

NWCG IRM Working Team

Meeting Notes

April 17-19, 2001

Boise, ID

April 17, 2001

Opening Remarks:

- Introduced Ron Strong, BLM Telecommunication Manager
- Reviewed Ground Rules

Project Status Reports:

- ROSS
- Wrapping up development and final testing of first two modules April 27
 - DMS is fully implemented. ROSS implementation of first two modules is ongoing nationwide
 - Additional ROSS modules (complete) will come on-line this summer through fall
 - ROSS Team has chosen BRIO as the report writer (FS and BLM standard)
- Ongoing training nationwide
- Team is evaluating proposals for the User Support Contract (help desk)
 - User Technology Services, runs support organizations for Pentagon, FEMA, etc.
 - IBM, runs support organizations for Forest Service and many large tech firms.
 - Contracted User Support expected to be operational by July 2001
 - User Support Contract is for one year and may be extended. One-year bid resulted in higher bid proposals.
- July 2001 beginning rollout of the dispatch module at NICC
- ROSS Team still has concerns regarding the network:
 - Concerns include network access speed from some locations including NIFC-NICC
 - ROSS Team also concerned about lack of DOI access to ROSS at NITC in Kansas City
- IQCS
 - Distributed copy of Request For Information as published in the CBD
 - Contract Officer is receiving questions from vendors
 - Are there still staffing issues?
 - **Action:**
Set up teleconference next week with Rick, Bill, ... to address any questions that the IRMWT might have. Get questions to Shari by COB Friday, 4/20/2001.
 - Time between RFI and RFP
 - Staffing, Project Plan
 - Communications Plan
 - Status of IRMWT direction and recommendations from December IRMWT meeting.
 - Status/concerns/needs?

- IBPWT
 - Incident Base Task Group chartered to look at functionality within existing applications:
 - I-Suite (IRSS, ICARS, Incident Time), ICECAP, INCINET (3 applications)
 - Task Group recommendations pertaining to all three systems are due back to the IBPWT in September 2001. Tory will bring recommendations to the NWCG fall meeting.
 - Allen Deitz (PMO) was instrumental in preparing the Incident Base Task Group Charter.
 - Handout of Incident Base Task Group notes and Charter from 4/10-11 meeting

- TWT – Distance Learning
 - GSA will set up environment for anyone. Contracted with AT&T to provide distance learning.
 - Have we tied in with NTC – Chip Calamato?
 - Gave copies of AT&T contract information to Logan (TWT Chair) and Deb Epps
 - Chip is resurrecting video conferencing and working with NICC on plans to establish at all 11 coordination centers for conference calls not briefings.
 - Some hardware will be procured. No analysis on why capabilities weren't used in the past. This does not seem to be requirement driven. The USFS has had a lot of success with speakerphone and "NET meeting".
 - It is worth contracting for equipment to keep current.

- WIMS
 - Sent out tech note on WIMS WEB – pre-engineering. Enabling WEB interface to a legacy system. Switch over on April 29th. Will be running parallel interface until the end of June.
 - Training accounts are available from the support desk. There has been positive feedback on the interface.
 - Phases 2 and 3 – re-engineering (requirements based, ground-up)
 - Complete first quarter of next fiscal year for phase 2
 - Move to ORACLE 8I next fall
 - Formally chartered a task group through FDWT to pull users into what is happening
 - Intend to charter phases 2 and 3 through NWCG
 - **Action:**
Complete draft charter for WIMS (phase 2 and 3) by June meeting. (Mike B.)

- RERAP
 - Also charter through NWCG
 - Rare Event Risk Analysis Program
 - Not Y2K Compliant
 - Engineering Effort underway to address deficiencies
 - Operate in same environment as Fire Family Plus
 - Dick Bahr is the focal point
 - **Action:**
Complete draft charter for RERAP by June meeting. (Mike B.)

