

National Wildfire Coordinating Group  
Fire Environment Working Team  
Meeting Notes

The Century House, Conference Room A  
June 6-8, 2006

Day One – Tuesday, June 6, 2006

Welcome & Introductions

- Introductions: Lani Williams introduced as temporary replacement for Erin Albiston, Executive Secretary, while Erin is deployed to Iraq.
- Attendees: Tom Wordell, Wayne Cook, Paul Schlobohm, Joe Kennedy, Pete Lahm, Larry Bradshaw, Lani Williams, Shari Shetler and Erin Albiston. Rich McCrea joined by phone as proxy for Dennis Dupuis.
- Logistics information shared
- Agenda discussed and expectations established

Action Item Tracker Review, Paul Schlobohm

- **Information:**

**Task 49** (Work up endorsement of new FB fuel models and implementation plan) – update given; Paul is waiting for responses back from NWCG teams before sending endorsement forward to NWCG; may need to move on if no comments are received.

**Task 60** (Comments to Chair regarding JFSP Request for Comment document) – update given by Paul during Round Robin

**Task 62** (Work to get information to the PMO Knowledge Manager for the website [FBC, FDC, FWC, FENWT charters, etc.]) – Glossary was posted

**Task 63** (Remain in step with annual revisions to projects such as QFFR) – discussion about meaning of the action item: reminder to stay aware of changes that are being made annually to various related projects (i.e. QFFR, FPA, MegaFire, NWFEA, etc).

- **Decision: At every meeting/conference call, discuss current reviews and look for opportunities.**

- **Bin Item: Assess QFFR as a group and the implications.**

**Task 64** (Create new mechanism in this table to track ongoing or "maintenance" items) – change in formatting, indefinite number of columns: each column representing a period of time (bathroom cleaning chart); should be related to Strategic Plan (possible additional column to indicate link).

**Task 65** (S490+ Proposal to TWT addressing details needed to make decision) – continuing work and discussion during June meeting

**Task 66** (Preliminary look at NWCG budget proposal during June meeting) – discussions held first day of June meeting

**Task 67** added – Liaison to FPA.

**Task 68** added – Liaison to LANDFIRE.

**Task 69** added – Wayne Cook and Pete Lahm to draft a request to the National Interagency Fuels Coordinating Group regarding FCCS and LANDFIRE (i.e. crosswalk of the fuel models) and will hand-carry to NIFCG meeting in mid-June.

Strategic Plan, Shari Shetler – Attachments, [NWCG Strategic Plan](#) (.pdf) & [FENWT Action Plan](#) (.xls)

- **Information:** Shari shared handouts and information regarding completed strategic plans for NWCG, FENWT and FBC. Shari suggested that there must be a link between budget requests sent forward by teams and NWCG’s strategies. NWCG wanted some consistency in what is submitted to them so they created two sheets “NWCG Action Plan” and “NWCG Budget”. An example was provided.
- **Action:** The group needs to review FENWT’s strategic plan to align with NWCG’s strategic plan. Items that do not align with the NWCG plan may be considered as work to be done with/for other groups (i.e. NFAEB and WFLC).
- **Information:** NWCG’s strategic plan is primarily standards and qualifications driven. NWCG is looking to have teams work together rather than just working independently.
- **Decision:** FENWT members agreed to work through their strategies with the intent to find strategies that align with NWCG. The following is an abbreviated description of how the links connect.

FENWT strategies that support a NWCG goal, objective and strategy:

- Priority Strategy 1 – *Identify and prioritize existing and emerging technologies* → links to NWCG Goal 1, Objective 3, Strategy 4
- Priority Strategy 2 – *Utilize iterative process to assess user needs, evaluate products and monitor feedback* → links to NWCG Goal 1, Objective 3, Strategy 4
- Priority Strategy 3 – *Establish partnership with research and development* → links to NWCG Goal 3, Objective 4, Strategy 7
- Priority Strategy 4 – *Promote spatial database system that can produce a variety of decision products from core underlying environmental data (fuels, weather, topography)* → links to NWCG Goal 1, Critical Success Factor 6
- Priority Strategy 5 – *Develop an integration plan* → links to NWCG Goal 1, Objective 3, Strategy 4
- Priority Strategy 6 – *Collaborate with R&D to develop and implement a comprehensive communication strategy for moving science into application* → links to NWCG Goal 3, Objective 4, Strategy 7
- Priority Strategy 7 – *Support development of science-based and peer-reviewed (as applicable) tools* → links to NWCG Goal 1, Objective 3 & 4, Strategy 6
- **Information:** Using a NWCG “Action Plan” template (Excel) we identified action plans for each of the FENWT goals and strategies listed above with links to NWCG GOSs (goals, objectives, strategies). In addition, NWCG Action Plans that require FENWT involvement were identified and stratified in this template.
- **Action:** FENWT to complete tabs within the template (i.e. need for NWCG Liaison, Investment, Dependencies on other Strategies, etc.).
- **Information:** Working through the process, the group created additional action items to complete the goals presented.
- **Information:** Series of events to follow from NWCG Strategic Planning process:  
Resulting action plans from NWCG Strategic Plan creation – September 15

