

- National Predictive Service Group (NPSG) -

Meeting Notes

Location: Northwest Coordination Center, Portland, Oregon

Meeting Dates: April 20 – 22, 2004

Members Present:

- Gerry Day – NWCC – GACC Managers Representative
- Kim Christensen – NICC Manager – NICC Liaison
- 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
- Neal Hitchcock – NIFC (for Alice Forbes) – NMAC Liaison (Advisor)

Members Absent:

- Alice Forbes
- Bill Plough – CDF – State/NASF Representative

Guests:

- Jay Ellington – SWCC, Intell
- Sim Larkin – BlueSky/FCAMMS

Notetaker: Lani Williams

Meeting Agenda Topics:

1. Introductions & Meeting Logistics – Gerry Day
2. Review and approve Palm Desert meeting notes – Gerry Day
3. Review and revise agenda – Gerry Day
4. Project updates
 - a) NWS Fire Weather Program Report – Rusty Billingsley
 - b) Intelligence Coordinators report – Gwenan Poirier
 - c) Fire Weather Program report – Rick Ochoa
 - d) NWCG Working Team Meeting– Gerry Day
5. JFSP National Preparedness Level Project – Gerry Day
6. Standardized weekly and monthly fire weather/fire danger outlooks – Rick Ochoa
7. GACC Web survey/questionnaire – Jay Ellington
8. GACC Web standards – Jay Ellington/Gerry Day
9. NPSG – Predictive Services Framework – Gerry Day
 - a) Review draft from the Task Group/2004-17 check for deficiencies
 - b) Discussion

- c) Consolidation and refinement
- d) Next Steps
- 10. Project budget request – FY-2004
- 11. Blue Sky/FCAMMS – Sim Larkin
- 12. Project Updates
 - a) Cheetah, Version 2 – Tom Wordell
 - b) Seasonal Assessment Workshops – Rick Ochoa
- 13. Predictive Services Conference –
- 14. New product procedures (NWS example)
- 15. Bin Items
 - a) Future meeting preparations
 - b) Questionnaire survey from Portugal – Neal Hitchcock
- 16. Closeout

Exhibits

A.	Pending Action Items Tracking Table	2 pgs
B.	Completed Action Items Tracking Table	2 pgs
C.	2004 NPSG Funding and Project Status	4 pgs
D.	NPSG Framework and Goals-Final Draft	14 pgs
E.	GACC Website Development Task Group	3 pgs
F.	Guidelines for GACC Websites Hosted on FAMWEB	30 pgs
G.	Fire and Weather Smoke Management	6 pgs
H.	BlueSkyRAINS Quarterly	2 pgs
I.	National Weather Service New Products/Services Process	2 pgs
J.	National Weather Service Product/Service Description Document	2 pgs
K.	Portugal Questionnaire	3 pgs

Tuesday – April 20, 2004

Pending Actions Table:

2003-7 – RAWs data quality oversight is an issue that needs to be addressed by each GACC.
Decision: *Rick and Gerry will develop the issue paper. The draft will be completed by May 15th. The paper should be completed to be routed to the GACC Center Managers for review and then to the Fire Directors for approval and issuance by June 11th.*

2004-2/2004-12 – The group sees the potential for application of the work by Haiganoush Preisler and Tony Westerling to Krista Gebert’s effort at suppression budget estimating.
Decision: *Neal will offer to familiarize Krista Gebert with the work of Haiganoush Preisler and Tony Westerling. The group agreed the task should be closed.*

2004-3 – The Intell training session for the Northern Rockies was cancelled and the session to be held by the Eastern Great Basin will be using local instructors so the need for financial support from the Center Managers is no longer necessary.

2004-5 – The ROMAN committee currently consists of Ed Delgado, Tim Matheson and Randy Hart. ROMAN is currently in need of a host site which will be provided by the Weather Service either in Salt Lake City and/or Boise. The project is also in need of funding beyond April 2004. Broader support may be necessary for ROMAN to be approved through IRM. **Decision: Rick will find out what support from NPSG can provide and draft a letter from NPSG in support. (Completed)**

2004-11 – The survey regarding “ownership/protection” consistency on the Sit Report and the ICS-209 from the Intell Coordinators should be returned by May 4th. This data will be compiled and summarized.

