National Predictive Service Group (NPSG) Meeting

Spring 2006 Meeting Notes

Location: Southern Area Coordination Center – Atlanta, GA
Meeting Dates: 04/25-27/06

Members Present:
- Tom Wordell – FS/NICC – Fire Analysts Representative – NPSG Chair
- Rick Ochoa **–** BLM/NICC – Fire Weather Program Representative – NPSG Vice Chair
- Chip Collins – NPS – Field Level Fire Managers Representative
- Gerry Day – BLM/NWCC - GACC Center Managers Representative
- Roger Lamoni – NWS, Western Region – National Weather Service Representative
- Brad Smith – NASF Representative
- Charlie Leonard – FS/NICC – Intelligence Program Representative
- Chuck Maxwell – FWS/SWCC – GACC Meteorologists Representative
- Kathy Wiegard – BLM/SACC – Intelligence Coordinators Representative (for Mike Lococo)

Members Absent:
- Neal Hitchcock – FS/NIFC – NMAC Representative
- Kim Christensen – FS/NICC – NICC Representative
- Mike Lococo – FS/ONCC – Intelligence Coordinators Representative

Guests:
- John Szymoniak – Riverside - Technology Transfer Specialist
- Denver Ingram – SACC – Meteorologist
- Kevin Scasny – SACC – Meteorologist
- Scott Goodrick – FS – Research and Development
- Ned Nikolov – RMC – Research and Development
- Robyn Heffernan – NICC – Meteorologist
- Tom Rolinski – OSCC – Meteorologist
- Clint Cross – R8 – Regional Fuels Specialist
- Pat Winter – FS – Social Scientist *via teleconference*
- Heidi Bigler-Cole – FS – Social Scientist *via teleconference*

Notetaker: Stephanie Becker – NIFC – Fire Operations Program Assistant

Meeting Agenda Topics:
1.   New NPSG Proposals and funding requests to be considered
2.   NPSG Action Item Review and Final Budget Decisions for FY 06
3.   NPSG Action Plan Development (Follow up on Group Assignments)
4.   Southern Area Predictive Services Update
5.   Southern Area Fire Environment Working Group Update

6.   Rapid Response and Large Fire Decision Support
7.   Predictive Services User Assessment Update
8.   USFS RMC High Resolution Fire Weather and Smoke Dispersion and Intelligence and
        Management Decision Aid Tools
9.   Predictive Services Handbook
10.   Future Meeting Topics and Logistics
11.   7-Day Product Update and Operational Data Support Protocols
12.   Miscellaneous Items
13.   OFCM Fire Weather Needs Assessment Update
14.   Bin Items

Exhibits Handed Out:
A.   Building a Well Performing Team Lesson Plan, 31 pages
B.   Team Building Training Proposal to NPSG, 3 pages
C.   Biography of Team Building Trainer, 1 page
D.   National Predictive Service ArcIMS Pilot proposal, 1 page
E.   DRAFT NPSG All Action Plan.xls
F.   SA FENWT Charter
G.   Southern Area Fire Environment Working Team.ppt
H.   Rapid Response Decision Support for Large Fire Briefing Paper, one page
I.   Excerpts from QFFR regarding Predictive Services, 2 pages
J.   Leadership in Decision Support Powerpoint - Szymoniak
K.   User Needs Assessment Update Powerpoint
L.   RMC New Products Powerpoint
M.   Draft Predictive Services Handbook, 34 pages
O.   Safety Alert Follow Up Correspondence, 1 page

Day 1 Notes – 04/25/2006

Introductions: Introductions were brief, as the morning session was mostly NPSG in-house business. J.P. Greene warmly welcomed all to SACC and his office that is coveted by most Congressmen.

Agenda Item: New NPSG Proposals and funding requests to be considered

- *Virtual Team Building at Fall 2006 Predictive Services meeting-Robyn Heffernen*
  Decision: Schedule the session per agreement from Met and Intel Working Groups, solicit and prioritize issues between now and then
  Robyn handed out a Biography of the proposed trainer from National Seminars Group, as well as a draft lesson plan on building a well performing team and the draft cost agreement. A one-day session will cost $3500. This vendor has a very good reputation. The lesson plan can be tailored to suit Predictive Services (PS) needs and/or focus. PS has unique challenges due to distance, parallel roles and responsibilities, management scopes on national, regional, and local level. It is agreed that focus should be put on decision-making processes, and the significance of Team conflict. This kind of session is not a one-

time exercise, so the first pass should stay fairly high-level. Sessions are also most successful when interactive.
(See Exhibits A, B, & C)

- *Central Processing System- Robyn Heffernen*
  Decision: Procure 3.0 terrabytes on an FS NITC ftp site for $1200
  Per Robyn, a team to implement a data-sharing capability has been put together including herself, Chuck Maxwell, Ed Delgado, John Saltenberger, and Steve Leach (Team Lead). Data categories include a PS folder, teaching tools, scheduling assessments, applications and tools, verification, and announcements. The team will put together a formal proposal building a business case (what business problem will this solve?) and covering issues such as: user id's and passwords; folder management; upload authority; information back-up; user groups (e.g. GACC's, states?); sensitive data protection; data retention schedules; and communicating with IRM to be integrated in to any long range/big picture solution.

