

- National Predictive Service Group (NPSG) -

Meeting Notes

Location: National Interagency Coordination Center, Boise, Idaho

Meeting Dates: October 26-28, 2004

Members Present:

- Gerry Day – NWCC – GACC Managers Representative
- Kim Christensen – NICC Manager – NICC Liaison
- Tom Wordell – JFSP – PS/Fire Analysts Representative
- Deb Bowen – EGBCC – (for Mike Lococo) Intelligence Coordinators Representative
- Chip Collins – Grand Teton NP – Field Level Fire Managers Representative
- Bill Plough – CDF – State/NASF Representative
- Rick Ochoa – NICC – GACC Meteorologists Representative
- Rusty Billingsley – NWS – National Weather Service Representative
- Alice Forbes – NIFC – NMAC Liaison (Advisor)
- Neal Hitchcock – NIFC (for Alice Forbes) – NMAC Liaison (Advisor)

Guests:

- Paul Schlobohm
- Michael Bevins
- Jay Ellington (via phone)
- Chuck Maxwell (via phone)

Notetaker: Lani Williams

Meeting Agenda Topics:

1. Introductions & Meeting Logistics –Tom
2. Project funding status – Tom
 - a) FY-2004 report
 - b) FY-2005 proposal process – Tom/Kim
3. Lessons Learned - 2004 (season review along with unresolved and emerging issues) including a review of November Intell/Met meeting agenda and expected results
 - a) Intell (30 minutes) – Deb
 - b) Met (30 minutes) – Rick
 - c) NWS (30 minutes) – Rusty
4. Intelligence Coordinators Report – Deb
 - a) Intelligence Training update
 - b) SIT/209
 - c) Ownership vs. Protection Reporting update – Kim
5. Web Task Group Charter – Gerry/Jay Ellington
 - Conference call with Jay Ellington

6. NPSG Framework – Gerry
 - a) Discussion of where we are and where we need to go
 - b) User Assessment – status/need
 - c) Include action items, assignments, completion dates and funding
 - d) National Park Service Fire Ecology Program Strategic Plan – Chip
7. Fire Environment Working Team Update – Gerry/Paul Schlobohm
8. Fire Weather Center Concept Update – Rusty (and other FWC Members)
9. Standardized Products for GACCs – Rick
10. NPS Fire Ecology Program – Chip
11. Research – How do we get “Plugged in” – Tom/Gerry
 - a) Opportunities for getting topic areas in front of research
 - b) FS logic model update
 - c) How to integrate into project proposal/funding process
 - d) Other
12. AMS Meeting – Fall 2005 (see notes from last meeting) – Rick
 - a) Special section on Predictive Services
 - b) Who should represent NPSG?
 - c) Update on how and what NPSG representative should discuss
13. Predictive Services Conference/Symposium- (see notes from last meeting) – Gerry
14. Validation & Verification (Conference call with Chuck Maxwell)
 - a) Adherence to consensus decision on 2004 verification process – Chuck Maxwell
 - b) Update on what will be presented at Nov. Intel/Met meeting – Tom/Chuck
15. Integrating Decision Support into Predictive Services – Gerry
 - a) Update on Don McGregor’s visit to NWCC during summer of 2004 (30 min)
 - b) Resource Allocation Topic (30 min) – Neal Hitchcock and Michael Bevins
16. User Feedback and Bin Items – All
 - a) AWIPS Equipment – Heath
 - b) ROMAN – Ed Delgado
 - c) Red Flag Fuels/Large Fire Potential
 - d) National Seasonal Assessment Workshop Funding
 - e) Where to take “Spot Weather Forecast Policy – Rusty
 - f) Agenda for January Meeting
 - g) Pending Actions
 - h) Prep for Predictive Services Portland Meeting
17. Next Meeting; January 18-20 (California) – Gerry/Tom
 - Logistics and Topics

Exhibits

A.	Pending Action Items Tracking Table	5 pgs
B.	Completed Action Items Tracking Table	6 pgs
C.	NPSG Funding and Project Status	2 pgs
D.	NPSG Framework and Goals-Final Draft	14 pgs
E.	Lessons Learned – 2004 Meteorologists	1 pgs
F.	Lessons Learned – 2004 National Weather Service	2 pgs

G.	Fire Environment Working Team (FENWT)	2 pgs
H.	Fire Weather Center Proposal	2 pgs
I.	National Park Service Fire Ecology Program Strategic Plan: 2004-2008	28 pgs
J.	Standard Products for Predictive Services	3 pgs
K.	Charles Maxwell Email	1 pgs
L.	Gridded FX-Net Project Proposal	1 pgs

Tuesday – October 26, 2004

Project Funding Status – Tom: (Exhibit C)

ROMAN

- Approved as an application in the BLM IT Portfolio in FY-06.
- NPSG has provided funding that should carry the program through December 2004.

