

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

### **Meeting Notes**

**Location:** Boise, Idaho  
**Meeting Dates:** February 5-7, 2008

#### **Members Present:**

- Tom Wordell – FS/NICC – Fire Analysts Representative – NPSG Chair
- Robyn Heffernan for Rick Ochoa – BLM/NICC – Fire Weather Program Representative – NPSG Vice Chair
- Rick Ochoa – BLM/NICC – Fire Weather Program Representative – NPSG Vice Chair
- Susie Stingley-Russell – ONCC – GACC Center Managers Representative
- Heath Hockenberry for Paul Witsaman – NWS, National Weather Service Representative
- Marva Willey – BLM/ONCC, Intelligence Coordinators Representative
- Brad Smith – Texas Forest Service, NASF Representative
- Tom Rolinski – BLM/OSCC – GACC Meteorologists Representative
- Charlie Leonard – FS/NICC – Intelligence Program Representative
- Rich McCrea for John Barboronas – BIA – Field Level Fire Managers Representative
- Rex McKnight – BLM/NV State Office, Geographic Operations Group Liaison
- Neal Hitchcock – FS/NIFC – NMAC Representative
- Kim Christensen – FS/NICC Manager – NICC Representative
- Dan Smith – NWCG Liaison

#### **Members Absent:**

#### **Guests:**

- Ed Delgado – Meteorologist, Eastern Great Basin Coordination Center
- Chuck Maxwell – Meteorologist, Southwest Coordination Center (via Conference Call)
- Jeanne Hoadley (via Conference Call) – Air & Water Quality Specialist, USFS
- Dan O’Brian (via Conference Call) – Wildland Fire Analyst, BLM
- John Snook (via Conference Call) – Meteorologist, Northern California Coordination Center
- Mike Kreyenhagen (via Conference Call) - Meteorologist, Northern Rockies Coordination Center
- Matt Jolly – Missoula Technology and Development Center (via Conference Call)
- Pete Lahm – Fire Air Coordination Team

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

**Meeting Agenda Topics:**

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Meeting Logistics
2. NPSG Action Item Tracking Table Status Check
3. Eastern Seasonal Assessment Workshop Update
4. Update/Info Sharing from Meteorologist and Intelligence Working Groups
5. Fuel Sampling Protocols
6. 7-Day Product Updates
7. National Weather Service Update
8. NWCG Restructuring Update
9. Integrating Fire Occurrence into Outlook Products
10. Smoke Management Issues related to Predicted Services
11. Update on GSI, NARR, EROS Fire Potential Products, etc.
12. Update on RAWS/ROMAN and other FENWT Issues
13. Agenda Topics and Logistics for next meeting
14. Geographic Area Coordinators Meeting and NMAC/GMAC Update
15. Dispatch Study Team Update
16. NPSG Project Proposals and Funding Status

**Exhibits:**

- A. Action Items, Decisions and Meeting Topics
- B. NPSG Project Funding
- C. Short-Term 209 Changes
- D. International Association of Wildland Fire (IAWF) Yellowstone Fire Conference
- E. Fuel Moisture Collection and Sampling Standards
- F. Online 7-Day Outlook Preparation System
- G. Web-based 7-Day Outlook Preparation System
- H. GIS Tools Project Proposal
- I. Predictive Services Web Data Interface, Briefing Paper
- J. Implementation Plan for NDFD Fire Weather Grids
- K. NWCG Substructure Overview
- L. Fire Occurrence Analysis
- M. Predictive Services Significant Fire Density Prototype Document
- N. Proposal for Modification and Extension of RMC Tabular Forecasts to Support Smoke Management

**Tuesday – February 5, 2008**

**Welcome, Introductions and Meeting Logistics – Tom Wordell**

Randy and Tom welcomed everyone and covered the logistics for the area. Everyone introduced themselves, and the Agenda was briefly covered.

**Agenda Item: NPSG Action Item Tracking Table Status Check – Tom Wordell (Exhibit A)**

The Action Items Tracking Table was updated.