- *ArcIMS Website (hosted by RSAC)- Tom Wordell*
  Decision: Work with Brad Quayle at RSAC to develop the ArcIMS website with the long-term goal of porting it over to NITC. Keep Joe Frost in the loop.
  This topic was pending a proposal being developed by Brad Quayle of RSAC. Currently, RSAC is willing to host a site and support it at no cost with an informal agreement. The objective would be to have a site where the wildland fire community could display information and products graphically. Hardware has been procured already; NPSG possibly may need to procure another server but may not have WO-SYS support for that. NPSG would like to move forward and bring up the site with preliminary products that are portable so that they can be hung on NITC. NPSG can continue to strategize what other products can be added to/developed for the site in the long range. For now, Joe Frost is the point of contact (208-387-5961).
  (See Exhibit D)

  ACTION ITEM #122: Follow up on obtaining the ftp space for Central Processing; develop a management strategy and identify IRM contacts.
  Lead: Robyn Heffernan
  Target Completion Date: 07/01/2006

  ACTION ITEM #123: Coordinate with Kathy Wiegard to get the Team Building session in the middle of the NPSG Fall meeting agenda.
  Lead: Robyn Heffernan
  Target Completion Date: 05/15/2006

Agenda Item: Action Item Review and Final Budget Decisions for FY06 – Tom Wordell

Action Item update on the NPSG Charter: The Charter has been moved under NFAEB and has been signed. Tom W. will have Kim Christensen do an informational broadcast e-mail, attaching the NFAEB memo. This should enhance NPSG credibility.   The flipside, however, is that NFAEB expects the Handbook to be completed. As far as budget,

NFAEB will only be in an advisory capacity, and the Charter includes a GACG representative on the membership (the burden falls to the GACG's to select a representative).

Funding/Budget
Tom W. updated the NPSG Budget spreadsheet during realtime discussion.
--It was agreed to fund the Team Building session with 06 money, Robyn will do the footwork to see how this can be done through agency B & F processes.
--NPSG committed to fund the facility costs for the Orlando meeting.
--NPSG will wait till next year to strategize on funding for the Fire Behavior Workshop.
--ROMAN is still in limbo. FENWT is working on determining its future, but doesn't want it to go away until the full analysis is done. This may require a project proposal to cost out? Meanwhile, the FS has agreed to cover the $60k in basic operating costs… Tom W. has added ROMAN to his ITRB project for Predictive Services
--The Gridded FXnet system for Alaska is funded, but may need an additional $5K for a server (different data source). This is an FY07 cost but if NPSG has any $$ left from 06 it could maybe be applied toward this cost.
--It was agreed to fund approximately $4K for awards for Pat Winter and Heidi Bigler-Cole for their work on the user survey.

ACTION ITEM #123: Begin research on how to pay a deposit to National Seminars Group for the Team Building session
Lead: Robyn Heffernan
Target Completion Date: 05/15/2006

Refer Topic: Team Building Proposal

Agenda Item: NPSG Action Plan Development (Follow up on Group Assignments) - All
Decision: Leads for each Action Item are to provide status report at Fall NPSG meeting.

The Action Plan is being developed to provide strategic direction for NPSG to achieve objectives. Critical success factors and potential barriers were part of the original analysis that resulted in prioritization of strategies. The All Action Plan spreadsheet, compiled from the four Group spreadsheets, is e-attached for reference. The term "Assignment Statement" has been changed to "Statement of Work".
Brief digest of Group discussions:
  o **Goal 1 Priority 1—*Establish and Implement Performance Standards for Products and Services*—**Tasks 9 and 10 were edited. Robyn will contact Kathy about getting on the next conference call agenda to break ground on building the Standards Team.

  o **Goal 1 Priority 2—*User Assessment*—**The user assessment data collection period is completed. A final report is due back from Pat Winter this summer. The real dissecting of the results won't probably happen until the Fall meeting, Kathy will put it on the agenda

for discussion with Pat on how to build and maintain a viable Continuing Improvement Process out of the survey results.

- o **Goal 2 Priority 1—*Integrate Predictive Services into Wildland Fire Management Training and Operational Policy and Procedure*—**A key point here is that the field is still confused as to the role of PS, it is generally seen as an "alternative" to the Weather Service. One of the disconnects may be that PS is not integrated into lower level training courses, so exposure is limited. Another point is that best science is tied to technology, which becomes obsolete as soon as training material is written and incorporated. Suggested options:
    - o Integrate PS into the Annual Refresher.
    - o Appoint a NPSG liaison to the RedBook committee and to training development teams, etc…
    - o Develop a generic "dog and pony" ppt. of two or three slides for executive level leadership to incorporate into their big picture strategic presentations on Fire Management.