Decision: Arrange a conference call this week with Ed Delgado for update of:

- ***Plan for 2005***
- ***Contingency***
- ***Options/Plans***

Gridded-FX Net

- Hardware purchased with yearend money.

Red Flag Fuels Criteria

- Not funded
- Submitted to JFSP
- Denied as being too operational

Predictive Services Product Verification Study

- Not funded

Resource Utilization Study

- Needed for Cheetah default values
- Data is complete through July 2003

Decision: Need to arrange for follow up and completion of data input into spreadsheet that Tom and Don Carlton developed. Kim was unaware the resource utilization data had not been updated and agreed to appoint someone to complete the data input through 2004.

User Assessment Plan

- Unable to find someone with current contract to task prior to the end of FY-04
- Decision: Need to follow up with user assessment in 2005.***

National Seasonal Assessment Workshop

- Funded by NPSG Climax and NOAA for \$15,000 in 2004
- Climax and NOAA may not be providing funding for 2005

Decision: Summary of FY-05 funding will be focused on three areas: National Seasonal Assessment Workshops, User Assessment and Standardized Products.

Funding Proposal Process – Rick/Kim:

A proposal process has not been worked out yet. Although funding is limited a process is still needed so that proposals can be prioritized.

Intelligence Coordinators Report – Deb

- Intelligence Training Update – There will be three levels of Intell Dispatchers. Qualifications will be managed by the Dispatch Training Steering Committee with oversight from the Intell Working Group.
- SIT/209 – The SIT/209 Committee is proposing developing an official Change Board. The Committee also needs to be tied in with the Fire Occurrence Working Group.
- Ownership/Protection Reporting Update – To be covered later.

Lessons Learned – 2004 Meteorologists – Rick: (Exhibit E)

With the exception of Alaska, half of the normal acres were burned in 2004. A high remained over the Four Corners Region during much of the season. Periods of dry lightning were followed by periods of precipitation.

Predictive Services Agreements:

- Validation of ERC – FM “G” and update of products was not done by all of the GACC’s.
- Need to find a way to insure accountability in that agreements and commitments are acted upon BlueSky/RAINS
- USFS is considering studying a request by EPA to implement BlueSky/RAINS in the West.

Lessons Learned – 2004 National Weather Service – Rusty: (Exhibit F)

- Below average number of IMET Dispatches
- NWS cosigned FENWT Charter (first NWCG Charter for the NWS)
- Verification of NFDRS sites – NWS needs a list of RAWs sites that meet NFDRS Standards
- IMET Role Expansion Team – Studying the feasibility and requirements to expand IMET support to all-hazards.
- Spot Forecasts requests continue to increase – Requesting review of policies to assist in defining a formal process.

Web Task Group Charter – Jay Ellington:

The Charter was modeled after other NWCG Charters. The group is comprised of the former Task Force Members:

Jay Ellington, SWC, Chair
Ed Delgado, EBC
Steve Marion, EAC
Tom Rolinski, OSC

Kathy Wiegard, WBC
Dan Ervin, NIFC, Ad Hoc Member

A presentation will be made at the Predictive Services/Intelligence Meeting next week. The Host Server is scheduled to be available in January. The National Webpage should be posted early 2005. GACCs will be required to use the new template by May 1, 2005 unless prohibited by hosting agency. Accountability remains an issue.

Decision: Charter was approved.

Kim will send out letter that will include expectations and implementation dates.

Accountability will be a subject at the Coordinators Meeting.

Jay will work with Dan on obstacles and "pinch points" for Host Server implementation.

NPSG Liaison to the Web Group will be Rick.

Jay will update NPSG at the January Meeting. (2004-32)

NPSG Framework – Gerry: (Exhibit D)

Objectives:

Deal with comments that were received – Find a way to address in Framework or capture in next phase.

In exploring the possibility of a User Assessment task from the previous meeting additional requirements were discovered that made the option unattainable.

