



January 18, 2024 | [Fire Weather Subcommittee](#) Meeting

Members/Invited Attendees:

Darren Clabo (NASF/SD State, Chair), Jim Wallmann (USFS, Vice Chair), Larry Van Bussum (NWS), Calvin Bailey (NASF/SC State), Dennis Burns (NASF/CA), Kari Fleegel (NWS), Colby Neuman (NWS), Brian Potter (USFS), Paul Sopko (USFS), Robert Swofford (BLM), Dave Schultz (NWCG Coordinator/BLM)

Actual Attendees: Darren Clabo, Dennis Burns, Robert Swofford, Nick Nauslar, Dave Schultz, Kari Fleegel, Brian Potter

****These and past notes are also available internally in our [Google Drive folder](#).**

Agenda

1. **NWCG Annual Meeting** (Darren Clabo/Dave Schultz)
2. **Next Steps in Ending the Haines Index and Lightning Activity Level (LAL)** (Darren Clabo)
3. **RT-130 and WFSTAR Video discussing Haines Index and LAL** (Darren Clabo)
4. **S-Course Updates** (Darren Clabo/Dennis Burns)
5. **NWCG Subcommittee Membership** (Darren Clabo)
6. **Budget Items** (Darren Clabo)
7. **Prescribed Burn Planning** (Brian Potter)
8. **Fire Environment Observation Unit Update** (Robert Swofford)
9. **FENC Update** (Nick Nauslar)
10. **Round Robin** (all)

1. NWCG Annual Meeting (Darren Clabo)

The NWCG Annual Meeting will be held in Boise February 22-23, 2024. Dave Schutz noted that while the meeting is mostly for committee and subcommittee chairs and co-chairs, anyone can attend. An email was sent over the last week requesting folks RSVP if they plan to attend.

Darren Clabo will be attending the meeting in person, and attending the Fire Environment Committee that will be happening during that time period. Darren will present the transition plan/ending timeline documentation for Haines Index and LAL (Lightning Activity Level). This documentation continues to be prepared. We are also on the docket with the Executive Board for creating a memo to the

NWS on discontinuing producing the Haines Index and LAL calculations. This was a request from Heather Hockenberry.

2. Next Steps in Ending the Haines Index and Lightning Activity Level (LAL)
(Darren Clabo)

Dave Schutz discussed the current 2-month process for bringing items to the NWCG Executive Board, and that they are working on making this process more streamlined.

Kari Fleegel mentioned alternatives or replacements for LAL already being produced by the NWS, either national or by local forecast offices. Each office produces a Probability of Thunder (PoT) which is available on the [Forecast Points page](#), and falls out of the gridded forecast database. Model data wise, the National Blend of Models (NBM) has this [experimental site](#) (although it has not been updated since mid December), a [Text Product \(MOS-like\) site](#), and the [NBM 1D viewer](#).

3. RT-130 and WFSTAR Video discussing Haines Index and LAL (Darren Clabo)

A meeting was held with Steve and Joe from WFSTAR about the creation of a video discussing the end of the Haines Index and Lightning Activity Level (LAL). Fire Weather Subcommittee members included Larry Van Bussum, Darren Clabo, and Jim Wallmann. The outcome was that it was too late to make a video for the spring 2024 RT-130s, but that they hope to include a brief 15-40 second mention in the WFSTAR year in review video.

Brian Potter suggested a 1 paragraph statement that can be given to RT-130 training leads. Before Brain creates a draft, Dave Schultz will look into if there is a mechanism available where we drop drop this statement to be easily available to the training leads.

4. S-Course Updates (Darren Clabo/Dennis Burns)

S-290: Darren Clabo is working on videos and scripts. S-290 will be added to the agenda for our next meeting, as it may have implications to other training courses.

S-490: Dennis Burns is co-chair for S-490. The direction from the NWCG Fire Behavior subcommittee was to rewrite the objectives and add FlamMap training to the course. Behave will be discussed more in a different course. Course revisions will continue over the next year.

5. NWCG Subcommittee Membership (Darren Clabo)

Darren Clabo brought up a former member who is now working for an electric company. Dave Schultz believed that membership needed to be tied into one of the NWCG Member organizations, or state or federal government employees. Member organizations include: USFS, BIA, BLM, NPS, FWS, National

Association of State Foresters, US Fire Administration, Intertribal Timber Council, International Association of Fire Chiefs, US Department of Defense.

6. Budget Items (Darren Clabo)

Darren Clabo asked the group if there were any known funding needs. Discussion went to the WFSTAR video, and Dave Shultz noted that WFSTAR would not need funding unless travel or other above and beyond expenses are required. Funds have previously been needed for Red Flag or gap-filled RAWs projects by DRI/Tim Brown. Nick Nauslar recently spoke to Tim Brown, and said that there are no funding requests at this time.

7. Prescribed Burn Planning (Brian Potter)

Brian Potter is working on prescribed burn planning with the US Forest Service AirFire Research Team, and specifically about what weather tools are being used in Washington and Oregon. He noted that there are several places where weather should be used in the prescribed burn planning process. However, states are working through the process differently. Prescribed burn planners are wondering how mixing height is calculated. Brian Potter said that the methods used to calculate the mixing height from actual weather soundings don't work for forecast model data, and that some assumptions are being used incorrectly. Different groups are calculating mixing height, and different numbers being produced. Clarification is needed and Brian suggests a paper. Some of the training, including RX-340 Introduction to Fire Effects, discusses weather. Brian will put together a starting document discussing potential failure modes with prescribed burn planning.

8. Fire Environment Observation Unit Update (Robert Swofford)

A Fire Environment Observation Unit (FEOU) meeting was recently held. Robert Swofford mentioned that the BLM/RAWs folks have taken over the FS contract for RAWs maintenance. Three new technicians have been hired and will be in California. FWS noted that California and Nevada may come into contract with them too for maintenance.

Randall Benson, Senior Meteorologist at Xcel Energy, came to Robert Swofford with the plan of putting up RAWs on Xcel Energy property. This would include 20 stations in 2024, and 50 stations in 2025. Randall Benson was looking for input on where they should go. As a result, Robert Swofford is looking for contacts across Colorado. Kari Fleegel will send him the NWS contacts across Colorado.

9. Fire Environment Committee (FENC) Update (Nick Nauslar)

There is a Fire Environment meeting next Wednesday. Nick Nauslar let us know that the Fire Danger subcommittee may come to us about fire environment standards, asking if specific items should be under the fire weather, fire behavior, or fire danger subcommittee.

10. Round Robin (all)

No additional topics were discussed.

Next meeting February 15, 2024 at 11 am MT
typically the 3rd Thursday of each month