  Discussion covered "hard sell" and "soft sell": the hard sell tack being to work toward making PS products mandatory in agency direction like 5190 and Severity Requests; the soft sell being more marketing "what we can do for you" so that PS products are desired by the field and therefore more operations driven anyway. Work to make disciples—sell a few key products to SME's, and you have essentially done "force multiplying" on your behalf. To appeal to leadership, identify their drivers such as Decision Support in meaningful metrics to back up their requests for funding. Develop talking points from that angle. If started with the platform "are we necessary?" the rest should be easy. ***Chuck is the lead***.

- o **Goal 2 Priority 2—*Assess Current Product and Services Capability of Predictive Services*—**Skill sets are being identified in Goal 4. This is more to assess what the PS Users say and do versus what PS currently provides. It was discussed whether to use the assessment Robyn already has, or to re-survey the GACC's with a more standardized questionnaire where language is more focused: "Do you do a daily product?" as opposed to "What do you do?". Group decided it would be more prudent to write the new survey after the User Assessment is analyzed and use common terminology from there. The results could then be used for a "high level" gap analysis to identify service holes which can then be prioritized, and each "hole" can then be analyzed at a more "weeds" level to determine a course of action. ***Gerry and Robyn are the leads.***

- o **Goal 3 Priority 1—*Foster Relationships Through Increased Outreach*—**Will need to involve outside entities from NPSG, such as Ext. Affairs. Tasks are to define stakeholders, identify audiences, and develop messages to each audience (e.g. what's in it for them?). Chuck will tap the Forest Information Officer at Region 3 for help to write the draft communications plan, and then vet the plan through NPSG. (Gerry has some Comm Plan templates he will send to Chuck as well). It was agreed that the Communication Plan will better facilitate the partnership goal, so the priorities were swapped. The Plan should be completed by this Fall. ***Chuck and Jay will be the leads for now.***

o **Goal 3 Priority 2—*Development and Implementation of Partnership Plan (Partnership and Communications Team, or PACT)*—**It was agreed to add the Statement of Work and the Assignment of the Team to the front end of action on this goal. Agreed to add NOAA to the list of partners, also IRM types, and to brainstorm on other touch points. It was questioned whether contractors are truly partners as they are being paid? Partners should be identified, and stratified (e.g. if some relationships are more valuable than others, or time limited, etc…). This goal can be acted on immediately, though the Communications Plan will help to keep messages consistent.

o **Goal 4 Priority 1—*Develop, Implement, and Codify Predictive Services Handbook*—**The development of the PS handbook is in progress. It was recommended that anyone making edits use Track Changes before submitting them to Chuck and Mike. Can't say how many iterations it will go through before it is called a "final draft" to send for review and validation to Center Managers and GACC personnel, but would like it done by October. ***Chuck and Mike are leads.***

o **Goal 4 Priority 2—*Develop and Implement a Training Plan for Predictive Services*—**Re-titled: "Provide Proficiency for Predictive Services Personnel". The focus should be to define the skill sets and professional development that can be common across all agencies, based on a workload analysis. The desired proficiencies should be outcome/performance based. An index of resources should be developed so new people can know where to go to get up to speed on products and capability. This goal should be kept fairly high level. Changes to the original Action Plan .xls:
  o Deleted asking PS people what additional training they would like
  o Deleted line on internal and external training
  o Deleted lines on submitting a plan for GACC Center Manager review and revising per such review; changed the term "Funding Requirements" to "Investment Strategy".
  No lead was identified (?).

o **Goal 4 Priority 3—*Develop Staffing and Funding Requirements for Program*—**This should be based on workload analysis and tied to the Handbook. Still need to define the goal of a workload analysis: to report need or to report current performance? ***No lead was identified (?).***

ACTION ITEM: See individual Goals
Lead: See individual Goals
Target Completion Date: See individual Goals

(See Exhibit E – NPSG All Action Plans DRAFT.xls)

Day 2 Notes – 04/26/2006

Agenda Item: Southern Area Issues and Concerns – Kathy Wiegard, Denver Ingram, Kevin Scasny

The biggest challenge for the SACC meteorologists is how to serve EVERYone. Daily operations and information requests leave very little time for developmental products for Intel, and the pool of detailers with the necessary skillsets to increase service and capability is very small.

The mets put out a fairly "standard" suite of products, but they have 49 Predictive Service Areas, all of which are good-sized—the Southern Area is comprised of 25% of the Conus landmass, 15% of which is federally owned. They are constantly working toward products that allow them to see the entire region at one time. 85% of fires in the Southern Area are human caused, which means all PSA's have a need for information equally. The diversity in conditions also makes PS in the Southern Area complex—SACC is an anomaly from the other GACC's with the tropical areas, and SACC is considered a competent player in hurricane response by DHS and FEMA, so the hurricane forecast work is NOT going away.

To generate their products, the SACC mets use fuels, weather, and topographical data as they don't have RAWS in each PSA, and poor RAWS maintenance is an issue. Strength of data is a limiting factor, especially for the 7 Day Product. They have identified "key" RAWS stations (those with at least ten years of history)—the areas with the key stations have higher confidence forecasts, and where correlations are reasonable, they approximate. Where lack of data dictates, they will "grey" out the areas on the 7 Day Product map, with the hope that "peer pressure" will be a catalyst to remedy the lack of data. Some of the problem is that there is so much state land, and the states all have different levels of reporting. Also, they all appear to have different definitions for the same terms, so standardization is needed. For the Southern Area, the 7 Day Product should be considered a work in progress for a period of time yet.