- **Goal 1 – User Assessment**

Guidance is needed to determine the best way to solicit comments from users.

Other groups may also be looking at surveys (e.g. FENWT)

Advantage to doing one large survey versus same groups having to complete several surveys

Survey costs could be reduced through partnerships

NPSG could develop the survey and PowerPoint presentations and present them to each GACC Social Science Research Meeting in Tucson in January could provide a possible in brief opportunity

Decision: Identify advisor for Goal (possibilities including: NCRS or Don MacGregor).

Invite Advisor to the January meeting to develop a course of action that the group can accomplish. (2004-33)

- **Goal 2 – Standardized Products**

Decision: See Goal 1.

Invite Kim Kelly from NWCC to discuss findings from work with the Predictive Services unit at NWCC and at the facilitated GIS Session at the Predictive Service Meeting scheduled for the first week of November in Portland. (2004-34)

- **Goal 3**

Before this Goal can be discussed more information is needed about where we are at. A questionnaire could be distributed to Meteorologists, Intelligence Coordinators and Center

Managers. Need to look at obstacles to accomplishing the current workload – “pinch points”.

Examples include:

Technology

Data

Staffing/Collateral Duties

Expertise (analytical skills)

Travel Budget

Priorities

Organization

Operating Plan for office

Key success and accomplishments should also be requested. This response should be more open-ended:

RAWS data quality

New products developed

Products issued

Feedback to NWS

The questionnaire should also allow the responder to indicate their current position.

Decision: Rick and Chip will develop questionnaire to identify “pinch points”, key successes and/or accomplishments for improving Predictive Services functionality. (2004-35)

- **Goal 4 – Performance Standards**

Performance Standards are a way to define success and differ from validation/verification of products. Some performance standards are listed in the MOB Guide. Performance Standards should be developed as part of the product design. In order to work through this goal a list of current products and services offered and their Performance Standard.

Decision: Rick and Deb (Mike Lococo) will assemble a list and examples of products and services from the Fall Predictive Services Meeting. Performance Standards should be included. (2004-26)

- **Goal 5 – Working Relationships**

This Goal deals with working relationships; internal/external, Meteorologists/Intelligence, GACC/ NIFC. What needs to be identified are the Best Business Practices, what works best and what does not and what can NPSG do to help enhance the interaction. This goal helps supply the groundwork for Goal 6.

Decision: Include a question to the survey in Goal 3 that address the integration of functions under Predictive Services. (2004-35)

- **Goal 6 – Communications Plan**

This goal needs a list of products and what the users wants, maybe a project that one or two GACCs can work on.

Decision: Revisit after listing of products.

Wednesday – October 27, 2004

Fire Environment Working Team (FENWT) Update – Paul Schlobohm: (Exhibit G)

At its Fall meeting in Annapolis, MD the NWCG reconfigured several working Teams and created the Fire Environment Working Team (FENWT) to provide an integrated approach to fire weather, fire behavior and fire danger. This will be accomplished through coordination with Predictive Services, Air/Smoke Management, Fuels Management and the National Weather Service. With the formation of FENWT, other Working Teams under NWCG will be realigned (Fire Behavior, Fire Danger and Fire Weather). NPSG will have a member on FENWT.

Fire Weather Center Concept Update – Rusty: (Exhibit H)

The Western Governors Association (WGA) received a grant from NOAA to assess the feasibility of a Fire Weather Center. The first meeting was held at the NWS Storm Prediction Center. Fire Weather is currently the only major NWS Program that does not have a Center. The feasibility study will examine gaps in services for fire weather first and determine what might logically be filled by a Fire Weather Center. Rusty, Tom, Rick, Gerry and Neal were individuals on the NPSG who attended the meeting in Norman. Rusty will have an update on the status of the proposal at the meeting in January.

NPSG Framework (continued) – Gerry: (Exhibit D)

- **Goal 7 – Data Infrastructure**

Data Infrastructure

- Standards
- Performance Standards
- Minimum Data Entry Requirements

The group needs a better understanding of the requirements needed; this includes defining required fields as well as acceptable values for fields. Need to determine the role of NPSG. What can NPSG influence? What can NPSG change?

Decision: Heath will invite Judy Crosby (Data Architect, NWCG Project Management Office) to the meeting in January to advise and council the NPSG on the appropriate path. (2004-36)

- **Goal 8**

National Products with published standards could be a starting point. In order to address issues, there needs to be a process for documenting compliance.