Review of action plans – October 15

Revised action plans returned to NWCG from WT Chairs – December 15

Budget proposals due – January 15

Budget proposals approved by spring meeting of NWCG – Spring 2007

#### NWCG Weather Station Standards Issue, Paul Schlobohm & Tom Wordell

- **Information:** NPSG submitted an Issue Paper to FENWT requesting support in presenting the weather station standards issue to NWCG. One item of concern is the data quality that is influenced by human intervention; changing the inputs to “O” (observed) and entering station green-up dates. Tim has received RAWS data quality information from Beth Hall which may not clearly reflect the human intervention issues. Paul shared data from DRI that showed the automated observed data stream is of generally high quality.
- **Action:** Paul will contact Beth and Tim regarding new study of data dependent on human intervention and will update as soon as information is available (possible update on Day Two).
- **Action:** Tom will request additional information from Beth Hall; including stratification by agency and by area.
- **Action:** Tom, Paul and Larry will compose a cover letter to accompany the Issue Paper to NWCG, keeping in mind possible additions.

#### Fire Occurrence Reporting System (FORS), Tom Wordell

- **Information:** Tom provided background information regarding FORS. Tom is the Federal Business Lead for the FORS. NWCG has tasked the group to look at a Data Warehouse and assess the common elements of the existing reporting systems and to evaluate the needs of the business/user community for reporting information. To accomplish this, the group will conduct a business needs study accessing the needs of the user community. In doing this, the current charter needs to be modified to include FENWT as the Business Steward. Tom has contacted Common Thread concerning the possibility of conducting a User Needs Study with the available \$40,000. Michelle (Common Thread) believes that it is feasible. Tom believes that the role of FENWT is to be supportive and knowledgeable of the fire occurrence business interests and to reach out to entities not represented by FENWT (i.e. FPA, Budget).

Phase 1	Definition Phase	July 1through August 15
Phase 2	Discovery Phase	July 15through October 15
Phase 3	Elaboration Analysis and Evaluation	October 15through December

- **Decision:** Tom has reflected the necessary changes reviewed by the group and will submit the Charter to NWCG.
- **Action Item:** Tom and Pete will work on the caveats for the study; including data standard proposals, data element definitions and temporal frame options/suggestions.

Day Two, Wednesday, June 07, 2006

OFCM / JAG User Assessment, Eli Jacks, and Mary Cairns (by phone)

- **Information:** Mary presented an update on the assessment. Three meetings with the Joint Action Group (JAG) have been held. Many agencies have expressed their needs and the JAG group gathered information from many sources. The JAG is preparing an “early results” questionnaire. The “early results” questionnaire will feed the FY08-09 budget. Users, educators, and research groups will receive the questionnaire (each group will receive a different version of the short questionnaire; see attachments). The “early results” will help to answer questions about needs, priorities, etc. Objective of the “early results” is to refine the larger survey (i.e. to areas of expansion). Due date: June 16. Mary and the JAG are working on a comprehensive set of questions for the comprehensive user assessment. OFCM / JAG are using a contractor to implement the electronic, complete version of the assessment. This contractor was used by the National Weather Service in their user assessment.
- **Information:** The JAG is hosting a special session at the 2006 Fire Ecology Congress in San Diego. The survey questionnaire will be available in either in electronic or paper form. Two speaker panels are being created to discuss the role of weather in fire; user and provider panels.
- **Action:** FENWT provide feedback to Mary Cairns regarding Fire Congress panels
- **Action Item:** Provide Mary with suggestions to include in the discussion:  
For Example:  
Verification process – Quality of forecast?  
Resolution of forecast – How good does the forecast need to be?  
Model performance – Are they doing what is needed?