SACC has a unique product in a browser-based weather tool that was admired by the other mets attending. Kevin is working on a chart for ERC that is similar to the DSR chart—the idea being to see the entire region at once as opposed to having to open up 49 windows). Their comprehensive product takes about 3 hours to generate, and includes:
- Executive Summary
- Risk Factors
- DSR Summaries, regional and by PSA
- Regional Perspectives, high level and "weeds" level
- GSI
- All-hazards Outlook, sometimes up to 10 days out
- Red Flag Summary

This product will likely all roll into the 7 Day Product once it is running well. It was suggested that the SACC mets survey the field as to the products that are used heavily, and maybe drop the others when the 7 Day Product is a competent addition. Southern Area FENWG could likely give good feedback and validation from the user perspective. It's

important to give some focus on the relationship between the Predictive Services people and the customers. Clint Cross stated that the fire data and risk assessment is done for all 13 states in a format that can be shipped into FireFamily Plus, and he will follow up on getting to Denver ASAP.

Agenda Item: Southern Area Fire Environment Working Group Update – Clint Cross

Clint presented a PowerPoint on the SA FENWG best practices, issues, and concerns. They are chartered under SA Coordinating Group who meets twice a year (charter attached), with five focus areas. Of those areas, only Smoke Management has a separate committee as a lack of leadership in this area has resulted in poor communication about reporting acres burned. So, managing smoke is difficult and accomplishments aren't being captured accurately.

The SA FENWG is visioneering about what technology is really needed to accomplish fire management missions. There is so much capability "out there", but do we need all of it, just because it's there? What they would like to see is a tool to move money/resources for Rx targets on a PSA level resolution, 14 day minimum, 30 days preferred. To optimize confidence, maybe a 14-day product issued every 7 days? They'd also like to see tools generated in metrics that are more meaningful to the field level folks, e.g. NFDRS outputs are index-based which has meaning to the SME's but not necessarily to those on the ground level. Bottom line, SA FENWG is more than willing to facilitate feedback to SACC PS and support efforts to develop products that meet the field's needs.

(See Exhibits F & G – SA FENWT charter and Powerpoint)

Agenda Item: Rapid Response and Large Fire Decision Support – John Szymoniak

John's presentation can be found posted at:
ftp://ftp2.fs.fed.us/incoming/wo_fam/z_stuff/Meeting_powerpoints/

John previewed some of the newest rapid response products being developed to assist with large fire decision support, Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (WFSA), and other time-critical wildland fire incident planning situations. FSPro (Fire Spread Probability) is one of the tools he discussed, which stochastically estimates the probability of fire perimeters of different sizes. Currently, initial runs can be completed in 4 hours. FSPro auto-correlates fuels info from ERC climatology. Developers are working toward realtime weather forecasts as the input for the first 2-3 days.

Another product discussed was WindWizard. The wind data for the Wind Wizard comes from RAWS mainly, but there are several new wind products in the hopper that will help with wind mapping several days out.   John and several of the Research/Tech Transfer/ Science Delivery guys from Missoula have made themselves available this fire season to help with rapid response prototype systems as a proof of concept. Their hope is that they

produce at least one big-ticket savings incident (estimating cost savings is still an issue that needs to be quantified).

Fire Management and technology should be able to have a meaningful relationship. Technology can play a huge role in early decision support, and alliances have been developed with other agencies for advanced mapping and surveillance capability of values at risk to support Agency Administrators and fire management decision makers. As development of technology progresses, expectations increase and the definition of success can be unrealistic, which often sets up science/IT projects to fail. Much of the success of technology is dependent on the integrity of the data, but high-level leadership doesn't always understand enough to be willing to fund the science for the degree of success they are looking for. A push from the Early Adopter community could be very important where these new products are concerned, to keep things proactive instead of reactive to OMB/GAO audits that end up creating mandates. The MEFSS (Monitoring Early Fire Suppression Strategies) program (DOI-lead) is a good example of innovation to increase levels of fire expertise for Line Officers. NPSG should be in a leadership role to guide the wildland fire community in this arena.

(See Exhibit H, I, & J - Rapid Response Briefing Paper, Excerpts from QFFR, and Decision Support PowerPoint)

Agenda Item: Predictive Services User Assessment Update – Pat Winter and Heidi Bigler-Cole

Presentation via PowerPoint and teleconference with Pat and Heidi. Pat reported on the progress to date of the survey. The Wave 1 final sample is usable data—partial responses were not used. She will be analyzing non-respondents for bias checks to validate the final sample. There were some non-federal volunteer respondents that are being held aside, but at the time they were collected there was no permission to collect from non-federal participants, and likely those responses will not be used at all. It was asked if there was an approach to be able to use the volunteer responses, but Pat said it is better to have a solid acceptable data set—every respondent needs to be defensible. That way, there is a greater confidence in the planning efforts that result from the analysis.

