



January 16, 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), Robert Swofford (BLM), David Schultz (NWCG Coordinator/BLM), Nick Nauslar (NWS), Robert Field (NASA)

**Actual Attendees:** Darren Clabo, Robert Swofford, David Schultz, Colby Neuman, Nick Nauslar, James Wallmann, Kari Fleegel, Drew Daily, Larry Van Bussum, Brian Potter

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

**Agenda**

1. **BLM Lightning Contract** (Nick Nauslar)
2. **Haines Index/Lightning Activity Level Status** (Nick Nauslar)
3. **WFSTAR video update and Communications** (Jim Wallmann)
4. **FEMS 3.0 Update** (Nick Nauslar)
5. **Fire Weather Handbook Graphics Budget** (Darren Clabo/Dave Schultz)
6. **Round Robin** (all)

1. **BLM Lightning Contract** (Nick Nauslar)

Most requests have been worked into the contract. The BLM will have the contract up for viewing by the end of this week, with a 2–3-week period for proposals/applications. Paul Sopko will round up folks to review the proposals/applications. One will be selected in February, so it can be in place by the end of the previous contract (end of April). The Data Management Program, and specifically Chuck Maxwell, will take a more active role in the contract process next time. Chuck would like to compare the BLM contract with the current 22-page NWS contract. As a result, our Lightning Unit (LTNU) may have a smaller role next time but will still likely be Subject Matter Experts.

2. **Haines Index/Lightning Activity Level Status** (Nick Nauslar)

A memo about the status of the Haines Index and Lightning Activity Level was sent to the NWCG Executive Board last month, and it will be briefed at their

meeting next month. February 1st is the current deadline for The Haines Index and Lightning Activity Level to be of NWS products. As a result, expect an increase in feedback from users in February and March. Jim Wallmann added that he was contacted by John Norton-Jensen about 6 Minutes for Safety messages that would need to be removed.

3. **WFSTAR video update and Communications** (Jim Wallmann)

The Haines Index/Lightning Activity Level portion of the WFSTAR (Wildland Fire Safety Training Annual Refresher) video for RT-130 was recorded last month with Jim Wallmann. It is in final production and will be published soon. Dave Schultz included that communications will continue to be important within the NWS and with NWCG speaking with the fire community. Nick Nauslar and Scott Stearns will be writing up a document on the changes that are going to be happening at the NWS offices.

For the virtual annual Incident Meteorology (Continuity of Excellent Exercise) in early March, Nick Nauslar will speak for around 30 minutes about the NWS Storm Prediction Center and 15 minutes about the Haines Index and Lightning Activity Level. Nick will also be attending the Northwest Regional AOP meeting to further the discussion.

4. **FEMS 3.0 Update** (Nick Nauslar)

FEMS 3.0 is a solution to a difficult problem. WIMS will be ending sometime this year, likely in the fall. FEMS will be having a larger meeting in the 2nd week in February, so look for more information this spring.

5. **Fire Weather Handbook Graphics Budget** (Darren Clabo/Dave Schultz)

Darren noted that 8 chapters of the Fire Weather Handbook have been completed, with 4 to 5 still to go. A quote of \$48,000 was given for 240 graphics from a graphic designer who will also give complete copyright access to reuse that as needed. Darren will ask the graphic artist if they have had any contracts with the federal government in the past and give this information to David.

The overall deadline for our subcommittee was mid-January, with the Fire Environment Committee (FENC) bringing up final requests next week.

6. **Round Robin (all)**

**Drew Daily** - On the Southern Plains, a modified IWT (Integrated Warning Team) on fire assessment on detections that is headed by folks from the mesonet, Oklahoma Forestry Services, NWS, and the Cooperative Institute for Severe and High-Impact Weather Research and Operations (CIWRO) at the University of

Oklahoma and CIRO) on assessment on detections. Over 250 folks have registered from the media, emergency management community, and more.

Drew also mentioned the potential of a NWS employee becoming embedded with OFS this year, possibly Thomas Curl from NWS Norman. This person will also liaison with the Southern Plains Wildfire Outbreak Group (SPWO).

**Brian Potter** - Brian recommended us read the LA Times article, [Inconvenient truths about the fires burning in Los Angeles from two fire experts](#), which included interviews with Jack Cohen and Stephen Pyne.

**Dave Schultz** - Dave notified the group of the NWCG annual meeting February 18th for chairs of committees and subcommittees. Darren got the official invite.

**Robbie Swofford** - Robbie said that there was a Fire Environment Observation Unit (FEOU) meeting this month. The RAWs technicians have been asked to help with the annual Incident Meteorology training in Boise in early March. As for RAWs technicians, there were 2 new hires in Carson City, NV (now up to 6). There are 6 in Phoenix, with the rest being in Boise. The RAWs home page - have videos on how to install and take down the portable stations: <https://raws.nifc.gov/raws-training-series>

**Larry Van Bussum** - Larry was curious on the status of belt weather kits and kestrals at fire camps this summer. The latest he heard was that one of the subcommittees was ok getting rid of belt weather kits due to potential mercury (if any mercury kits were still available). Darren Clabo and Dave Schultz will follow up with other coordinators and give us an update at the next meeting.

**Robert Field** - Robert gave a brief introduction. Robert works for NASA/Goddard with more of an international focus to wildland fire, and would be happy to talk about some of his work at an upcoming meeting. He mentioned the Chinchaga fire of 1950 as the largest fire over North America in reported history.

**Darren Clabo** - Darren teaches classes Monday, Wednesday, and Friday that are at the same time as upcoming FENC meetings. Nick Nauslar will look at rescheduling these meetings to a time when he can participate.

**Next meeting February 20, 2025 at 11 am MT**

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