- FARSITE

- Fire Area Simulator
- Finalized Service Level Agreement
- Not formally a NWCG application
- **Action:**
Distribute copy of Service Level Agreement. (Mike B.)
- GTG – Geospatial Task Group
 - Training in Boise last week
 - GPS – Andrea Olson sat in and was impressed.
 - Attendance – 25 people – interagency

Radio Narrow Banding Paper

- Started as technology concern
- Need to get through BLM operational testing this spring/summer
- Still have different policies between DOI and USDA
- Outside “fire’s” control. Talked to Daryl White
- Insuring we have plans in place for smooth transition – not a technical issue
- Teams/Bureaus need transition plans
- Loss of technical people at the field level is still an issue
- Cost – less of an issue now than two years ago. Need continued funding levels. Appears that DOI is waiting for fire to fund.
- Long Term: Cooperators
 - Expedite getting newer technologies in their hands. Through Rural Fire Assistance – National Fire Plan
 - Discourage handing down (transferring) old technology to cooperators
- **Action:**
Add paragraph regarding getting new technology to cooperators. (Gladys/Shari)

Network Issues

- Update on cutover to new provider. Problem with EFF Payroll is an NBC problem. They could not get back to DOINET.
- Up and Running at NIFC. Seems to be quicker.
- NICC running slow before cutover. Will re-test for ROSS.
- Other network problems attributed to low-end PC’s
- Wait for entire Bureau to cutover for final test
- Changed network interface to ATM/Update at NIFC
- Negative effects of Audio and Video Streaming on NIFC network--Department policy is to turn Real Player OFF. There should be no audio and video streaming through DOI Bureau networks.
- Department level – Bureau networks are stable.
- Contingency plans...not identified yet.

- NPS concerns – moving to FTS2001 – NPS is struggling to implement its VNET. BLM is in good shape. Not sure how quickly this can happen. NPS has no VNET Denver connection at this time...still on DOINET.
- Department will keep DOINET up and running until everyone has transitioned.
- DOI (USDA?) concern – A Network Communication Plan is needed identifying possible single points of failure and opportunities to improve efficiency. Some type of plan is needed from each agency ensuring their networks will be up and running this fire season – list server is an option to ensure communications happens between bureaus.
- Ron Strong offered a “corporate” IRM telecommunications perspective, and corroborated the supposition that agency IRM Directors don’t want projects’ or agencies’ staffs to build network infrastructure. IRM’s job is to provide corporate infrastructure for all staffs.
- Ron will pursue DOI connectivity to NITC for Bureau access to DMS/ROSS and other wildland fire applications located at the Kansas City center.
- Ron also suggested looking at “Workplace of the Future” – a pilot satellite service delivery project in Wyoming.
- **Action:**
 - Get results of NICC ROSS network testing to IRMWT (John G.)
- **Action:**
 - Pursue a USDA waiver to ensure interagency computer and network functionality with the DOI wildland fire community– NWCG request?
 - **Action:**
 - Ron Strong will contact Bobby Swain (DOI Telecomm) regarding an order for a connection (Permanent Virtual Connection through MCI) between NBC and NITC. This will also facilitate hot site development for the ROSS Project.
 - Depending on Ron Strong’s success in establishing DOI connectivity between NBC and NITC...IF Ron is unsuccessful; develop recommendations to NWCG to implement an interconnectivity solution.
 - Alternative: Do nothing...continue to suffer at DOI locations with Internet outages.
 - Alternative: Point out business opportunity to Center Directors for hot site opportunities with each Center providing support to the other instead of each Center contracting independently for hot site support. (We suggested this already).
 - Alternative: Move Fire applications to NBC (where all five federal networks exist).
 - Alternative: NWCG connect NBC and NITC centers (Spread costs among fire applications).
 - Alternative: Have the ROSS Project connect NBC and NITC centers.
 - **Action:**
 - Ron Strong will report NBC-NITC connection status to Shari who will pass info to NWCG.

Satellite Data Communications

- Mike Field, USFS-R4 would like to see a downlink at NIFC.
- Could not get from fire camp back to hosting unit. This was not in place last year. Would be resolved through connection from fire camp through a downlink at NIFC. Might be more efficient at one of the computer centers because of connectivity.
- Make it available to each host unit.

- **Action:** (Shari will designate lead)
 - Set up Temporary Task Group: John Gebhard, Gladys Crabtree, Mike Barrowcliff, Barry Mathias (as requested by IRMWT Chair), Mike Garrett, Ken Wilbert to:
 - Get experience report
 - Set up demo at NIFC
 - Information item to NWCG, other WT's
 - Recommend Prototypes
 - Come Back with Cost Analysis

