

# What Fire Behavior Specialists Need To Know About WFDSS - 2016

This document is a quick reference for Fire Behavior Specialists to review recent enhancements, common problems, little known features, recommendations and things to consider that will help you use WFDSS more efficiently.

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## Recent WFDSS Enhancements

The latest WFDSS release information, now available in both print and video, is located at the top of the WFDSS Training Page. The section located on the right side of the WFDSS Home Page previously called *Latest Information* is now called *Hot Picks*. This section contains links to those items most frequently accessed by users. [Release 5.3](#) (September 2015) and [Release 5.4](#) (October 2015) are the latest releases affecting users. Below are a few highlights from these releases.

*Table 1: Recent WFDSS Enhancements*

Feature	Description
<b>Situation Map</b>	The Situation Map page displays by clicking the Situation tab or the small map icon located on the right side of the page in the incident perspective. Accessing the Situation Map from the Situation tab embeds the map in the application's main window whereas accessing it via the map icon opens the map in its own window. Accessing it from the icon allows the greatest flexibility as you can both edit a decision and view the Situation Map simultaneously.
<b>Customized Risk Tables</b>	Customized risk tables can be created on the Assessment tab within the Default Decision Editor. This feature is useful if the Values at Risk inventories from STFB, NTFB or FSPPro runs do not contain a complete set of potentially threatened values. With this feature, you can customize these types of inventories to capture a more complete list of values. See <a href="#">Creating and Editing Customized Risk Tables</a> for more information.

Feature	Description
<b>Hauling Charts</b>	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.
<b>Alpha Numeric Code Added to LCP Critique</b>	What does this code do? Landscape critiques now include both the number and letter code for fuel models for easier use by those familiar with only one or the other.
<b>New Menu Slide Out</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The left hand menu slides in and out from the screen, providing more screen space for users. To use the menu hover your mouse over the menu tab and it will slide out onto the screen. In addition, in the Analyses tab, a right hand fly out menu was created to show analyses requirements. To disable this feature navigate to My Home &gt;Systems Preferences and check the box for Enhanced Accessibility.</li> <li>• The menus only work when using Internet Explorer 11. The feature may experience problems if you are using an older version of Internet Explorer.</li> </ul>

## New Data Layers

Table 2: New Data Layers

Feature	Description
<b>MTBS Data</b>	Monitoring Trends in Burn Severity (MTBS) data for the continental United States will be available later this spring as map layers by year. For a single year, burn area boundaries as mapped by MTBS will display as a red outline. Burn severities within each burn area boundary will display as a categorized image (thematic raster) color-coded according to burn severity. When available, users may have to manually add this layer to their available map layers (My Home>System Preferences> select the Disturbance>2010 Burn Severity dataset).

## New Training Aids

Table 3: New Training Aids

Training	Description
<b>YouTube WFDSS Support Videos Channel</b>	<p>This channel provides training videos that walk you step-by-step through many common tasks. If you have a YouTube account simply search for WFDSS Support Videos. To view new videos as they become available, subscribe to this channel.</p> <p><a href="http://www.youtube.com/user/WFDSSSupportVideos?feature=g-high-u">http://www.youtube.com/user/WFDSSSupportVideos?feature=g-high-u</a></p>
<b>Quick video preview of What's New in WFDSS</b>	<p>A link to a short video describing recent WFDSS enhancement will be available from the WFDSS login page following new releases (may be a short delay after the actual release date). Users can quickly preview recent WFDSS enhancements without leaving the login page and no longer have to search the WFDSS home page for a link. This option will be easy to incorporate into WFDSS refreshers for units nationwide. Previous release videos are available from the WFDSS home page in the What's New in WFDSS and Training &gt; Videos menu options.</p>
<b>What's New in WFDSS menu option on the WFDSS Website</b>	<p>A new menu option has been added to the WFDSS Website called <a href="#">What's New in WFDSS</a>. Here, users can quickly review notes from previous releases and short preview videos, if available. Links to the most popular items will be available in the Hot Picks column as well.</p>
<b>Example Decisions</b>	<p>Two example decision documents have been created to give users a point of reference when crafting a decision document (examples include the <a href="#">Gold Pan long duration incident</a> and the <a href="#">Salt Cove Type 3 incident</a>). These Example Decisions are located on the <a href="#">Reference &amp; Guidance section</a> of the WFM RD&amp;A Website and are linked to the <i>WFDSS Website &gt; Training &gt; Decision Learning Resources</i> location as well. Use these decisions as examples of where long term assessment-related information can be utilized in a decision document.</p>
<b>Modeling Learning Resources section on WFDSS Website &gt; Training</b>	<p>The WFDSS website has been improved with Modeling Learning Resources consolidated on the WFDSS Website &gt; Training page. The Related References page also contains valuable reference information but core learning materials are now in one location on the Training page.</p>