The OMB approval for collection from non-federal respondents required some changes in format, e.g. quite a few of the questions were dropped from Wave 1, which changed the flow of inquisition. Pat also had to apply "anchors" (each point on a response scale had to be labeled and given descriptors), which can change the way people responded. She tried to keep the content as much the same as possible from Wave 1 to Wave 2. At the time of the teleconference, there were a lot of volunteer responses on the Wave 2 sample, partly because the survey was forwarded for delegations and/or expected interest. They had hoped for more BIA response, but restrictions on e-mail affected that (one segment of the report will be "characterization by agency" to look for trends that may be from a predominant response from an agency). And, in general, there were a lot of e-mail failures. And concern was expressed from those in the sample list about the origin of the e-mail, and wondered if it was SPAM. The collection closed on May 9.

Findings from this study have been accepted for presentation at the "Threat Conference" in Boulder, CO in July. Pat has to submit a paper on the study (will be on a selected set of data), and she will have that document available to Tom W. before the full report. She will have the full report before the October NPSG meeting. The findings could well be rolled into the NPSG Communication Plan.

There was some discussion on the OFCM survey and their expectations of using the findings from the PS study. Pat does not want to release any information until it has been peer reviewed, that any released data is defensible. The NPSG sample list is also not available to OFCM. Concerns about the OFCM survey coming so closely behind the PS survey is that the audience may be very much the same, and being asked for similar responses in a short turn-around is not often received well, which may also contaminate the OFCM sample. Pat offered to share lessons learned with Paul Schlobohm.

Pat was asked about strategies to make the survey results to be rolled into a continuing improvement process. She will address at a later date, probably in October.

THANKS to Pat and Heidi for tenacity and diplomacy!

(See Exhibit K – User Needs Assessment Update Powerpoint)

ACTION ITEM #125: Provide a copy of the User Assessment Final Report to Tom Wordell
Lead: Pat Winter
Target Completion Date: October, 2006

Agenda Item: USFS RMC High Resolution Fire Weather and Smoke Dispersion and Intelligence and Management Decision Aid Tools – Ned Nikolov

Ned presented a PowerPoint giving an orientation of sorts to the current products on the RMC site, including the Fire Consortia for the Advanced Modeling of Meteorology and Smoke (FCAMMS). FCAMMS began at the University of Washington in 2001, to provide intel to fire community research and operations, and was eventually moved to RMC as a team of five people. The mission is not a replacement for the Weather Service, rather it is customized—value-added weather products and services to continue research, and implement rapid Tech Transfer. Currently, the most requested output is point forecasts. The main customers are folks who are technically quite advanced, many potential users would not be able to interpret the information yet. There is, however, an audience for all data sources, and RMC believes that exposure to their products will increase the user group.

Ned then connected live to the RMC website to demonstrate the products. The home page offers three sets of information: observed weather, forecast weather, and applications. There was much specific discussion on technical aspects; the bottom line is to get to better forecasts through innovation.

The future of FCAMMS etc… was asked about—when will it get from innovation to operational use? Will it go from Project to Program (e.g. what is the FCAMMS life span)? When will it be handed off? Will it be supported at some point by operations and not by research? Has it been elevated to the Fire Directors for support? How will it be marketed (e.g. identify business drivers and contact those user groups to help market the products)? Remember, if the products give Fire Management a political advantage when requesting funding, they will be supported!

(See Exhibit L – RMC New Products Powerpoint)

ACTION ITEM: Follow up with Ned to identify the fuel model that runs the NFDRS window on the RMC web page.
Lead: Tom Wordell
Target Completion Date: no date identified

Agenda Item: Predictive Services Handbook
Decision: Discuss further with Neal for more specific direction on what the Handbook needs to contain, e.g. how detailed, how prescriptive, etc….

It was agreed that the starting point should be the direction from NFAEB, and their expectations of Predictive Services. Bottom line, the Handbook should cover the commonalities from location to location of responsibilities, protocols, organization, and current capabilities. It was suggested that maybe a gap analysis between the current capability and the targeted organization and capability (optimal staffing) should be part of the Handbook, lest a false expectation of what PS can currently provide be perceived by leadership.
Up front—work on a new logo. Put the Draft watermark on each page of the work in progress.
Organization Chart: Current and target. Delineate which are lines of authority and which are advisory. The only common positions across every GACC are one Fire Weather specialist and one Intel specialist. Maybe combine the NFDRS, FBAN, and RAWS positions into one. Add NMAC to the Org Chart. It was also suggested that perhaps the Org Chart should reflect the activities that need to be performed as opposed to positions that need to be filled. Also, any shading needs to be relevant.
Miscellaneous items: For Products, in Chapter (Section?) 31 list what they are and who they serve, not how to do them. For process, can just refer to the Mob Guide. For Services, back-up plans are not addressed. Need to visit the definition of "operational", which includes back-up. Section 33 should be about Services, Section 34 should be about COOP. It was discussed whether a COOP plan needs to be part of the NPSG Handbook, and it was finally agreed that rather Predictive Services should be part of each GACC COOP.
Communication and Coordination: Chapter 50 should include information flow charts (as opposed to the physicals tools of communication) such as showing relationships between national and geographic operations, chains of command (governance?), other entities that are touch points for PS info, and emphasize the coordination on geographic boundaries.