- Action Item 115 – Develop a tracking mechanism and post performance measures. Verification is currently being performed; the Remote Sensing and Application Center (RSAC) may be able to automate the process for the 7-Day Product.
- Action Item 128 – Backup/contingency plans for the 7 Day Product. This action item is still pending based on the proposal by Ed Delgado.
- Action Item 151 – Entering priority NPSG Action Plans and Tasks in Microsoft Project Manager. This action item has not happened.
- Action Item 154 – Integration of non-RAWS stations into WIMS. This may be tied into the recommendation by the Fire Environment Working Team (FENWT) for the RAWS network.
- Action Item 160 – Unit Award; Tom will share the information received by Paul Witsaman with the group.
- Action Item 165 – Adopt a Predictive Services Slogan. Tom will send out the current submission to the Meteorologist and Intelligence Working Groups and request that they each make a selection and forward it to NPSG.
- Action Item 166 – Develop a brochure. Tom will send final brochure layout to Susie Stingley-Russell. She will have the staff on the Shasta Trinity National Forest develop three alternatives for the April Meeting.
- Action Item 167 – Explore the process/possibility for shortening the URL. Robyn Heffernan will follow-up with Natalie Wickland.
- Action Item 169 – Determine the status of GSI and the Live Fuel Moisture Data Base. Matt Jolley will be on the Conference Call.
- Action Item 170 – Identify a group to review and make recommendations concerning the standardization of daily products. The group has been formed.
- Action Item 171 – Development of a National and a Geographic Level brochure. This action item will be completed in conjunction with Action Item 166.
- Action Item 172 – Develop the Statement of Work for Tasks 1, 2 and 3 of Goal 2, Priority 2 of the Strategic Plan. This action item needs to be revisited and completed.
- Action Item 173 – Develop a Communications Plan. Rex McNight will coordinate with Sheldon Wimmer on the progress of this action item.
- Action Item 176 – Invite John Noneman to the winter meeting in Boise. John was unable to attend the meeting this week. However the IRM Working Team is developing and end to end process for submission of IT Projects. When this is completed they will attend the next meeting or submit a presentation of the process.
- Action Item 177 – Retask the Web Task Group to review and make recommendations of the Geographic Area Websites. This subject will be discussed later in the meeting.
- Action Item 178 – Explore the development of web-based Briefings/Conference Calls. Fred Svetz needs to be contacted concerning this action item.

**Agenda Item: Eastern Seasonal Assessment Workshop Update – Robyn Heffernan**

The Eastern Seasonal Assessment Workshop was held last week in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. The Workshop was well attended; however the Southwest Geographic Area was not able to participate this year. The proceedings should be available Friday, February 15<sup>th</sup>; they will include a Confidence Level and Bias section for each Geographic Area. The Bias will discuss the next most likely scenario and will also explain the white areas on the map. The findings from the workshop were used in the Seasonal Outlook which was issued yesterday.

The Western Seasonal Assessment will be held the week of April 21<sup>st</sup>, at the NOAA facility in Boulder, Colorado.

**Agenda Item: Fire Occurrence Reporting System (FORS) Data Standards Update – Tom Wordell**

The FORS Study Team continues to evaluate the 38 common and critical data elements they had previously identified and develop the data standards required for warehousing the data. The complete study findings are posted at: [www.nwccg.gov/teams/fenwt/fors.htm](http://www.nwccg.gov/teams/fenwt/fors.htm).

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

- Intelligence Working Group – Marva Willey
  - Chair – Marco Perea
  - Vice-Chair – Jay Ellington
  - NPSG Representative – Marva Willey
  - A funding proposal has been submitted to NPSG to assist in travel expenses for meeting attendance.
  - The Sit/209 Program is currently being updated to include the addition of ownership units.
  - An on-line training course for the Sit/209 Program is currently being developed.
  - The Group is pursuing an AD Pay rate for the Intelligence Specialist (INTS) Position. This position was developed to provide assistance to local dispatch centers as well as support at the Geographic Area level.
  - The Rocky Mountain Geographic Area will be sponsoring the Intelligence Specialist Training in 2008. More information is coming.
  
- Sit/209 Program – Charlie Leonard (Exhibit C)

There have been several substantial changes to the Sit/209 Program; the most significant being the addition of the “Incident Kind” field. This field will require a wildland fire strategy which will accommodate “Appropriate Management Response”. The addition of this field provides a more accurate depiction of the management strategy for the incident and will assist in the allocation of resources. When more than one strategy is being utilized to manage an incident, the predominant strategy will be reported and additional management strategies should be listed in the Remarks section.

Another change is to the “Current Weather Conditions” field; which will be renamed “Observed Weather”. In addition, “wind speed” was changed to “peak gusts”.

Discussion:

- The “Incident Kind” field may need to be changed to “Event Kind” to follow NWCG Standards.
- The purpose for changing “wind speed” to “peak gusts” is not clear.

➔ **Action Item 179:** Investigate the reason/decision/validity in changing “wind speed” to “peak gusts”.

