NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP

Memorandum No. 16-027
Date: 8 November 2016

TO: Larry Sutton, Chair, Fire Management Board

FROM: John Glenn, Chair, NWCG Executive Board

SUBJECT: Wildland Fire Information and Technology (WFIT) program assistance request: Interagency Data Cache Concept

The NWCG Data Management Committee (DMC) has proposed establishing an interagency wildland fire data cache. The NWCG Executive Board supports this concept and seeks FMB assistance.

Our organizations produce, consume, and maintain numerous independent datasets to support various applications without a clear strategy for national interagency data management. This leads to limited data accessibility, duplicative data collection, incomplete datasets, and inconsistent data and quality standards. It contributes significantly to the high cost of the wildland fire IT portfolio. An interagency wildland fire data cache could significantly improve this situation.

We have directed the DMC to work with the WFIT program to develop this concept. The DMC will provide primary NWCG leadership in consolidating NWCG business capabilities and requirements and providing technical support for this effort. We appreciate your assistance in coordinating these efforts with the Lines of Business team for completing capabilities development and the Program Board for technical support.

Some potential benefits, key capabilities, and ramifications of inaction regarding the data cache concept are stated below.

Potential benefits:

- Improved efficiency (lower cost) and predictability in application data management.
- Reduced effort and time spent to create and update interagency datasets.
- Reduced redundancy in the number of applications focused on data entry, retrieval, and services.
- Improved national level reporting as a result of access to national scale interagency data.
- Increased confidence in interagency data products.

The key, high-level capabilities proposed by the Data Management Committee:

- Capability to become the single authoritative location for interagency data
- For discrete datasets (ex. fire occurrence), store one record per event regardless of source or ownership.
- Capability to store spatial and tabular data.
- Capability to serve out stored data for viewing, editing, replicating, and reporting purposes.
- Capability to perform QA/QC processes of the stored data using defined business rules.

Potential ramifications of inaction:

- Fire applications will continue to develop their own data management and data hosting strategies at a higher, more unpredictable cost.

cc: NWCG Executive Board; NWCG Staff; FMB Executive Secretary

- Innovative applications will be unable to meet goals because they must continually expend budget on stand-alone data management schemes rather than application functionality.
- The fire community will struggle to meet required federal open data initiative standards.

Please support our efforts to define and pursue a single interagency wildland fire data cache concept. Direct questions to Roshelle Pederson, Data Management Committee Chair (kimber_pederson@ios.doi.gov), or Paul Schlobohm, NWCG-FMB Liaison (pschlobo@blm.gov).

cc: NWCG Executive Board; NWCG Staff; FMB Executive Secretary