

## FENC Annual Meeting Notes (February 23, 2024)

### Attendance

Nick Nauslar, Robyn Heffernan, Charles Maxwell, Cheryl Bright, Chris Moore, Darren Clabo, Larry Van Bussum, Chad Hoffman, Travis Verdegan, Wes Hall, Tim Brown, Dave Schultz, Cole Belongie, Robert Clark, Billy Gardunio, Jim Wallmann, Dan Jimenez

### NWCG Meeting report out (per Robyn question)...

- “NASA” and “communication” two main themes
  - NASA full NWCG affiliate and exec board member
  - Bring huge research capability.
  - R2O process needed...constant contact.
- Improving comms up and down the NWCG org
  - Who has authority for what decisions & communication?
  - Checklist for NWCG committee/subcommittee navigation discussed.
  - Questions about vetting across partner groups always come up.
  - Important: Six week process from NWCG committee to NWCG Exec board.
  - Expectations of committees still needing some clarification (mission)
  - Issues/decision wallowing in “non-decision” territory too long, for lack of communication and decision making capacity.
  - Might be more structure than can be supported (more committees/SC than can be supported)
- Robyn: Coordinator’s job is to sit in on all the committees/SC’s, right?
- Chris Moore/Nick: Seem to be just too many pieces to effectively manage everything (From NWCG coord perspective)
- Robyn: NASA and wildland fire operations concept...Was CONOPS presentation/concept well received? Was it vetted or coordinated?
- Cheryl: NASA has A LOT of information in their presentation/info that seems overwhelming in general, and especially for NWCG.
- Nick: Fire Mgmt. seems to want NASA to solve things, but “stay in a lane” that’s not well defined.
- Robyn: NASA has ideas about holistic fire management that go well beyond what we’ve talked about previously. Things seemed to really ramp up fast recently.
- Larry: Silo’s in place, NASA is one...maybe trying to bridge the ones we have.
- Nick: NASA looking for problems to solve?
- Chad H.: Got same impression of NASA holistic problem solving idea from talking with them on an Rx.
- Larry: Maybe 3 different directorates within NASA aren’t communicating well?
- Nick: Seems NWCG lanes are very blurry and cross-lane complications continue to occur.
- Chris: Reiteration that NWCG does standards and training, doesn’t set policy. But ,who does?
- Cheryl: Some differentiation needed as to whether or not NWCG applies at incident level.
- Nick: Is IPSC in on every decision?

- Robyn: Ongoing issue with NWCG enterprise standards being adopted/adhered to on an agency by agency basis.

### FENC Agency Representation (Nick)

- Nick: Looking for “legit” agency representation by folks who are 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> tier decision-makers, or those who directly influence them, to move things forward more robustly and quickly. (Agency vetting)
- Keystone representation needed (not all reps created equal)
- Sort of mini-exec group concept to get things moving with good communication and coordination.
- Cheryl: Do we want to shift SCs to focus on more technical/SME expertise vs. complete representation of all NWCG entities.
- Robyn: Would like to have a NASA rep on SCs or FENC. Perhaps SC’s first. Agreement from several.
- Clarification that NWS is the NWCG agency on the exec board, not NOAA.
- Robyn: NWCG structure undergoing a transformation, as when/what it was designed for aren’t working anymore. Committees and SC members don’t necessarily need to have exec group representation.
- Nick: Can/should committee/SC chairs be agency reps?
- Robyn says: Choose reps according to ability, with multi-representation possible.
- Cheryl: Folks changing agencies don’t lose their skills/SME capability, so it should be possible to move around and FENC committee/SC assignments.
- Cheryl: Would like to see a rep for each NASF region? Travis & Robert concurred.
- Robyn: FENC historically had two state reps...agrees with adding a third rep.
- Travis: Make the seats available on FENC and they’ll be filled.
- **Recommendation? Apparent concurrence on adding another NASF rep (total of 3)?** 11 positions on FENC now...what’s our target? Could be max of around 15?
- Robyn: Is intent to have DOD on since they are member of exec board? YES
- Cheryl: Consider “connection to your exec board member” for all current FENC reps.
- Robyn: Some FENC voting members could become liaisons or associate member. (Folks who contribute valuably, but don’t make the decisions)
- Dave S.: Might have a line on getting more NASF representation and offered his assistance.
- **Nick: Is there any disagreement on changing the FENC structure per this conversation...i.e. all members and associated members get an invite to join?**  
**NO**
  - **Keep current liaisons...reach out to OPS, RMC, Fuels, etc. as liaisons.**
  - **Nick will communicate next week to line up an official FENC vote.**
- Good idea to review FENC purpose and protocols with the evolving group and new people coming in...perhaps regularly.

