

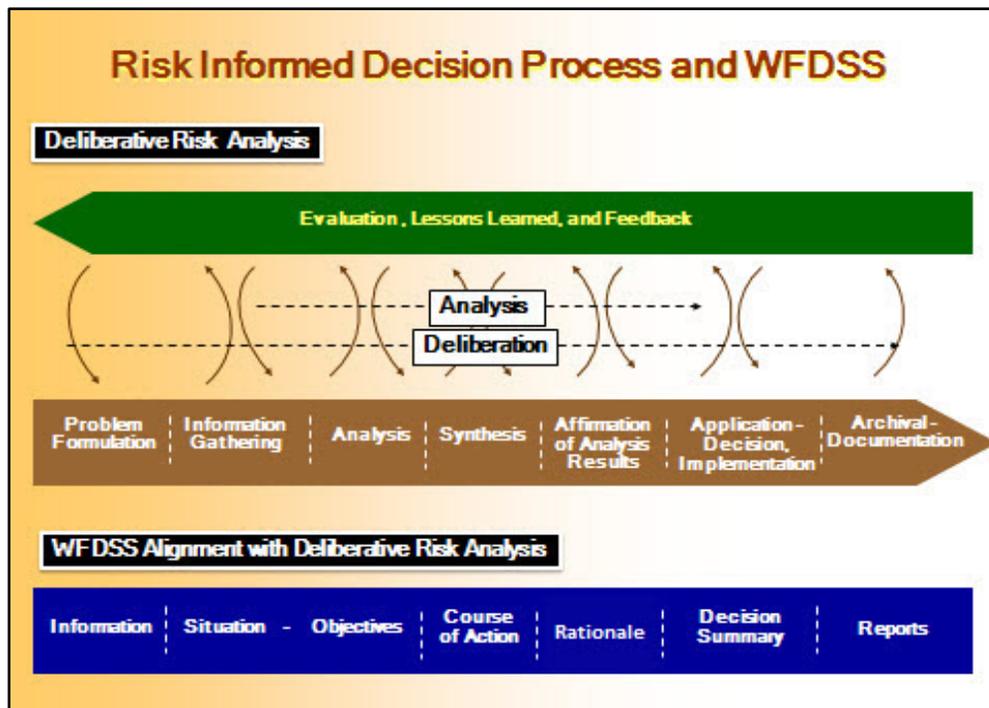
# What You Need to Know About WFDSS - 2018

This document is a quick reference and review of WFDSS enhancements, little known features, recommendations, and things to consider that will help you use WFDSS more efficiently.

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[Additional enhancements will be added throughout 2018.](#)

Figure 1: Risk Informed Decision Process and WFDSS



[Risk-informed decision making](#) requires two distinct but linked processes: analysis and deliberation. Analysis involves the rigorous, replicable methods to provide information about factual questions. While

analysis brings new information into the decision-making process, it informs the deliberation. Deliberation is the discussion, reflection, and persuasion to communicate, raise issues, collectively consider issues, increase understanding, and facilitate substantive decisions. New analyses are framed as deliberation brings new insights, questions, and problem formulations. WFDSS parallels this process as you move from Incident Information right through the Decision development process. Please refer to this image as you develop a WFDSS Decision.

**NOTE:** Starting with the 6.0 Release, the WFDSS Production and Training environments have new URLs. If you use the old URLs, they will be redirected to the new addresses automatically. However this redirect will be temporary, so bookmark the new addresses as soon as possible.

- Training. <https://wfdss.usgs.gov/WfdssAppTrain/faces/facelets/login/WFDSSLogin.xhtml>
- Production. <https://wfdss.usgs.gov/WfdssApp/faces/facelets/login/WFDSSLogin.xhtml>

## WFDSS Enhancement Refresher

A major WFDSS release occurred in March 2018 to improve code and overall system stability, resolve bugs/known issues and deliver long-awaited enhancements. Tables 1 and 2 summarize the enhancements included in the release, as they are broken down for two audiences; Incident Owners/Authors/Approvers and Fire Behavior Specialists. On the WFDSS home page, click the *What's New in WFDSS* menu option to view full release information. Don't forget to check out the Hot Picks menu on the right for recent training materials and guides.

