

## ***National Predictive Service Group (NPSG) Meeting***

### **Meeting Notes**

**Location:** Fort Worth, Texas

**Meeting Dates:** May 8-10, 2007

#### **Members & Advisors 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
- Paul Witsaman – NWS, National Weather Service Representative
- Randy Dzialo – BLM/WBC, Intelligence Coordinators Representative
- Brad Smith – Texas Forest Service, NASF Representative
- Tom Rolinski – BLM/OSCC – GACC Meteorologists Representative
- Kim Christensen – FS/NICC Manager – NICC Representative
- Neal Hitchcock – FS/NIFC – NMAC Representative
- Charlie Leonard – FS/NICC – Intelligence Program Representative
- Sheldon Wimmer – BLM/UT State Office, Geographic Operations Group Liaison
- Pat Phillips (for John Barborinas) – BIA – Field Level Fire Managers Representative

#### **Members & Advisors Absent:**

- Dan Smith – NFAEB Liaison
- John Barborinas – BIA – Field Level Fire Managers Representative

#### **Guests:** (via Conference Call)

- Ed Delgado – Meteorologist, Eastern Great Basin Coordination Center
- Robyn Heffernan – Meteorologist, National Interagency Coordination Center
- Chuck Maxwell – Meteorologist, Southwest Coordination Center
- Jay Ellington – Intelligence Coordinator, Southwest Coordination Center

**Notetaker:** Lani Williams – Boise Interagency Logistics Center

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

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Meeting Logistics
2. Update/Information Sharing from Met and Intel Working Groups
3. Update/Information Sharing from NFAEB
4. Daily and 7 Day Significant Fire Potential Products Update
5. Live Fuel Model Project Demonstration and Update (Conference Call)
6. Predictive Services Handbook Update (Conference Call)
7. Strategic Plan Update (Conference Call)
8. Predictive Services Logo (Conference Call)

9. NPSG Action Item/Task Tracking/Budget Review and Updates
10. NOAA/NWS Transitions Smoke Forecast Tool into Operations
11. Predictive Services Mission
12. Monthly/Seasonal Products and NSAW Workshop Updates
13. Bin Items
14. User Assessment Review (Workgroups)
15. Presentations of Workgroup Findings and Action Items
  - a. Develop Action Plan and Linkage to Strategic Plan
16. Bin Items and Future Meeting Logistics

**Exhibits:**

- A. Action Items, Decisions and Meeting Topics
- B. NPSG Funding
- C. Meteorologist Working Group Goals
- D. Resource Capability for the 7 Day Product, National Example
- E. Predictive Services Logo
- F. National Fuel Moisture Database Project Proposal
- G. Strategic Plan
- H. NOAA National Weather Service Transitions Smoke Forecast Tool Into Operations
- I. Smoke Forecast Tool: New Guidance in National Air Quality Forecast Capability
- J. Predictive Services Mission Proposal
- K. Fire Weather Predictive Services Workshop

**Tuesday – May 8, 2007****Welcome, Introductions and Meeting Logistics – Paul Witsaman**

Paul welcomed everyone and covered logistics of the Southern Regional Headquarters of the National Weather Service. Everyone introduced themselves, and the Agenda was briefly covered.

**Agenda Item: Update Information Sharing from NFAEB – Tom Wordell**

Tom is writing a memorandum for NFAEB requesting a high level of support for the Predictive Services Program. He will share the memo during the meeting. NFAEB requested the formation of a Task Group to develop a baseline of essential products to meet business requirements. Mike Doherty is the Lead.

**Agenda Item: Update/Information Sharing from Meteorologist and Intelligence Working Groups**

- Meteorologist Working Group – Tom Rolinski (Exhibit C)

Tom distributed a list of the goals that he would like to accomplish during his two year term to bring focus and cohesiveness to the group. Asked for feedback and issues - nothing for this group

  - Goal 1: Clarify and focus the mindset among the meteorologists

- Goal 2: Predictive Services mission and vision statements should be understood and upheld by program practitioners.
- Goal 3: Meteorologists to rotate through NICC and at other GACCs
- Goal 4: Program Managers to take management courses
- Goal 5: Meteorologists to have GIS or other technical training.