### Safe Separation Distance Update (Dan Jimenez)

- Status...this needs to go through IPSC, and IPSC would like some field testing (beta testing) and ground truthing before final approval.
- More feedback is desired through 2024 season to increase comfort levels.
- Dan gave presentations to over 700 folks in SA on this with consistently good feedback and apparent buy-in. Good sign!
- Similar communication is occurring between Dan and NEMO, other GAs.
- Looking to attain more widespread feedback, from different entities.
- Possible integration of this work into the IRPG when final approval achieved.
  
- Q(Rob C.): Training for FBX series?
- Dan: Safety zone section in S-390 will eventually move over to the new work. Right now, what's being taught isn't consistent across similar FBX courses in different places. Awaiting IPSC approval before going big, but ground-up via 390 likely necessary as well. **Dan might be creating material directly for the 390 course and others.**
- Q(Nick): Dan shouldn't need to do road shows for years to get this all done, but it seems effective. Is the juice worth the squeeze for Dan?
- Dan: New, large safety zones creating concerns for operations/operational folks. Might take a live, ongoing, face-to-face road show. (ongoing personal engagement)
- Larry: Mentioned similar challenges with the Haines and LAL transition.
- Chris: Was everyone on FBSC able to reach out and prep their agency and NWCG reps (including IPSC) on the safety zone work before it was brought to them for a decision?
- Nick: Wants to encourage outreach (per Chris' question) for all FENC proposals for decisions moving up.
- Robyn: NWCG reps used to be assigned to committees so that this work (outreach/lobbying) can be done. Coordinators do that now. Need to functionalize that for effective navigation?
- Nick: Committees/SCs still have some responsibility to outreach to agencies/programs
- Cheryl: NWCG coordinators/reps without technical/SME skills might be creating communication barriers. Misinterpretation rampant.
- Robyn: FENC membership should have broad representation and line of commo to NWCG exec member. Establish ASAP when joining FENC. Also, research/science/tech knowledge needs to somehow be able to move up to NWCG (via Science and Tech Advisory Board?). **Pending Science and Tech Advisory Board probably won't be an NWCG entity.**
- Nick brought up the potential for Dan to present to the IMET contingency to help spread the work. Larry on it.

### Fire Behavior Curricula Update (Chris M)

- In final process for test S-290 course for CA to be held this April. Certify afterwards.
- S-390 kickoff meeting SOW for contractor working through the system...analysis meeting upcoming in MAY/JUN (U of Idaho SME group heavily engaged and meeting NWCG requirements)
- Target date for test S-390 is October 2024, rollout Spring 2025.
- Planning review process each year to keep course currency between updates.
- S-490 and 390 group are meeting together. A large gap is going to emerge in S-490, some have talked about S-395 as a bridge. Ongoing conversation and collaboration. U of Idaho heavily involved here as well.
- S-490 issue now (GB) 44 requests for instruction help, only 5 instructors available. Might be some detailer help coming to bolster SME pool. Concern about choke points developing. (GB also not getting any applications for their Fire Analyst position after)  
Question about contracting out course delivery? Looking at it.
- S-590 first two weeks of MAR...gov't shutdown issues pending, but plans are going forward mostly "as is". Some contingency discussions.
- Q (Larry): S-395 idea, has curriculum group considered targeting courses to specific purposes and having less redundancy?
- Chris: Yes, but there are some misalignments between position requirements, courses, general needs that need working through. It's complicated!
- Clabo: described the tiered process of leaning/knowledge associated with the FBX courses right now.
- Cheryl: Fire Danger dealing with the same issues, but not wanting to go through the NWCG training process for concern of dramatically limiting the audience.
- Who is responsible for properly educating the entire workforce, not just those on incidents? Who covers educating day job positions?
- S-190/290 is being taken by NWS personnel that aren't IMETs...supporting the above
- IFPM is changing, so training<>position relationships are going to change.
- Fire Environment training appears to cross/blur the lines between NWCG and "other" purposes, but nobody to do the needed work at present.
- Nick: We have days jobs that require incident qualifications, so we're already training for people's day jobs. Already happening!
- Robyn: Think strategically in designing our courses, so we need to have ability to have agility. Think about that now, as we develop things. **Modular training one approach.**
- Cheryl: S-191 > S-391 are tabled for now, pending strategic consideration.

