

FENC Spring Virtual Meeting Notes

May 5th and 6th, 2020
10am-2pm MDT

May 5th

Present: Shelby Law, Steve Manthei, Robyn Heffernan, John Noneman, Mark Fitch, Billy Gardunio, Henry Bastian, Wes Hall, Larry Van Bussum, Nanette Hosenfeld, Tami Parkinson, Dan O'Brien, Mick Baldwin, Clint Cross, Chris Markle, Pete Lahm, Tim Brown, Tim Chavez, Deb Fleming, Sean Triplett, Reginald Goolsby, Jon Wallace, Cole Belongie, Chris Buzo

10:00am – FEMS update – Law/Noneman

- Update from Shelbi Law on Fire Environment Mapping System (FEMS) (see PPT slides).
- Working on trying to find a home (environment) for FEMS to set up the sandbox.
- It's critical that whatever happens in the FEMS environment works together with other applications across the portfolio.
- Need to create a rolling list of issues/needs.
- Spatial database - weather & fuels
- John Noneman - working on the business side of things to get the data bases up and running
- Weather data is a rolling 30 years, updated annually.
- Suggestion to track the differences in dataset meta data. E.g. - "30 years of weather data" means one thing to NFDRS and another thing to NWS.

10:30am – Lightning Contract update – Hosenfeld

- The previous lightning contract had the BLM as the middleman for the data from the vendor. New contract requires that the vendor store and distribute the data. The new contractor is Earth Networks.
- The current viewer only contains an hour of data but downloading and archiving data through the viewer is fairly simple.
- There is currently only a single login for the data, but this will change.
- The current format of the data is not meeting the contract requirements.
- The data is not currently feeding into any other viewers.

11:00am – WFIT update – Markle/Manthei

- Briefing from Steve Manthei on WFIT staff
 - Assigned project manager
 - Program board - first of 4 business subject areas
 - Interagency Fire Data Cache Effort - WFIT Enterprise Architecture Analysis and Portfolio Transition Plan
 - Alternative 0 - Status Quo
 - Alternative 1 - Establish Data Cache Foundation
 - Alternative 2 - Cloud Migration to Layered Architecture - this is the one that was chosen
 - NIST specified service offerings
 - IaaS
 - PaaS
 - SaaS
 - Uniform, single environment allows Sandbox development
 - Low Code/No Code
 - Hosted, mobile-capable environment

- Moving towards a data driven enterprise. The data cache is a big piece of this (single source database).
- Have done an inventory of the application portfolio and technical environment.
- If something doesn't fit within this framework it really needs to be looked at.
- How does this relate to FEMS? Need a dedicated project manager assigned to the project.
- Still a long way to go in figuring this all out, it's hard, but now are collectively approaching the portfolio.
- What is the WFIT process to get to the sandbox for FEMS? That conversation is already happening with the Program Board.

12:00pm - Virtual meeting software standards - All

- Need to come up with some standards for this summer to use in a virtual setting.
- Each agency has their own acceptable software.
- WFIT has not discussed and come up with standards for this at this time.
- Firenet has a Teams capability that is starting to be used more. You can bring guests into Teams. Connectivity is not ideal in all situations. There is some proof of concept work being done regarding connectivity. OCIOs are the decision makers. Once the connectivity issue is solved, the platform issue needs to be resolved. Teams does not have a audio only via phone.
- Steve will bring this up with the Program Board tomorrow. A list of what is authorized and by whom is a first step. Zoom and Teams are the two primary federal options.

12:15pm - Vetting process for use of tier 3/4 applications - All

- These are of potential value to wildland fire but have been developed externally.
- Need to find a way to peer review and recommend those that are applicable.
- This idea has been discussed through the years.
- The Mobile Technology group has been inactive, and Steve said the group is going to be re-chartered under the WFIT Program Board.
- FirstNet (3 teams will be utilizing this) – post 911, emergency response systems crashed. Congress sanctioned and funded building out the broad band network primarily in rural areas. Dept of Commerce is overseeing this program. All states and territories have opted in for use of FirstNet. Network has been expanding for 3 years and the trajectory for Phase 1 is 5 years. As revenues come in the capabilities will be further expanded.

1:00pm - Tech transfer process for Tier 2/3 applications (ex. WindNinja) - All

- How do we transfer these in and stay within the established WFIT architecture? For instance, WindNinja is still sitting out there as a heavily used, but adhoc application.
- Is the Mobile Technology group under WFIT thinking about this process in their sphere of influence?
- The process to get this sanctioned isn't well defined.
- Tech transfer is on ongoing issue. Finding the environment to put things in should be close to being solved. The resources to support new tools is a problem. Either OWF or FAM needs to agree to support a new tool like WindNinja.
- Balancing objectives for new tools is challenging. Needs vs support.
- Environment should be approved within days.

Fire Weather Subcommittee Update (Larry)

- Working on a sensitivity analysis of mixing height calculations
- Working on the Fire Weather Handbook
- Will participate on the Lightning Task Team
- Status of LAL Haines Index – has been put on the backburner, but it is still on the radar

Fire Behavior Subcommittee Update (Tami/Kyle)

- Continuing to work on continuing education videos
- Wrapping up draft IPDs
- Working on Fire Behavior Pocket Guide – out for review through the GATRs
- Agreement with South Dakota is set up to add money; first project is getting underway
- Getting a repository set up on the website to help when people transition in/out
- Mann Gulch project is also moving forward – videographer compiling video which will be used to supplement the staff ride.

