

WFDSS Annual Refresher Training Recommendations

This document is intended to be a reference for Agency Administrators and other individuals on their unit. Refresher coordinators can utilize all or portions of this document to assist them in pulling together materials to meet the annual recommended/required WFDSS training for Agency Administrators (required for Forest Service Agency Administrators). The training recommendations provided in this document are not new but highlights important topics and what is available. The training materials are hosted in various locations; this document provides links and directions on how to access these materials. Much of this information can be utilized as self-study but a scenario is strongly encouraged to ‘tie it all together.’ Scenario emphasis can be found at the bottom of this document. A recording of the Agency Administrator WFDSS Refresher hosted by WFM RD&A staff can be found on the [AA WFDSS Refresher](#) page of the Wildland Fire Management Research, Development & Application (WFM RD&A) Website at <https://wfmrda.nwcg.gov/>.

WFDSS Training Resources:

[WFDSS help](#) has many resources for the users and trainers to access the most up to date information regarding the application. The WFDSS user guide is a place to start for all users accessing the application, new and old users alike. The help section of WFDSS is continually being updated as content changes, updates are made and provide the most updated help content for the field users.

WFDSS User Guide

- **Getting Started section** – depending on the audience and experience of the refresher attendees review the “Getting Started Section” to provide updates or discussion around some of the basics of accessing and using WFDSS such as:
 - System access, how to find your Geographical Area Editor, User Roles, Incident Privileges, Connected Systems, User Roles, ISAP Cost Estimation, and more. This section of the User Guide has many topics worth refreshing every year for new users and returning users alike.
 - Additional highlights to consider:
 - Differences between roles and privileges
 - How to set up my preferences
 - I am an approver of incidents – how to set that up in my profile
 - Check the Frequently Asked Questions section – for additional ideas.
- **Incidents Section** – provides the functional overview of each specific section associated with an incident. Topics and content include:
 - **Dashboard Basics** – how to Search for Incidents, setting up Individual Incident Dashboards within WFDSS, using the Decision Stepper for guidance, Incident Symbolology (review of the Legend Data), and Layer List basics – how to manage the layers within your map view.
 - **Incident Information** – How to set up Collaborators, and pulling data associated with the Spatial Inventory.
 - **Analysis section** – review of the analysis products available, and why this data is important

- is valuable, having a fire analyst assist with the refresher would be advantageous.
- **Relative Risk** – this section is directly aligned with the [NWCG Wildland Fire Risk and Complexity Assessment - PMS 236](#) (Part B) - it is recommended to review this guiding document and how the evaluation of risk is documented within the application. How to use the outputs of the Risk Analysis to inform discussion, leaders intent and decision documentation. *Review of this document and integration into WFDSS is tiered to the Relative Risk and Organization and Complexity sections of WFDSS.*
 - **Strategy** – The **Strategic Assessment** section was historically the Incident Objectives and Incident Requirements section of WFDSS, additionally this section is tiered to the ISAP (Incident Strategic Alignment Process).
 - [Review of the ISAP process](#) is recommended - how ISAP is integrated into WFDSS, how this information and the process is integrated into Incident Management and IMT oversight of an incident.
 - **Organization and Complexity** ([NWCG PMS 236 Part C and D](#))
 - **Organization Assessment** is fully integrated with NWCG PMS 236 Part C; Fire Duration, Incident Strategies (course of action), Functional Concerns, Objective Concerns, External Influences and Ownership Concerns.
 - Information within WFDSS is directly aligned with this overarching guidance provided by NWCG.
 - **Incident Complexity** (NWCG PMS 236)
 - Provides an overview of the attributes regarding complexity of team configurations, and span of control indicators.
 - **Functional Complexity** (NWCG PMS 236) – evaluation of the functional capacity of the IMT organizational structure.
 - **Decision Rationale/Assessment** – the executive summary by the Agency Administrator, what was considered, what was rejected, and the final decision being made regarding the management of the incident. This section should also include information supporting the decision rationale, considerations, photos, analytics, maps etc.

Scenario Exercise Working through WFDSS:

These are topic areas to review as they relate to WFDSS, it is recommended to have an in-depth discussion of each item and what it means to your unit. Incorporating these topic areas into a scenario type exercise is highly recommended, highlights for an exercise are included below.

Appendix K in the Red Book provides additional information regarding WFDSS highlights.

Review key terminology and processes – Relative Risk, Strategic Assessment, Strategic Course of Action, attributes of Cost, Incident Organization, Incident Complexity, Functional Complexity, what is the Incident Strategic Assessment Process, integration of NWCG PMS 236, and the Decision Rationale and Assessments.

Strategic Assessment and Strategic Course of Action – briefly review what is currently pre-loaded in WFDSS for your unit. This data is viewed within the WFDSS data layers, but is updated through the Spatial Fire Planning Services – NIFC AGOL site. If edits are needed work with your local GIS/Fire Planner to update this information in a timely manner.

Boundary Fires – discuss, with interagency partners, how fires will be managed along boundaries. Utilize a fire scenario for this discussion if possible and work through a practice WFDSS decision.

Fire Scenario:

Develop a scenario within WFDSS Training, this will help provide a basic WFDSS overview in addition to utilizing a fire scenario that is somewhat complex and includes interagency partners to help drive home important considerations or steps within the decision-making process.