Decision: The results of the survey will be discussed during a conference call in May, an issue paper and recommendation will then be forwarded to NMAC. In addition, there is a potential for this issue to be addressed through the Fire Occurrence Project. A request for the NPSG to provide input in the project scope and development process will be submitted to the PMO (NWCG Project Management Office).

2004-13 – Agenda Item

2004-14 – Agenda Item

2004-15 – There are currently two GPS/GIS training courses that would assist managers in their program development. If there is an additional need Joe Frost is willing to develop training that is identified by specific elements.

- There has been an expressed need for an interactive dialog on the application of GIS in Predictive Services.
- The NW has hired a GIS Specialist this season and will work towards applying GIS techniques into Predictive Services. This will be an opportunity for NPSG to review the lessons learned from the NW after the season.
- GIS has been identified as an area of deficiency, and requests for proposals maybe encouraged in the proposal process. This item should be revisited with the project proposal process.

2004-16 – Gwenan received limited response from the training needs survey. Interest was expressed for Fire Family Plus, HTML, Regression Analysis, (others). A need for training to assist those in Predictive Services in dealing with the Media has also been expressed.

Decision: New Agenda Item, Interactive GIS and other training needs will be prioritized and reviewed for possible inclusion as Agenda Items for the Fall Intell/Predictive Services Meeting. (2004-19)

GACC Website Development Task Group – Jay Ellington: (Exhibits E and F)

The need for website standardization was identified in 2002 and a group met to address the situation. The group consists of:

Ed Delgado – EBC

Steve Marien – EAC
Tom Rolinski – OSC
Kathy Weigardt – WBC
Jay Ellington – SWC

- A survey was completed and the results have been compiled. Using these results a GACC web page template has been developed.
- The template consists of a banner across the top and along the left side with four options (Predictive Services, Fire Management, Related Links, and Fire Information).
- The Websites will be hosted on the FAMWeb Server. The target date for the server availability is October 1, 2004.
- Similar products should be called by the same name, product standardization.
- A URL has been identified: <http://gacc.nifc.gov>
- GACCs will have the choice of being hosted on the FAMWeb Server or existing servers, linked to the GACC Homepage.
- A “How to” guideline have been written, for implementation.

Decision:

Kim and Neal will write a letter to the Center Managers from NPSG to inform them of the following decisions (2004-20):

- ***The Website Development Task Group will be chartered under the NPSG, (2004-21).***
- ***A Task document will be developed for the Website Development Task Group for them to evaluate existing websites and products and to develop an implementation plan for website and product standardization, (2004-22).***
- ***Current standard products identified in the MOB Guide (Weekly, Monthly and Seasonal Assessments) will need to be named using the standard naming convention by June 1, 2004. Kim will send out a letter, (2004-24).***

Gerry will ensure that the FAMWEB server is available to host the GACC Predictive Services WebPages, with auto-forwarded links to the individual Webpages, (2004-23).

Definitions that need to be clarified/defined:

Fire Potential

Fire Risk

Large Fire Potential

Fire Danger

Wednesday – April 21, 2004

Updates and Reports:

Gwenan Poirer, Intelligence Coordinator Report:

- Kathy Wiegardt attended the IOS Working Team meeting seeking support for the Intell positions and training course. Although the mnemonics for the positions have been approved under Technical Specialist, currently there was not support for the establishing the training.

Decision:

- ***Neal will write a letter in support from Fire Management.***
- ***Kim will write a letter in support from the Center Managers.***
- ***Support will be sought from the western states through Don Artley.***

- The list of projects for Dan Ervin continues to grow, with the additions from the Whitefish meeting.

Decision: Neal will set up a time to meet with Dan to review and prioritize the list.