PMU Update (Deb)

- Staffing – lots of change on the NWCG staff going on; filling various details
- Budget – working on getting some of the FY21 projects funded with FY20 funds
- The substructure reorganization is complete with the exception of the S-591 description for the training page – working with co-chairs to get that information

1:30pm – Adjourn

May 6th

Present: Robyn Heffernan, Mark Fitch, Billy Gardunio, Wes Hall, Larry Van Bussum, Tami Parkinson, Clint Cross, Tim Brown, Tim Chavez, Deb Fleming, Sara Brown, Pete Lahm, Kyle Cannon, Matt Jolly, Reginald Goolsby, John Wallace, Shelby Law, Tami Parkinson, Todd Lindley, Annie Benoit, Crystal Stonesifer

10am – Fire Potential Modeling / Fire Triage – Cross / Jolly

- NMAC stood up Area Command Teams to develop Response Plans for each geographic area. FS has also set up a Management Group to oversee response, and a Risk Management Assistance Group to develop support related products. One of the key things with all this is to try and look at some new science to help inform decisions.
- Wildfire Triage (see Matt Jolly's PPT slides)
 - Info will be distributed through WildfireSAFE app: desktop & mobile application with feed from IRWIN
 - Includes an Incident Triage Dashboard to help inform the shorter-term decisions, fire behavior observations thru incident-level analytics.
 - Severe fire weather potential can be forecast and communicated in advance and a severe fire index can be assigned.
 - Based on these metrics, resources can be assigned more appropriately.
 - This project is intended for the GACC versus the individual incidents. GACCs can use to help with decisions on allocating limited resources.
 - Hoping to have this available for all Geo Areas this fire season.
- How do we make sure we use the best available science and incorporate that into our current systems.
- Strategy to move forward: this tool could have very wide use and multiple NWCG groups may need to be involved in implementation. It may be worth setting up a task team to focus on the business side.

11am – Satellite Data Task Team – Lindley

- See Todd Lindley's PPT slides for update on Task Team's findings and current progress
- Final report will be forthcoming shortly.

11:45am – IMET and FBAN COVID strategies – Van Bussum

- Much of the analytical support will be virtual and will be determined by the IMT.

- Building from the Response Plans and developing SOPs in an effort to establish a baseline across all geographic areas.
- Working through possible scenarios, 1) on incident @ ICP, 2) downrange @ offsite close to the incident, 3) remote support from home or office
- Have come up with a planning document to address these responses.
- Waiting for direction from agencies on how they are going to order IMETs and will adjust throughout the season.
- Parkinson - a lot of analytical support will be virtual, but up to teams how that will be done.
- Chavez: Helicopter flights may be problematic as flight helmet use may be restricted and private companies may restrict use to certain personnel.

12:00pm - GA / IMT COVID strategies – Stonesifer (see PPT slides)

- Survey done in early April
- Target ICs for ACT, NIMO, T1 - T3 teams
- Majority of teams indicated they will be able to field at least short teams, but with restrictions on personnel. 52% of respondents indicated they will be sufficiently rostered.
- Open text field: What IMT functions could be performed remotely
 - Plans/some plans ~35%
 - GISS 20%
 - IMET <5%
 - LTAN/FBAN/SOPL: 10%
- Only 15% indicated that they will not be limited in ability to manage an incident remotely
- 42 of 90 indicated Microsoft Teams, 21 Zoom, then less than 10 for all other platforms
- In general, not in favor of 14 day quarantine upon return from an incident.
- Who makes the call on how incidents will be responded to? Still being decided
- Need measurement mechanism in place to measure how successful different responses are in both fire containment objectives as well as keeping people healthy objectives.

12:30pm – Smoke COVID update – Lahm / Fitch

- Geographic area plans being revised with comprehensive plan on addressing Smoke and COVID.
- Poses major hazard given the nature of COVID and normal impacts of smoke inhalation.
- COVID funding received for:
 - Ensemble forecast improvement
 - Early warning system
 - Rx Fire
- Regional teams to determine what smoke products/services needed at a regional level.

Fire Environment Continuing Education Subcommittee (Wes Hall)

- Had a successful Spring Webinar; presentations are available on nwcg.gov on the subcommittee page.
- Added Ron Steffens as an advisor to the subcommittee. May be looking for additional members.
- Typically have the AAR in the fall. Would like to focus on COVID response this fall.

PSOG (Billy Gardunio)

- Still meeting and working on setting up some groups to work on specific taskings.
- Continuing engagement virtually.

States (Tim Chavez)

- Struggling with potential response issues related to COVID.
- Added a lot of intelligence, environmental science & fuels positions that may be in jeopardy due to funding issues.

Desert Research Institute (Tim Brown)

- Continuing with a project that Tami & RD&A started – continuous RAWS project with NFDRS 2016 in mind and trying to figure out how it can be maintained in the future.
- Additional funding came from CA BLM.
- Fire Weather Subcommittee may have a role here to determine the authoritative RAWS data set.

1:30pm – FENC Tasks/Roles

- Notetaker – Annie Benoit will no longer be able to participate or take notes. Robyn may look to see if she can find a new IMET. Good learning experience for someone.
- FENC representatives on Tasking Memo (TM-20-002) regarding SOPs for training advisory groups – Gwenan & Shelby & Tami & Wes
- DMC rep – need a closer tie to make the connections between DMC and FENC; circulate request through subcommittees and get back to Robyn with interest. Shelby is already engaged due to FEMS and can try and provide this link.
- Fire potential forecasting and Wildfire Triage related connections – FENC needs a more direct connection to these efforts from a business leadership perspective. Think of others that might have an interest or talent in this area and get names to Robyn if you have anyone that might be interested.

1:45pm - Adjourn