## Fire Danger Update on Definitions and Standards (Cheryl)

- Task group working on definitions (fire danger, fire danger rating, fire danger metrics/indicators, fire potential): Am I on this – Maxwell?
- Framework for where standards would be or live.
- Want to stand up a CFFDRS and NFDRS task group, both.
- FEMS...Hard to tell what conversations need to happen in FEMS, FDSC, other oversight.
- No clear oversight structure with crosswalks for communication/influence.
- Nick: Has it been posed to the subcommittee as to what they think they do? How about trying that.
- Travis: Practices of the past making it very hard...
- Nick: Should FENC weigh in?
- Robyn: Mission/vision of all SCs, like FDSC, perhaps up for a redo?
- Nick: Is fire danger fundamentally helpful to fire management?
- Cheryl: Kinda/sorta...
- Travis: Actual robust application of fire danger might be necessary to be able to talk about it.
- Cheryl: Misapplication/lack of standards causing issues...
- Travis: Is anything before an incident important? (Pre-fire)
- Chuck: Misapplication, using something we have never understood, pigeonholed application, importance of pre-fire decisions?
- Larry: Are we right in what we're doing?
- Robyn: Be the change we want to see!!! (pre-fire, active fire, post-fire, etc.)
- New path forward needed?
- Chuck mentioned the learning loops, and how double loop learning might be what we really need...
- Robyn: Pick and choose targets of opportunity, task them out, get em done!
- Travis: Can a comprehensive, agile business plan approach work?
- Nick: NWCG has slapped us before for stepping out of our lane. Should we be concerned about that before paving a new way?
- Larry: Does NWCG understand their coordinating role, training and standards aside? Are they fulfilling it?
- Robyn: NWCG is seen as a coordinating body by many outside of fire, and we should leverage that. "Do what's right vs. what might be problematic".
- Is NWCG just outside their lane?
- Robyn: NWCG organization is overwhelmed, but the business is the business.
- Cheryl: Be bold and request what we need, flat out? Get delegations of authority
- Robyn: Just understand we'll be accountable to whatever answer is given...
- Can we successfully pitch an expanded "lane" for FENC that has a broader charter?
- Robyn: Maybe we can have a broader charter/mission that touches more of the pieces we need? More powerful & inclusive governance
- Build back from the need towards the org & governance instead of the other way around.
- Robyn: Organizationally multi-disciplinary, comprehensive of all fire environment aspects, get the right people.
- Travis: Add members to all SC's to cover the full fire environment continuum?

- **Restructuring? Fire Environment Decision Support SC, Fire Environment Training SC, Fire Environment Data Standards & Definitions SC, Fire Environment Decision Modelling SC?**
- **Robyn version: Technology Subcommittee, Data Subcommittee, Analysis and Prediction Subcommittee, Education Subcommittee**
- Clarification for Maxwell: (Thanks Cole) Task group gets stood up and then stood down, SC/committee are permanent for
- Robyn: A Task Team has a specific purpose. A committee/subcommittee is to coordinate business.
- Nick: Are there enough people to cover our collateral duty SME needs? (Chuck says maybe...if we staff them!)