Decision: Rick and Kim will develop a process to check for performance of GACCs for issuing products on time and in compliance with standards. (2004-37)

NPS Fire Ecology Program – Chip: (Exhibit I)

The National Park Service Fire Ecology Program has written a Strategic Plan that incorporates their Goals, Mission, Strategy and Action into a defined time period, 2004-2008. This document provides a historic prospective as well as a source of documentation.

Decision: Use the NPS Strategic Plan Template to develop Draft NPSG Framework. (2004-38)
Chip will obtain a copy of the document in Word.
Neal will write Appendix A.
Gerry will write Appendix B.

Standardized Products for Predictive Services – Rick (Exhibit J)

Predictive Services are doing a good job within their own areas. Issues of non standardization remain. Weekly and daily products differ from GACC to GACC. There are also no standards definitions for some key terminology, (e.g. fire potential). If nothing is done, products will become even more splintered. NPSG needs to provide leadership and support to GACCs to make implementation successful. Utilize individuals from outside the group to give them ownership in the process. Use one product as a starting point;

- Daily product that goes out seven to ten days.
- Tabular and/or Graphic
- Weather
- Fire Potential (fuel dryness, ignition triggers)
- Resources

Decision: Assemble a team.

Encourage them to look at existing products

Invite them to the meeting in January for status report

Key items

- ***What is going to be done related to proposals?***
- ***Who is going to be involved?***
- ***Implementation Strategy***
- ***Funding Needs***

Goal – implementation by June 2006

Research – Tom

The Annual JFSP Principle Investigator Meeting may be an opportunity to educate/build support for Predictive Service Research Proposals.

- **Fire Logic Model – Tom/Gerry**
Logic Models provide the building blocks for strategic goals and objectives.
Includes Performance Measures
Forest Service Research is now being related to the National Fire Plan – focused on WUI

Decision: Gerry will pass on information about work unit level meetings as available.
NPSG members are encouraged to attend and share Predictive Services research needs.

ROMAN – Ed Delgado

- Financial
 - Currently funded through January 2005 though NPSG
 - Business Case is included in BLM Fiscal Year 2006 Portfolio
 - Additional funding is still needed
 - Past funding has come from Utah State BLM
- Technical
 - Server to be housed at NWS in Salt Lake City, better capability in handling communications requirements
 - Equipment is purchased
 - Dual service with NWS and University, two ROMAN Systems in parallel for full redundancy

Validation and Verification – Chuck Maxwell: (Exhibit K)

After consensus for standardized product at meeting last year, only two GACCs have developed product; with an additional two in the process. Concern over what compels compliance, benefits for those who do/consequences for those who do not. Barriers for compliance include:

Staffing Issues

Conflicting direction for Geographic Area Board/Center Manager

Considered a step backward by some

Need to know what “Fire Potential” is first

NPSG needs to look at the total spectrum of Program Management issues which include: agency commitment, interagency program direction, funding and personnel/staffing.

Decision: Neal, Kim, Gerry and Rick will work with Fire Directors to correct obstacles and deficiencies in Predictive Services. After discussion, a letter will be distributed to the GACC Boards and Center Managers. (2004-39)

Thursday – October 28, 2004**AMS Meeting, Fall 2005 – Rick:**

- The 5th Symposium will be held in Kenmore, BC the week of October 24th, 2005.
- Rick will be the Chair for the Predictive Services Session
- The call for papers has not gone out yet
- There have not been any organizational meetings yet
- This is an opportunity for exposure/encourage product development

Decision: Rick will continue to keep the group informed.

Protection vs. Ownership Reporting Update – Kim:

Discrepancies exist between NICC, GACCs and agency totals when analyzing number of fires and acres. The largest discrepancy is between GACC and Agency totals for number of fires (71,000 vs. 21,000). Some of the discrepancies can be attributed to reporting differences concerning ownership vs. protection. It is recommended that fires should be reported by ownership at the point of origin. This issue is an excellent opportunity to tie into the Fire Occurrence Committee. Compliance can be facilitated through the SIT Reporting process.

