



**National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG)
Smoke Committee (SmoC)
Monthly Activity Update – September 2012**



Communication and Messaging

- Conference Calls will be every Thursday 1000 PT, 1100 MT, 1200 CT, 1300 ET
- Diana Hinson and Josh Hyde are working on a dynamic Action Item table for the SmoC website.
- Will work to condense the Activity Update to a 1-pager at NWCG's request.
- June/July and August Activity Updates are posted.

Wildfire Air Quality Response

- -Pete established a Dropbox site for Air Resource Advisors containing personnel exposure guidance and supporting documents, example products from ARA deployments over 2011 and 2012 and other support materials.
- Air Resource Advisors (ARA).
 - ARA's deployed currently: Thomas Dzomba then Gary Curcio/N. California Geographic Coordination Center; Mark Fitch/Halsted Fire and SW ID Area Command; Mike Broughton/Halsted Fire and Erin Law/Halsted Fire.
 - Regulatory personnel have been invited to serve in this capacity such as EPA-R9.
 - Interested parties: Mary Uhl (BLM), Andrea Holland (FS R2), Josh Hall (NM).
 - Need ARA Guide — some Incident Management Teams unsure how to handle ARAs and utilize their products. Provides opportunity to show importance of ARAs. Creates ability to unite efforts of local AQ & health agencies and work closely with PIOs.
- OR— Pole Creek fire—
 - Heavy smoke in the Sisters area. Range: good/moderate/unhealthy—Improved
 - Portable nephelometer put in at Redmond; Redmond not as severely impacted.
 - DEQ, OR Health Authority, County Health making decisions together regarding exposure to schools. Nick Yonker (and others) providing meteorological support.
- WA— Forest Service working with Washington in CO monitoring/personnel exposure.
 - Cashmere School district/WA is back in session using FS monitors and HEPA filters.
- MT and ID— Mark Fitch
 - ID is still continuing to have calls on smoke and monitoring. Salmon School Dist. severely impacted by Mustang fire, also put in HEPA filters.
 - MT is starting to clear out from the unhealthy range.
- Carbon Monoxide portable USB monitors—Mark to supply USB personal CO devices to the Missoula Fire Lab to use in their burn chamber study and testing arranged by Pete.
- Metrics
 - Several different metrics are being used to describe smoke impacts to the public.
 - MT, WA, OR all have their own metric—different than the national AQI.
 - ID— citizens confused by two different AQI values from the Fed/EPA and the State.
 - Need to establish consistent messaging between all agencies.

NWCG Business

- Elaine meeting with the Executive Board to ensure NWCG reps are supportive of proposed membership additions (DOD, TNC, NACAA associates).
- Need to update roster to reflect current names/agencies.
- Joint webinar w/SmoC Training Subcommittee for NWCG Committees and members needed next 4-6 weeks (after fire season)
- All-Chairs Meeting Development



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- Developing an agenda— Political level invited to speak to Exec Board and Committees on the future of the fire field.
- Budget Issues—Target budget = \$2.173million. Need to reduce by \$90K.
- Smoke Symposium (\$35k request) - not part of the budget, but it will be considered by the board on Wednesday 10/10. Phase 2 of 4 hour online training - we need the full \$50K from NWCG
- Fireline Handbook Revisions
 - Pete—Working with Gary Curcio & George Broyles to include new language on Personnel Smoke Exposure and Transportation Safety as well as other position responsibility edits to address air quality.
 - Public exposure, transportation safety, and personnel exposure should be addressed.
 - Pete has 30+ comments thus far (re-write of both smoke exposure and transportation safety section). Too many comments to use the OWDC form.
 - Several comments on basecamp smoke exposure; planning measures to address this.
- NWCG is trying to finalize RX fire guide for a 30-60 day review period.

