

## NWCG Fire Environment Committee

Date: 26 March 2025 at 1130 MT

Attendees:

- Nick Nauslar
- Ben Hatchett
- Robyn Heffernan
- Cheryl Bright
- Dave Schultz
- Chris Moore
- Chuck Maxwell
- Darren Clabo
- Rob Clark
- Wes Hall
- Billy Garduino
- Kevin Hiers
- Pete Lahm
- Casey Teske

- Dave NWCG Update: FY26 budget request from FENC, Fire Wx subcommittee for handbook and to get help on revising pubs, both went forward. Proposals did well in conversations, well-framed. They were not approved to move forward, not because of work, just came down to funding level (projected). Cut back an additional 5% on top of 10%. Steady decline in funding levels to support projects.
  - Darren is not stoked on this outcome. He will keep sketching out thoughts on graphics and hope to resubmit in FY27. Has funding through fall 2026, expects to wrap up by end of this summer.
  - Dave: Get some time w Darren and pubs to chat, can talk options about where things are at, what needs to happen. Worst case, steal graphics from current book.
  - Chris M: Will have some leftover funding from SME request on 394 update, could shift some funding to get graphics done? Will know number in the fall, trying to have Uofl save as much money as possible. Will have some but not all. Robyn asked when funds expire, Chris thinks about another year.
  - Darren to prioritize where graphics are most needed.
  - Chris M: updates to be annual in attempt to minimize workloads
  - Nick: Do you know projects that did get moved forward?
  - Dave: Six minutes for safety, only a couple made it.
  
- FEMS from Chuck: Lots of action towards finish line for FEMS, RAWS, soil moisture from ASOS, need to get briefing from business staff.

- Cheryl: Still developing, end of May/early June, Scott shown NFDRS updates, data is populating a map but in staging, not production. Seasonal trend analysis charts getting built for stations. Starting to put together FAQ, challenge because there are data things and FEMS itself, whole bunch of questions about analysis, FDOPs, non-FEMS things.
- Nick presented memo to exec board, went pretty well, main concern was doing this transition into fire season. Make sure FAQs/job aids are done and filter them down to the field, what capabilities are not yet there once WIMS is shut down. Trying to get more funding/help but nothing concrete, so a lot of duties fall onto FEMS team
- Robert: Hosted FDOP workshop with 65 interagency attendees. Data ingest great/seamless. Data had some big errors in FEMS data (200 mph windspeeds for multiple weeks), need help on that to QC out bad data so can do analysis, produce seasonal information. What is the process to get data corrected in FEMS? Other thing was can we get a list of proposed stations added in 3.2. Agencies using stations not in FEMS, can we see those in the future?
  - Nick: Steve Vollmer brought issue up on fire danger call, when did DRI gap fill data, QC flags/replacements, lots of concerns with replacement of values (precip/wind/max RH), maybe replacing obs when shouldn't or vice versa. In another release, could make changes, but if data gets changed, what would it get changed to? Steve wanted to edit/guess, but may not be better could be worse than other options for QA/QC. Tough question to answer.
  - Cheryl: Scott and her talked the other day, it is RAWs data, probably was in WIMS that way, analysis done that way, didn't find it. Or, human-based edits (maybe not science-based), or just deleted values out of system. Not really going to affect things in some cases, but others it could affect things/mess things up. People need to understand that we're not going to change weather data.
  - Robert: Recommendations on how to use data would be good. When doing POR analysis and have these errors, need things to match. Guidelines/recommendations would help.
  - Nick: deleting data can be huge issue for NFDRS. Not going to be answers that will satisfy the field. Some say this is worse than raw RAWs data! But conscious decision since can't go through all data. Big complicated problem.
- Chris updates on S-290/390/490: Summary of changes to 290 submitted to NWCG; in certification process now. 390 group met yesterday to incorporate feedback from test course, several lessons need revamping. 490 just started

today with unit revisions. Things moving along.

