



Fire Management board
Tasking #16-001
Release of incident data to the public

PRESENTED TO FMB ON WED. SEPTEMBER 21, 2016

Presentation outline

- What data should and should not be released
- When and how should data be released – real-time vs. delayed release?
- How should we coordinate with external affairs?
- How should we handle data from state or local entities? Are they okay with the release of their data?
- How to minimize conflicts with data published on the Situation Report and other public reports?
- Who should oversee and manage this process?
- What, if any, IT security issues must be addressed prior to the release of data?



FMB Tasking Memorandum No. 16-001
Date: 19 September 2016

TO: Ben Butler, Chair, Incident Data Access Task Group

FROM: Larry Sutton, Chair, Fire Management Board *Larry Sutton*

SUBJECT: Release of Fire Incident Data to the Public

Purpose: This memorandum establishes a task team to address standard protocols and associated guidance for release of wildland fire incident data to the public.

Tasking: Conduct an assessment of business requirements and develop recommendations for standard protocols and associated guidance regarding the release of wildland fire incident data to the public that could be used by the agencies. The task team is expected to reach out to subject matter experts and pertinent interagency stakeholders at national, geographic area, and local levels to assess business requirements and develop recommendations. Provide a status report at the FMB meeting, May 18, 2016, and a final report, including recommendations, at the FMB meeting, October 19, 2016, that address the following:

- What data should be released and what data should not be released?
- When and how should data be released – real time release or delayed release?
- How should we coordinate with external affairs?
- How should we handle data from state or local entities? Are they ok with the release of their data?
- How to minimize conflicts with data published on the Situation Report and other public reports?
- Who should oversee and manage this process?
- What, if any, IT security issues must be addressed prior to the release of data?

Ben Butler will serve as task group chair, reporting to the FMB. Other representatives have been selected to cover the range of wildland fire business area stakeholders. Paul Schlobahn, NWCG-FMB Liaison, will serve as our contact with your task group. The task group will seek assistance from Subject Matter Experts as needed. The task group members are:

- Chair, Ben Butler, FS RD&A
- External Affairs, Randy Eardley, BLM; Kaari Carpenter, FS
- NICC Intelligence, Sean Peterson, BLM
- NWCG Fire Reporting Subcommittee, Andy Kirsch, NPS
- NWCG Data Management Committee, Keith Smith, NASF
- GACC-level data management, Kim Kelly, BIA
- NWCG Geospatial Subcommittee, Sean Triplett, FS

Contact: Please provide deliverables to Paul Schlobahn (pschlobo@blm.gov) one week prior to FMB meeting dates.

What data should be released?

- **iRWIn – Integrated Reporting of Wildland-Fire Information**
 - Limits should be placed on the specific data elements that are shared publicly. A recommended list of appropriate elements can be found at - <https://goo.gl/2mzIKD>
 - Currently the largest collection of authoritative interagency incident data
 - Service-based and already serving several public-facing applications
- **Current “Snapshot” vs. Historical Archive**
 - There is currently no historical archive for IRWIN data
 - Recommendation is to publicize a live “snapshot” of data

When should the data be released?

- **Real-Time Release**

- Most data elements should be released in real-time with some exceptions
- In general the Task Group does not feel there were strong reasons to restrict the timing of the release of most data elements.
- Timely data are more important than highly accurate and given the nature of IRWIN, incorrect entries are rectified quickly by appropriate authoritative systems.

- **Delayed Release**

- There are some sensitive data that would require a delay in their release cycle to protect accuracy (i.e. fatalities)

Coordination with External Affairs

- **Standardizing the data used for reports**
 - **Opening IRWIN data would allow external affairs to create reports from the same data used in a public feed'**
 - **Keeping reports in line with the open data – by standardizing the preferred/required data stream used there would be assurance that all reports would be consistent.**
- **Publicizing the opening of data**
 - **There's power in telling the story of transparency**
 - **External Affairs could be a critical piece of telling the story**

State and Local Data

- **State Level Data**
 - There is support for publicizing state-level incident data
 - Currently many states already make data public
 - There is a limited set of IRWIN data originating from states
- **Other/Local Data**
 - This is a very limited subset of IRWIN
 - There is support for publicizing these data as well.

Minimizing Conflicts with Other Reports

- **Situation Report**
 - Currently pulls data from authoritative sources (ICS 209)
 - IRWIN also pulls data from these sources
 - SIT Report is using IRWIN Data
- **Other Public Reports**
 - Inciweb
 - Currently manually populated by PIOs
 - Has plans to move to auto-population by IRWIN
 - EGP
 - Currently makes IRWIN data public
 - Other Reports
 - Mixed sources for reporting data
 - Could easily standardize to using IRWIN if access concerns were alleviated.

Process Oversight and Management



- **Continued Guidance on Public Data Elements**
 - NWCG Data Management Committee
 - As IRWIN expands and grows further guidance will be required
 - DMC should have an annual task of reviewing IRWIN Data Elements and determining which should be made public
- **Technical Oversight**
 - IRWIN Development Team
 - DOI Geo-Platform

IT Security Concerns

- **General Concerns**
 - All data contained in IRWIN fall under the Freedom of Information Act and therefore can be made public.
 - There seem to be no security concerns with making data public
- **Technical Concerns**
 - System Security for any site hosting the data
 - Vary depending on the agency that would actually host the data

Recommendation Summary

- Publicize a modified version of the current IRWIN data stream
- Data should be machine readable and accessible to all
- There is currently no need to limit the data by agency or affiliation
- Many public reports are already leveraging IRWIN data and others should be tasked with also moving to this feed as their primary source of data.
- The NWCG Data Management Committee should be tasked with an annual review of IRWIN data elements to determine which should be made available publicly
- The IRWIN Development Team can provide technical oversight if required.
- Other than any IT System Security required to actually host the data there are no IT Security Issues that must be addressed.