



November 6, 2018

Wildland Fire Information Technology (WFIT) Program Board
Re: Letter of Support

I am writing to express my strong support for the Missoula Fire Lab WindNinja project. It has come to the attention of the NWCG Fire Environment Committee (FENC) that the WindNinja program is lacking dedicated support for development and maintenance. This is concerning to FENC as the WindNinja program is a widely utilized and embedded program for many wildland fire operational systems. WindNinja is a valuable tool for fire environment specialists as it allows for high resolution forecasting of a key variable to fire behavior, wind. This tool is unique in that it is much higher spatial resolution than any meteorological models available and allows the user to see diurnal patterns and impacts of synoptic systems at the local scale. This tool is specifically useful in complex terrain, where wind features are not resolved by broader meteorological models. In addition, fire environment specialists appreciate the easy-to-use interface that is specifically designed for wildland fire support.

WindNinja directly supports five of the capability requirements from the FENC analysis for fire weather and indirectly supports an additional two requirements. These capability requirements are listed below:

Direct

- Method to ingest point and gridded observations
- Forecast future weather conditions
- Display observed/forecast weather with fire environment observations/forecasts
- Fire Weather Information Analysis
- Forecast probability, confidence and bias

Indirect

- Display observed weather
- Point observations

Wildland fire management in the United States relies heavily on decision support systems to effectively manage wildland fires and limit their impacts to communities while limiting operational risk to responders. All of these systems rely to varying degrees on fire weather information, with wind forecast accuracy being a key to success. I encourage future efforts to maintain and build upon what the WindNinja program has begun.

Sincerely,

/s/ Robyn Heffernan

Robyn Heffernan
Chair, NWCG Fire Environment Committee