

Notes from **FIRESCOPE Predictive Services Specialists Meeting**

Nov. 13-14, 2008, Room W-120 at McClellan TC, Sacramento CA

Attendees list/ Group Roster, with contact information: See final page of these notes

DAY 1, Nov. 13 p.m. hours:

Action Item Review: This was conducted by going down the Table for the main FIRESCOPE website, that shows our Group's **Plan of Work**. This is shown on the next page, due to it's wide format.

Predictive Services programs and 2008 fire season review:

We concentrated mainly on the fire season and its impacts on our duties and overall workloads. Updates were given by North Ops PS Unit (Snook and Willey), South Ops PS (Rolinski and Torrez), and briefly by several of the other agency reps (NPS, Calfire, LA County, Orange Co., and CARB)

Update on PAL program and 7-Day PAL web product (Russ Gripp and tom Rolinski):

Russ continues to be the Region 5 'point man' for all things technical related to the Project Activity Level program. He has attended numerous meetings to aid users in making full and proper use of the process, reminding them too that it is a tool in the overall decision making process. The Web product has been in place since about June, and it has been well received so far. There is still some DRI work to be done on a few stations, and some other minor improvements that Tom (who handles the Excel template/ web portion) and Russ have in mind. Good work guys!

FIRESCOPE Task Force Update (Art Torrez):

- Looking into Fireline paramedic (to do with quals?)
- the Field Operations Guide (FOG) has been revised
- looking at priority setting, have a meeting in late January 2009, I believe in San Luis Obispo

CEFA/ DRI Update (Crystal Kolden):

- Hourly Fire Danger Phase II topic, Tasks listed here. Crystal said tasks 1 and 2 are 'almost done'.

1. Updating FDRA shape files
2. Updating Station weightings
3. 90th and 97th percentiles (i.e. HFD climatologies)
4. Including snow cover for WetFlag
5. Validation

- WestMap precip project of Hauss Reinbold's, which uses PRISM data. It is 'much nearer to completion' than prior report. Link is <http://cefa.dri.edu/Westmap/>

- CANSAC

1. Bluesky 3.0 is now up and running, with testing almost finished. They are assessing a bug in Smartfire. Re-incorporating the manual input option ASAP.
2. There is an effort underway to gather funding for sorely needed new hardware. (Note - This was discussed at the Dec. 16 CANSAC board mtg at McClellan too. The goal is new, faster computing hardware, with redundancy (backup ops) capability, and a 5-year maintenance contract. The NPS has some money to largely fund this, but it is currently held up at the Boise level.

- Sonoma Tech Inc. / DRI Smoke products produced last summer, during the lightning fire siege.

Crystal posed several questions to survey use of the website/ products:

- Did the products have impacts on decisions?
- Were they useful?
- If useful, which products were the most (or least) useful?

A short discussion followed, and (from this group's perspective) it seemed that the products never became real well known, or used a lot, outside of the meteorological community. It was basically an unknown as to how much, if at all, T1 or T2 fire teams knew about and/or used the smoke product in operational decision making. John S. said operational FW mets thought the products were weak initially, but that they improved over time.

Another hindrance to the overall effort, was the USFS needing 3-4 weeks to decide just what would be done smoke-wise, during this siege. By the time STI products/ website arrived, the worst was over.

CARB Update (Jason Branz)

PFIRS - Still in lengthy series of testing phases

Jeff of CARB told the group that his unit used CANSAC products quite a bit this past year.

Francis F. asked what the obstacles were that were hindering getting PFIRS use into Bluesky

LA County Update (Jay Lopez)

3 more RAWS stations will be out by next spring.

Review to date, of ongoing Pacific dry lightning study (Basil N.)

Since just after the June 20-21 major dry lightning event, Basil has been in cooperative research with NWS Eureka, Medford, and Reno on ways to improved prediction of future similar events.

Some of the factors the researchers have found (so far) that should be looked at include:

- Sea Surface temperature anomalies (SSTs) out around 40-45 N and 140 W
- High Level Total Totals (a CANSAC graphic for this is being developed)
- Make better use of NOAA's Storm Prediction Center (SPC) outlooks
- PS Unit Dryness levels

DAY 2, Nov. 14 a.m. hours:

NWS Update (Steve Goldstein, of NWS Sacramento)

Reviewed the 2008 fire season, from NWS perspective. One of the more active on record, regarding IMET assignments.

Santa Ana Wind Index (Tom Rolinski)

Tom presented on this proposal, and NWS folks present helped expand on its intent and proposed content/ look). Discussion followed, and it appears we are still a ways out from having a consensus as to content and format of the eventual finalized product. Our FireScope group was okay with the basic concept, but several members mentioned sideboards and/or caveats they would want to see with it. These included things like limiting the eventual, finalized Index to assessing/ predicting only offshore/ dry Santa Ana events, and **not including** the moister, onshore type events (the initial proposal had the approach of one 'Index to cover both onshore and offshore winds'). Also, not trying to make it a northern CA Index, but confining it to southern CA use, where it is most applicable. The subject will be discussed further in spring FW Program User assessment meetings, and it will also come up in prior Red Flag program discussions within the CA fire agencies this winter. **Here are some 'Options'** taken from NWS Roger Lamoni notes on this topic: Keep it internal and utilize for consistent descriptive wording? Use in fire weather. or public, or both? Do we really need the Index, given current and evolving dissemination capabilities? Do we need to have the SPC coordinated and involved CA?