**Agenda Item: Daily and 7 Day Significant Fire Potential Product Update – Tom Rolinski**

The Southern Geographic Area has come on line and is contributing to the national map. There are still some missing Predictive Services Areas (PSA) for various reasons that are being cleaned up. Desert Research Institute (DRI) has completed the MOS equations for the Eastern Geographic Area and they should be online soon. They are currently working on the equations for the Eastern Great Basin and they should be available mid-May. Alaska is expected to be online some time on June.

Verification of the data through DRI should start this spring, the status is currently unknown. Alternate methods to forecast when DRI is down are also being explored.

The implementation of the Nelson Model has been delayed; the new date is late spring this year. The Business Practices will be discussed on the next Meteorologist Conference Call.

**Agenda Item: Update/Information Sharing from Meteorologist and Intelligence Working Groups (con't)**

- Intelligence Working Group – Randy Dzialo (Exhibit D)
  - Personnel Changes - Three Intelligence Positions have been filled:
    - Northern California Coordination Center – Marva Wiley Intelligence, Coordinator, Mark Steele, Assistant
    - Southern California Coordination Center – Bruce Risher, Intelligence Coordinator, Vince Cohee, Assistant
    - Eastern Area Coordination Center – Trudy Fagre, Intelligence Coordinator
    - Eastern Great Basin Coordination Center – Deb Hamill will be going on a detail assignment to the BLM Utah State Office, her position will be filled by a detailer.
  - 7 Day Product (Exhibit D) – The Group is working on adding a Resource Capability to the 7 Day Product. They reviewed a study from the Northwest Geographic Area Coordination Center on Predicting Planning Levels that from a historical analysis on Type 2 Crew usage. This provided inspiration to develop a resource discussion with national anticipated resource demands.
    - Jay Ellington at the Southwest Geographic Area Coordination Center used Type 1 Crews as an indicator of anticipated resource needs based on Large Fire Potential. Randy used engines as an indicator. The group is looking at methods to utilize additional resources as indicators.

- The product will be optional and experimental this year. A Fact Sheet is available.

### Conference Call

#### **Agenda Item: PS Handbook – Chuck Maxwell**

The Handbook is nearly completed in draft form. Tom Rolinski and Robyn Heffernan will help complete edits for the Handbook to be submitted to NFAEB at their next meeting for review.

- ➔ **Action Item No. 162:** Complete edits for the Predictive Services Handbook, to be submitted to NFAEB.  
**Responsible:** Chuck Maxwell, Tom Rolinski, Robyn Heffernan & Tom Wordell  
**Due Date:** May 31, 2007

#### **Agenda Item: Predictive Services Logo – Jay Ellington (Exhibit E)**

Reviewed and discussed options for the Predictive Services.

Decision: Use one word titles in each of the diamonds: Weather, Fuels and Resources. Jay will rework logo and email examples to Tom including a design for a reduced size logo.

#### **Agenda Item: Live Fuel Model Project Demonstration and Update – Ed Delgado (Exhibit F)**

The Live Fuel Moisture Project is available for data entry. There are still some items that are being addressed, including correcting data. The map is not interactive at this time.

Ed submitted a proposal for additional features to the National Fuel Moisture Database including:

- Interactive geographical interface
- Import/export features
- Add Canadian sampling formats (for Alaska for northern States)
- Production of .KML or .KMZ files (for Google Earth)

The funding request is for \$15,260.

- ➔ **Action Item No. 163:** Add link to the Live Fuel Moisture Database from the Geographic Area Coordination Center and the National Coordination Center Webpages. This topic will be discussed at the Meteorologist Conference Call.  
**Responsible:** Tom Wordell  
**Due Date:** 7/31/2007

#### **Agenda Item: Strategic Plan – Robyn Heffernan (Exhibit G)**

The Strategic Plan is almost ready for release. Robin will send the Plan to Tom, to be emailed out to the members for comments, prior to distribution to NFAEB and posting to the NPSG webpage. The document is scheduled for review annually.