## Little Known Features

Table 4: Little Known Features

Feature	Description
<p><b>Help</b></p>	<p>WFDSS has an extensive Help system that can be accessed any time by selecting the Help icon in the upper right corner of any WFDSS screen. You can find topics alphabetically in the WFDSS Help index, or look for information using the search feature. The help information is being updated constantly to keep up with program enhancements and in response to user feedback, so check often.</p>
<p><b>Situation Assessment Features</b></p>	<p>The Situation Map allows access to a comprehensive set of incident-related data and information that can guide briefings and inform decision documentation. Here are some little-known highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● You can modify your map layers to display only what is relevant to your unit or incident. This will improve navigation during briefings and decision-making (My Home&gt;System Preferences) and allow more efficient access to the most relevant information for an incident.</li> <li>● You can display fire planning spatial data for a unit (if it's been loaded) by turning on the Unit Fire Planning map layers. Depending on which planning process a unit has chosen for use in WFDSS, FMUs or Strategic Objectives and Management Requirement shapes are available for viewing in map displays. You can view specific information about individual Management Requirements by clicking the dropdown arrow beside its name in the LayerSwitcher, and then clicking the underscored Mgmt Requirements link.</li> <li>● A zone fire weather forecast for an incident's origin displays by clicking Weather Forecast on the Situation Map&gt;Info tab. To view fire weather forecasts for other zones in the fire area, turn on the Fire Weather and Danger&gt;Fire Wx Zones map layer and use the 'i' tool to click in a different zone. When you open the Weather Forecast on the info tab, it will be for the zone you clicked.</li> <li>● Similar to how you switch zones above, you can also choose to generate Fire Danger Rating Graphs for other RAWS in the fire area. The graph that displays on the Situation Map&gt;Info tab is for the RAWS closest to an incident's origin. Using the 'i' tool, click on alternate locations to display ERC-G data for alternate RAWS. These graphs show a 7 day ERC-G forecast in green.</li> <li>● Predictive Service fire potential forecasts are available as spatial, daily map layers in the LayerSwitcher and as a 7 day forecast for an incident's point of origin on the Situation Map&gt;Info tab.</li> </ul>