Fire Weather/Danger/Behavior Curriculum Strategy, Wayne Cook

- **Information:** Wayne presented an update regarding the S490+ courses. A briefing paper was presented to the Training Working Team in May by Paul and Wayne on behalf of FENWT. FENWT requested taking over the oversight of the curriculum of the S490+ courses. The intent is to be more progressive in the way that the content is kept up-to-date. The TWT responded to FENWT requesting more information before a decision can be made about transferring the responsibility to FENWT. Wayne and Paul are preparing a response to the information requested by TWT.
- **Information:** The Fire Behavior Committee has been working to update the S190-590 matrix that was created several years ago. The new matrix is presented in an Excel format and is intended to track courses by subject (i.e. GIS mapping, topography, etc). The purpose of sharing the information with FENWT was to inquire about other resources that might be available for tracking course content.
- **Action:** FENWT provide feedback to Wayne for response to the Training Working Team. Include recognition of NWCG Strategic Plan.  
Include in next budget cycle  
Add S-591 to the matrix.

### COMET Presentation, Tim Spangler

- **Information:** Tim presented a PowerPoint presentation to FENWT. Included in the presentation was an explanation of UCAR and its organizational structure. COMET is engaged in a cooperative agreement and an interagency effort that began in 1990. The National Weather Service is the host of the program and the anchor tenet. COMET is an award-winning corporate training program. Among the interagency partners are NWS, DOD, and international partners. Focus is placed on adult learning. The COMET group is composed of professional educators. COMET is committed to well-designed distance learning. COMET uses a lot of added production value to keep the learner engaged. Tim presented examples of different types of “sound instruction” e-learning. Many questions were posed about costs and how to begin a paradigm shift. Tim suggested using NWS as a way to create an agreement and start some work related to fire weather.
- **Action:** Further discussion how FENWT can utilize COMET and available funding.
  - Engage the Training Working Team.
  - Demonstrate to NWCG how COMET can help them achieve their Goals.
  - May want to include NAFRI as a partner/not just a portal
- **Action Item:** A tasking letter will be drafted to specifically request the desired information.

### Hurricane Blow-down Photo Series

Roger Ottmar has requested FENWT provide a letter of support to FEMA for additional funding for this project. Roger is requesting \$50,000 from FEMA to complete a photo series. The project was initially funded by JFSP at less than 100 percent.

- **Decision:** Paul will suggest to Roger that he also contact the Fire Use Working Team and the National Interagency Fuels Coordination Group.

### NWCG Weather Station Standards Issue, Paul Schlobohm & Tom Wordell (continued)

- **Information:** Update after speaking with Beth and Tim: Paul has asked for a due date of 15 July for data related to human intervention issues. This will give us time to consider results and develop our issue paper in time for NWCG October meeting.

Day Three, Thursday, June 08, 2006

### FENWT Internal Review, All

- **Discussion:** Shari Shetler led the group through an evaluation. The group, in a round-robin fashion, expressed their feelings on what is working well, what isn't working and what can be changed. A laundry list of items was created and grouped by subject (NWCG related topics, Internal/External, Strategic Plan) in order to address issues and follow thru on items as necessary. From these categories a series of Action Items were developed.

### NWCG Related:

- **Action:** Reconnect to NWCG Liaison through written communication from FENWT that expresses concerns, requesting a strong connection to parent group and with help to identify priorities. Ask NWCG if there is going to be another paradigm that will provide incentives for participation. Include responsibility of communicating outward by members.

## Internal:

- **Action:** Chair to contact regularly absent members to re-encourage participation and reinforce the need for a proxy if the member is not available.
- **Action:** Chair to address expectations and consequences of attendance of chartered members in a formal letter/policy.
- **Action:** Select new Vice Chair (group deferred decision to Chair): **Due date October 2006**
- **Action:** Look for another tool to track the progress of the activities of the Strategic Plan

## External:

- **Action:** FENWT identify three “big ticket” items
  - Post to the NWCG Website.
  - Notify people via an email and include the URL.
  - FENWT members will communicate the information out to their interest parties.
  - Perhaps a close-out Agenda Item.

## Preliminary Budget Proposal 2008-2010, All

- **Information:** The proposed process for NWCG budget submission was revisited. Group has already developed a first-cut at the action plans. Additional action plans that address “big ticket” items were added to spreadsheet that the group worked on earlier in the week: FBC curriculum items, OFCM action plans (sub-tasks, due dates, leads), data quality issues and communication of and about the Strategic Plan itself was agreed upon.