Rusty Billingsley, National Weather Service Fire Program Report:

- Numbers from the past season:
 - 86% probability of detection of Red Flag Warnings
 - 22% probability of False Alarms
 - 8400 Red Flags issued (does not include FL)
 - 151 dispatches for IMETs, (through early October), third busiest season
- NFDRS Verification System, requirements and development will be this season and through the winter. Currently a verification system exists in some parts of the West, but not nationwide. Data retrieval would be by office, possibly by GACC.
- Non-Federal/Non-Wildfire Policy, Spot Forecasts will continue to be provided for all wildfire and prescribed fire on federal lands. Spot Forecasts will also be provided for states working with federal agencies and for Public Safety Officials if needed for public safety. Information concerning the requestor must be provided when making the request.
- Local offices are encouraged to communicate with their local Weather Service offices policies that may impact workload.
- Update Policy, Spot Forecasts are meant to be a one time forecast and there are no guarantees to update the forecast. There may be a possibility to update forecasts if the Spot has observations.

Rick Ochoa, Fire Weather Program Report:

- California is adopting the Northwest's Fire Danger with Fire Potential Outlook. Other areas are moving along for PSA.
- Reno Meeting:
 - From Greg Mandt's meeting with the Fire Directors, the Weather Service and Predictive Services were tasked to develop an interagency Fire Weather Program which would include an evaluation/validation process, resource issues and management. Additional items that came from the Reno Meeting include:
 - An Interagency Fire Weather Group was formed, a Draft Charter is being written. The relationship of this group will be better defined after the Albany Meeting.
 - Develop requirements and standards for fire weather products and services. The Office of Federal Coordinator of Meteorology may be able to provide assistance in leading workshops on developing new requirements and standards.
 - Identify and prioritize fire weather issues. This will include quality and consistency issues as well as Weather Service workload.

NWCG Working Team Meeting – Gerry Day:

Based on a series of letters and a recognized course of action that may be leading to a duplication of efforts and tasks, the NWCG has requested a meeting to reorganize the Fire Weather Working Team and the Fire Behavior Working Team. This meeting will:

- Examine the organizational mission

- Define a recommended configuration
- Develop a Mission Statement for the newly defined group and supporting subgroups as appropriate.

The results of this meeting will aid in defining the newly formed Interagency Fire Weather Group.

JFSP National Interagency Process for Predicting Preparedness Levels – Gerry Day:

- This project was tasked by the National Coordinators.
- Phase 1 was funded by JFSP; it is a conceptual model has been built that determined the factors that determine the Initial Planning Level.
- Currently the report is being completed.
- Additional funding is needed for Phase 2, which will attach values to the factors.

Standardized weekly and monthly Fire Danger and Fire Weather Outlooks – Rick Ochoa:

In an effort to standardize products, the existing variety of products and needs of the users will need to be surveyed. Originally the timeline involved product development during the fall/early winter and implementation January 1, 2005. The survey will need to be designed to obtain meaningful results. Distribution of the survey will be through the GACCs and should include local dispatch offices, fire management, wildland and prescribed as well as Incident Management Teams. Information is needed on what decisions are made using the products and any deficiencies that may exist. In order to more successfully implement the project a new timeline was identified. The new implementation date will be January 1, 2006. This will allow time to build the infrastructure to assist in the implementation process.

Decision: During the summer of 2004, a survey will be conducted. During the fall 2004 through spring 2005 a series of workshops and small group meetings will be conducted to help define and determine the products. 2005 will be the design, build and evaluate phase, this will also be the time to assure that the program will be able to be successfully implemented. January 1, 2006 will be the target implementation date.

NPSG Predictive Services Framework Document: (Exhibit D)

The Draft Framework document was reviewed and edited.

