



**National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG)
Smoke Committee (SmoC)
Monthly Activity Update – September 2011**



SmoC News:

Communications and messaging: SmoC continues to explore avenues to communicate our messages and information about smoke and air quality better. Gordon Andersson sent the SmoC briefing papers on our Online Training and NWCG Smoke Assessment to five National Association of Clean Air Agencies (NACAA) committees. NACAA is comprised of over 150 state and local air quality agencies. Claudia Standish distributed the same information to the Lessons Learned website and to the network of Public Information Officers in the southwest. Kevin Harvell (NCFS) distributed the online training information to Foresters and the Prescribed Fire Council in North Carolina and others throughout the SE.

SmoC Websites (NWCG website, www.nifc.gov/smoke, two myfirecommunity sites): Mike Broughton as the SmoC webmaster has been working with the NWCG web portal team on our future SmoC web presence. This effort will encompass both our NWCG website and the www.nifc.gov/smoke website with retention of the current web identity.

Smoke Exposure: George Broyles (USFS), Joe Domitrovitch (USFS), and Roger Ottmar (USFS) , joined the SmoC call for a lively dialogue on Smoke Exposure of fire personnel. Tasked by NWCG, the Risk Management Committee is to establish permissible smoke exposure limits for wildland fire personnel. The pollutants of concern are CO and PM, with a focus on the long-term health risk. In collaboration with Roger Ottmar and Tim Reinhardt (USFS), they recommend monitoring CO on national crews. They found that CO and PM, as well as other compounds, were highly correlated. Questions about silica exposure were raised, due to the impact it has on the respiratory system. Issues to be addressed include base camp health/exposure and training/educating of fire fighters on smoke exposure.

Agricultural Air Quality Task Force (AAQTF) Meeting Highlights: Susan O’Neill (NRCS) and Pete Lahm (USFS) briefed SmoC on the meeting which was held in Manhattan, Kansas. The Flint Hills of Kansas burned 2.7 million acres this year, with the majority of the acres burned in April. There were 4 ozone exceedances this year attributed to the Flint Hills prescribed fires. Wildfires from TX also were also attributed to be contributors to high levels of ozone. Janet McCabe, EPA Deputy Assistant Administrator presented an EPA update to the Task Force and stated the new EPA Smoke Policy will be completed by 2012.

Implementation of Ozone Standard: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently announced the reconsideration of lowering the ozone standard, however, they will move forward with implementing the 2008 standard of 0.075 ppm. EPA will have to wait until 2013 to move forward on stricter standard, proposed range between 0.060 and 0.070 ppm, as recommended by the agency’s science advisers. EPA’s preliminary review of ozone data from 2008-2010, based on the 0.075 ppm standard, 53 metropolitan areas are found to be nonattainment. SmoC is writing a briefing paper that will contain more detail on the implementation of the 2008 standard, which will include a map of the potential nonattainment areas.

SmoC Subcommittees Activity Reports:

Smoke Technical Topics:

Smoke Management Guide Revision (Funded through DOI Fuels Management committee): Progress continues on revisions to the Smoke Management Guide (SMG). The steering committee set



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the draft deadline for 1st of December with the primary author for each chapter. The majority of the authors anticipate making the deadline.

Emission Inventory Working Group: The initial task for this work group is to help EPA with the 2008 NEI. Interest and energy was high on the first call, with 13 interested callers the kick-off call was held to 1 hour. EPA is looking to reduce the 63.4% of the fires in 2008 NEI that are unclassified between wildfire, prescribed fire or agricultural burn; which has wide ranging implications for the fire community such as the contribution of fires to Black Carbon and Green House gas inventories. EPA is looking to reduce these errors; Sim Larkin (USFS) stated SMARTFIRE2 has the means to classify all fires and the new algorithms were used in EPS's 2009 emission inventory. Tesh Rao (EPA) asked if it was possible to run SMARTFIRE2 for the 2008 inventory, Sim said it was. The workgroup is very interested in Sonoma Technology Inc.'s (STI's) method for classifying fires in SMARTFIRE2. The next call will be 60 minutes, focused on Tom Moore of the Western Regional Air Partnership, talking about the Fire Emission Tracking System (FETS).