- ➔ **Action Item No. 164:** Distribute the Strategic Plan.  
**Responsible:** Tom Wordell  
**Due Date:** 6/30/2007

**Agenda Item: NPSG Action Item/Task Tracking/Budget Review and Updates – Tom Wordell (Exhibits A and B)**

- Budget:
  - NPSG receives approximately \$160,000 each year. Of that, \$60,000 is direct funding for ROMAN. This leaves \$100,000 funding for the year.
  - There should be some savings over what was budgeted for the Seasonal Assessment Workshops.
  - There is an additional savings of \$4000 from the Haines Climatology Website.
  - There is approximately \$10,000 remaining of the FY07 budget.

***Decision: Consider Ed Delgado's Proposal with the 2008 Budget.***

- Action Items Tracking Table  
 The Action Items Tracking Table was updated
  - Action Item 125 – The User Assessment will be completed by the end of the month
  - Action Item 128 – The back-up and Contingency Plan is completed. The servers are going to NEES.
  - Action Item 139 – The resources input to the 7 Day Product will be tested in some Geographic Areas this season.
  - Action Item 156 – There was a conference call one month ago and there were some good ideas that were discussed.
  - Action Item 160 – Paul presented the NWS, group will tailor proposal for Predictive Services.

**Agenda Item: Bin Items**

- MyFireCommunity.Net ([www.myfirecommunity.net](http://www.myfirecommunity.net))
  - There are public and private page options for each neighborhood.
  - Predictive Service as well as the Intelligence and Meteorologist Working Groups have their own pages. NPSG Members have or will be invited to join.
- Intelligence Working Group prototypes and documents can be found at: <http://gacc.nifc.gov/training/intelligenceintelligence.htm>

**NOAA/NWS Transitions Smoke Forecast Tool into Operations – Paul Witsaman (Exhibits H and I)**

The National Weather Service expects to have a new Smoke Forecast Tool operational this spring. The Smoke Forecast Tool integrates the NOAA Satellite Information Service's satellite information on the location of wildfires with NOAA National Weather Service weather inputs from the North American Mesoscale model and smoke dispersion simulations

from the NHYSPLIT Model to produce a 48 hour prediction of smoke transport and concentrations. The model also incorporates estimates for wildfire smoke emissions based on vegetation cover. (<http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2007/s2812.htm>).

The interactive map can be accessed at: [www.spc.noaa.gov/exper/sref/frames.php?run=latest](http://www.spc.noaa.gov/exper/sref/frames.php?run=latest)

**Agenda Item: Predictive Services Mission – Tom Rolinski (Exhibit J)**

Tom shared a document that he drafted in an effort to bring the Meteorologist into a cohesive group. This includes the developing a Mission Statement as well as use of the use of a Predictive Services logo to be displayed at Geographic Areas and on t-shirts, buttons pins and other small items. A trifold pamphlet/brochure designed to promote Predictive Services was suggested. Additionally the use of a simpler URL was suggested to access the website ([www.predictiveservices.gov](http://www.predictiveservices.gov))

- ➔ **Action Item No. 165:** Adopt a Predictive Services slogan.  
**Responsible: Tom Rolinski**  
**Due Date: 7/30/2007**
  
- ➔ **Action Item No. 166:** Develop a brochure; contact the Shasta-Trinity for cost estimates.  
**Responsible: Tom Rolinski, Susie Stingley-Russell**  
**Due Date: 9/30/2007 (prior to fall PS meeting)**
  
- ➔ **Action Item No. 167:** Explore the possibility/process for shortening the URL, check with JFSP.  
**Responsible: Robyn Heffernan & Tom Wordell**  
**Due Date: 8/30/2007**

**Agenda Item: Monthly/Seasonal Products and NSAW Workshop Updates – Rick Ochoa**

- Monthly Seasonal Product – The new processes expected to be implemented soon. This will need to be a coordinated effort and will probably occur with the July Seasonal Assessment. An explanation page is also necessary prior to implementation.

**Agenda Item: Bin Items**

- FCAMMS Support – Tom Wordell  
Rocky Mountain FCAMMS have requested a letter of support from NPSG. He will send out the letter next week, through FENWT in support of all FCAMMS. The letter will also include information about NPSG.

