



March 20, 2025 | [Fire Weather Subcommittee](#) Meeting

Members/Invited Attendees:

Darren Clabo (NASF/SD State, Chair), Jim Wallmann (USFS, Vice Chair), Dennis Burns (NASF), Larry Van Bussum (NWS), Drew Daily (NASF/OK Forestry Services), Kari Fleegel (NWS), Colby Neuman (NWS), Brian Potter (USFS), Paul Sopko (USFS), David Schultz (NWCG Coordinator/BLM), Nick Nauslar (NWS), Robert Field (NASA), Tom St. Clair (BIA)

Actual Attendees: Darren Clabo, James Wallmann, Kari Fleegel, Brian Potter, Robert Field, Dennis Burns, David Schultz

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

Agenda

1. **New Fire Weather subcommittee members** (Darren Clabo)
2. **New BLM member on the Fire Weather subcommittee and Chair for our Fire Environment Observation Unit subgroup** (Darren Clabo)
3. **FEMS Updates** (Jim Wallmann)
4. **BLM Lightning Contract** (Darren Clabo/Jim Wallmann)
5. **Round Robin** (all)

1. **New Fire Weather subcommittee members** (Darren Clabo)
We welcomed Tom St. Clair from the BIA to our group. He has already been added to our NWCG webpage as well as given access to our documentation (thomas.stclair@bia.gov). Another name that came up was Heidi Strader from the NPS, but she is unable to fill the role at this time.

Jim Wallmann suggested Steve Marien or Andy Snyder, meteorologists from the Geographic Area Coordination Center level. Darren Clabo suggested a non-meteorologist, with Dennis Burns noting some FBAN/LTAN and fuels officers at the western region of the NPS. Dennis will check on their interest. Brian Potter suggested that new operational folks were also invested in the prescribed fire side of land management.

2. **New Fire Weather subcommittee and Chair for our Fire Environment Observation Unit subgroup** (Darren Clabo)

Given the recent retirement of Robert Swofford (BLM), a new BLM representative in our subcommittee and new chair for the Fire Environment Observation Unit subgroup was needed. Alan Hester was suggested. He is currently a RAWS (Remote Automatic Weather Stations) Technician. Darren Clabo will ask him to join.

3. **FEMS Updates** (Jim Wallmann)

While fire danger is now available, there is an issue with the calculator so it shouldn't be used. The live fuel database has been updated and released. All development will stop in June, at least at this point. As a reminder, the Weather Information Management System (WIMS) will shut down September 15th.

4. **BLM Lightning Contract** (Darren Clabo/Jim Wallmann)

The contract has been awarded to Vaisala, which is a change from the previous contract. BLM and the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) are currently planning for no lapse in contract funding.

6. **Round Robin** (all)

Jim Wallmann: The WFSTAR video for Haines/Lightning Activity Level is now available and a part of RT-130: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-WRYY4S7RKM>

Dennis Burns: The S-490: Advanced Wildland Fire Behavior Calculations class is moving along. The group is setting up pre-course assignments for beta classes in September and October.

Robert Field: Doug Morton at Goddard Space Flight Center is working on a fire sense program, evaluating models for FARSITE (Fire Area Simulator-model development and evaluation) to more complex models. This includes sensitivity testing and optimization. This is in collaboration with the NPS and USFS. Doug would be happy to hear from folks for additional collaboration, Douglas.Morton@nasa.gov.

Brian Potter: An S-490 course is planned for April with assistance from Jon Bonk (Meteorologist, Northwest Interagency Coordination Center) and Stephen Bodnar (NWS Spokane). The American Meteorological Society fire weather conference is still expected to occur. Brian discussed model assumptions with different programs based on the fire weather triangle of fire behavior, fuels, weather, and topography. He suggested one common structure that could be the base used in much of the modelling. AirFire Rx window makes assumptions about fuels, RFTI (Red Flag Threat Index), BlueSky playground, and others make different assumptions.

Dave Schultz: Darren Clabo will need to respond to recent emails on transition plans for the Haines Index and Lightning Activity Level.

Darren Clabo: The May 15th meeting will be run by Jim Wallmann.

Next meeting April 17, 2025 at 11 am MT

****typically the 3rd Thursday of each month****