Thursday – April 22, 2004

NPSG Predictive Services Framework Document (con't):

- The Framework document was reviewed and edited down to Actions-Tasks.
- The document should now be circulated for review and comments.
- While the document is out for review, work can continue on the Actions-Tasks
- Goals may be grouped, example:
 - Goals 1, 2 and 7 would come first
 - Goals 3, 4 and 8 would be next
 - Goals 5 and 6 would follow
- The Strategy of Goal 2 is to put a Team together, that Team could take on the results of Goal 1.
- Look at the private sector for ideas and examples.

- Assessment Plan Team where all or part may become the Product Development and Assessment Team.
- Need to focus on the best way to do the survey/assessment for all products and services
- Contract out Goal 1, have NPSG as a contact/liaison.
- The fire community has expertise in contracting user assessment.

Decision:

Gerry will draft a cover letter to solicit review and comments from NMAC, GACC Managers, NWCG and Working Teams and Predictive Services. The package will also contain terminology used in the development of the Framework, (2004-27).

- **GOAL 1 –**

Explore the utilization of private contractors(s) to develop a through approach to assess user needs for Predictive Services products to include, (2004-25):

- *Survey*
- *Analysis of survey results*
- *Workshops to integrate results into products*
- *Design and build models*
- *Implement*

Neal will explore the utilization of private consultants in the design, development and implementation of a User Assessment Plan.

Gerry will visit an outside company on the process that they utilize.

- **GOAL 2 –**

Gwenan will contact GACC's and have them assemble a list of their current products and bring them to the fall meeting. (2004-26).

Budget: (Exhibit C)

- NPSG received \$90,000 through the ITIP's process.
- Seasonal Assessment came in under budget.
- Cheetah –
 - Currently in validation phase
 - Data was given to the GACC's at the March Workshop
 - Final release may be delayed about one month.
 - Training scheduled for May in Portland (Note: Completed, five GACCs were represented).
- 15 Day NFDRS –
 - Currently in validation phase.
 - Forecasting for 14 days.
 - Displays actual ERC's.
 - More information is needed from Tim to provide additional funding.
- Climate Variability Workshop –
 - No preparation has been done yet.
 - Planned for next spring, in conjunction with the Spring Assessment.
 - Due to the volume of material to be covered, some agenda items may need to be moved to the fall Predictive Services/Intell Workshop.
- Long Range Forecast Workshop –
 - No work has been done on this yet.

- Intell Training –
 - Funding is no longer needed, training will be covered locally.
- SCRIPPS –
 - Did not receive funding through JFSP.
 - Goal was to operationalize the project so it could be handed off and Anthony Westerling could resume research.
 - Funding may be available through Krista.
- ROMAN –
 - NPSG reaffirms its support.
 - Too large a product for NPSG.
 - No additional information is available.
- Other Potential Budget Items
 - Resource Utilization Study –
 - Update resource values used in Cheetah.
 - Information is obtained from 209's.
 - Work was completed for 2002 and part of 2003.
 - Proposal is to complete 2003 and track 2004.

Decision: NICC will provide an individual and fund the work. Tom will work with them. The data will be validated to determine if project needs to be ongoing.
 - Predictive Services Validation /Verification Study –
 - Tim Brown has expressed an interest in this study.
 - Phase 1: Develop framework and requirement document, **Cost \$17,000.**
 - Phase 2: Implement, validate and verify study, gather data and publish findings, **Cost \$80,000/year.**
 - Red Flag Map (Gwenan Poirier) –
 - Proposal was to have a map of fire weather zones.
 - The affected Fire Weather Zone would become red when fuels were critical based on NFDRS output (but could be manually overridden) by FMO/Fuels.
 - The proposal sought funding through JFSP, but was denied due to the operational nature of the proposal.

BlueSky/FCAMMS – Sim Larkin (206-732-7849, larkin@fs.fed.us): (Exhibits G and H)

- FCAMMS – Fire Consortia for Advanced Modeling of Meteorology and Smoke (www.fs.fed.us/fcamms).
- Northwest Modeling Consortium – (www.atmos.washington.edu/pnw_envirom)
 - MM5 runs, feed into value added products
 - MM5 maps, produce forecast maps
 - Work with MM5 leads into Blue Sky.
- BlueSky –
 - Smoke modeling framework.
 - Provides real time smoke concentration predictions.
 - Teams are calling to have wildland fires added into the prediction.
 - Products are available by GACCs in two or three formats.
 - Currently Rocky Mountain is tracking wildland fires.
 - Goal is to migrate BlueSky and MM5 to other FCAMMS around the country.