**Responsible:** Charlie Leonard

**Due Date:** April 1, 2008

- NIMS 209 – Charlie Leonard  
The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have adopted the Incident Command System (ICS) and are creating ICS reports. They have created 209 for all hazard incidents. Charlie has provided feedback to Vanessa Burnett at DHS; one concern is that they are not developing an electronic reporting and data retrieval system. The form is to exist as a paper copy only. It also appears to be a redundant process. Sue Christensen is the Liaison from the Intelligence Working Group, and she remains in contact with Vanessa. Charlie remains engaged as well. FEMA is progressing slowly.
- Tactical Resources Website – Charlie Leonard  
Charlie has drafted a letter that is currently being reviewed by the Intelligence Coordinators regarding the development of a redundant system. He will then discuss the subject with Kim Christensen.
- Resources Component to the 7 Day Product  
This status of this subject needs additional investigation with the retirement of Randy Dzialo.
- Meteorologist Working Group – Tom Rolinski  
With reference to the NPSG Meeting in Fort Worth, the cohesiveness of the group has improved; in part due to the implementation of the 7 Day Product.
  - Action Items the National Predictive Services Meeting:
    - Draft a formal proposal (White Paper) on fuels sampling standards to submit to the National Fuels Committee with intent for development of an interagency standard.  
*Marva Willey and Ed Delgado will have a presentation this afternoon.*
    - Draft a proposal to NPSG to obtain funding for a Climate-Pattern (local lore) database, and then identify the next step if funding is approved.

- Robyn Heffernan will be making a presentation this afternoon.*

  - Centrally do analysis, de-bug and validate method for verification of the Monthly and Seasonal Outlooks.
    - This has been completed for three Geographic Areas.*
  - Invite Pete Lahm or a member of the Smoke Air Resources Management Team to address the group.
    - Pete will be at the meeting tomorrow.*
    - Next years Annual Predictive Services Meeting will be at Estes Park, CO the week of November 17<sup>th</sup>.*
  - Assess what possibilities exist to market Predictive Services in your unit and take action.
    - This is ongoing.*
  - Resurrect the effort to draft a Predictive Services Communications Plan to aid with the marketing effort.
    - Rick Ochoa is circulating a draft, unclear how this ties in with Sheldon Wimmer and NPSG's efforts.*
  - Pull together a list of pertinent global datasets (such as precipitation, lightning, etc.) to be incorporated into a standard GIS tool for all GACCs, and work with the RSAC training staff to establish a basic skills training around data that is relevant to Predictive Services.
    - Tied to action item below and Robyn Heffernan will be presenting a proposal this afternoon.*
  - E-mail a solicitation to the field on what kind of data would be preferred for viewing as a spatial display (lightning, fuel moistures, forecasts, etc...) that could be built into a national "Met Toolbar" to enhance decision support. Prepare to consolidate feedback, and discuss sources of preferred data and establishment of a national standard for that data. After discussion, develop a proposal for funding a Met Toolbar to NPSG.
    - See above*
  - Chase down the reasons why BLM cannot load Google Earth on their network computers.
    - Fred Svetz has investigated this action item.*
  - Distribute the urls for capability to plot climate patterns (or lack thereof) against significant fire weather for a particular forecast period.
    - Robyn Heffernan has sent out the urls.*
  - Draft proposal to NPSG for funding of 7-Day product on-line capability to support Operational Product status.
    - Ed Delgado will have a presentation this afternoon.*
  - Go to the DRI 7-Day verification test site, evaluate the application, and send comments to Tom Rolinski for compilation and forwarding to DRI. Also look at it in terms of how verifications can be used to market competency of program.
    - Tom has sent out the website and is working with Tim Brown to implement the recommendations.*

- To facilitate analysis of PSAs by burn environment risk and ignition risk, draft a request to NPSG for funding of a workshop prior to next western fire season. Data needed to implement the workshop will be: lightning data by PSA for all Geographic Areas, model data sent by Tom Rolinski for all Geographic Areas daily Dryness Levels (five years' worth, and maybe even get them updated to 6 or 6 ½ years worth through DRI?), and fire data from all GACCs. Workshop date will be preceded by a deadline date for having the needed data.

*Tom has requested initial thoughts. Related to following action item.*

- Task group will investigate options for visual display of risks, and develop visuals for review, keeping in mind the need for clarity and sensitivity to users. Possibilities will include but are not limited to: colored boxes with new colors for high risk categories, boxes without colors for high risk but with colored symbols, boxes outlined with colors indicating high risk, or no change at all from the current system. These options will be vetted through some fire management decision-makers, and given to Tom Rolinski to assess for any programming challenges before being proposed to NPSG for decision.

