

Meeting Notes
 Fire Environment Working Team
 1st Meeting
 March 29-31, 2005
 Boise, Idaho

Meeting Schedule thru June 2006:

April 25, 2005 **Conference Call** **1pm MDT** **877-988-5351 code: 329515#**

June 1-3, 2005 **Missoula, MT**

Nov. 15-17, 2005 **Portland, OR**

Feb. 28-Mar. 2, 2006 **Tucson, AZ**

June 6-8, 2006 **TBA**

<i>Members present</i>	<i>Role</i>
Paul Schlobohm	Chair
Dick Bahr	Fire Weather Committee
Wayne Cook	Fire Behavior Committee
Larry Bradshaw	Fire Danger Committee
Dennis Dupuis	National Interagency Fuels Coord. Group
Tom Wordell	National Predictive Services Group
Dennis Haddow	Fire/Air Issues Coordinating Group
Leroy Spayd	National Weather Service
Joe Kennedy	NASF-Eastern States
Wayne Mitchell	NASF-Western States
<i>Members absent</i>	
Mike Hilbruner	Fire Research
<i>Staff present</i>	
Erin Albiston	Executive Secretary
Shari Shetler	Facilitator

Attendees provided background on the groups they represent. These thoughts are summarized below except for the “issues that are relevant to FENWT” topics list, which were compiled separately by Shari. See attached file: Prioritized Task List.doc.

FENWT (How did we get here?) – Paul Schlobohm

In October 2002, NWCG asked the Fire Danger Working Team (FDWT) and the Fire Weather Working Team (FWWT): “Can the teams merge?” Five possible options for merging were presented in “Alternatives for Combining the Fire Danger and Fire Weather Working Teams: A report to the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, January 2003”. Option C was selected in January 2004. It proposed one new Working Team with increased scope: weather, danger,

behavior, climatology, predictive services, and smoke. In May 2004, a task group drafted a charter for the new Working Team. FENWT concepts: Integrated approach to Fire Weather, Fire Behavior and Fire Danger. Coordinated with Predictive Services, Air/Smoke Management, Fuels Management, the National Weather Service. The proposed FENWT organization would “think outside the box” with concepts like: members represent functional areas (e.g. fire behavior), and membership status of non-NWCG-chartered groups. The team management consists of a Chair, Vice-Chair, Executive Secretary, Facilitator, and NWCG Liaison. NWCG approved the FENWT charter in October 2004.

Fire Weather Committee (FWC) – Dick Bahr

The FWC replaces the Fire Weather Working Team as the primary NWCG focus-group for fire weather issues. The FWWT was created to address the development of Annual Operating Plans between the National Weather Service and the fire agencies. The FWWT was sunset in February 2005. The FWC is chartered under FENWT.

Fire Behavior Committee (FBC) – Wayne Cook

The FBC was created under the Training Working Team (TWT) to support the fire behavior curriculum (S190-S590). Its original charter was modified to enable it to address other issues related to changing technologies. With the formation of FENWT, the FBC has moved from the TWT to FENWT. Paul’s post-meeting note: Jim Glenn had been the TWT liaison to the FBC; he is now the TWT liaison to FENWT.