Training: Discussion hovered on the appropriate semantics regarding "required", "recommended", "minimum", and if documentation such as White Papers or ICS qualifications were needed to back up statements made in the Handbook. *Per Neal Hitchcock, this section should follow format in the IHC Ops Guide, which lists a brief descriptive paragraph (as opposed to an official Position Description) with minimum Red Card requirements, followed by a matrix where Training is represented as "Required" and "Recommended". Per Jim Knox in BLM HR, it is fair to outline those things in a Handbook. When it comes to writing official Position Descriptions, NPSG will need to touch base with the IFPM folks in HR (himself for BLM, Joy Thomas for Forest Service) if ICS qualifications are to be required, and any required training can be made a Condition of Employment (candidate either has taken the training or signs an agreement upon employment to attain the training within one year) during the Recruit and Fill process. Guidance is not specific (other than IFPM), but any White Papers or other documentation to support proposed requirements is sound business.*

Support Requirements: *Chapter 70 is not about staffing. Discussion was learning to interpret the political climate to know when the time is conducive to re-submit NPSG White Papers.*

Personnel Management: Recruitment retention will be addressed in the Strategic Plan, is not appropriate for the Handbook. This section should identify deficiencies and how they can be filled with current options such as Detailers, etc…

Chuck and Mike L. will continue to incorporate edits as they are submitted. NPSG would still like some kind of clarification from Neal as to what the document is and isn't, such as performance focused as opposed to a prescriptive document.

(See Exhibit M – DRAFT PS Handbook)

ACTION ITEM #124: Discuss with Human Resources how to approach required, suggested, optional training/skills/experience for PS staff positions in the Predictive Services Handbook.
Lead: Stephanie Becker
Target Completion Date: May 15, 2006

ACTION ITEM: Incorporate edits as submitted.
Lead: Chuck Maxwell and Mike Lococo
Target Completion Date: May 31, 2006

Day 3 Notes – 04/27/2006

Agenda Item: Future NPSG Meeting Topics and Logistics – All

Logistics: A future scheduling consideration was addressed, that last weeks of the month conflict with monthly outlook preparation. The next meeting will be October 10-12 in

Boise. The hours for the October meeting were agreed to begin 1300 on Tuesday and go to 1700 on Thursday since the meeting follows a holiday. The February meeting will be the 6th through the 8th in Portland, beginning 0800 hours on Tuesday morning and going through noon on Thursday. The spring meeting is tentatively scheduled for the week of May 7 in Albuquerque.

Suggested Topics for Boise:
- o User Assessment update (Tom will invite Pat and Heidi)
- o Finalize the details on the Team Building session (Charlie will help Robyn with customizing the session for the NPSG group, Gerry will help if needed)
- o Brian Potter to give a presentation on the Pacific Northwest Research Station
- o Follow up with Tim Swedberg
- o Update on 7 Day Product with Tom Rolinski
- o Follow up on 30 Day Outlook test with Terry Marsha and Rich Wooley for status of level of complexity. (Gerry and Chuck will discuss how to proceed on this topic for the Fall meeting based on the status)
- o Matt Jolly and Larry Bradshaw update on FireFamily Plus and GSI
- o Standing update from FENWT and obtain a membership list for FENWT working committees

Suggested Topics for Portland:
- o Have the Northwest Coordination Center mets and intel folks discuss their program successes, issues and concerns
- o 508 compliance on web products

ACTION ITEM #127: Invite Matt Jolly and Larry Bradshaw to prepare an update on FF+ and GSI to NPSG for Fall Meeting
Lead: Tom Wordell
Target Completion Date: June 2006

Agenda Item: 7-Day Product Update and Operational Data Support Protocols – Tom Rolinski

Tom presented with a PowerPoint and discussion. The components of the 7 Day Product are fuel dryness levels (DL), weather triggers, a GACC specific legend, GACC reference in the top left corner (Brad Quayle is doing a standardized version of this in GIS), a weather synopsis, fire potential and resource narrative and optional links that are GACC specific. The issue of colorblindness was brought up by JP Greene (although it was discussed that the DL number could be superimposed in the color blocks to mitigate the uses of other color schemes) and 508 compliance in general was discussed. It takes about 30-45 minutes to generate the product. The MOS goes out to 10 days, but the product only utilizes the first 7 days for greater confidence. It was asked if the product could always be run at 10 days for later verification? Tom Rolinski stated the confidence level would probably not be worth the effort. All GACC's (except AK) should be on board with the 7 Day Product by mid-summer—any who aren't will be "grayed out" on the national map that is being developed. Tom will be working with Alaska this summer and they

should be operational by fire season of '07. Eastern Area and Alaska may need some additional funding to incorporate Canada indices ($4-5K?).