Lightning Contract

- This is the fifth year of the existing contract.
- The Weather Service is starting to put together a new contract.
- Matrices were sent out to gather information for requirements. There is a potential 60% growth, most in USFS. 120 end users at the forest level versus 56.
- The original contract was for \$5 Million. This one is estimated at over \$10 Million, so have to go to NOAA. There is only one vendor and an increase in the number of people involved.
- This is a multi-service contract. A lot more functionality: cloud to ground, inter cloud, coverage over 1000 miles off shore. SOW much more complex.
- Contract is broken up into "options", so we can select what we want.
- Extended current contract for one year – covered through FY02 at current price structure plus 5%.
- Other players are coming to the table to bid on portions of the contract. Fire's cost for 2001 is \$185,709.
- Don Latham's concern is that we have the authority to determine who is a player.
- Haven't heard from the weather service in four months.
- SOW is scheduled to be completed in late fall. On the street in January with contract award in Spring of 02.
- Issue: Use of archive data in current contract that is "on file". Not sure how this will play out in new contract.
- Identify cost structure to the user – WRCC for repository?
- Accuracy in certain situations is questionable.
- Would anticipate increased requirements for historical data.
- Phil Sielaff is doing a good job in representing the fire community.
- **Action:**
Get copy of draft SOW

National Fire Plan:

- USFS – Fiscal Staff in charge of project
- Proceeding in Crisis Mode
- Quarterly Reporting
- Derived from regional system, modified, implemented, several revisions.
- Duplicate reporting in other systems within the USFS
- DOI is looking at this system
- Tim Hartzell verbally committed to use this system

- Dick Bahr is DOI's representative
- Andrea/Glad indicate the decision has not been finalized
- Meeting Thursday in Washington. Roger Erb is asking for list of everything that SACS currently collects.
- Revision to Fire Statistics (90%) Doesn't feed "data-mart"
- Push is for DOI to use same tracking system and "data-mart"
- **Action:**
Get information on SACS from the contractor (Andrea)

NWCG WEB Site:

- Ken Reninger and Ted Tower are working on preparing a response to the NWCG on the current state of the NWCG Web site. Ted has requested information from all of the working teams, per Jim Stires request.
- We need a process and standards. Who should develop these?
- Service Level Agreement
- Content Review
- Privacy
- Repository
- Geospatial issues
- Federal versus public network location for rehosting NWCG home page....ISP or Federal location?
- Links
- **Action:**
Do a WEB requirements study (define needs) (Ken Reninger, Ted Tower)

Eastern States Representative:

- Phil Murphy received background information from Mike Funston.
- Has left messages for Jim Hull.
- Representative has not been identified.
- May have to request Jim Stires forward request.

April 18, 2001

NWCG IRMWT Budget for 2001

- Reviewed Budget
- The PMO will purchase some IRM support tools:
 - Plotter
 - Pilot Software for Repository
 - Case Tool
 - Cost Expert
 - Etc.
- IRM Strategy Plan
 - Charter
 - Goals

- Designate Task Group
 - Lead – Mike Barrowcliff
 - Ken Reninger
 - Phil Murphy
 - Meeting May 3, 2001 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
 - May include dispatch, planning for identification of priorities

PMO Annual Work Plan for 2001/2002

- Handout on PMO cost Projections for Remainder of FY2001.
- Handout on PMO Proposed Accomplishments for FY2001 and FY2002.
- Demonstration of Access Database Application that organized PMO Objectives, Goals, and Actions for planned work in 2001/2002
- A PMO report from this Access Data Base in the form of a work plan will be delivered to Shari by May 15, 2001 for distribution to the IRMWT prior to the June (Portland) meeting.
- PMO has tentatively scheduled two trips to DC:
 - End of May - 1) Meet with USFS – Barry would like assistance from IRMWT members coordinating two-hour meetings with other DC-based agency Fire and IRM groups to increase awareness of PMO and market PMO products and services; PMO members will also attend IBM presentation on IBM service offerings.
 - July – Institute for International Research Course “Building a Project Management Office” Arlington, VA.
 - Other PMO travel will include monitoring of, and providing assistance to NWCG Projects.

- National Fire Plan - May use consultant to develop questionnaire, conduct an assessment, and produce a report

Round Robin

Phil Murphy – None

Mike Barrowcliff

- ICBS
 - BLM/USFS – Managed by the Cache Managers
 - Negotiating a Service level Agreement for support
 - ICBS is jointly managed by USFS and BLM
 - ROSS/ICBS integration proposal
 - Large overlap in “ordering” component
 - ROSS looked at it in terms of interface
 - Complex due to distributed system