*Related to above action item. Also considering additional color/categories: high risk for ignition, high risk for significant growth. Continues to be a topic of the Meteorologist Working Group Conference Calls.*

### **International Association of Wildland Fire (IAWF) Yellowstone Fire Conference Participation – Tom Wordell (Exhibit D)**

- The IAWF Conference will be held September 22-27, 2008 at Jackson Hole, Wyoming. The theme is “The '88 Fires: Yellowstone and Beyond”, which correlates with the twentieth anniversary of the Yellowstone Fires.
- It would be desirable if NPSG could have a presence at this conference to educate attendees regarding Predictive Services Products. A poster would be a possibility, please coordinate with Tom.
- The Fire Environment Working Team (FENWT) is expected to be there in some capacity as well.
- Ed Delgado is planning on presenting a paper on the Fuel Moisture Database.
- Tom Wordell is planning on attending as is Tom Rolinski, depending on scheduling.

### **Web Task Group Task and Issues – Tom Wordell**

Tom contacted Jay Ellington to request that the Web Task Group reconvene and review the current status of the Geographic Area Webpages and standards. The group has met and requested further clarification. Specifically they asked:

1. How formal is the process intended to be and how should the methodologies be determined?

*This is not intended to be a formal process, and the Web Task Group can determine the methodologies.*

2. What specific objectives are to be met and how is consistency defined?

*Tom Rolinski is on the Web Task Group and he will work with the group to convey the objectives of NPSG concerning consistency. Heath Hockenberry will also work with the group to determine the potential of linking with the National Weather Service Fire Weather Webpages.*

3. Uncertain on how to proceed with “correcting the differences”.

*The group should make recommendations which NPSG would forward to the Geographic Areas.*

4. Would the group be allowed to make additional recommendations?

*Absolutely*

5. *In his response to the group, Tom added an additional request to “look for gaps”.*

### **National Predictive Services Slogan – Tom Wordell**

Tom will send the six slogans that have received some support to the Tom Rolinski and Marva Willey to take to the Meteorologist and Intelligence Working Teams. Each Working Team will select one slogan, or design their own. A slogan decision will then be made.

### **Agenda Item: Fuel Sampling Protocols – Marva Willey and Ed Delgado (Exhibit E)**

#### National Fuel Moisture Data Base (NFMD)

- Developed regionally in Eastern Great Basin in 2006
- Expanded nationally in 2007
- Web-based database of live and dead fuel moisture data already collected throughout the country
- Tabular and graphical displays of fuel moisture data
- Data available for use on fire danger/fire behavior assessments, historical analysis, model input, validation of remote sensing technologies, etc.

#### Data Quality

- Currently, no national interagency standard exists for data quality in the fuels program
- Concerns:
- Collection methods (old versus new, leaf to stem ratio, storage and transport, etc.)
- Sample size – Is it statistically valid? Is it dependent upon fuel type?
- Baking Samples – What kind of ovens? Calibration standards? Optimum temperatures? Fuel type dependent?

#### References:

- Countryman and Dean (1979) - Standards for chaparral used in CA during 1980s. Separated old and new growth. Gradually faltered.



- Norum and Miller (1984) - Standards for Alaska fuels included lichen and mosses. Old and new growth handled differently. Designed for Rx but could be modified into permanent site sampling program.
- Rice (1989) - Similar to Countryman and Dean but expanded to desert environment.
- South Canyon IMR (1995) - Recommends a comprehensive live fuel moisture collection approach, combining elements of earlier work by Countryman and Dean and by Norum and Miller.
- Florida Division of Forestry (2002) - Details collection methods. Allows mix of old and new growth. Gives oven temperature recommendations.
- Pollet and Brown (2007) - Based on South Canyon IMR approach. Allows for mix of old and new growth. Developed for Utah BLM fuels program and adopted as a first attempt by NFMD. Modified versions used in Southwest and other GACCs.

Recommendation:

- Multi-discipline working group with an emphasis on fire environment develop interagency standards for fuels collection and sampling.
- Build on previous works as well as work currently underway at USFS/San Dimas Technology and Development Center.
- Must be done quickly to ensure data currently collected in NFMD will be statistically and operationally valid.

Discussion:

- Once standards are developed all data entered into the database must meet the standards.
- There is no way to ensure that historical data meets the standards.
- There is the potential to build a quality control “flag” into the program that would identify uncharacteristic data.
- The next step would be to take the proposed standards to the National Fuels Committee.