Fire Danger Committee (FDC) – Larry Bradshaw

The National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS) has existed as the national system for rating fire danger since 1972. It was developed by USDA-Forest Service Research and is supported by that agency’s Division of Fire and Aviation Management. Over the period since initial release, numerous modifications and enhancements have been suggested to improve the function and application of the system resulting in revisions in 1978 and 1988. Initial Tech Transfer was ‘troublesome’. In 1988 the USDA-FS, Director of Fire and Aviation Management (Roger Eubanks), established an interagency advisory group to oversee the application and use of the NFDRS, particularly the 1988 updates. This group was known as the National Advisory Group for Fire Danger Rating (NAGFDR). In 1993, the original computer system for NFDRS, AFFIRMS, was replaced by WIMS. In 1995 to better facilitate the national application of fire danger rating and to ensure that notification of modifications were communicated to all wildland fire agencies, NAGFDR was placed under the joint jurisdiction of the Director of Fire and Aviation Management and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). In 1999, NAGFDR was designated as the NWCG Fire Danger Working Team (FDWT) solely under their jurisdiction. In 2005, the FDWT was replaced by the Fire Danger Committee under the Fire Environment Working Team (FENWT). Annual Budget generally includes only state representative travel. FDC exists to support FENWT in advancing the mission of NWCG in providing leadership in establishing and maintaining consistent nationwide policies, standards, and procedures for wildland fire management with the specific focus of Fire Danger Rating.

National Interagency Fuels Coordinating Group (NIFCG) – Dennis Dupuis

The NIFCG was established shortly after the National Fire Plan in October 2001 to provide leadership and coordination in uniting the Departments' resources and fire management programs under a common purpose for reducing risks to communities while improving and maintaining ecosystem health. NIFCG was established under the direction of the DOI Fire Directors of the BIA, BLM, FWS, NPS; and the Chief of the Forest Service. The NIFCG exists to provide assistance and guidance in the development and implementation of an effective interagency fuels management program including: address risks from severe fires in WUI communities and restores healthy ecological systems in other wildland areas. NIFCG functions: Provide National Interagency leadership and guidance; facilitate collaboration; set national interagency fuels management priorities & standards; develop safe and effective strategies that mitigate threats to communities while maintaining the sustainability of ecosystems; identify/resolve impediments; support research and development of HFR strategies/methods; provide support to the formulation and reporting of the budget; track and maintain HFR project and accomplishment information; provide a forum for exchange ideas; develop recommendations to the Fire Directors, DOI Wildland Fire Coordinator, and USDA FS NFP Coordinator.

National Weather Service (NWS) – Leroy Spayd

Mission of the NWS is: NOAA's National Weather Service provides weather, hydrologic, and climate forecasts and warnings for the United States, its territories, adjacent waters and ocean areas, for the protection of life and property and the enhancement of the national economy. NWS data and products form a national information database and infrastructure which can be used by other governmental agencies, the private sector, the public, and the global community. The NWS Fire Weather mission: To eliminate weather-related wildland fire fatalities and injuries, and to reduce fire suppression and land management costs by providing more timely and accurate weather information. The two main concerns of users are suppression and resource management. Products and services offered by NWS include: Fire Weather Watch/Red Flag Warning Program, Fire Weather Planning Forecasts, site specific spot forecasts, and consultation and technical advice in support of basic services. NWS wants to fully support fire agencies in a new era of partnership and collaboration.

National Predictive Services Group (NPSG) – Tom Wordell

National Predictive Services Group was chartered in 2002, originally under NMAC, then under the Geographic Area Center Managers. NPSG strives to continually improve the quality, accuracy, and relevance of decision support products provided through the multi-agency coordination system to fire managers and users nationwide. NPSG goals include: Develop and implement a user assessment process so that user needs are understood and defined; identify and implement standardized products that satisfy user needs; determine organization, resources and programmatic requirements; develop and implement performance standards for products and services; enhance the interaction between the PS functions; establish a method for communicating information between PS internally and externally; improve the data infrastructure that supports and facilitates the integration of PS and wildland fire; and implement methods to assess and improve PS products and services. NPSG represents a tremendous pool of

expertise. It is a link to the coordination system, agency fire weather programs and intelligence, and it is a medium for information dissemination.