#### Haines/LAL Transition Plans (Clabo)

- Successful in getting memo from NWCG exec > NWS to discontinue LAL and Haines Index
- NWS now has their process to go through, which will take several months at least.
- Exec wants a transition and comms plan, as well as milestones we need to meet to adhere to **planned January 2025 removal**.
- Jim: Milestones roadmap discussed this past summer and could NWS help “advertise” changes in their products.
- Dave: Check back in with EB Board this summer, to accommodate NWS process. A number of guides/document/training (like IRPG) need to align updates with this change. **Hope to have comms plan by June/July 2024.**
- Darren: FWSC looking at dedicated page (living doc) planned to assist transition. Caveats (\*) are being placed in current guides/documents/training signaling the terms that will be dropping out. Planning a face-to-face comms blitz, per Dan and safety zone work.
- Jim W.: RT-130 another opportunity to advertise this information.
- Nick: Same with AOP meetings
- Take advantage of all opportunities to help get the word out.
- Dave: Recommendation to track when & where this info is being communicated.

#### Remaining Subcommittee Report Outs (Just Darren)

##### Darren (FWSC)

- Forces in play...need to liaise with Chuck Maxwell (planned for next week)
- Most info in training based on CONUS and AK...can we get training for islands and other place? Francis Fujioka (former SW research station scientist is on it)

## NWCG FENC Glossary Terms Organization (xxx) **Round Robin instead**

### GSI Live FM Threshold (Rob)

- Rob: Had been discussed earlier about GSI “best practices” threshold settings to calibrate NFDRSv4 live fuel moisture values. Where is that?
- Nick: Still awaiting technical documentation.
- Rob: Causing some issues in CA and elsewhere and needs resolution.
- Rob: Also, some of the common field sampled LFM thresholds from CA (used to validate the v4 LFM values) are decades old...and arguably invalid.
- Travis: NFMD transition has shown this might be more complicated than we think, and different thresholds in different places might be accurate. Visibility of data/info needed to enhance awareness.
- Chris: Would be great if this could work out and support learning on incidents and elsewhere with data correlating to fire behavior, activity, etc.

### EDDI data WCS or Rest Service (Wes)

“In reference to NWS and Fire. I know there is currently not a WCS or Rest Service for the EDDI data. This data has been identified in several reviews over the last few years and talking to Mike Hobbins, CPC is likely to pick up the project to move it forward. Is there any way we could push that timeline up as a priority?”

- Wes – Can we get access to this data now or sooner? Important to WFDSS, fire behavior, many applications...
- Nick and Larry will try to keep tabs on this and watch for an emerging solution.
- Cole: Ingestable, usable data are critical (services) to develop fire environment data relationships.

### Billy G. PSOG

- Live PSOG meeting a few weeks ago...
- PSOG bucket #2 positions approved (three of them).
- PSOG bucket #3 (PS program) – Met Working Group will be stood back up to represent the mets...similar with Fire Analysts. Intell already as a working group.
- Next annual PS meeting to try to be separate from center manager meeting, to encourage more participation.

Cole - All good...glad to help from DMP and EGP perspectives.

Rob – Curious on FM sampling database for FEMS going? (See Travis’ answer below)

Travis - Looks good for April, and specific CA issues have been considered. EAuth or iNAP will be vehicle for access. Training on data entry will be focus of early release and efforts. **(Current DB shutdown on March 8, release by mid-March...more in April. Comms coming)**

Chris – Moving over to RDA next week.

Chuck – Moving over to DMP next week...Fire Environment Business Lead.

Chat stream...

Robyn Heffernan - NOAA Federal

8:26 AM

No

Wesley Hall

8:36 AM

In reference to NWS and Fire. I know there is currently not a WCS or Rest Service for the EDDI data. This data has been identified in several reviews over the last few years and talking to Mike Hobbins, CPC is likely to pick up the project to move it forward. Is there anyway we could push that timeline up as a priority? Sorry a little off topic

Nick Nauslar - NOAA Federal

8:40 AM

noted it as a topic Wes

Robert Clark

8:46 AM

What about the training aspect? For the fire behavior series?