**Agenda Item Online 7-Day Outlook Preparation System (7-Day OPS) – Ed Delgado**  
(Exhibits F and G)

Goals:

- Develop a web-based, database-driven preparation system for the 7-Day Significant Fire Potential (Outlook) product that will:
- Standardize/centralize preparation of the 7-Day Outlook.
- Provide a central database for the 7-Day Outlook and for future Predictive Services products.
- Provide an efficient operational backup system for the 7-Day Outlook and for future Predictive Service Products.
- Provide a modularized, evolving system that can be expanded as needs change.

Benefits:

- Provide a standardized interface to put a common recognizable look on the 7-Day Outlook (and all Predictive Services products)
- A central database reduces/eliminates maintenance of multiple data stores/archives and facilitates transfer among Geographic Areas and other users and partners.

- Facilitates operational Geographic Area to Geographic Area backup procedures and streamlines software maintenance and upgrade issues
- New products can be added as modules rather than creating new and separate systems.

#### Basic Design:

- A central database that will feed both preparation and end-user interfaces
- The preparation interface will allow interactive, real-time changes for editing of data and will store changes for verification
- The End-user interface will be visually similar to the current 7-day Outlook product.

#### Enhanced Design

- Rollover-type behaviors that highlight data by day/date, weather element, Predictive Service Area and other elements
- GIS functionality, both on preparation and end-user interfaces
- User-defined queries.

#### Timeline:

- Set specifications – early Summer 2008
- Secure funding for development system – Summer 2008
- Identify partner(s)/contractor – Fall 2008
- Beta system ready – early Spring 2009
- Beta Testing – Summer 2009
- Beta test assessment – Fall 2009
- Build full, national system – Winter 2009/2010
- Implement national system – Spring/Summer 2010

#### Discussion:

- The best way to approach this project would be to approach NWCG and develop a Business Case.
- The group will need to develop specifications.

➔ **Action Item 180:** Contact Judy Crosby or the Information Resource Management Working Team (IRMWT) to work on developing a Business Case for the 7-Day Outlook Web-based Proposal.

**Responsible:** Tom Wordell

**Due Date:** March 30, 2008

➔ **Action Item 181:** Schedule time on the NWCG Agenda to present the 7-Day Outlook Web-based Proposal.

**Responsible:** Tom Wordell

**Due Date:** March 19, 2008

#### **Agenda Item: NPSG Project Proposals and Funding Issues – Tom Wordell**

- GIS Tools Proposal – Kim Kelly (Exhibit H)  
This proposal is for the development of two GIS Toolbars. Each Toolbar is expected to cost \$6000.00. The total request is for \$12,000.00.

1. To create a verification toolbar that would verify the monthly and seasonal forecasts.
  2. To develop a meteorology toolbar within GIS that would display some common meteorological and fire danger indices for analysis and display.
- **Web Portal Proposal – Shelby Sharples and Robyn Heffernan (Exhibit I)**  
This proposal is for a web based portal to access data sets that are frequently used in Predictive Services.  
Discussion:
    - This may be similar to COGNOS and other existing efforts.
    - The specifics of this proposal need to be further defined.
    - Some aspects of this proposal may be able to be combined with the online 7-day proposal
  - **Back-Up Procedures Proposal Status – Robyn Heffernan**  
This project was funded by NPSG with the 2007 budget. ESRL has not started work on this project as of yet and the project may not be needed on light of the online 7-day proposal. It is possible that ESRL can re-route the money for work on FX-Net and gridded FX-Net.

**Agenda Item: National Weather Service (NWS) Update – Heath Hockenberry (Exhibit J)**

- **Implementation Plan for National Digital Forecast Database (NDFD) Fire Weather Grids**
  - Core Elements are those recommended for national NDFD implementation are required from every office.
  - Regional elements are those parameters that are produced on a regional and or seasonal basis rather than nationally and/or continuously through the year. These elements are Lightning Activity Level (LAL), Chance of Wetting Rain (CWR), Haines Index (HI) and several air quality-related parameters applicable to various parts of the Nation.
  - Defined elements are those that receive substantial regional or national use, but can be generated with simple calculations rather than with NDFD grids. These elements are 24 Hour Trends of Temperature and Relative Humidity, 20-Foot Winds and several air-quality parameters, including Ventilation Rate. Definitions and calculation methods were included for these parameters for inter-site coordination and potential local applications.