Decision:

- ***Recommend to NMAC a change in MOB Guide to reflect reporting by ownership. Kim will write a letter from NMAC with specific direction; stating issue and requiring more accurate reporting in Firestat and on 1202's. (2004-11)***
- ***Gerry will talk to Barry and/or George to ensure Predictive Services involvement in the Fire Occurrence Committee process.***

BIN Items:

AWIPS/Gridded FX-Net Project – Heath: (Exhibit L)

- Shifted out of AWIPS due to cost
- Phase 1 has been funded
- Project will be presented to the Meteorologists at the Predictive Services Meeting next week
- Projects has received conditional approval from BLM IRM
- AWIPS equipment can be rebuilt
- Bandwidth issues may exist
- Maintenance still an unknown
- Need to test multiple client configurations

Integrated Decision Support:

- **Update on Don MacGregor's Visit to NWCC during summer 2004 – Gerry**

Don McGregor, a Decision Scientist, visited NWCC this past summer. His task was to understand the operational working environment at a GACC by observing briefings, conference calls and conducting interviews. The goal is to develop a one day course for the NWCC staff on incorporating decision science into the GACC level decision process to be presented during the winter/spring. Gerry will share with the Center Managers in December.

- **Resource Allocation – Neal**

Resource Allocation decisions are fundamental to Decision Science. Over the summer Neal met with Michael Bevins (USFS Research, Ft. Collins, CO), they discussed the possibility of using Decision Science in the propositioning of resources. This can be accomplished by reviewing past fires and determining if propositioned resources would have helped. Classes of probabilities are defined as well as trigger factors. Difficulty is in quantifying known events and determining how results would have differed. This could also tie into Preparedness

Levels. There is currently no collective model for making decisions. Social aspects are also important; why people made their decisions. Michael would like to:

- Look back at past fire events
- Solicit expert opinions; Did prepositions help
- Develop a Hypothesis
- Test the Hypothesis in future fires
- Evaluate

Study would need to start with small numbers to refine what information needs to be collected/evaluated. This could be a potential proposal for JFSP.

Decision: Michael Bevins will write a proposal to Neal on data collection approach. (2004-41)

Local User – Mike Ford (Fuels, Boise District BLM)

- Heavily used the Daily Conferences with the National Weather Service
- Relied on National Weather Service Products, noted standardization
- Intell WebPages differed greatly
- Viewed most Predictive Service Products mainly utilized by GACCs

Red Flag Fuels/Large Fire Potential

- Unfunded
- On Agenda for Predictive Services Meeting next week
- Consistency in terminology and thresholds is needed
- Information is used by local Weather Service offices in issuing Red Flag Warnings/Watches

Decision: At the annual Predictive Services meeting in Portland (November 2-4), task a group to recommend standards for consistent terminology.

National Seasonal Assessment Workshop Funding

Decision: NPSG agreed to fund \$14,000 which may be reduced if Climax and/or NOAA provide financial support. They have historically contributed approximately \$2000.00.

Spot Forecast

Need to understand what is driving the workload.

Decision: Rusty and Neal will write an Issue Statement to distribute to each agency requesting current Agency Policy. (2004-42)

Fire Weather Meteorologist Position – Rick

There is a possible change in direction of the program as vacated positions are being filled. Additionally some positions may not be funded due to reduced budgets. These actions could

affect NPSG's ability to implement the Framework. A reiteration of the original direction may be in order.

Dan Ervins's Time

NPSG needs to prioritize requests for Dan's time.

Website vs. SIT/209

Change Requests/Reports for the SIT/209 need to be revisited to determine validity

Decision: Website Server is the NPSG's priority for Dan's time.

Messages for Predictive Services Meeting

- Discuss Framework Actions
- Working with Fire Directors on Program Management Issues
- Uniform Guidance on terminology, standards, Webpage and standard National Products
- NPSG Funding for 3005
- National Seasonal Assessment Workshops
- User Assessment
- Standard Products
- Growing use and dependence on Predictive Services Products
 - Standard Daily Products (Rick)
 - Standards (safety, efficiency, others)
 - Daily and Weekly Products
 - Daily Products (Day 1-7, tabular/graphic)
 - User Survey and Facilitated Meetings
 - Product Design Team (Meteorologists, Intelligence Coordinators, Fire Analysis, Center Managers)
 - Implementation Plan

Meeting Schedule:

Meeting Room Requirements:

Conference Bridge

Projection Access

Ability to order food in

Invite Predictive Services Guests, earlier in meeting to be more effective

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