### Enhancements for Incident Owners/Authors/Approvers

*Table 1: WFDSS Enhancement Refresher*

Feature	Description
<b>Incident Groups</b>	<p>From the Incident Groups List, you can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collectively View Incident Group information in Excel format for all incidents in a group by selecting <b>View Incident</b>, and then clicking the Excel icon above and to the left of the <a href="#">Incident Name</a> column, or</li> <li>• Quickly view current decision status for each incident in an incident group by selecting <b>View Incident</b> and then locating the Decision Status column on the far right. Click the hyperlink for an incident to review its decision status. If a published decision exists, the date is the hyperlink. If the first decision is pending, the hyperlink displays as "Pending." The column is blank for incidents without decisions.</li> </ul> <p>Refer to <a href="#">Editing an Incident Group</a> for further information.</p>

Feature	Description
<b>Relative Risk (RR) and Organization Assessment (OA) graphics included in Decision Content</b>	In the past, RR and OA notes were automatically included in decision content but accompanying graphics/charts were not. Both the notes AND the graphics/charts are now automatically included in decision content and there is no need to add this content manually.
<b>Incident Owner receives 'Decision Reviewable' email</b>	Previously, only Decision Approvers received an email alert that a decision had been 'submitted for review/ approval' and was now Reviewable, indicating accessibility to approvers. This email is now sent to incident owners as well, to improve monitoring.
<b>Wildcard Search Feature to Improve Incident Search by Name</b>	A wildcard search feature improves the ability to search for an incident by name when using the quick search feature above the incident list.
<b>Decision Reject button updated to read 'Return for Edits'</b>	Previously, decision Reviewers and Approvers 'rejected' a decision to return it to pending status. Now, the button reads 'Return for Edits' to clarify intent and facilitate updating.
<b>Determine who has Drawn/Uploaded Fire Perimeter</b>	The name of the user who drew or uploaded a fire perimeter is now accessible in the LayerSwitcher when viewing a map display. To determine who drew or uploaded a shape, click the black expansion arrow beside the shape and the name will display below the effective date/time stamp.
<b>Improvements to Fire Behavior Request Screen</b>	In the past, a 'Rationale for Request' was required when submitting a request for fire behavior analysis. In an effort to encourage critical thought related to the request, the prompt has been improved to read "What management questions are you trying to answer through fire behavior modeling?" the additional information gleaned improves analysts ability to provide the best and most informative products given concerns to date.
<b>Option to Add Note to Approver when Submitting a Decision for Review/Approval</b>	Incident Owners can add an optional note to the Decision Approver(s) when they submit a decision for review/approval. The note is included in the notification mail to the approver(s) and added to the Incident History list, but it is NOT added to the decision. 500 character limit.

Feature	Description
<b>Improved Access/Download options for Periodic Assessments</b>	You can now download an Excel file of all Periodic Assessments related to a decision. From the Decision tab, select a decision and then click View Info. An Assessment History section has been added; click the Excel icon in the upper left to download.

### Enhancements for Analysts

Table 2: Recently Added Data Layers

Feature	Description
<b>Merged Fire Behavior Specialist and Super Analyst Roles</b>	<p>The role of Fire Behavior Specialist has expanded to include the same capabilities as Super Analyst. As a result of these changes, all Fire Behavior Specialists have the same capabilities as Super Analysts, but their title remains Fire Behavior Specialists. All users with the Super Analyst role will now be called Fire Behavior Specialists, but their capabilities remain the same. Fire Behavior Specialists can now:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set <a href="#">conditioning days</a> to zero. This makes initial fuel moistures the same for every cell on the landscape, regardless of slope, aspect, elevation, shading and previous weather conditions. It should, generally, only be used for model testing or homogeneous, unshaded fuels on flat terrain.</li> <li>• View, copy, and edit any analysis in the system without being added to the incident privileges.</li> <li>• Download more options for completed runs (All Models: Analysis Input, FSPRO: Daily Acres, Average Time Grid, Arrival Day Distribution, Suppression Effect, Ensemble Perimeters.)</li> <li>• ‘Terminate’ runs that have been queued or are currently processing. <b>NOTE:</b> The Terminate button does NOT work instantaneously; it should only be clicked ONCE and it may take minutes, or hours, for the run to actually stop because it has to complete current calculations. Clicking it more than once could cause additional issues.</li> </ul> <p>See <a href="#">Fire Behavior Specialist</a> for more information.</p>