Review proposal and send comments to Heath.
- **Directives**  
The NWS is currently updating Directives 10-4, 10-401 and 10-406. Directive 110-4 is being broadened to include incident support beyond fire.
- **Training**

- The S-591 Fire Weather Forecasters Course has been updated by COMET and will be available online as well as on a DVD. The first prototype delivery is scheduled for April 24-25.
  - The NWS is attempting to have COMET publish Intermediate Wildland Fire Behavior (S-290) as well.
- Master Agreement – Neil Hitchcock  
The new master agreement is in the final stages. Incident Meteorologist (IMET) issues are being resolved and it is expected to be finalized in March.
  - Advanced Weather Interactive Processing System (AWIPS)/FX-Net  
AWIPS will be transitioning to thin client, AWIPS2, the contractor is Raytheon; with that, FX-Net will be replaced by a thin client in AWIPS2. It is unclear what the affect will be on gridded Fx-Net. Although it is expected that FX-Net will remain unchanged for a number of years, it is important that preparations/planning for the transition begin soon.
- ➔ **Action Item 182:** Obtain briefing on the potential thin client AWIPS and the projected timeline.
- Responsible:** Rick Ochoa, Robyn Heffernan, Heath Hockenberry and Sher Schranz
- Due Date:** Feb 14, 2008
- Red Flag Warning/National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS) Verification  
Heath has a list of domains for those interested in reviewing statistics on demand verification.

### Wednesday – February 6, 2008

Dan Chan, Meteorologist for the Georgia State Forest Service will be the new NASF Representative, vice Brad Smith.

#### **Agenda Item: National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Restructuring Update – Where does NPSG fit? – Dan Smith and Tom Wordell (Exhibit K)**

An effort began approximately 18 months ago to combine NWCG and the National Fire and Aviation Executive Board (NFAEB) into one body. That merger has been completed and restructuring proposals are currently being evaluated. The substructure design is expected to be finalized in March; with budget requests expected in April for the 2009 budget.

#### **Agenda Item: Integrating Fire Occurrence into Outlook Products – Presentation/Discussion – Tom Wordell (Exhibits L and M)**

WFMI and NPS Fire Analysis (Data supplied by the CHEETAH Data Base)

- Fire Occurrence Statistics and Trends
  - 2007 Expenditures
  - Mean Fire Return Interval and Implications
  - Fire Activity Spatial and Temporal Relationships
  - Management Implications and Discussion
- Summary – 1982-2006
  - The number of fires seems pretty stable through time.
  - The number of acres burned is increasing through time
    - The average suppression fire is about four times larger now than in 1982.
  - The number of days at high fire danger each year is increasing (at least in the Northern Rockies)
  - Fire programs in the regions are very different.
  - Our support actions are generally increasing through time.
  - Fire use and prescribed fire have increased greatly but seems to have leveled off or to be declining recently.
  - The amount of work to treat an acre of land is increasing through time.
  - The number of acres burned in most parks is much smaller than the number of acres expected by Mean Fire Return Interval (MFRI).
- Decision Support and the Future
  - As the decision support tools (FARSITE, FlamMap, WRDSS and others) and data (LANDFIRE) become more available there will be an increasing expectation that they should be used.
  - We need to use and understand these tools to meet our own guidance (and best available science) and to understand and evaluate the use that others make of these tools.
- Data Management
  - As technical analysis becomes more important in planning and operations, accurate and readily available data will become more important.
  - The models work fine with inaccurate data but poor decisions may result.

Discussion:

- It would be interesting to evaluate the data at the Predictive Services Area level.
- This analysis may be useful in determination of “drawdown levels”
- Potential to use this type of analysis to validate Predictive Services Products.
- Process could be handled internally or externally (contract).

**Agenda Item: Conference Call – Smoke Management Issues Related to Predictive Services – Pete Lahm** (Exhibit N)

Pete Lahm, Fire and Air Coordination Team (FACT) was invited to this meeting as a result of the National Predictive Services annual meeting to explore the role Predictive Services could or should play in smoke management.

FACT is currently chartered under NWCG and is the focal point for smoke management policy and fire activity emission issues.

- Proposal for Modification and Extension of RMC Tabular Forecasts to Support Smoke Management – Chuck Maxwell and Jeanne Hoadley.  
The proposal would make available tabular forecast data out to seven days in a format which is conducive to being processed and made into custom smoke management outlook products. Once the seven day tabular forecasts are available, an operational test will be conducted to develop and automate customized smoke management support products for interests in New Mexico. This will be done in the context of developing a basic reproducible process that can then be ported to other locations. The availability of the data and the means for processing it to create custom smoke management products will then be advertised throughout Predictive Services.

Discussion:

- Desire to enter into smoke management in an organized fashion.
- Potential as an advisory tool for decision making:
  - When to time a burnout?
  - When will the inversion break?
- Potential to display graphically – assistance through the Fire Consortia for Advanced Modeling of Meteorology and Smoke (FCAMMS)

➔ **Action Item 183:** Send out letter soliciting user specifications, recommended products and identify sources of information/data.