**Wednesday - May 9, 2007**

**Agenda Item: User Assessment Review – Tom Wordell**

The Survey was divided into groups or related job categories and the Group Members were divided to review results and comments from the respondents based on their job categories. Responses were reviewed for both the federal respondents (Appendix F) and the nonfederal respondents (Appendix G). Results were summarized in a spreadsheet. The purpose of this review is to develop a set of Action Items for inclusion in the Strategic Plan.

Rick Ochoa, Brad Smith, Susie Stingley-Russell  
IMT – F4, G1  
Crew – F5, G2  
FBAN – F8, G4  
FUMT – F13

Tom Wordell, Pat Phillips, Paul Witsaman  
FMO – F2, G7  
Fuels – F7  
Admin – F6, G3

Tom Rolinski, Randy Dzialo, Kim Christensen  
Dispatch – F10, G6  
Coordination – F11  
NWS – F3  
Other Meteorologists – F14

Charlie Leonard, Lani Williams  
Public Affairs – F1, G5  
Support – F9  
Research – F12

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

- Tactical Resources Website – Charlie Leonard  
Development is continuing on the Tactical Resources Report. This is an effort to provide information to NMAC concerning tactical resources to assist in their decision making. The information will be entered by the Geographic Areas onto a website being developed by the Remote Sensing and Application Center (RSAC). A template has been developed and now needs National Coordinator approval. The end product display has not yet clearly defined by NMAC.

#### **NWS Southern Region Headquarters Presentation – Victor Murphy (Exhibit K)**

A variety of climate tools that can be accessed from a government computer were demonstrated.

- What is normal and what are extremes?
  - <http://xmacis.ncrr.cornell.edu>
  - [http://www/cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long\\_range/lead02/off02\\_temp.gif](http://www/cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long_range/lead02/off02_temp.gif)

- [http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long\\_range\\_lead02/off02\\_prpc.gif](http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long_range_lead02/off02_prpc.gif)
- How are these numbers verified?
  - [http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long\\_range/climates/jja.html](http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long_range/climates/jja.html)
- Optical Climate Normals (OCN) predicts temperature and precipitation based on observed temperatures and compare to 30 year normals.
  - [http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long\\_range/lead02/ocn02\\_temp.gif](http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long_range/lead02/ocn02_temp.gif)
- Dynamic Models
  - NCEP has developed the new Coupled Forecast System (CFS) model
    - [http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/people/wwang/cfs\\_fcst/](http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/people/wwang/cfs_fcst/)
  - Forecasts Nino 3.0 and Nino 3.4 SSTs
    - [http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/people/wwang/cfs\\_fcst/image/s/nino34SSTSea.gif](http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/people/wwang/cfs_fcst/image/s/nino34SSTSea.gif)
  - The CFS Model is run by NCEP, based on the SST anomalies and other parameters, long lead forecast temperature and precipitation are made.
    - [http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/people/wwang/cfs\\_fcst/image/s/usPrecSeaNorm.gif](http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/people/wwang/cfs_fcst/image/s/usPrecSeaNorm.gif)
- Climate Impact and Public Policy Issues
  - National Integrated Drought Information System (NISDIS) bill passed by Congress in December 2006.
  - Authorizes 81 million dollars through FY2012 to establish an integrated drought forecasting system with an express goal of providing usable, accurate, and reliable drought forecast.
  - Goal of NIDIS is fivefold
    - Monitoring and Data Collection
    - Mitigation
    - Education and Outreach
    - Forecasts
    - Research
  - NOAA has created the Climate Test Bed (CTB) at the Climate Prediction Center. The goal is to create new climate products which provide value.
  - North American Monsoon Experiment (NAME) should soon be yielding valuable results in the Southwestern United States.
- New Local Three Month Temperature Outlook Product
  - <http://www.weather.gov/climate/index.php?wfo=psr>
- Other Climate Forecasting Tools
  - The UKMET also issues long lead outlook products
    - [http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/seasonal/monthly\\_forecasts/single\\_terce2.html](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/seasonal/monthly_forecasts/single_terce2.html)