Feature	Description
<b>Improvements to Fire Behavior Request Screen</b>	The fire behavior request screen solicits more detailed information related to the need for analysis. Rather than Rational for Request, the prompt now reads “What management questions are you trying to answer through fire behavior modeling?” to help you, the analyst, determine the best products for delivery. If the primary concerns (fuels, weather, topography, values, and so forth) are not outlined, contact the incident owner for clarification of Line Officer concerns.
<b>Spot Ignition Delay added for Short Term Fire Behavior (STFB)</b>	The Spot Ignition Delay (< = 60 minutes) has been added to STFB as a new input field on the Short Term Information page. As with NTFB, the input is an estimate of the amount of time that passes between an ember landing and fire spread occurring. Default is zero minutes.
<b>View Analysis Notes from Analysis List</b>	A Fire Behavior Specialist can view notes for a modeled run from the Analysis List by selecting a run and then clicking <b>View Notes</b> . This useful feature can help you quickly compare and contrast notes/inputs for individual runs when calibrating for example, without having to open the analysis itself.
<b>Ability to ‘Delete All’ Analysis Notes</b>	When you copy an analysis, you may not want to retain all the notes associated with it. The <b>Delete All</b> button helps you start from scratch without having to painstakingly delete each individual analysis note.
<b>Import Analysis Notes</b>	A Fire Behavior Specialist can import notes from one analysis into another (within an incident), to create documentation efficiencies when calibrating and/or creating runs with similar inputs. When importing notes between different modeled runs, FSPRO to NTFB for example, only notes on shared pages (Landscape and Landscape Editor) import.

## Recently Added Data Layers

Table 3: Recently Added Data Layers

Data Layer	Description
<b>MTBS Data</b>	Monitoring Trends in Burn Severity (MTBS) data for the Continental United States as map layers by year; 2010- 2014 are currently available, but 2016 data will become available in WFDSS in 2018. For a single year, burn area boundaries as mapped by MTBS will display as a red outline. Burn severities within each burn area boundary display as a

Data Layer	Description
	<p>categorized image (thematic raster) color-coded according to burn severity. Users may have to manually add this layer to their available map layers (My Home&gt;System Preferences&gt; select the Disturbance&gt;2010 Burn Severity dataset.</p>
<p><b>WFDSS Data Refresh</b></p>	<p>The WFDSS data team is working to refresh over 60 spatial data layers used in the application this year. The status of data refresh activities will be available on the <a href="#">2018 Monthly Emails and Quarterly Call Notes</a>. Much of the spatial data available in WFDSS can also be downloaded at the <a href="#">WFDSS Data Downloads web page</a>.</p>
<p><b>FMU/SO Shape Layers</b></p>	<p>A new schedule has been posted for updates or changes to unit Fire Management Unit (FMU) or Strategic Objective (SO) data layers. Please refer to the <a href="#">Schedule</a>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To accommodate the inclusion of strategic objective shapes in WFDSS. Additional updates may be scheduled on an as-needed basis throughout the year. These updates will be announced to the WFDSS Geographic Area Editors and via the WFDSS GIS Team. Please contact your <a href="#">WFDSS GIS Team</a> representative to enquire about updates that are not posted on this schedule.</li> <li>• We make every effort to have the update loaded by the "Available in WFDSS" dates however, sometimes unpredictable challenges prevent us from getting the data loaded on time. In these cases we will notify the WFDSS GIS Team Leads of the revised schedule and reason for the delay.</li> </ul>

**IRWIN-related Updates**

*Table 4: IRWIN Updates*

	Description
<p><b>IRWIN v5 Released</b></p>	<p>This update changes much of the code that WFDSS uses to exchange data with IRWIN and is designed to improve performance and lower future maintenance cost. In addition, it should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the number of instances where fires from dispatch centers (WildCAD, FireBeans, IFM) are incorrectly flagged as duplicates and kept out of WFDSS</li> </ul>

	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the impact of true duplicates, as they will be kept in 'quarantine' status in IRWIN and will not show in WFDSS until conflicts have been resolved in the originating system.</li> <li>• When your fire is not appearing in WFDSS but you KNOW it was entered into FireCode, WildCAD, or 209 - check the helpdesk for the application in which the fire was created.</li> <li>• Use WFDSS Feedback to get assistance on data exchange issues, but it should be secondary to identifying problems in the originating application - usually a computer aided dispatch application.</li> </ul>
<b>Safeguards to Creating Duplicate Fires</b>	When creating a fire that you can't find in the system, pay particular attention to warnings from WFDSS, Sit/209, or other applications stating that their fire is a potential duplicate of a fire that already exists. Verify with dispatch, a duty officer, or person in touch with the current situation before choosing to create the fire anyway.
<b>Data Exchange Environment User Guide</b>	The Data Exchange Environment User Guide is a document that explains the workflow and process of information exchange that occurs with the IRWIN system. It is accessible from the Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center website, and from the Hot Picks section of the WFDSS Home page.