Wesley Hall

8:46 AM

The RDA is working on getting SSDE added into NextGen WFDSS. It will likely not be available upon initial release but is on the priority list of enhancements

Robert Clark

8:50 AM

can you share what you have for a presentation?  
thatd be great

Wesley Hall

8:59 AM

Dropping off for a bit I will be back

Chad Hoffman

9:08 AM

Nice job Dan. Keep up it up.

Nick Nauslar - NOAA Federal

9:36 AM

back at 945

Chad Hoffman

9:56 AM

i like Robyn's point about the how subcommittee can be more inclusive.



Chad Hoffman

9:59 AM

need to step out for another meeting.

Travis Verdegan

10:27 AM

I've got to run for a half hour, be back in later.

Wes Hall

10:31 AM

In terms of committee members it would be good to reach out to Rick Stratton in wildfire analytics and my current position Strategic Wildfire Risk Reduction to keep a pulse on FENC topics

Robert Clark

10:41 AM

Is there a list of all NASF contacts?

Jim Wallmann

10:48 AM

not that i know of Rob

contact Greg Smith (NASF EB rep)

Jim Wallmann

11:10 AM

back at 1115

Robert Clark

11:17 AM

plastic

You

11:23 AM

speaking in 3rd person for myself

Canyon Hideaway & Escape

11:33 AM

This is Wes. Had to switch to my phone

You

11:34 AM

double loop learning needed

You

11:37 AM

sorry...that's where you challenge the assumptions of what you're doing and ask new questions, instead of fixing the beater in the driveway

Robert Clark

11:45 AM

If one of the objectives of the FDC is to Develop and support standards, analysis processes, and tools for fire danger rating. What is the next generation fire danger system outside of NDFRS? Are we not looking to the future of how we make decisions?

You

11:47 AM

We need to talk more, Rob

Robert Clark

11:47 AM

sunk cost bias

Chad Hoffman

11:50 AM

brb

Robyn Heffernan - NOAA Federal

11:53 AM

Yes - that is my exact point.

Robyn Heffernan - NOAA Federal

12:01 PM

Who is Canyon Hideaway & Escape?

Canyon Hideaway & Escape

12:02 PM

It's Wes robyn

Robyn Heffernan - NOAA Federal

12:02 PM

Thank you!

Canyon Hideaway & Escape

12:03 PM

I'm on another call on my laptop.

Robert Clark

12:11 PM

Who is the NASF Western rep to FDSC?

Decision Support?

Robyn Heffernan - NOAA Federal

12:22 PM

Technology Subcommittee, Data Subcommittee, Analysis and Prediction Subcommittee, Education Subcommittee?

Robyn Heffernan - NOAA Federal

12:24 PM

Cole's summary of my comments is amazing!

Chad Hoffman

12:31 PM

i need to run to a meeting i'll check in later.

Robyn Heffernan - NOAA Federal

12:32 PM

A Task Team has a specific purpose. A committee/subcommittee is to coordinate business. I think we need to do both.

Robert Clark

12:36 PM

I might be able to give a SME from CAL FIRE who is on S-495 and S-591 steering committee if needed.

Robyn Heffernan - NOAA Federal

12:45 PM

Getting resources is always a surprise. Let's be ready for the surprise.

Robert Clark

12:50 PM

didnt know what was in the sausage

Robert Clark

12:52 PM

Should we put this on the agenda for the next call?

Travis Verdegan

12:52 PM

We need not recreate yesterday we need to build a new tomorrow.

Robyn Heffernan - NOAA Federal

12:52 PM

Yes!

Drew would be AMAZING!

Wes Hall

12:54 PM

You have me. I am WO-FAM

Robyn Heffernan - NOAA Federal

1:01 PM

I need to run to another meeting. Nothing from me. Thanks for this!

You

1:04 PM

1:15 (MT) planned restart...

Wes Hall

1:24 PM

I will try to get my rear in gear with FCESC and we can help with that!

You

1:33 PM

Good diagnostic tools, not necessarily predictive ones! (re: EDDI)

Robert Clark

1:45 PM

IS there going to be a press release with the details that we can share?