Whitefish. The guests were asked what they would like to see from Predictive Services. It was mentioned that the scope and amount of information is increasing at such a fast pace that it is often difficult to keep up with. Other points included:

- FBAN-Net is underutilized
- GACC Predictive Services webpages are constantly changing.
- SoOps Webpage is very useful
- WIMS and KCFAST should be more available and more user friendly. The need for the site to be password protected was also questioned.
- Would like to see “one stop shopping”.
- Need for centrally located site for live fuel moisture data, historical
- Point and click place for fire history data to be spatially displayed, (>100 ac – polygon)
- Relative Greenness needs to be available at a smaller scale, (this is available at the USGS website – <http://gisdata.usgs.net/website/IVM/viewer.htm>)
- Need server with layer data for FARSITE, (coming with LandFire).
- Need a place to retrieve current NFDRS indices, regardless of where you are
- Need NWS contact phone numbers

The need for FBANs at the GACC level was discussed. One possibility to meet the need would be a nationally funded team that rotates through the GACCs during the season. It was also pointed out that at the GACC level there may be other alternatives. GACCs need to look at the products that are needed to help determine the credentials or skills necessary to accomplish that task. This may not necessarily be an FBAN.

Another need that surfaced during the California Firestorm was the need for accurate maps in a timely fashion. This issue may be mitigated by the availability of military assets and Northern Commands’ interest in assisting the wildland fire community.

Updates and Reports:

Rusty Billingsley, National Weather Service Fire Program Report:

- On February 3rd, Greg Mandt of the NWS will be meeting with the NIFC Fire Directors. Their agenda will include issues from the previous summer as well as the role of the Weather Service in the fire organization.
- The Weather Service is currently performing a Weather Service Assessment for California. Completion is expected in February/March.
- A symposium, hosted by the American Meteorological Society is scheduled for November. One of the topics will be the role of the Weather Service for nonfederal/nonwildfire situations.

Gwenan Poirer, Intelligence Coordinator Report:

- The workload and staffing level at the GACCs has been evaluated, based on a questionnaire. Intell Coordinators at the GACC level are all GS-11, most are in the 462 series, some are in the 401 series. (Exhibit F)
- The Intell Working Group has recommended a change to the National Mob Guide pertaining to the SIT reporting requirements and the IMSR Criteria. (Exhibit G)
- The Intell Working Group will be meeting with representatives from ROSS concerning the data warehouse and reporting requirements.
- The role of Intell and public information is being discussed within the Intell Working Group including the need for an Information Officer to help with the workload and provide a more professional service.
- The Intell positions and taskbooks are currently being defined, although sponsorship is still being finalized. There will be two positions, defined through Technical Specialist, as Intell Assistant (INTA) and Intell Specialist (INTS). The third position that was initially proposed is viewed to be defined by Position Description rather than assignment. The current training that has been developed will satisfy the INTA. The course is scheduled for May in Utah and for June in the Northern Rockies. Both positions will have taskbooks.
 - The initial funding request of \$30,000.00 may not be needed. It was originally requested to develop the three courses, now it appears that there will only be one course and it was generally felt that those that are benefiting from the training should be covering the cost of the training.
- There are statistical discrepancies in the 209/Situation Report that are being reflected in the IMSR. In order to help alleviate these discrepancies, a warning screen will be incorporated into the reporting process. Additional discrepancies exist because of the inconsistency in reporting acres in ownership versus protection.

Decision: The ownership/protection issue needs to be decided among the Fire Directors and direction provided back to the field, possibly included in the Mob Guide. (2004-11)

To assist in reporting, an additional column will be added to the report that will date stamp when changes and approval has occurred for NICC. An additional user group may also be added to accommodate Public Affairs.
- Mike Lococo is the Intell Rep on the Wildland Incident Digital Transfer Project. This will be accomplished through an FTP site. The data standards are expected to be completed in 2004.
- The Intelligence Working Group Operating Plan was submitted for signature by Gerry Day. (Exhibit H)
- The Intell Working Group Task Group Status Report was also handed out. (Exhibit I)

Rick Ochoa, Fire Weather Program Report:

- Rick and Rusty are jointly tasked to develop GACC Product Standards, due by June 1, 2004 for implementation January 1, 2005. Standards need to include methods of 1) Verification, 2) Validation, and 3) Evaluation. This was further discussed on Thursday.

Thursday – January 22, 2004

Updates and Reports (con't):

Kim Christensen and Gerry Day, Center Managers Report:

- Gerry shared the NPSG PowerPoint presented at the National Coordinators Meeting. (Exhibit J)

AWIPS Project Charter was handed out. (Exhibit K)

Preparedness Level Project (Gerry Day):

- Phase 1 – Build Business Model using workload and capability factors. The Model is built and the report is being written.
- Additional funding is needed either through NWCG or Joint Fire Sciences for Phase 2
- **Decision: Add to Agenda for April Meeting.**

Haiganoush Preisler (Tom Wordell):

- Daily maps are developed using statistical departure from norm. The applicability to Predictive Services is currently unclear. There may be a use for this information initially through the budget process.
- **Decision: Have her connect with Krista with the thought of using this information on the budget/fiscal side. (2004-12)**

Standardized Products (Rick Ochoa):

- Issue: To implement standardized weekly and monthly products for 2005. The process for implementation needs to be defined. This project can either be used to define the process or the process needs to be decided first and the project follow it.
- A survey needs to be conducted asking very concise, pointed questions to determine how the information is to be used and what are the time constraints.
- It was also suggested that it might be best to establish minimum requirements and allow the GACCs to embellish. The current format that individual GACCs have developed evolved to meet the needs of their customers.
- The group needs to look at what is currently available.