## Training Aids

Table 5: Training Aids

	Description
<b>An Author's Guide to WFDSS Decision Making</b>	<a href="#">The Author's Guide to WFDSS Decision Making</a> was developed to assist an author through the WFDSS decision process. The Guide uses a question and answer type of walkthrough. The guide was not developed to be a step-by-step process, but rather to guide the author through the decision support process.
<b>WFDSS Incident Groups and Decisions</b>	Although the WFDSS Incident Groups feature provides functionality to users managing multiple fires, it is best not used to create a single decision for multiple fires. Thorough documentation and clarity on incident direction is best completed for individual fires; creation of a single decision for multiple fires should be uncommon.

	Description
<b>WFDSS 101</b>	This series of lessons are intended to be completed as a suite, and in numerical order, but can be used as stand-alone lessons to help guide your self-paced training in WFDSS. Each lesson contains one or more short exercises that teach you how to use WFDSS tools, as well as ideas for incorporating the tools into your workflow. See the <a href="#">Training tab</a> on the WFDSS home page.
<b>Backup WFDSS Incident Reporting Form</b>	The document provides a <a href="#">paper form Decision Document</a> that can be completed if the WFDSS application is down or internet is unavailable at the time a Decision Document needs to be published.
<b>YouTube WFDSS Support Videos Channel</b>	WFDSS training videos that walk you step-by-step through many common tasks are available on YouTube. You can easily search for available offerings (WFDSS Support Videos) or subscribe to the channel to view new videos as they become available. <a href="http://www.youtube.com/user/WFDSSSupportVideos?feature=g-high-u">http://www.youtube.com/user/WFDSSSupportVideos?feature=g-high-u</a>

### Little Known Features

Table 6: Little Known Features

Feature	Description
<b>The Fly-out menu option – Turn it On or Off Depending on your Needs</b>	In 2015, the fly-out menu enhancement brought added screen space, but two downsides as well: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This feature is not accessible for users who use assistive technologies.</li> <li>• The fly-out menu cannot be accessed on mobile devices.</li> </ul> For each of these cases, the Enhanced Accessibility option should be enabled (My Home tab >System Preferences). Enabling this option deactivates the fly-out menu and returns menu options to the screen display by enabling the Enhanced Accessibility.
<b>Quickly View Incident Content</b>	Did you know you can quickly access Incident Content to review available inputs (such as images) for a decision? Navigate to Reports > View Full Report > expand the file tree in the left pane to view Incident Content*.

Feature	Description
	<p><i>* Incident Content is ALL the information available for a decision that has been created, uploaded or captured during the life of the incident in WFDSS.</i></p>
<p><b>Estimated Ground Evac Time</b></p>	<p>This data layer (Fire Environment and Safety map layers) displays estimated ground evacuation time and models the shortest ground transport time in hours from any point within the continental United State to a hospital. The layer has been designed for strategic decision making only. Its intent is to encourage thoughtful decisions about the risks being transferred to firefighters and how to mitigate those risks. See <a href="#">Estimated Ground Evac Time Overview</a>.</p>
<p><b>Basic Fire Behavior Hauling Chart</b></p>	<p>The surface fire characteristics chart, known as the hauling chart, now includes the wind speed and direction used in the simulation as part of the title of the chart. To access the hauling charts, a Basic or Short-term fire modeling run must be generated. Next, view the modeling run and under the results tab there is a link to the hauling charts.</p>
<p><b>Incident Groups</b></p>	<p>WFDSS populates incident complexes (from IRWIN) under the Incident Groups tab. Here users can view/create a collection of incidents and view analyses for two or more incidents on the same map page. This can be advantageous when you are monitoring several incidents that are in close proximity and/or you wish to evaluate the impacts of adjacent fires on one another. These groups can remain private or made public and shared with other users.</p>
<p><b>Reports</b></p>	<p>Need to quickly generate a list of MAPs and map locations for Operations? WFDSS enables you to create reports that are useful for conducting briefings and sharing published MAPs for active incidents, as well as post-fire for after action reviews and reclamation plans. You can pull information from WFDSS documentation such as text, maps, tables, and images into a report format and both edit/publish the report as you would a decision. See <a href="#">To create Management Action Point Reports</a>. Want to create your unit's Delegation of Authority (DOA) in WFDSS? DOA templates are also available on the Reports tab; you can use existing templates or create your own for streamlining DOA creation for your unit. See <a href="#">Creating Delegation of Authority Reports</a>.</p>

