



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

**Actual Attendees:** Darren Clabo, Robert Swofford, Colby Neuman, James Wallmann, Kari Fleegel, Drew Daily, Larry Van Bussum, Brian Potter, Robert Field, Paul Sopko, Dennis Burns

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

**Agenda**

1. **FEMS Meeting Updates** (Darren Clabo)
2. **BLM Lightning Contract** (Paul Sopko/Robbie Swofford/Jim Wallmann)
3. **Fire Weather Handbook Graphics Update** (Darren Clabo)
4. **NWCG Annual Meeting Updates** (Darren Clabo)
5. **Mixing Height Calculations** (Brian Potter)
6. **Belt Weather Kits** (Larry Van Bussum/Robbie Swofford)
7. **Round Robin** (all)

1. **FEMS Meeting Updates** (Darren Clabo)

All Fire Environment Mapping System (FEMS) development is expected to end in a few months, because contractors may be done at the end of June. The weather section will be the same. At the current time, it is expected that only data from 1900 Remote Automatic Weather Stations (RAWS) will be used for fire danger calculations, with nothing from the alternate gateway. As a reminder, the Weather Information Management System (WIMS) will shut down September 15th. The Synoptic Lab data is also not available to all federal agencies, as it is currently only available to the U.S. Forest Service personnel.

2. **BLM Lightning Contract** (Paul Sopko/Robbie Swofford/Jim Wallmann)

Jim Wallmann, Tim Brown, and Paul Sopko met to discuss the BLM lightning contract offers and passed up their recommendation to the contracting person. There is the potential that the contract could be awarded in the next month.

Brian Potter was wondering what our responsibility is on this issue. Since the BLM lightning contract is not a Fire Weather Subcommittee purchase item, the information should be brought up to others in the NWCG for their awareness and guidance. Brian suggested that our subcommittee write a white paper along with a letter of concern that highlights that the lightning data is critical for fire management and fire prediction for during the fire year. A white paper could be more widely distributed. Robbie Swofford and Paul Sopko will share the necessary details to Darren Clabo and James Wallmann so a white paper and letter of concern can be drafted.

**8. Fire Weather Handbook Graphics Update (Darren Clabo)**

The budget details for the Fire Weather Handbook graphics have been submitted. The Fire Environment Committee (FENC) will be meeting soon, with additional details expected after that meeting.

**9. NWCG Annual Meeting Updates (Darren Clabo)**

The NWCG Annual Meeting was held February 18th. Darren Clabo attended the meeting and noted that the National Association of State Foresters was very appreciative of our work with the Haines Index and Lightning Activity Level. The NWCG Annual Meeting Updates topic will be included again in the next meeting, with additional details by Dave Schultz.

**10. Mixing Height Calculations (Brian Potter)**

Brian Potter was speaking with fire weather focal points from the NWS office in Spokane, WA about how they should potentially replace the Haines Index in their fire weather forecasts. They discussed concerns about replacing it solely with the mixing height. Brian Potter suggested including a near surface stability component, one that covers the lowest 1000 feet. This topic will be included again at an upcoming meeting.

**11. Belt Weather Kits (Larry Van Bussum/Robbie Swofford)**

There are no new details with respect to the cache storing and supplying of belt weather kits versus electronic meters. This topic will be included again at an upcoming meeting.

**12. Round Robin (all)**

**Robbie Swofford** will be leaving his position on March 7th at the latest.

**Drew Daily** had a successful interagency Integrated Warning Team (IWT) meeting to demonstrate the science behind and technology used during past fires. Drew also noted that during a recent Nebraska DEQ smoke management workshop, a NWS forecaster out of Nebraska did an excellent job highlighting why the Haines Index and Lighting Activity Level have been removed from forecasts. Drew also mentioned that the NOAA's Fire Stakeholder Round Table will be held on February 25th, and sent an invitational email to the subcommittee members. The Round Table will include information on the NOAA's Geostationary Extended Observations (GeoXO) satellite system that is scheduled to be available in the 2030s, including NOAA satellite data and decision making with fire alerts with Next Generation Fire System (NGFS). Detections across Oklahoma now take less than 10 minutes from initial detection.

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

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