## Other Business

- **Action:** Executive Secretary position tasked to post planned dates for meetings and conference calls (specific to FENWT; Committees post their own) on MyFireCommunity calendar
- **Decision:** Dates for Fall and Spring FENWT meetings set: October 31-Nov. 2, 2006, Athens, GA and March 6-8, 2007, Boise, ID. Summer 2007 date to be selected in October.
- **Action:** Engage S-591 by adding them into the matrix
- **Decision:** FENWT reviewed FBC Strategic Plan and concurred with the content.

## Round Robin, All

## Eastern, Southern States Rep (Joe Kennedy)

- Eastern Area Intel Coordinator vacancy announcement currently available.

## National Weather Service (Leroy Spayd and Eli Jacks)

- Will continue to stay connected about OFCM/JAG activities in the future.

## Fire Danger Committee, Chair (Larry Bradshaw)

- Committee conference call was held.
- An update of NIFMID (National Interagency Fire Management Integrated Database) data has been completed and is available.
- Working to write a task order to build a toolkit for NDFD (National Digital Forecast Database).

- Went to DC to meet with WIMS contractors to work on second portal, for some NWS observing stations in Florida and North Carolina, which will be available in July.

#### Fire/Air Issues Group, Pete Lahm

- A lot of changes in FCAMMS require preparation by the group in order to get the most out of the meeting (i.e. integration, performance, etc.). All five FCAMMS will be represented at the Athens meeting. Will spend some time with FCAMMS Directors to ask questions about what they would like to come out of the meeting in October.
- **Action:** All members look at the websites prior to meeting to gain understanding of programs. URL: [www.fs.fed.us/fcamms](http://www.fs.fed.us/fcamms)
- **Action:** Will invite a guest to the FCAMMS meeting who has critical linkage to the FCAMMS program
- Exceptional Event rule (EPA) to be finalized in September/October. General conformity rule (also EPA) related to PM 2.5 changes, is also being reviewed.
- **Task Request:** Determine FENWT's role in air/smoke monitoring strategies, data quality and procedures?

#### Fire Behavior Committee, Wayne Cook

- Committee met last week and worked on strategic plan.
- First draft of strategic plan will be posted to MyFireCommunity.
- Added new member to FBC representing Fire Behavior Analysts, John Barbarinos.
- **Bin Item:** Extend fire behavior matrix to be used by FENWT
- Fuel moisture sampling is not being used consistently. To be discussed at the NIFCG meeting next week.
- Memo from FBC through FENWT to NWCG regarding model issues being drafted up.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Fire Behavior and Fuels Conference update – FENWT is a sponsor. Changing the title to reflect a broader base of interest; suggestion “Fire Environment: Applications and Innovations”. Will continue work on the conference and continue to update the group as needed.

#### Predictive Services Group, Tom Wordell

- Predictive Service handbook or operations guide being worked on currently that is tiered to other guides.
- Charter for FORS completed which makes FENWT the business steward for the project.
- ROMAN has been placed in ITRV.
- Changes to Forest Service protocols on ftp site because of lack of management on the site. New rule: anything over 30 days old will be removed. NITC going to host ftp site.
- NPSG User Assessment completed; waiting on data analysis and roll together; final reports should be available at October meeting.

#### National Interagency Fuels Coordination Group / Bureau of Indian Affairs, Rich McCrea, proxy for Dennis Dupuis

- ASCADS system issues including cost of running the system and training related problems.
- **Action:** FWC look at the issues related to system shut-downs and continuous operations of systems like ASCADS, WIMS and WFMI.

FENWT Chair, Paul Schlobohm – Attachment, [JFSP Research Supporting Sound Decisions](#) (.pdf)

- Passed out one-page briefing from Joint Fire Science Program. Paul conveyed to the team that Tim Swedburg expressed his thanks for FENWT's input and influence on their program. (Reference Task 60)
- A formal agreement will be created between FENWT and JFSP.
- NWFEA has identified one representative from each working team and the group is called the Business Transfer Team. There has also been a sub-group, Core Modernization Business Team, created. Paul is the FENWT rep for both teams.
- S-491 Revision meeting in Boise went well. Planned a second meeting to tackle Unit 5. Have already made some content changes. Students are better prepared than when the course was put on the shelf.