Feature	Description
<b>Smoke Dispersion Forecast</b>	A Smoke Dispersion forecast is available when you are viewing a map display in WFDSS (Situation map > Info sub-tab > Smoke Dispersion). The forecast is pulled from the National FCAMMS Point Forecast Product and its updated every three hours. Any user with an active WFDSS account can access it.
<b>WFDSS Lite</b>	A mobile website available to all WFDSS users from their smartphones and tablet devices. This application has limited features compared to the full WFDSS application. For example, you will not be able to view maps, Intelligence information, or Data management information. WFDSS Lite can be accessed from the WFDSS Home page under the Sign Into Mobile Website, or Mobile web sites can be found at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Training: <a href="https://wfdss.usgs.gov/training_lite/faces/jsp/login/wLogin.jsp">https://wfdss.usgs.gov/training_lite/faces/jsp/login/wLogin.jsp</a></li> <li>➤ Production: <a href="https://wfdss.usgs.gov/wfdss_lite/faces/jsp/login/wLogin.jsp">https://wfdss.usgs.gov/wfdss_lite/faces/jsp/login/wLogin.jsp</a></li> </ul>

## Recommendations

Table 7: Recommendations

Feature	Description
<b>Managing WFDSS Passwords – Keep your password current!</b>	Your WFDSS user name and password allows you to access the WFDSS application. Privileged users (National Editors, Administrators, and the Help Desk) must change their passwords every 30 days. All other users must change their passwords every 60 days. WFDSS sends 10 day and 3 day warning email alerts to help users avoid account lockout. When a user fails to change their password prior to expiration their account will lock and they must contact the Helpdesk to obtain a new password.
<b>WFDSS Known Issues</b>	In 2017 a <a href="#">WFDSS Known Issues</a> document was created to keep WFDSS users and NFDSC staff informed of current WFDSS bugs/issues. It will be used again in 2018. If you experience an issue with the application or its performance, refer to the document to determine if the issue has been reported previously. You may learn helpful workarounds or a timeline for repair. If the issue is not in covered in the document then it is likely a new issue that needs to be reported via Feedback in the Training or Production application.

Feature	Description
<p><b>Default Decision Editor Limitations</b></p>	<p>The default decision editor accommodates text, but does not allow the copying and pasting of tables, images, and bulleted lists. When using the advanced decision editor, create tables and lists manually using the text editor tools to avoid potential errors. All images should be uploaded, regardless of which editor is being used. The Default Decision Editor can accommodate up to 4000 characters per section.</p>
<p><b>Capitalize on the Reviewer role</b></p>	<p>Decision <b>Reviewers</b>, if assigned, are responsible for examining decision content that’s been submitted for review and/or approval, and indicating whether they have successfully reviewed it or are returning it for edits.</p> <p>The Reviewer role is not necessary to publish a decision. However; aside from Approvers, Reviewers are the only other incident privilege that can return a decision to pending once it’s been submitted for review. This is useful if a decision needs to be returned to pending status due to an error or if it was submitted before it was ready. A Reviewer can intervene and kick it back to pending status without involvement from the decision Approver.</p>
<p><b>Situation Map pop-up link</b></p>	<p>The Situation Assessment map pop-up link opens the map its own window. Use of this feature will allow the user to maintain awareness of the spatial data to inform the decision process.</p> <p>The Situation Map and its map layers is an excellent briefing tool with its comprehensive set of relevant, incident-related data and information. Use it to guide briefings for incident management teams, fire managers and Line Officers; inform decision making and approval, and share information when meeting with public, cooperators and other audiences. For additional information see Situation Assessment features in the <a href="#">Little-Known Features</a> section of this document.</p>
<p><b>Delegation of Authority</b></p>	<p>An Incident Management Team should relate to the published decision in WFDSS. There should be a direct connection between the Course of Action (leader’s intent) in a WFDSS decision and the delegation of authority. Incident objectives, incident requirements, and the course of action should be used to frame the delegation of authority. Developing a decision prior to the team’s arrival helps to provide clear direction to the team through a meaningful delegation of authority. A Delegation of</p>