Smartfire ver. 2, 2011 National Emission Inventory (NEI) Webinar

- Sim Larkin/FS & Sean Raffuse/Sonoma Tech talked about options for the 2011 NEI, info they are looking for and timeline. Interested in collecting all fire data for 2011 as well as 2000-2012 wildland fire occurrence data regardless of format (even paper).
- 85% of their inputs are via satellite. Fires less than 200 acres difficult to detect. Ground based data is particularly useful for the smaller fires.
- Provides opportunity for states (regulatory or forestry agency) to submit their data through their program.
- Trying to link NEI with greenhouse gas emission inventory efforts.
- Goals: Better understanding of landscape trends and remote sensing capability limitations.
- Another Smartfire 2 NEI Webinar on September 5th/replayed on October 4th.
- Link: <http://www.airfire.org/workshops/2011-nei-informational-sessions/>

Subcommittee Report-Outs

Technical Smoke Topics Subcommittee

- Smoke Management Guide work has slowed—key people involved in fire season responsibilities.

Training Subcommittee

- Reviewing Fireline handbook/other guides—Incident Response Pocket Guide, Fireline Handbook, Redbook, BIA Bluebook, Line Officer Guidance—to insert new smoke messaging information.
- Discussed designing personnel smoke exposure module of the 4-hr Online Wildfire and Air Quality Decision-making Course to be part of the annual fire refresher—to use with other resources developed for the 2013 season.
- Inter-committee webinar (sometime between Oct 22-Nov 9)—Discussed smoke training assessments and Training Subcommittee projects.

Smoke Managers Subcommittee

- Setting up a meeting for the first full week in November. Agenda topics include an update on EPA AQ standards, smoke managers contact list, communication/coordination plans, potential reduction of Rx fire in parts of the country due to litigation fears, air resource advisors.



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Round Robin

- WESTAR submitted comments on the Exceptional Events Rule
- Canadian AQHI (Air Quality Health Index)
 - New index based on shorter term, 1-hour acute exposures
 - Department of epidemiology based index on Ozone, NO₂ and PM_{2.5}
 - Scale of 1-10 (1=low, 10=high) 3-hour rolling average used; 3-hr more stable than 1-hr

Concentration PM _{2.5}	AQ rating
≤ 64 µg/m ³	Good
65 µg/m ³ – 124 µg/m ³	Moderate
>124 µg/m ³	High

- Brian Potter working on March 2013 Air Resource Advisor Workshop announcement to post on SmoC website.
- NACAA Agricultural Committee Meeting September 19th:
 - Discussed fire & role of fire in the ecosystem and EPA’s plan for the guidance.
 - USDA taking strong stance that EPA’s role should be related to the AQ from smoke & protection of health and the fire policy should come from USDA not EPA.
 - Recommended EPA should avoid creating unnecessary requirements for states and agencies when collecting exceptional event documentation.
 - EPA has not commented on the issues yet.
- Pete Lahm attended CAA Advisory Committee meeting in DC. Ozone proposal is at CASAC. Proposal is being drafted. Scheduled to be finalized in 2014.
- EPA updates- policy analysis for Ozone released from CASAC.
- Revision of PM standards and comment review is underway to meet December 14 Court-ordered deadline for release by EPA.
- Phil Lorang – Regional and AQ directors meeting discussed fire policy for half an hour. Decided to process fire policy issues since questions will likely come up at the NACAA meeting.
- OK SMP sent to EPA October 8, 2012 for review/comments. Still on track to certify/submit to EPA by end of 2012 in time for 2013 fire season.

Upcoming events/meetings

5th International Fire Ecology and Management Congress: Uniting Research, Education and Management, The Association for Fire Ecology, December 3-7, 2012, Portland, OR <http://afefirecongress.org/>

American Geophysical Union Fall Meeting, December 3-7, 2012, San Francisco, CA <http://fallmeeting.agu.org/2012/>

4th IAWF Fire Behavior and Fuels Conference, February 18-22, 2013, Raleigh, NC <http://www.iawfonline.org/2013FuelsConference/index.php>