- **Dashboard Basics** - How to set up individual dashboards within WFDSS and why it is beneficial for an Agency Administrator to set them when monitoring several incidents.
- **Incident Information** -
 - **Fire Area** – setting the **Planning Area**
 - ‘Default Planning area’ and when it would be beneficial to draw a specific planning area for an incident.
 - Open the various data layers within the **Layer List** to gain situational awareness of the specific incident, as appropriate discuss how this information is useful for a specific incident. Determine which layers are most appropriate for your incident, providing additional situational awareness.
 - **Incident** – Strategic Assessment, Strategic Course of Action
 - **National Incident Reference** -What it is and how various systems populate this data in the map when an incident is being managed.
 - **Fire Safety** – Population Density, Potential Control Location, Suppression Difficulty Index, Snag Hazards, Lessons Learned Histomap, National Risk Assessment.
 - **Fire Environment and Weather** – RAWs, Heat Detections, Severe Weather Potential, ERC, Various Weather Forecast grids.
 - **Boundaries** – Geographic Area Coordination Center, Dispatch Centers, Jurisdictional and Protection boundaries etc.
 - **Designated Areas**
 - **Disturbance History**
 - **Infrastructure**
 - **Natural Cultural Resources**
 - **Operational Fire Planning**
 - **Spatial Fire Planning**
 - **Spatial Inventory** – review the information as provided in WFDSS from the Planning Area.
 - **Collaborators** – Who should be included as a Collaborator
- **Analysis** – What analysis products are available, how to use various products to inform decision making, what other products are available to include in the decision outside of WFDSS, and how to make sure those products are included in the final decision rationale.
 - [Risk Management Assistance Dashboard](#)
 - [National/Regional Predictive Services Outlooks and Products](#)
 - Weather outlooks
 - Climatology
 - Fuels and Fire Danger
 - Smoke
 - Snow/Precipitation
- **Relative Risk and Organization & Complexity**
 - Review [NWCG Wildland Fire Risk and Complexity Assessment PMS 236](#)
 - Consider clarification and discussion on Risk, Organizational Assessment, Functional Complexity, Incident Complexity Level and Indicators of Incident Complexity.

- **Strategy**
 - **Strategic Assessment** – writing a strong Strategic Assessment and integrating with ISAP Pillar One – Critical Values
 - **Strategic Course of Action** – consider the Suppression Strategy, how to write SCOA for an incident with more than one strategy.
 - **Cost** – Review the different options to evaluate cost and project incident cost forward.
- **Decision Rationale**
 - Discuss what should be included in the Rationale –
 - My leaders intent is....
 - What is the fire situation – summarize the fire environment factors around the incident and expected duration of the incident – reference as needed products used to make these assessments.
 - Risk Assessment – What are the critical values, what are the chances they will be impacted, low probability/high consequence events, which stakeholders should be part of the discussion/decision.
 - Risk Decision – What alternatives were considered, evaluate and document exposure to incident responders, probability of success, and which alternative balances exposure and probability of success.
 - Additional considerations to include: Political or social implications, smoke concerns, fire behavior modeling and which models were used, area closures, other incidents in the area, resource availability due to Regional/National Planning Levels
 - Ongoing Assessments and decision validation

Agency Administrator IMT In-Briefing – Provide an example in-briefing to an incoming team, from the Agency Administrator to the IMT, including the Leader’s Intent, Delegation of Authority and Decision documentation ([Appendix E of the Red Book](#)). Emphasize the importance of these documents relaying the leader’s intent and consistency to the Decision Rationale.

Fire Behavior Models – include the fire behavior models within your scenario to help support the decision or discuss the models and how they can assist with decision support as a standalone refresher. Review fire models that can help provide decision support (Fire Spread Probability - FSPro, Near Term Fire Behavior - NTFB, Short Term Fire Behavior - STFB), and when it is appropriate to use the various tools. Discuss how the models might be utilized to answer what types of questions. (Note: Fire Behavior requests go through your Geographic Area Editor. If requests are not being fulfilled, contact your Geographic Area Editor.)

Additional References for Refresher Material:

Local Leaders Intent and Delegation Letters:

Provide a review of the Unit Leader’s Intent, Delegation Letters, and the IMT briefing package; discuss the information included within each document/briefing, consider highlighting how these documents compliment the Decision Rationale – they shouldn’t repeat or conflict with the decision rationale documentation. [Appendix F of the Redbook](#)

National or Regional Direction specific to Agency:

Review the current guidance and discuss as needed. (Can be found on the WFMRD&A under [Agency Administrator Resources](#).)

Additional References for Decision Making:

- [Decision Making for Wildland Fire Incidents](#)
 - *Decision Making for Wildfires: A guide for applying a risk management process at the incident level.* This document, available for download, was written to explain the risk decision process for wildland fire.
- [USFS Line Officer/AA Desk Reference Guide](#)
 - Created to aid line officers who oversee fire management from the preseason through the life of a fire and thereafter. Updated annually.
- [Relative Risk & Complexity Analysis Guidance](#)
 - This document brings all elements of the Relative Risk Assessment and Complexity Analysis completed in WFDSS into one document.
- [Analytics for Fire Support and Intel gathering](#)
 - There are numerous support tools for intelligence gathering and analysis types readily available to aid fire managers and administrators in making risk informed decisions.
- [Incident Strategic Alignment Process](#) (ISAP)
- [Strategic Risk Assessment \(SRA\) & Strategic Operations](#)

Other Training to Consider

Resource Advisor:

Review the role of the Resource Advisor, and how they should be integrated in support of wildland fire management. Many non-fire resources staff fill roles as acting Agency Administrators, providing a review of expectations for their involvement in preseason planning and throughout the duration of an incident will be helpful to achieve success.

- [NWCG Resource Advisor's Guide to Wildland Fire](#)
- [Fire Management Toolbox](#) - This toolbox contains resources for managing fire in wilderness. It provides information on managing agency policy and strategies, wilderness fire planning, fire resource advisor training, research, and other references. The toolbox also includes wilderness fire management aids such as guidelines for MIST and BAER and sample FS forms and guides for determining the need and requesting approval for motorized equipment and tractors or dozers in wilderness.