Feature	Description
	<p>Authority template is available in WFDSS that pulls key elements from the decision to provide an editable Delegation of Authority letter. See <a href="#">About Report Templates</a>.</p>
<p><b>Incident Objectives Project</b></p>	<p>The Incident Objectives project findings reveal that objectives and other agency administrator direction often differ and sometimes conflict between the WFDSS decision, delegation of authority, the briefing package, other documents and ad hoc discussions, which sometimes results in misdirection in managing risk and the fire. Incident objectives and incident requirements should cover what, where, and why and should be communicated consistently in incident documentation.</p> <p>See the <a href="#">WFM RD&amp;A Reference &amp; Guidance</a> and <a href="#">Line Officer Resources</a> webpages for additional information and links to the <a href="#">USDA FS Briefing Paper</a> and white papers titled <a href="#">Creating Incident-Specific WFDSS Incident Objectives</a> and <a href="#">Improving WFDSS Incident Objectives &amp; Incident Requirements and Relaying Leader’s Intent</a>.</p>
<p><b>Decision Content Rationale</b></p>	<p>The decision rationale provides the opportunity to tell the "story" of the incident. Onscreen help on the Rationale vertical tab (default decision editor) is intended to help Line Officers develop rationale for their decision that is both informed and thorough. They should document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their decision.</li> <li>• Who the cooperators are that share the decision process and why.</li> <li>• What the values of concern are and the likelihood of impact on them.</li> <li>• What the relative risk assessment and organization needs indicate.</li> <li>• What the current fire situation is.</li> <li>• What triggers would indicate revisions to the decision or when a new decision is needed.</li> </ul> <p>See <a href="#">Creating Rationale</a>.</p>

**Preseason Preparation Checklist (My Home tab)**

Table 8: Preseason Preparation Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/>	Feature	Description
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Passwords</b>	<p>Users are allowed one account per person and it provides access to both WFDSS Production and Training sites.</p> <p>If you forget your password, you can request an automated password reset. An access key link is emailed to your primary email address. Click the link to reset your password.</p> <p>See <a href="#">Do-It Yourself Password Reset</a> and <a href="#">Requesting a Password Reset</a>.</p> <p>Your password must be changed every 60 days or your account will be locked. If you have not logged into WFDSS recently you may still be able to log in, but you will be required to change your password. If the system does not allow you to log in and more than 60 days have passed since your last log in, you are likely locked out. Contact the Help Desk (1-866-224-7677) and request a password reset. <b>Do not request a new account</b>; this causes confusion when preparing decision documents and performing other WFDSS functions.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Disabled Accounts</b>	<p>If two years have lapsed since your last login and your account is subsequently disabled, you must do two things; first contact your local GAE to request role(s) reassignment and second, call the Help Desk (+1 866.224.7677) to request a password reset. If you are unsure of who your local GAE is, the Help Desk can help you with this.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Contact Information</b>	<p>Check your contact information and ensure that it is up to date. This information is used by the WFDSS system and WFDSS users to contact you for various reasons, for example if you are an incident owner you will receive confirmation when any fire behavior analyses are completed on your incident to the email address listed in your Contact Information. If you have changed jobs, geographic areas, or even agencies you can simply update your Contact Information.</p> <p>See <a href="#">Updating your Contact Information</a>.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>User Roles</b>	<p>Ensure that your User Roles are appropriate for your current position and job duties. To view your current User Roles select My Home &gt; User Roles. See <a href="#">Requesting Additional System Privileges</a> or <a href="#">WFDSS User Roles</a> to learn more about user roles and privileges. User roles granted in Production are automatically carried over to Training but conversely, user roles granted in Training are exclusive to the Training site only.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>System Preferences</b>	<p>You may select preferred default settings to customize specific items, for example the default base map layer. New map layers are added periodically to the list of available Map Layers from System Preferences. The Map Layers listed in the right hand box are available for display on WFDSS maps. It's a good practice to check these Layers periodically to</p>

☐	Feature	Description
		ensure pertinent data is available for viewing from WFDSS maps (Disturbance History > Fuel Treatments are a good example; these map layers need to be manually added). Users must move those layers that are not needed back to the left hand box if they don't wish to display them on their WFDSS maps. See <a href="#">Changing your System Preference</a> .
☐	<b>Address Book</b>	Check your address book to ensure it is up to date. Preseason is an excellent time to customize your My Address Book. You can set up groups now for use on incidents later. See <a href="#">Address Book</a> , or see the other WFDSS Help topics related to the address book such as, <a href="#">Creating a Group</a> and <a href="#">Editing a Group</a> .