Thursday, May 10, 2007**Agenda Item: Presentations of Workgroup Findings and Action Items – Tom Wordell**

Key Findings that result in Action Items:

- **Inconsistencies with the WebPages** – Reengage the GACC Web Task Group to review websites for discrepancies. Concentrate on major differences in terminology, location, and layout for products that are consistent among all GACCs.
- **Conflicting Information** – Initiate daily conference calls to facilitate coordination between the Geographic Area Meteorologists, National Weather Service and Incident Meteorologists during peak fire season.
- **Why Predictive Services Products were not used** – Target a marketing strategy to FMO group (and other target audiences) to inform them about products, including fact sheets on websites to explain products.
- **Tolerance for False Alarms** - Define criteria for outlook products in meeting above or below normal.
- **Predictive Services Products would be more useful if...** – Include fact sheets on websites to explain products. Include Predictive Services Logo on all products. Include time stamp on all products as well as information on when the product will next be updated. Prioritize development if gridded “next-gen” products.
- **Products and Services that should be added to Predictive Services** – Post verification info to webpages (DRI Project).
- **Met Expectations** – Three times as many nonfederal FMOs as federal FMOs indicated that Predictive Services did not meet their expectations. Seek out opportunity to speak at the NASF Conference to explain Predictive Services Program/Products and seek their input.
- **Reliance on other sources** – Improve fuels information input for red flag warnings. Work with the National Weather Service to set up a Task Group to tackle this.
- **Overlap from Predictive Services and other sources** – Develop a Fact Sheet to explain differences between high risk day and red flag warning.
- **Synthesize information** – Implement "smart board" technology for briefings so information can be shared via “Go-To” meeting technology.
- **Baseline List of PS Products** – Baseline suite of products; Tom and Doherty have been tasked by NFAEB to do this.
- **Standardize navigation to and location of Standard PS products** – Questions concerning the Fuels/Fire Behavior Advisories product and location on GACC websites.
- Educate users on the difference between Fire Potential (PS) and Fire Weather (NWS)
- **Standardize Fire Danger Graphics /Increased GIS Capability** – Explore options of more maps and graphics (the increased need for GIS/Web skills).
- **Product Information** – Develop Frequently Asked Questions/Fact Sheets for all products and yearly newsletters for new products and accomplishments; emailing links of products to selected users.
- **Incorporate Predictive Services overview into the annual Firefighter Refreshers** – Additional possibilities include workshops and other courses were appropriate; utilizing web-conferencing technologies where possible.

- **Reliance on Predictive Services Products** – Publish historical accuracy information for products. Document when Predictive Services products were used in decision making process and the outcome from that decision – need to capture successes.
  - **Accessibility** – WebPages that are designed to be accessible using dial-up connections and PDAs.
  - **Product Validation** – Establish criteria for Confidence Levels in products – Product Validation.
- ➔ **Action Item No. 168:** Format the findings and Action Items into the Strategic Plan format of Action Items to be distributed along with the spreadsheets of findings from the group breakouts.
- Responsible: Tom Wordell, Rick Ochoa and Lani Williams**  
**Due Date: 9/30/2007**

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

- Future Meetings:
  - October 9-11, in Reno, Nevada at the BLM State Office, Randy Dzialo will send out map and lodging information. The meeting will start at 1300 and will go through 1700 on Thursday due to the holiday on the 8<sup>th</sup>.
  - February 5-7, 2008, scheduled for Boise, Idaho
- Review of GACC websites: Most of the Geographic Areas are doing a good job following the template.

**Agenda Item: Predictive Services Logo**

Jay sent out a revised version. The basic/simpler logo pictures should be replaced with colors. Jay will rework and send out again.

**User Assessment Survey – Tom Wordell**

Pat Winter has requested an additional review. The target completion date is the end of May. The report will consist of an Executive Summary, the Report and Appendices. NFAEB and NMAC will be briefed and the report will be posted to the NPSG webpage. Respondents will receive an email when the report has been posted. The Group Members will facilitate the release through their contacts and affiliations.