Future product is a national map showing significant fire potential. Initially there will be a separate map for each day of the 7 day forecast, but eventually it will be integrated into the ArcIMS suite of products. It was suggested that the national map page be "clickable" so it can be linked to the 7 Day home page for each GACC. Also suggested to provide a "feedback" button on the 7 Day page.

The question whether a backup was being planned for when DRI data is not available? Tom said not at this time.   It was asked if the data could be derived from Gridded Fx-Net, (i.e. could software be written to create MOS outputs?) Tom thought it would be possible, but that would be very labor intensive—"non-trivial". It was then discussed that correspondence should be drafted to Tim Brown stressing the importance of the 7 Day Product and the need for continuity of data and backup protocols. No one is sure how this would relate to the existing Task Order, and if the need for backup goes beyond the "wiggle" language for them to provide little additions at no additional cost. The feeling is that if NPSG wants certainty over and above what is available, it will end up costing us eventually. Tom Wordell will draft a letter investigating more specific long-term options, Chuck and Tom R. will help with the specifics.

There was some discussion on posting time for products—after visiting with GACC's about the most realistic time, NPSG will work to be an active player in future MOB guide language since it currently reads 1000 and that may not work for posting info to the national map. Because the 7 Day Product has potential for decision support, the national map should be out by noon daily, so GMAC resource allocations decisions can have some confidence. GMAC morning calls will make decisions on yesterday's product, but the confidence level should still be adequate for that.

Future: Need to decide how much data to archive? And how much can be verified-maybe just look for anomalies? Verification and Validation can be done internally short term with archived data, should those results be linked to the 7 Day home page? Will this require a new project with separate funding?

Tom R. wrapped up with a few Lessons Learned. The GACC information collection was profitable. However, the planning effort could have been better, the scope was underestimated. Collaboration between GACC's and research folks could have been better, but a lack of skillset in some of the GACC's created the less than perfect situations. More MOS equations could have been contracted out with DRI. Tom R. could have communicated with the GACC's more, as expectations were not always communicated and that led to some lack of preparation. 508 compliance was never addressed to Tom R. as a need for the web designs. Project Manager training is something that should be considered for more projects like this.

Chuck Maxwell shared an example of a Fire Staffing and Action plan from the Coronado that is simply a dispatch matrix that is connected to Predictive Services products. This

works well in Chuck's unit because the entire unit is in one PSA, so it is easy to correlate the PSA resource plan to PS metrics. This could also be done on an FPU basis. Chuck will e-mail the handout to NPSG. The group will look at potential use of this product, communicating it as a prototype, not a final product.
(See Exhibit N _ SWA Dispatch Matrix using 7-Day Product)

ACTION ITEM #128:   Compose formal correspondence to Tim Brown regarding data backup possibilities.
Lead: Tom Wordell
Target Completion Date: June 2006

ACTION ITEM #129:   E-mail Dispatch Matrix handout to group
Lead: Chuck Maxwell
Target Completion Date: May 2006

Agenda Item: Miscellaneous Items – All

Center Manager Meeting Update
1) Dispatch falls under a national Competitive Sourcing feasibility study beginning this fall, which will include Predictive Services and Intelligence. A word to the wise is not to view this as a threat, but rather encourage participation so that the initial assessment is an accurate picture of the scope.
2) MEFSS will pre-position again this year, and will be looking to PS info as decision support.
3) Vanessa Burnett submitted a paper on collaboration between DHS and national coordination, including PS. It is supposed that NICC will be a focal point for DHS information on fire activity. DHS is apparently looking to use and/or modify our 209's for their use. Mets will be visiting and observing NICC to see how resource allocation is integrated with forecasts. Gerry or Tom W. will distribute Vanessa's paper.
4) Spot Weather forecasts sites have been changed to give access to all data to anyone, as well as allow any user to provide onsite observations or other information to supplement a forecast.

*Safety Alert Follow Up—*Tom W. handed out a letter from Bequi Livingston on her progress following the non-standard issue of Safety Alerts. She will keep following through with the Safety Council for resubmission of the issue to the Safety and Health Working Team for process review.
(See Exhibit O – Safety Alert Follow up email by Bequi Livingston)

*Letter to JFSP about future AFP topics—*Tom W. received no responses from the group, so he made some minor changes and sent it to Tim Swedberg. Tim outreached to many different groups to get ideas for future research needs. With more funding cuts, JFSP will be more and more limited as to projects funded, and the JFSP governing board is trying to provide a better focus for the dollars it will have to spend. Tim said he would follow up

with us after the JFSP Governing Board meeting this spring to inform us what decisions were made

Quality Assurance for PS Products—The ongoing issue of monitoring has yet another dimension: is there a method to validate that products are meeting deliverable dates? Desired is a method for analyzing data and processing feedback in way that is team building. Robyn demo'd a sample tracking spreadsheet. Group feedback suggested putting the GACC names on the output, biasing the results to a percentage compliance (maybe a bias to relative workload?), and distributing monthly to the GACC Center Managers. This product is a measure of performance, not workload. It was suggested that maybe some triggers could be set as to when to contact a GACC regarding performance? This tool could be used for an After Action Review to help with staffing issues? It is agreed to use the spreadsheet as is for now, and after a few months of distributing to GACC CM's, to review for changes or refinement, such as the number of items tracked.