NFDRS/ WIMS Updates (Russ Gripp)

- The folks at the Missoula Fire Lab are working toward changes in the Fire Danger rating (FDR) system, both shorter and longer term. In shorter, the new Nelson model (version 1.2?) will be included. It will deal only with 1 and 10-hour fuels, and will not affect 100 and 1000- hr fuels. There is a redesign of the WIMS Logon page, due out in early 2009, which will include a personalized "my WIMS" feature. The automated NFDRS will take 4-5 years from now, being done piece by piece.
- An ongoing question is 'How do we best implement the concept of Fire Business thresholds? (had some interruptions here, and didn't get everything Russ shared).
- Regarding Fire-Family plus, version FFP-4 will soon be released. A need to 'cross-calibrate old 7 new'.
- NWCG- FENWT Fire Environment Committee. They are in transition right now... soon to be the FENC (Fire Envir. Committee)..... a meeting was set for Boise in December.
- USFS – portable RAWS can be placed at logging sites for PAL. Industry pays for costs; Florida is testing adjusting ASOS data to merge with RAWS data for fire danger

RAWS Updates (Group, agency by agency roundtable report)

National Park Service report (Corky Conover): A manual was replaced with a RAWS in Hawaii. Most NPS stations are FTS, and topics being continually addressed as needed include Vendors, High data rate (HDR) and CMMS.

CALFIRE report (Doug Forrest): They currently have 74 permanent and 21 portable RAWS. Two permanent that will soon be deactivated are Wiley Ridge in Ventura Co. and Bear Valley in Kern County. There will be 2 new FTS RAWS into Kern Co. soon. Of the 72 permanent that will remain, 47 of them are now converted to FTS with HDR. Plans are for all to be done by next fire season. CALFIRE will eventually have improved maintenance. Handy-talkies will be removed from their permanent stations. At this time, there are no new CALFIRE stations proposed. The replacement for old Livermore RAWS (inactive) to the new Altamont site will be finished soon....(note that this will include a new station name and WIMS ID).

LA County report (Jay Lopez): Have agreements with NOAA and FCC for use of GOES radio. Most of the transmissions are within 15 minutes of the top of the hour, thanks to HDR. Jay was reminded how he could get RAWS photos to WRCC Greg McCurdy, who tries to house all available in West on his website, which is <http://raws.dri.edu/photos/>

Orange County report (Pete Curran): A correction was made recently for a problem with wind direction at Fremont Canyon.

USFS report (Russ Gripp): Region 5 is always examining the overall network in an effort to expand where needed (filling in holes). There have been lots of conversions to HDR. You cannot mix LDR and HDR on the same channel. The year 2013 is the cutoff for conversion to HDR. Also within the purview of USFS R5 was the PSW update from Francis F., concerning the temporary array of six portable RAWS for a research project in the area of the Esperanza fire. They are verifying wind modeling; looking at Wind Wizard and Wind Ninja.

BLM report (Tom Rolinski): Nothing specific was reported

WFDSS Update, Wildland Fire Decision Support System (Bernie Bahro, a R5 Fuels Analyst)

WFDSS is meant to document the decision support process. At this time of this meeting, it is still a prototype. In the newest federal Fire Policy, there are only two types of Ignitions – Planned and Unplanned. The weather and fire behavior portions of the WFDSS program are not too hard compared to keeping up with the fuels layers.

Training opportunities Update (Group, roundtable)

- a CARB Smoke Management workshop at Redding Dec. 3-4, that Snook was going to help teach in.
- annual McClellan **S-491** – March 23-27th, 2009
- annual McClellan **WIMS** - March 17-19th
- **National NFDRS** course - NAFRI in Tucson in late February 2009

Some other training opportunities can be found on the California wildland firefighter training site, at:

[http://www.nationalfiretraining.net/course_session/list.html?filters\[sf_guard_group_id\]=4&filter=filter](http://www.nationalfiretraining.net/course_session/list.html?filters[sf_guard_group_id]=4&filter=filter)

or at the McClellan Training Center site: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/fire/mcclellan/index.php>

Action Items - both Ongoing and New ones – **see next page**

Latest FIRESCOPE PS Specialists Roster – see **final page**

Next Meeting date- To be held **May 13-14, 2009** (a Wed-Thursday) **Site** - McClellan TC ?

[Note – following are several Action items NWS Lamoni had for himself as a result of the meeting]:

- Explore possibility of getting CANSAC output into AWIPS/ GFE?
- Explore possibility of getting CANSAC smoke forecasts into gridded FXNet;
- Explore possibility of having a CANSAC/Bluesky Rains session at the IMET workshop?
- Have NWS IMETs take RX-410, Smoke Management Techniques
- Determine possibility of routing IMET spot forecasts back to the NWS Spot page for web access to all (perhaps as KML file on Google Maps). Can we get spot and IMET forecasts into WFDSS below?