Decision: Rick will work on developing a Survey and Outreach Plan for review by the NPSG. (2004-13)

**Timeline: Survey and Outreach Plan due – 2/20/2004
Conference Call – 2/27/2004
Edits returned – 3/12/2004
Completed by – 3/24/2004
Begin process at NSAW the following week**

Rusty will track the FSL and NOAA Workshops concerning User needs and project development, as well as researching into policy related to new product development within these organizations. Gwenan will talk to Jay and have him give a report concerning the Webpage Standardization. The GACC webpages will be reviewed.

<i>SA</i>	<i>Tom</i>	<i>NR</i>	<i>Rick</i>
<i>EA</i>	<i>Gwenan</i>	<i>SO</i>	<i>Bill</i>
<i>RM</i>	<i>Gwenan</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>Bill</i>
<i>SW</i>	<i>Rusty</i>	<i>NW</i>	<i>Gerry</i>
<i>EB</i>	<i>Chip</i>	<i>AK</i>	<i>Kim</i>
<i>WB</i>	<i>Rusty</i>	<i>NICC</i>	<i>Rick</i>

What to look for:

- *Monthly/weekly forecasts*
- *Listing of products*
- *Listing of links*
- *Speed of opening*
- *Achievable data options*
- *Comments on ease of navigation, layout, organization, printability, sitemap, text, format options*

Product Questions:

- *Fire Danger/Fire Weather/ Intell/ Information (Internal/External)/Integrated*
- *Imbedded Links*
- *Text/Graphics*
- *User intervention/interaction*
- *Communication/Feedback capability*
- *Web counter*
- *Live demo vs. printing*

Predictive Services Conference, Topic for next meeting.

Bin Items:

FCAMMS:

- *Smoke Management Model that will track the path and concentration of smoke.*
- *Bluesky is another model that is used for smoke management.*
- *Models do not take into account convection or costal breezes well.*

Decision: Gerry or Tom will have someone give a FCAMMS/Bluesky Presentation at the Portland Meeting.

Decision: The Framework Document needs to be presented to the Fire Directors. Once it receives buyoff, then it can be used to clarify that Smoke Management is not the role of NPSG.

Assessment Workshop Update:

- *Two Conferences will be held this year.*
- *Planning is on track, good participation especially from states.*
- *Letter for western conference expected to be out soon.*

Budget:

- Brainstorm
 - Why funds are needed.
 - Seed money
 - What to use money for, fund or support recommendation
 - Fund innovation, (Demonstration, Pilot Projects)
 - Project Support (stop gap)
 - Information needs (15 Days NFDRS, research)
 - Systems Operation and Maintenance
 - NSAWS
 - Training
 - Workshops
 - People/Expertise (FBAN Team)
 - Program Development (Weather, Fire Danger Layers)
 - Systems (AWIPS)
- Need to build a Business Case
- ***Decision: Framework needs to be more complete so that items from the list can be tied to the framework and more informed decisions can be reached. Nothing on the list requires immediate attention. This item needs to be put on the Agenda for the April Meeting.***

Proposal Criteria:

- Interested party should write a short paragraph and email it to Tom/Gerry for review.
- Presentation to the group at the next meeting.
- Basic proposal information should be posted to the web.

Decision: Kim and Tom will develop the proposal information. (2004-14)

Lessons Learned from the 2003 Season, Items 3 and 4:

- GIS Overview Orientation:
Decision: Tom will talk to Joe Frost on GIS for Field Managers possible course in development. (2004-15)
- For Predictive Services:
Decision: Gwenan will send out an email to validate and prioritize the current training needs next Friday. Responses of an immediate nature will be handed off to the responsible person. (2004-16)
- Other issues:
Decision: Most unresolved issues are due to a lack of framework. The list will be given to the Task Group to see how they fit in to the Goals and Objectives. (2004-17)

Framework Scope Statement:

- A Scoping Statement would help bind and define the Mission and Vision.
Decision: Gerry will talk to Barry Mathias for further direction and draft a Scoping Statement prior to the Task Group Meeting. (2004-18)

Meeting Schedule:

- Next Meeting: April 20th-22nd in Portland, Oregon. Begin at 0900 on Tuesday, expect to have meeting completed at 1700 on Thursday.
 - Topics
 - 2003-6 Project List from the Pending Action Items Tracking Table
 - Preparedness Level Project
 - Standardized Products
 - Predictive Services Conference
 - FCAMMS/Bluesky Presentation
 - Budget
- Fall Meeting: October 26th-28th in Boise, Idaho.
- Spring 2005 Meeting: Jackson, Wyoming.