

FENWT FWC Strategic Plan



April 4, 2008

Executive Summary

The Fire Weather Committee (FWC) under the auspices of the Fire Environment Working Team (FENWT) provides leadership to improve fire weather operations and decision support for effective fire management. It consists of 10 members that represent the federal wildland fire agencies, the western and eastern states, wildland fire agency and academic atmospheric research, Predictive Services, the National Weather Service, and fire operations. Through collaborative efforts and input from user groups at all levels across the U.S., the FWC strives to improve weather data, products and services to provided wildland fire management with the best information and ultimately enhancing wildland fire decisions. The FWC has identified the following goals:

- Products and Services
- Standards and Policy
- Technology
- Research and Development
- Communication and Dissemination
- Education

Contents

- INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND.....2**
 - INTENT, APPROACH USED AND EXPECTED RESULTS2
 - CURRENT SITUATION.....3
 - STRENGTHS:3
 - WEAKNESSES:3
 - DECISION MAKING PROCESS4
 - THE CHALLENGE4
- STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT5**
- FWC STRATEGIC PLAN6**
 - THE FWC VISION6
 - THE FWC MISSION.....6
 - THE FWC VALUES (GUIDING PRINCIPLES).....6
 - GOAL 1 – PRODUCTS AND SERVICES.....7
 - GOAL 2 - STANDARDS AND POLICY7
 - GOAL 3 - TECHNOLOGY7
 - GOAL 4 - RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.....7
 - GOAL 5 - COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION7
 - GOAL 6 - EDUCATION7
- APPENDICES.....8**
 - APPENDIX A – STRATEGIC PLANNING DEFINITIONS8

Introduction / Background

Intent, Approach Used and Expected Results

The Fire Weather Committee strategic plan is the umbrella document that provides an overarching strategic context for all activities of the FWC. The strategic plan focuses on the enhancement of products and services from the standards of base data and research to communication, dissemination and technology. The strategic plan was developed by the FWC while in its initial stage. A framework of what was deemed important by the committee was developed over the first few meetings and will continue to be refined over time.

The FWC strategic plan is designed to define specific goals that will guide all activities of committee in support of the Fire Environment Working Team and the greater wildland fire community. The FWC strategic plan provides the long-term framework and direction across agencies and business areas in support of the Committee's vision and mission. This strategic plan consists of vision, mission, values (guiding principles) and goals. The FWC strategic plan will direct future decisions by acting as a guide to identify types of initiatives that fall within the scope of the overall mission of the committee. The strategic plan will be reviewed on an annual basis by FWC members.

Current Situation

The FWC is chartered under the Fire Environment Working Team (FENWT). The Fire Weather Committee strategic plan supports and addresses the mission and vision of the FWC, FENWT and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG).

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges of the Fire Weather Committee in total that are likely to affect new initiatives within the strategic plan are listed below.

Strengths:

- Diversity of membership agencies and backgrounds
- Technical and scientific expertise
- Broad vision and innovation
- Customer / user oriented

Weaknesses:

- Funding limitations
- Conflicting organizational priorities
- Time constraints and collateral duties of membership

Opportunities:

- Partnerships including non-traditional relationships
- Science application
- Increasing awareness of weather and climate issues
- Championing good ideas and influencing fire management decisions
- Better communication with customers and users

Threats:

- Varied customer needs
- Resistance to change
- Tendency toward prioritization and meeting agency needs
- Inadequate continuing education and support
- Lack of support for fire weather research

Decision Making Process

The FWC decision making process is a consensus in which each of the members of the group (that represent the federal wildland fire agencies, the western and eastern states, wildland fire agency and academic atmospheric research, Predictive Services, the National Weather Service, and fire operations) outside the chair has a vote. All decisions are validated against the strategic plan to confirm that the decision is within the scope of the overall mission of the program.

The Challenge

Weather impacts all aspects of wildland fire. There are inherent flaws in the fire weather process from the beginning stages of equipment calibration and data collection to the final stages of communication and dissemination of products and services. The true challenge of the Committee is to identify which areas of the process can be improved to make the largest gain with regard to quality of service. This prioritization process is critical in the ultimate effectiveness of the Committee.

Strategic Management

Strategic management is a comprehensive and iterative process for directing and managing change over the long run. It positions the organization for success by leveraging strengths and opportunities while overcoming weaknesses, problems and threats.

The Strategic Management Model, provides a comprehensive overview of the components of strategic planning and strategic management and illustrates the relationship between those components. The strategic management process is a cycle of thinking, planning, acting, monitoring, and reviewing which feeds back into the beginning of the cycle.

The components of a strategy and its associated plans include:

- the vision and mission statements
- guiding principles
- goals
- objectives, critical success factors, and barriers
- strategies
- action plans (tactical plan for the implementation of the strategic plan)

The vision statement expresses the organization's highest aspirations for its strategic management efforts. The mission statement brings into focus the overall purpose of the organization. Goals identify broad, long-term aims that define accomplishment of the mission. Goals link "upward" to the mission and "downward" to strategic objectives.

The strategic objectives within each goal state the specific outcomes expected to be accomplished. They provide an overall sense of what exactly is desired without outlining the specific steps necessary to achieve that end. They are specific and measurable targets for accomplishment. Objectives link "upward" to goals, link "downward" to critical success factors, barriers and strategies.

Strategies are the identification of broad activities required to achieve an objective, control a critical success factor, or overcome a barrier. These strategies are then prioritized and action plans are developed to implement them.

Fire Weather Committee Program Framework

VISION

Future

MISSION

Purpose

VALUES

Guidelines

GOALS

What

FWC Strategic Plan

The FWC Vision

Quality wildland fire management decisions are enhanced and supported by the best weather information.

The FWC Mission

Provide interagency leadership to improve fire weather operations and decision support for effective fire management.

The FWC Values (Guiding Principles)

- **EFFICIENCY** - We value efficiency, therefore in decision making, we fully evaluate all alternatives in terms of cost and benefits and ensure appropriate stakeholders are involved during the process.
- **INNOVATION** - We value innovation, therefore we recommend research direction and promote the infusion of scientific and technological advances into operations.
- **LEADERSHIP** - We value leadership, therefore we guide the interagency community toward appropriate implementation of fire weather information.
- **QUALITY** - We value quality, therefore we make decisions and present recommendations that maintain and enhance the accuracy, consistency and reliability of fire weather information.
- **RESPONSIVENESS** - We value responsiveness, therefore we expeditiously respond to and dedicate available time and attention to

addressing fire weather issues and needs identified by the wildland fire community.

- **SAFETY** - We value safety, therefore public and firefighter safety is the first priority in all wildland fire weather related products, services and activities.
- **TRUST** - We value trust, therefore we encourage constructive debate, strive for true consensus and provide recommendations that can be incorporated into operations with confidence.

The FWC Goals

Goal 1 – Products and Services

Decisions are supported by robust and trusted applications and information.

Goal 2 - Standards and Policy

Fire weather standards are defined with consistency, clear requirements, identified and operational currency. Fire weather policy is influenced by the collaborative interagency recommendations of the Fire Weather Committee.

Goal 3 - Technology

Existing and emergent technologies analyze, model and predict fire weather conditions.

Goal 4 - Research and Development

Applied research and development efforts improve fire weather programs.

Goal 5 - Communication and Dissemination

Fire weather information is communicated and disseminated to the wildland fire community and properly incorporated into operational practices and decisions.

Goal 6 - Education

Training and education enables the wildland fire community to most effectively interpret and use fire weather information products and services.

Appendices

Appendix A – Strategic Planning Definitions