**Responsible:** Tom Rolinski and Chuck Maxwell

**Due Date:** March 21, 2008

**Agenda Item: Update on GSI, NARR, EROS Fire Potential product etc. – Matt Jolly (Conference Call)**

- North American Regional Reanalysis (NARR)  
NARR is a compiled 1980-2005 data set of historical fire danger, climatology; current observed fire danger and related them to what is historically normal. The 2006 and 2007 data sets will soon be added. The data is available at:  
<http://www.emc.ncep.noaa.gov/mmb/rrean/>
- Earth Resources Observation and Science (EROS)  
EROS is assisting in the evaluation of a Fire Potential Index (FPI) by providing a set of fuel moistures and energy release components. Work continues with Haiganoush Preisler.
- Nelson Model  
Per Larry Bradshaw, the Nelson modifications have been implemented on the Weather Information Management System (WIMS) server. This is the “Half-Nelson”. Full implementation is expected in about six weeks.
- Fire Family Plus, 4.0  
A Users Guide is under development.

**Agenda Item: Update on RAWs/ROMAN and other Fire Environment Working Team Issues (FENWT) issues – Paul Schlobohm**

- RAWs/ROMAN

FENWT received an assignment from the fire directors to assess the needs/requirements of the fire community for fire weather in order to resolve two concerns:

- Unplanned growth in the size of the interagency Remote Automated Weather Station (RAWs) network while agency budgets are in decline.
- Should the agencies support the Real-time Observation Monitoring and Assessment Network (ROMAN) and if so how?

Recommendations

- RAWs

Low and high resolution grid emphasis, network size is finite and may increase or decrease.

*Establish a primary core set of RAWs emphasizing gridded data applications while continuing to support point data needs. Support fire weather with a combination of RAWs and non-RAWs observations, as determined by specific research.*

- ROMAN

- Short-term:

Fully support/sanction ROMAN as an NWCG mission critical access system.

*Upgrade ROMAN software. Provide programmatic funding level to include project management, maintenance and operations. Add enhancements such as fuel moistures and fire danger rating. Establish a backup system to provide for Continuity of Operations. Maintain RAWs archive at Western Region Climate Center.*

- Long-term:

Advance to an Enhanced ROMAN.

*Begin work fall 2008 to develop opportunities with Meteorological Assimilation Data Ingest System (MADIS) for fire weather data access. Partner with NOAA for MADIS to be the future source of RAWs and other observation networks and gridded products. Pursue ways to link, combine or merge our other data access systems and functionality with ROMAN.*

There is currently no set timeline for additional study to implement the recommendations.

- NWCG Re-Structuring:

The proposal is for FENWT to become the Fire Environment Committee (FEC).

There will be three subcommittees under FEC: Fire Weather, Fire Modeling and Fire Occurrence.

- Advanced National Fire Danger Rating System Training:

The course is being presented at the National Advanced Fire and Resource Institute (NAFRI) at the end of the month.

- Fire Weather Station Standards:  
The RAWS standards have been revised by the Fire Weather Committee and are now Fire Weather Station Standards. They have been submitted for comments under FENWT.
- Long Term Risk Assessment (S492)/FARSITE Fire Area Simulator (S493) Courses:  
The Fire Behavior Committee requested that these courses be revised to utilize new technology. The FBAN and LTAN Taskbooks are under revision and the Training Working Team has given the Fire Behavior Committee one year to rewrite the course.

### **Thursday – February 7, 2008**

#### **Future Meetings:**

##### Spring Meeting

Dates: April 29<sup>th</sup> – May 1<sup>st</sup>, to begin at 0800 on Tuesday

Location: San Diego or Salt Lake City

Tom Rolinski will work on the location and logistics.

##### Fall Meeting

Dates: October 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>

Location: Denver or Sacramento/Redding

Susie Stingley Russell will work on the location and logistics

#### **Agenda Item: NPSG Project Proposal and Funding Status – Tom Wordell (Exhibit B)**

Reviewed current funding obligations and proposals

- Expect \$160,000 for FY08, of which \$60,000 is direct funding for ROMAN
- Seasonal Assessment Workshops \$8000 (Eastern and Western)
- Verification and Product Maintenance for the 7 Day Product – need information from Tim Brown
- Web Data Interface – did not receive a funding request
- National Fuel Moisture Data Base – requested \$16,500, may have found another funding source, fund at \$10,000.
- Intelligence Working Group for travel support \$5000
- Value of the Predictive Services Program \$10,000
- GIS Tools Request \$12,000
- ROSS DDS Project \$5000
- Development of a standard web-based approach to the 7-Day Product \$20,000
- National Predictive Services Data Archive \$10,000
- Awards \$4000



