

**Date:** 03/25/2020

**PSOG Meeting Notes:**

- 1) AK Fuels: Zoom presentation by Robert Zeal (Zeke). Currently fire analyst at AK Fire Consortium. Give folks an understanding of why Alaska is so different. Pretty common to look at AK as a map of the whole state, is a deceptive way of thinking of Alaska. Appreciate that AK has relatively few fires each year but that translates into many acres. Have suffered lack of data in many years. Alaska has made a lot of progress to produce comparable products to what the PSOG is thinking about creating. 1981 ERA Analysis has proved to be very relevant. WIMS/WFMI is not the authoritative source for their data. AKFF system is scalable as they can expand their capacities — it is not behind a firewall or on a government server but in a cloud system that is flexible but secure. Listed six items that they believe would be valuable for the national initiative to support. Have tools to leverage a great 7-day forecast.
  - How did they manage to get this done amid all the IT policies, etc. Alaska has been forced to go its own way because many of the things in the lower 48 are unavailable to them. Another example is the drone program in AK. Tends to have lots of issues when trying to implement things developed and used in lower 48. For this program, it is leveraged by MesoWest with the University of Utah. Much of their funding has come from local services. Working with MesoWest for costs. Following up with those types of questions.
  - Not looking to take anything off the table and recognize every GACC is different. Going forward — figure out how we are the same and think less about how we are different. Hopefully it will merge technology where you can analyze apples to apples.
  
- 2) WFIT Proposal Update — 1 page sent by Chuck. Came up with a bunch of evaluation factors for potential IT projects that arise and a process people can follow. Look to have wrapped up as final for review on next PSOG call. WFIT process does not seem to fit the PSOG well because it talks a lot about NWCG committees. Should PSOG be going ahead and do this process for every single IT item (which could be many) or go out it systematically. Perhaps a discussion of new ways of business in the future. Should WFIT proposal continue for this? For WFIT it is a combination of approval and funding. We do not have a project manager full-time to move this forward.
  - a. Not strictly a PSOG problem because agencies have the same issue. PSOG as a national program. There are no line items for predictive services in a budget. Look to change in the future. Develop more of a strategic vision. Lots of obstacles but also many areas that are undiscovered. Touch base with Chris Buzo with WFIT.
  - b. Nate — WFIT also struggles whether you take item by item or a more strategic approach. Good approach to chat with Chris Buzo. Start to figure out how to be more strategic. Identify 7Day NTS as a critical need. Could also work on the strategic vision at the same time. Have worked with MBS (Mission Business Solutions) as project managers/facilitators and has been very helpful.
  - c. Action — Beth to talk with Tim Sexton to hopefully nail down funding to have a product in the near term. Chuck work with Nate and/or Chris to reach out to MBS. MBS is a consulting contract not a WFIT contract and FMB could potentially help w/that funding wise.

- 3) 7Day NTS — Not much change from last briefing. Funding still has not come through. Researchers working on new things. Working several months behind schedule. Either need to fund or reconsider the whole thing. Less from a year from now there will no longer be a G-model in NFDRS. Programmatically look at big picture and how to approach projects process wise (e.g. funding wise). Money was going to come from RD&A (Tim Sexton) with several hang-ups. Beth will follow-up with Tim Sexton on this issue.
- 4) Team Wellness — Uncertainty in the air. Just a pulse check on issues and concerns. Brian — How to accomplish a face-to-face meeting in April? Probably not the best way to accomplish tasks that were on that agenda via Zoom or some other option. Prioritize items. Fire season will be starting soon. This is where hard work begins to move the program. Hit the point where PS staff needs to get engaged (re: memos sent a few weeks ago). CGAC directed PSOG to take over these areas. Is there someone in PSOG who can help master the virtual capability for meeting — GaBriella offered up Zoom and then in the future Teams will be the best way to go. Dan will touch base with GaBriella on this.
- 5) PSOG Memos — 2001/2002/2003 weather service initiatives. Comments on memo 001, Heidi sent edits a few days ago. Subgroup met with NWS to talk about mutual interests. Last sentence “goal is to ...” Statement better found in memo 20-02 instead of memo 20-01. Collaboration with NWS met with positive response. One of the issues was that the weather service did not dedicate a fire weather forecaster — they are in the process of reviewing how this might work. Next requirement — if this is going to happen, need 7day coverage for fire season. How would this be accomplished? Discussed several options. Dedicated fire weather forecasters in GACC’s, fire weather desk at local fire offices, grab a qualified forecaster out of NWS for a fire assignment. How will fire weather forecasters at a GACC open gates for additional data accessibility. Be mindful of the groups time — crack the door open to see what possibilities are there. No decisions have been made but information has been put forward.
  - a. Developing organizational options — Is it one position or two? Unknown on fire organization. Be able to leverage NWS in other areas to help. Fire analyst position is highly undefined. Re-engage with requirements.
  - b. Heidi expressed concerns with the way forward as it feels like it is the way it was 20 years ago. NWS cannot provide daily fire weather forecasters. Do not see it being practical with NWS (short staffed, high turnover rate) be able to dedicate someone to an office where that support is not needed. Did not think we were on this part of the past but just scoping this out. If PSOG is going to make these changes, needs to happen at a pace that people can digest.
  - c. Nancie — Can see Heidi’s concern. Need to be sensitive. Caught the group off guard that PSOG was at that point in the conversation regarding the capabilities NWS could provide. Not a bad idea and would consider having one in GA if they were “free.” Just need to be very cautious moving forward. Do not get discouraged — just caught off guard.
  - d. Brian — Agree with both Nancie and Heidi. It is not a one size that fits all for each GACC’s. Not saying “no” to the NWS but are hesitant. Unsure how they will be able to provide a service at no cost (budget wise). What are the topics to discuss with both groups — since the door has been opened?
  - e. Action — Dan and Heidi to work on re-working memo 20-01. Messaging is important in terms of what are the hypotheticals. Ensure decision spots are applicable even if everyone

does not entirely agree. Work through that dynamic. How to have the conversations be transparent and still be prepared to have anxiety regarding the information? How to move the program forward productively? Not looking to displace anyone. Grab data points and come back to center with those ideas.

- 6) Memo 20-02 — Looks good. Identify timeline in this memo.
- 7) Nate — struggles w/various modes of communications. Formal process of communicating through memos. Get inundated and unsure how effective they are. Could it be consolidated? Could possibly put information in other spots.
- 8) Heidi, GaBriella, Billy, and Dan — meet up offline and talk best as to how to roll out.