

West Region Wildfire Council

Meeting Minutes

8/11/16

Last Name	First Name	Affiliation
Angell	Don	Montrose County
Barth	Chris	BLM
Chappell	Randy	BLM
Chavez	Thad	USFS
Conway	Bill	Arrowhead Fire
Gomez	Jamie	WRWC
Merritt	Benton	BLM
McCarthy	Jim	Log Hill Village HOA
Pankratz	Sam	CSFS
Petersen	Drew	Colorado OEM
Robinson	Corey	USFS
Shelby	Austin	CSFS
Stahlin	Erick	USFS
Stark	Rusty	BLM
Tarantino	Mike	WRWC
Watkins	Teri	Montrose County
Wright	Jeff	Delta County

Introductions

Jamie Gomez facilitated the meeting and initiated a round of introductions.

First Presentation: “Center of Excellence for Advanced Technology Aerial Firefighting” presented by Bob Gann the Deputy Director of the Center of Excellence for the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control

To view the presentation, click or copy of the following link:

[..CoE Presentation - WRWC 08112016.pdf](#)

Gann started the presentation by explaining the mission of the Center of Excellence (CoE). Gann stated that the goals of the CoE are to collect existing data and research on aerial firefighting, evaluate new and existing technology, and to help create a more efficient and effective database. Gann then went on to explain what the current projects are at the Center of Excellence.

The first project Gann presented on was the Colorado Fire Prediction System (CO-FPS) which is an advanced wildfire modeling system. For this project the CoE is working with the Center for Atmospheric Research to obtain the meteorological data that is used in CO-FPS. Gann then showed an example of the modeling system which creates an 18 hour simulation of a fires behavior and direction of travel. In this mock simulation a fire perimeter grew from a point of origin, the mock fire was dictated by topography and fuels as well as the weather forecast, and made significant runs at specific times and locations. At the end of the mock simulation a predicted 18 hour fire perimeter was on the screen complete with unburned islands. The CO-FPS system is currently modeling existing fires and their behaviors to test its

accuracy. Ideally the CoE wants to make the CO-FPS system an initial attack tool that will be available on CO-WIMS, but they predict that the modeling system will be a five year program before it becomes operational.

The second project that Gann presented on was an Air to Ground Data Link. Gann explained that there is currently no easy way to transmit data from DFPC's Multi Mission Aircraft to firefighters on the ground, unless they have internet access. The CoE is experimenting with small battery powered VHF radios that are capable of communicating to Bluetooth. With this tool data can be transmitted from the aircraft to firefighters in real time. The CoE would like to make this data link fully operational by the 2017 Fire Season.

Gann then went on to explain the impacts of the Multi Mission Aircraft, with its ability to quickly and accurately detect spot fires, and he explained how the data collected from this aircraft could put geospatial maps into the hands of firefighters.

The next project that the CoE is working on is tests of satellite messengers. There are currently many satellite messengers, such as SPOT Devices, that are available to the public. The CoE is currently testing the capabilities and limitations of these devices for firefighter use.

Next Gann explained that the CoE is creating a Firefighting Document Library. He explained that the CoE wants to become the repository for all firefighting related data.

Then Gann presented on the Aerial Night Operations Summit conducted at the CoE. This was a two day Summit that acted as an assessment of the viability and sustainability of night time firefighting in Colorado. The input and recommendations provided at this Summit will help shape Colorado's night operations program.

Gann ended his presentation by explaining a future project. The CoE is looking to study the effectiveness of using Unmanned Aerial Systems, or drones, for firefighting. This technology is a new frontier for wildland firefighting, and the CoE is currently working toward using unmanned aircraft on Rx burns and possibly in night operations. This study has not yet begun and the CoE is looking to hire a UAS Integration Specialist soon.

Second Presentation: "The Wildland Fire Decision Support System" presented by Thad Chavez the Zone AFMO for the United States Forest Service: GMUG National Forest

In this presentation Chavez explained the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS). Chavez explained that WFDSS is a decision support tool for line officers, Incident Management Teams, and on the ground responders. This is a web based program that is accessible on any machine. Chavez stated that any fires reported on federal land are automatically entered in WFDSS. After Chavez explained what the WFDSS system was he opened it and showed various functions and examples of the program. He showed the variable layers and data that could be entered and used for various incidents. He showed the Incident Information situation tab which has info on what affects fire behavior at certain locations. A discussion was started in the audience about how this tool could be applicable for any emergency management situation, not just wildland fire. The WFDSS program is an excellent tool for making decisions on how to manage incidents.