- Travel and per diem \$3000
- Traditionally held money through the spring

**Agenda Item: Geographic Area Coordinators Meeting and NMAC/GMAC Update – Kim Christensen**

NMAC/GMAC Meeting

- Fire Behavior Analyst/Long Term Fire Analyst (FBAN/LTAN) Position:  
There was discussion on the possible merger of the FBAN/LTAN positions and how to utilize LTANs on multiple incidents.  
Discussion:
  - There is a shortage of LTANs and they are being utilized more often.
  - The role of the LTAN is expanding, beyond what they were initially trained to do.
  - Utilization of LTANs on multiple incidents, shorter assignments, under Area Command.
  - The Northern Rockies Geographic Area utilized the position as a Service Center approach last season where they supported several different fires; which worked well for them.
  - Some Geographic Areas Coordination Centers are considering Fire Analyst positions on their Predictive Services staffs.
  - Geographic Areas are looking to the Coordination Centers to provide certain talents including Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS)
- 209 Discussion:  
NMAC/GMAC is interested in the primary suppression strategy and would also like to know when the “Season Ending Event” is forecasted.

**Agenda Item: Dispatch Efficiency Study – Kim Christensen and Susie Stingley-Russell**

Both the Forest Service and Department of Interior Leadership Teams have been briefed, with the exception of the Chief of the Forest Service. An additional briefing may be scheduled. A review period follows.

The study has become a management efficiency study where recommendations were made that would improve the efficiencies of the dispatch/coordination system.

When decisions have been made to implement the recommendations, Business Process Review Teams will be organized to further examine the recommendations made by the study team.

**Request from the Eastern Area Coordinating Group for an additional Meteorologist**

This request was initially mentioned at the NMAC/GMAC Meeting, with the understanding that a letter would be coming. This letter was received by NPSG. NPSG is in support of the position, but lacks the funding mechanism to provide financial support. The current

positions were initially funded through the National Fire Plan and their continued funding is provided by the agencies. However, in these times of tight budgets, these positions are continually under review and discussion. The Coordinating Group has interagency support for this position and would need to initiate interagency agreements to staff and fund the position. The additional meteorologist position is supported in the Predictive Services Handbook; however, the process of increasing the staff is not defined.

Predictive Services Meteorologists are required to generate and publish products seven days a week. This becomes difficult when staffing is at five days a week. Programs have developed a variety of methods to continue to produce the products. The products are not necessarily produced by meteorologists; when this occurs, the validity of the product is called into question. In order to maintain the integrity of the products, only qualified meteorologists should be producing the 7 Day Product. It is important that NMAC be briefed on the decision to not produce the 7 Day Product if there is not a meteorologist available that day.

- ➔ **Action Item 184:** Take letter to NMAC, for their consideration.  
**Responsible:** Kim Christensen  
**Due Date:** February 25, 2008
  
- ➔ **Action Item 185:** Issue direction that only qualified meteorologists will issue the 7-Day Product. Direction should be issued through NMAC and be included in the Predictive Services Handbook.  
**Responsible:** Tom Wordell  
**Due Date:** February 25, 2008

**Agenda Item: NPSG Project Proposals and Funding Status (con't)**

The budget is close in terms of overall requests. There may be some additional savings from the National Fuel Data Base due to a reduction in overhead costs.

- Proposal by the Intelligence Working Group to fund travel to attend the National Predictive Services Meeting.  
 Travel should generally be covered by the individual's agency. However, travel funds have been available to support task groups as well as travel for state representatives and may be available on a case by case basis.
  
- Proposal by Shelby Sharples for a Web Based Portal  
 Additional information is needed. The proposal did not include a request for funding at this time.
  
- Proposal by Ed Delgado for an Online 7 Day Product  
 This request was to build a prototype to system to produce and publish the 7 Day Product online. This would allow flexibility and back up for Geographic Areas needing staffing assistance. Funding will remain at \$20,000. A Business Case needs to be developed.

- Proposal by Fred Svez to Define the Value of the Predictive Services Program  
This proposal is through the University of Nevada and has been submitted to a number of funding sources. It would look at the value of utilizing propositioned resources. Funded at \$10,000

Additional funding may be required to maintain gridded FX-Net when the NWS transitions to AWIPS2. However FX-Net is expected to continue in its current form for the next two fiscal years.

Meeting Adjourned