Fire/Air Issues Coordinating Group – Dennis Haddow

The purpose of the group is to assist in the development and implementation of effective and efficient agency programs to address fire/air issues that may arise when implementing the National Fire Plan and meeting natural resource objectives. It was chartered by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council in June 2003. It is comprised of representatives from the NPS, BLM, F&WS, Forest Service, BIA and State Foresters. Their Work Plan was approved by WFLC in January 2004. Their responsibilities include: coordination between Agencies and Bureaus; development of consistent fire/air policies as appropriate; support development of a Comprehensive Fire Emission Inventory; development of a coordinated strategy to address PM 2.5, ozone and air toxic issues; coordination with RPOs, EPA, Tribes, State and Local Air Regulators and State Foresters; development of a coordinated response to air quality legal issues that may impact Agency fire programs; identification of time, staff, skills, training and budget needs to appropriately address fire-related air quality issues; development of a consistent guidance on planning and NEPA issues; development of real-time fine particulate and other air quality monitoring strategies; identification of research needs; coordination with the Joint Fire Sciences Program, Fire Research Coordination Council and Forest Service, FCAMMS and U.S. Geological Survey Fire Research; development of consistent information for the public on the air quality tradeoffs between wildfire and prescribed Fire; and identification of needs for model development and support for modeling centers.

Eastern States – Joe Kennedy

Joe represents states east of the Mississippi River. There is diverse management throughout the states. Federal programs cost money and positions. States can't hire more people to handle NFP issues.

Western States – Wayne Mitchell

Wayne represents states west of the Mississippi River. CDF is atypical of western states management. States do not use wildland fire to enhance the landscape. Standards have a big impact on local government.

NWCG Liaison – Neal Hitchcock

This new approach is good – a good change in the way of doing business. New funding is not available; look for ways to stretch dollars between member committees/groups. Neal offered this perspective on robust organizations: see attached file: The Four Factors that Distinguish.doc

Initial assignments given from NWCG to FENWT include: review FENWT Charter; resolve fire weather-related systems issues, including status of ROMAN; address RAWs network issues.

Action Item Tracking

An action item tracking mechanism was initiated.

Breakout groups

Three breakout groups addressed several internal team organizational topics including a vision statement, scope, purpose, objectives, leadership, and operating guidelines. This effort to update or develop these documents will be revisited and finished at the June meeting. The vision statement remains under construction until the June meeting. Relationships of our scope to other NWCG working teams will be pursued. Goals and objectives sections will be reviewed further. There will be one operating principles document; committee-specific language will be developed as paragraph sub-parts as necessary.

Task development and prioritization

To assess the matters that will be important for FENWT to address, members identified the priority tasks for their committees/groups or FENWT as a whole. Tasks were formed into logical, broad categories and these categories were prioritized.

Communications

The importance of a strong communications effort was recognized and supported by the members. Use of the NWCG website was viewed as obligatory, but other, more robust options should be considered to compliment the parent site. Wayne gave a brief demonstration of the myfirecommunity website managed by the Lessons Learned Center. We agreed in principle to use the myfirecommunity website, pending a presentation from the LLC at our June meeting.

Engaging the NWCG Social Science Task Group, possibly as a strategic partner, was viewed as an important component to developing our communications plan.

Strategic Partners

Strategic partners are other entities whose efforts are important to the success of FENWT. We began to develop a list of possible strategic partners. More thought needs to be applied to the number of strategic partners the group will have and how frequently they need to meet with us. Possible partners discussed at this meeting include: Joint Fire Science Program, Social Science Task Group, Lessons Learned Center, Western Governor's Association and the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR). Paul will initiate formal contacts.

Charters

Charters were reviewed for FENWT, FWC, FBC, and FDC. Work to refine language in the FENWT charter will continue with a target for recommending changes to NWCG in October 2005.

The committee charters were discussed in terms of boiler plate sections and sections unique to each committee. Language regarding purpose, objectives, and membership were agreed to. Final editing is to be completed and the charters signed by the FENWT chair by April 15, 2005.

Consensus Gradient

FENWT agreed to adopt a method suggested by Leroy to express one's level of consent to a decision. Dissent must be accompanied by an alternative.

Full Agreement



I can live with it



Dissent