- Cache managers are evaluating the proposals and submitting questions to the ROSS Project Manager
- ICBS should become an NWCG project
 - Not sure BLM and USFS are on the same page
 - What is the IRMWT Role
 - Need to understand the Big Picture environment
 - What is the PMO Role
 - Need communication plan
 - IRMWT is in a support role – responsible for the overall “health” of the NWCG IRM program
 - Still individual agency’s requirements
- Cache Manager’s Task Group is looking at the implications of making ICBS available to regional and local caches. This expands the usage of ICBS to all agencies
 - Data sharing agreements between projects/systems.
- Cost Expert Training (Tool normalized on estimating algorithms from over 20,000 Projects)
 - PMO and FS learned basics of how to use the tool.
 - Need to customize Cost Xpert parameters based on experience with fire applications. Cost Xpert is being used with good results to estimate various costs associated with the ROSS project.
 - Could this be a standard tool for NWCG? Explore agency estimating methods and tools...are there any specific agency requirements for estimating projects.
 - Projects, special teams, or an independent, external group can do cost estimating. Estimations of overall project costs for management consideration should be developed independently and externally to the project.
 - The idea is to use the same tool every time and develop skill estimating project costs.
 - **Action:**
Each IRMWT representative is to check with their agency to determine if they have a cost estimating tool and/or process in place. Report out at the June meeting.
 - **Action:**
Barry will check with the Leslie Roberts (DOI) to determine if there is a standard methodology or tool for estimating projects and reporting in A-11, 300B development. Report out at the June meeting.
- Metrics Conference
 - Price Waterhouse and Cooper have a project health assessment tool. Have four categories that indicate project health by green, yellow or red light.
 - Need to define metrics that must be kept from the beginning of the project to make this assessment tool useful.
- Help Desk
 - Enterprise System Management
 - Tivoli
 - Centralized Help Desk – IBM – 50 person help desk will provide all first level support for USFS infrastructure.
 - Exploring to support other areas and other programs and interagency to support.
 - Meeting at NIFC next week

- Want to evaluate before totally buying in to the concept. We have something that works.
- Land Fire Project
 - 30 meter coverage, GIS project
 - upward reporting back to Congress
 - estimate from \$30 to \$115 million and 1 year pilot to 10 year project
 - Contacted PMO for chartering
 - Dan Keller's first task is to pin down requirement – he is the focal point for fuels business area for USFS
 - Being treated as a USFS project
 - Should be another NWCG project
 - NPS involved in another inventory and monitoring (vegetative mapping)
 - Lots of opportunities to coordinate ground truthing with both projects
- Local IRM Coordination
 - Begin monthly meetings with IRM staffs
 - 2nd Tuesday of each month (10-11:30am)
 - Call for agenda items
 - Round Table Discussion
- **Action:**
Mike Barrowcliff set up monthly meeting

Doug Stephen

- GEOMAC
 - Concerns regarding the draft GEOMAC data elements
 - Concern about workload to create and upload this data to GEOMAC
 - USFS put up a Web site
 - Got information from satellite – fire maps, etc.
 - Proposal is to get data for every fire greater than 10 acres
 - Convert perimeter to specific format to post on Web site
 - Value for MAC groups
 - Really impacting operations – getting into a lot of work to gather and transmit data
 - Should not be using this data to make tactical decisions
 - What is all this data going to be used for?
 - Outstanding product
 - A lot of data is being entered already – new in terms of shape files – perimeters
 - This year, look at what people like, usefulness, cost
 - What makes sense to continue
 - Welcome set of standards for fire related GIS data collection
 - GTG is working on standards
 - Prototype of technology – pulling information from where necessary to bind information together to form a final product.
 - There is no business steward.
 - Do we have the bandwidth to support?
 - Is there a method to upload data
 - Using FTP to central site

- Expect Arc View data – prj file
- More intended for large fires
- No requirement to do this
- Question whether to move to NWCG project after this year
- Public Information and the MAC group are the primary user groups
- Possibly 3 purposes
 - Operations
 - Public Relations
 - Historical
- Needs a business case to go forward.
- GEOMAC should put on a presentation for IRMWT
- Geospatial Data Repository – desire of the task group
- Standards for meta data – PMO repository
- GTG group would be the data steward
- NPS – EROS data center – mapping fire perimeter and severity using Landsat > 100 acres.

Strategy Assignments

Handout – NWCG IRM Working Team Roles and Responsibilities

Handout – NWCG IRM Working Team Members/Program Management Office Roles and Responsibilities

Handout – Systems and Processes

Handouts were reviewed, information to be updated and used in tomorrow's Responsibility Matrix Workshop.