Predictive Services Support for Prescribed Fire and Fire Use— This kind of support has been pointed out in several management reviews (QFFR, etc…).   If PS had adequate staffing and dollars it could definitely provide more decision support for Rx and WFU planning efforts. Some issues presently include the lack of communication to PS about when planned ignitions are scheduled. The SitRep currently has the tools in place for Rx folks to report, and that would help with resource tracking and needs… but the SitRep isn't being utilized for that purpose. In order for the Predictive Services Units to assist with RX fire planning, a mapping system is needed to alert them where planned, current, and patrolled RX fires are located. It was suggested that a small envoy from PS and Weather Service go to Fuels Program managers Boise meeting so they can understand what kind of support they'd like.

ACTION ITEM #130:   Distribute Vanessa Burnett's paper on collaborative coordination
Lead: Tom Wordell
Target Completion Date: June 2006

Agenda Item: OFCM Fire Weather Needs Assessment Update – Rick Ochoa

The main functional areas that will be covered are: data collection, modeling, fire prediction, training education and outreach, user response, etc… Rick will send a link to drafts on the functional areas. It was asked what will the agency do with the data collected? The scope of the users is very broad; there may be a risk of scope creep. The responses may be stratified by group types? A consideration is to make the survey "clickable" for desired topics, lest responding be an insurmountable task. They are also very aware of the issues discussed during Pat's update of the PS survey regarding another survey of the nearly the same user group in a short turn around time. Some other options being considered are conducting focus workshops, and contracting out some of the survey work. They will have a report due to Western Governors by June 2007.

ACTION ITEM: Send link to drafts on OFCM survey functional areas.
Lead: Rick Ochoa
Target Completion Date: as available

BIN Items:
- ➢ Cash Awards—it was agreed to set aside $4K for this for various recipients.
- ➢ FS IT changes, e.g. the agency going to Windows XP in June 2006 and possible complications. XP is higher security, more restrictive, and not able to read older scripts. Will this affect applications used by PS?—it was agreed to deal with these things as they come up.
- ➢ Predictive Services White Papers—it is agreed to assess the political climate and resubmit the papers on topics not addressed in the signed Charter when an opportunity presents itself. Chuck will be the lead.
- ➢ Fire Occurrence Data on the FAMWEB site: There have been some significant changes to fire occurrence data systems in the past few years, which are going to impact how fire occurrence data will be made available via FAMWEB. The old DOI SACCs system is now defunct. FWS set up their own web-based system and BLM,NPS, and BIA have migrated to WFMI. The current status message on the FAMWEB site reads:

5/23/2006 – Advisory notice for FAMWEB users seeking updated fire occurrence data files

The files currently posted here include fire report data that is complete through the end of calendar year 2004.

Normally, the fire occurrence files posted on FAMWEB are updated every Spring, primarily to add the fire report data for the preceding year. However, the update that was originally scheduled for Spring 2006 has been delayed because the Department of Interior agencies that use the Wildland Fire Management Information (WFMI) System are developing a new file format for exported data.

All files posted here will be updated by July 2006 to include data through the end of calendar year 2005. With this, there will be significant changes to some fire occurrence data files:

All agencies: Files will include all fire report records from 1/1/1972 to 12/31/2005.
USFS: No change in format - files will continue to use the fire report passing format (*.raw), which is compatible with all versions of the Personal Computer Historical Analysis (PCHA99) and FireFamilyPlus (FF+) software programs.
BIA, BLM, and NPS (agencies using WFMI): Discontinuing the fpl format. Files will be issued in 2 new formats:
PCHA/FF+ format (*_PCHAFFP.txt): Format containing the data fields needed for PCHA99 (v1.2.31_Patch-1e). Also compatible with FF+ version 4, which will be released in Fall 2006.
Excel format (*_Excel.csv): Generic (comma-delimited) format that creates a single table with all data fields when opened with Excel.
FWS: Files will be compatible with FF+ and PCHA.

As in past years, an updated version of the Annual Fire and Weather Data CD will be made available in conjunction with the FAMWEB update. Federal fire managers may request copies of the CD through their State/Regional Office.

CLOSE OUT
- ❖ It is agreed that holding meetings in conjunction with GACC's, Center Managers, and staff invites is profitable.
- ❖ Knowing what John Szymoniak is working on is worth following to know what is on the "cutting edge".
- ❖ Need to obtain the NPSG Rep for Intel SOON.

❖ Neal Hitchcock was MISSED.
❖ Per Gerry Day, please task Kim Kelly as minimally as possible for now.
❖ The May 2006 Canada trip is scheduled for fact-finding and observations, to bring back concepts that might be integrated in our programs. This is expected to be another positive step along the lines of including the Canada and Mexico representatives at the NSAW workshop. A report on this trip should be an agenda item for the October meeting in Boise.

ACTION ITEM #131:   Provide copy of Canada Trip report to NPSG at Fall meeting
Lead: Tom Wordell
Target Completion Date: 10/10/2006

End