- BlueSky RAINS Application –
 - Useful to Incident Command Teams for Public Information, Aircraft, planning burning operations.
 - Local level would like more confidence in go/no go decisions.
- AQUIPT –
 - Air Quality Information Planning Tool.
 - New project funded by USDA
 - BlueSky with combined historical and climate information.
 - Probability maps of impact.
 - Probability of meeting prescription
 - Probability of impact from prescription
 - Can be used for any point source that affects air quality (ex. Dairy farms).
- Sim would like feedback:
 - What are you looking for?
 - What are your priorities?

Decision:

Rick will solicit input from GACC meteorologists and Intell groups to determine what their interactions are with FCAMMS and to get their input for predictive services products they would like to see FCAMMS produce, (2004-28).

Rick and Tom will talk to Sue Ferguson/Sim Larkin about utilizing FCAMMS to generate NFDRS outputs, possibly replacing the 14 day NFDRS Forecast by DRI (both 60 hour and GFS outlooks, (2004-29).

Meeting Schedule:

Fall Meeting

October 26-28, 2004

Boise, ID

NPS Conference Room reserved

Winter Meeting

January 18-20, 2005

Start at 1200, adjourn end of day Thursday

California

Spring Meeting

April 26-28, 2005

Start at 0800

Jackson Hole, WY

Conference Call Agenda:

- Protection vs. ownership in reporting
- Web Group Charter
- Update on budget:
- Update on Assessment (Neal):
- Update on Product Design/Development and Implementation:
- Update on Fire Weather/Fire Danger Working Team/NPSG:

2003-6 and 2004-13:

Decision: This item has been incorporated into the NPSG Framework Document.

2004-14:

With the funding limitations that NPSG is under (\$50,000/year), a systematic process needs to be developed to review potential funding proposals.

Decision: Kim and Tom will develop the criteria for submitting proposals to NPSG. Due date – July, 4; this will allow for utilization for fall proposals.

October Agenda Items:

Decision: Agenda topic for October Meeting – How to get funding for Predictive Services product development. Invite Forest Service research representative to discuss (Hilbruner), (2004-30).

Predictive Services Conference/Symposium

May need to incorporate into Joint Coordinators Meeting for support.

AMS Orland Meeting, Fall 2005 in Alberta BC.

Special section on Predictive Services

Look for opportunities in the future to engage.

Decision: Rick will contact Sue Ferguson and Tim Brown to determine if Predictive Services could tag onto the AMS meeting to present new product ideas, (2004-31).

National Weather Service New Product – Rusty Billingsley: (Exhibits I and J)

- National Directive
 - Establish process
 - Review
 - Evaluate
 - Encourage innovation, have a handle on control
- Framework
 - Product/Service Description Document
 - Experimental Phase
 - National Product Prototyping
 - Approval for operational use
 - Feedback
- Product is posted on webpage:
 - Marked experimental
 - Lists defined dates
 - OMB approved survey is provided for feedback
- Other feedback is solicited through Public Information Statements, meetings and other contacts.
- Evaluation –
 - Project manager pulls together information.
 - Approval is done at the regional level

Portugal Questionnaire – Neal Hitchcock: (Exhibit K)

Neal received a questionnaire from Portugal which brings up some of the same issues that NPSG is working on. Anyone interested in contributing to the response, contact Neal.

Blue Ribbon Report to the Governor of California:

This report was released last week. There were a couple of issues that referenced Intell.

- The need for accurate real time mapping.
- The potential for use of unmanned aerial vehicles for fire mapping.
- Need for information in a timelier manner.

RAWS:

The importance on maintaining and calibrating RAWS units was discussed.