<https://www.nwcg.gov/training/nwcg-certification-workflow>

- Someone asked is 290 not certified? Not yet, close but have to go through actual process of certification through FENC/IPSC, Dave also doesn't know all the steps in it, maybe more clarity to come. Documentation side there will be recommendation for approval, signature form to go around. Trying to get all the actual steps sorted out, will update.
- Robert Clark to Chris: how are states/locals to access the new material? Estimated time? Need to put together classes asap. Chris: Copy the 290 shell, everything is hosted in the portal, can be shared before certification, will get hard date. Robert attempted to order fire behavior guides from cache, is there a slow down? Producing locally. Nick will help try to track down.
- Annual Meeting agenda topics
  - Is it in FENC's lane to discuss FEMS/ new fire danger or implications of the addition of fire danger to FEMS and downstream implications?
  - Agency specific approval process for R2O.
  - FBSC is struggling with ideas for funding projects that don't include labor given current day job work load.
  - Fire Danger proposed Red Book Changes
  - FEMS
  - Gridded fire danger
  - S-491/591
  - New FENC Chair/Vice Chair
  - Fire environment data management/integrity
  - Fire Behavior Modeling R2O process
- Chuck noting Data Summit on April 8-10 in Boise, remote but room available.
- Robyn: Data discussion should be added to annual meeting topics? Adding guidelines/recommendations for how to use data.
- Robyn: FENC chair can help transition vice chair into position. Nick willing to help, wants to pass the torch, good to have different agencies represented. Cheryl considers it, but rolls out of FDEC? Chair in June. Chaired out but she may be more into it later in the summer.
- Nick: Back to NWCG funding lacking, want to note that NWCG coordinator is under a lot of stress, Dave has lots on his plate, don't shoot the messenger!

## Round-Robin

- Robert states: FDOP workshop, 10 cadre, 65 attendees. Thresholds for transition to FEMS, lots of q about stations not in there, other data issues, xml feed into other programs, dashboards/spreadsheets. Working on interagency fire danger dashboard for CA. Big concerns in CA, at national level, 491 only being taught once, host CA location in 2026 would appreciate support. Did message out memo on transition, plan in place to evaluate in June w working sessions.
- Chuck: NTR
- Chris: NTR
- Darren: Tie up loose ends on LAL/Haines to make sure as of 1 Feb products are discontinued. Nick: Year in review has a 3-4 min piece from Jim Wallman on change. Discussions on how to come up with best practices for stability parameters.
  - Robert: States have a concern with IMETs availability
  - Robyn: What will loss mean for programs? Use comms channels? No boilerplate information. What speaks to legislators are stories, these are meaningful. Nick adds that if this doesn't get figured out, IMET is critical part of the IMT, importance for having IMETs and getting them there in a timely manner is important.
- Robyn: Fire-related legislation to increase response time/suppression arrival (shortsighted as written, hopefully will get input from LMs):
  - <https://ciosenus.app.box.com/s/rzb9zs1dayumz3zme4ayfn3ct0is0q5y>
- Recommendations for wildland fire commission:
  - <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/1923>
- Wes: Continuing ed committee met a few times, training around NG WFDSS, FARSIGHT, FLAMMAP, NG WFDSS went live 1900 users, 7 active incidents with decisions. Biggest thing is fire behavior analyst workshop in May.
  - Nick: In terms of model updates, how does that get approved and ready for ops?
  - Wes: Fire Lab RMRS works with developer to adjust code, updates get fed into fire model services framework for WFDSS to access, he builds UI, feeds into framework, processes, read outputs. No guidance/policy for approval of new models. Nick to add as annual meeting topic.
  - Robyn: Was an effort 1.5 years ago with USFS/DOI CIOs to create advisory board to vet/decide what should go forward, requirements for technology. On pause at the moment. Harder bill highlights need for oversight board, awareness of need but no solution. Wes: Put through fire behavior subcommittee?
- Cheryl: Most of FDSC? Spent talking about memo. Stephen Vollmer's weather data concerns need to be addressed (flags/replacement or not). FDSC has

several planners on committee, say this is too technical for them. Planning, everything falls on them, entire thing about FDOPs, fire danger, constant problem with FDSC having to explain everything with whats happening in FEMS. How do we apply? How do we put it into our planning? Taking a toll. Day job issues crossing over to influence what's being taught. Not sure what to do, but compounding, no end in sight for FDSC to focus on data and analysis. R2O, operationalize NFDRS for ops, bad feelings? Looking at science, asking questions. All becoming a hard spot.

- Nick: Will be a constant struggle, no good answer aside from having standards/processes/best practices to point to. Need to show how to get to the end product.
- Chris M: How to streamline this into classes, talk about this in May.
- Casey had comms issues
- Billy PS: NTR