Smoke Managers:

A conference call was held 8/30/2011, which discussed the Subcommittee draft Charter and Intent documents, subcommittee organization, and information needs.

Smoke Training:

Subcommittee changes: Welcome to Stu Hoyt (USFS) as the new co-chair, replacing Julie Oliver (WA DoE). SmoC will miss Julie and we thank her for all her efforts, writing the charter and intent documents, and serving as the SmoC representative for National Association of Clean Air Agencies (NACAA), and co-chair of the training committee. SmoC will develop a certificate of appreciation for Julie. Bill Waln (FWS) joined the training subcommittee.

Smoke Training Assessment (Funded through DOI Fuels Management committee): The final report for the Smoke Training Assessment has been completed and is out for review to other NWCG Committees (no comments received to date). This assessment reviews the occurrence of smoke and air quality information within 91 NWCG courses and 125 position task books (PTBs) within the national interagency incident management system (NIIMS) as of April 2011. A report is in process based on queries performed against the Federal Incident Qualification and Certification System (IQCS) to determine what wildland fire positions currently have RX-410 and RX-341 training.

Updates to Online Training (Funded through DOI Fuels Management committee): Major revisions are underway on the Smokepedia; a compendium of over 600 air quality and smoke related terms. Josh Hyde (U of Idaho) sent out a draft of the Smokepedia for training Committee review.

NWCG Business:

SmoC has two items being pursued for funding for FY 2012; Phase II of the Smoke Management Guide and a new 4-hour online course "Wildland Fire and Air Quality Decision Making.

Briefing Papers (BP):

- *Current and Upcoming Issues BP* – Progress continues with many SmoC members filling in pieces of information.
- The *2005 National Air Toxics Assessment (NATA) BP* has been completed and posted on the SmoC public myfirecommunity site "Air Quality and Fire Issues" in the neighborhood library, under the briefing papers folder.
- Progress continues with the *Managing Vehicle Traffic in Smoke BP* and the *Fire Fighter Smoke Exposure BP*. Both have been revised to reflect a larger national perspective.

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For additional information on SmoC go to: <http://www.myfirecommunity.net/Neighborhood.aspx?ID=279>



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Round robin

- Estimated Smoldering Potential (ESP) Sensors – Gary Curcio is working with Larry Bradshaw (Fire Danger Subcommittee) to move North Carolina stations onto the wildland fire assessment webpage.
- When is EPA's NAAQS standard not the standard? Nick Yonker sent out a news article on the Dollar Lake Fire, and the air quality concentrations reported in the article as hazardous were different from EPA's air quality index (AQI) levels. Pete Lahm circulated a table listing the different concentrations and AQI break points used by States that differ from EPA's. More dialogue and a briefing paper to follow.
- MN Pagami Creek wild fire affected air quality in Chicago and Milwaukee, but resulted in little ground level effects in Minnesota.

Upcoming Conferences and Meetings:

- AMS 9th Symposium on Fire and Forest Meteorology, October 18-20, 2011, Palm Springs, CA.
<http://www.ametsoc.org/MEET/fainst/20119fireforest.html>
- SW Fire Ecology Conference <http://humboldt.edu/swfire/abstract.html>
- Emission Factor Workshop in the Southeast directed at a range of participants (both fed. Land managers and emission inventory personnel).
- American Geophysical Union (AGU) Fall Meeting, December 5-9, 2011, San Francisco, CA
<http://sites.agu.org/fallmeeting/>
- 3rd Human Dimensions of Wildland Fire Conference, April 17-19, 2012, Seattle, WA
www.iawfonline.org