Feature	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fuel Treatment map layers are available in the Disturbance History, but these layers must be added to your list of available map layers in My Home&gt;System Preferences.</li> <li>Estimated Ground Evacuation Time, see below.</li> </ul>
<b>Basic Fire Behavior Hauling Chart</b>	<p>Basic Fire Behavior map results allow users to display modeled flame lengths with the same breakpoints as the Hauling Chart (Fire Characteristics Chart). This feature allows for a quick assessment of areas of the landscape that may pose safety risks for firefighters and allow for planning of appropriate control tactics. Look for better graphics in near future WFDSS enhancements.</p> <p>See <a href="#">Analyst-Assisted BFB - Why use it</a></p>
<b>Results Landscape Features</b>	<p>Attributes for the landscape file used by an analysis are now available for viewing on the analyses results map page. Attributes such as slope, aspect and fuel model can be toggled on from the analyses results map LayerSwitcher. Clicking the down arrow next to Landscape in the LayerSwitcher reveals a layer transparency slider bar. With this tool, you can adjust the transparency of your selected landscape feature to better view your results layer underneath. This allows users to better assess areas of the analyses results that show increased fire spread or little or no spread to determine what landscape feature or features may have influenced the fire behavior.</p>
<b>Results Downloads</b>	<p>The KMZ, ASCII, and Output files are an excellent source to use for displaying analysis results outside of WFDSS, but there are many other useful files located under Downloads on the Results Tab. FSPro downloads include Fire Size Histogram, Event Coverage, and Daily Acres. These files can be useful to you as an analyst. For example the Event Coverage Report will give you the burnable and non-burnable days for your analysis (also available in two other locations listed in the first section of this document); to help you understand how many days in the simulation the fire didn't spread. Daily Acres Report can give you information on daily spread also indicating how many burnable and non-burnable days your analysis had and when they occurred. See <a href="#">FSPro Results Downloads</a> and <a href="#">Near Term Results Downloads</a>.</p>
<b>Analysis Report available from the Analysis Tab</b>	<p>The Analysis Report can be obtained from the Analyses tab View Report button or by selecting Report on the Menu switcher tree. The Report provides the same information as the Analysis Details but this printable report also provides more details and some additional graphs and images including a wind rose. The Analysis Report includes a map image of the results. This Report can be an excellent tool to use for briefing a line office or fire manager on the analysis</p>

Feature	Description
	<p>results particularly if you are working remotely and must email this information.</p> <p>See <a href="#">Viewing the Analysis Report</a>.</p>
<p><b>Estimated Ground Evac Time</b></p>	<p>A data layer available in WFDSS (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. Used in conjunction with modeling results, areas of higher risk can be easily identified and can help inform overall strategy into the short, near or distant future, depending on the model used.</p> <p>See Help&gt; <a href="#">Estimated Ground Evac Time Overview</a>.</p>
<p><b>Incident Groups</b></p>	<p>Users can now 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. See <a href="#">Creating a Group</a>.</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.</p> <p>Want to share a hard copy, landscape-oriented image of an analysis output with someone? Enter a Report Name when you capture an image of the analysis output. Navigate to the Reports tab in the Incident perspective, locate your report in the list, and you can print a draft or publish it as a report. See <a href="#">Capturing Map Images as Landscape-Oriented Reports, and Creating Draft Decisions and Reports</a></p>

## Recommendations

Table 5: Recommendations

Feature	Description
<b>Sharing Analyses Results</b>	<p>You may share your analyses without accepting your analysis as complete. The Landscape-oriented Report allows you to capture a map image and title it as you would for a decision, and if you add a Report Name below the image capture description you can also generate a landscape mode.pdf report you can edit and print or email for review by other incident personnel.</p> <p>The Landscape Report displays only single map captures. See <a href="#">To capture map images as landscape-oriented reports</a> .</p> <p>Users who are in the Incident Address book can view all the analyses for the incident. To easily share analyses, a user should be added to the address book by either being an Incident Editor, or by creating a fire behavior analysis.</p>
<b>Keeping Analyses up to date on active large fires</b>	<p>Increasingly, data from WFDSS is being used in ancillary intelligence sources. For active incidents, having up to date and accepted as complete analyses helps to give a clearer picture of an incident’s potential.</p>
<b>Guidelines when Naming Analyses</b>	<p>When naming a fire behavior analysis run, use spaces to delineate information rather than underscores or periods. This allows text ‘wrapping’ in the database and is easier to manage under the hood.</p>

## Preseason Preparation Checklist (My Home tab)

Table 6: Preseason Preparation Checklist

✓	Feature	Description
✓	<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. See <a href="#">Do-It Yourself Password Reset</a>.</p> <p>Your password must be changed every 60 days. 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 90 days have passed</p>

✓	Feature	Description
		<p>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 will cause confusion when preparing decision documents and performing other WFDSS functions.</p>
✓	<p><b>Contact Information</b></p>	<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. <b>Do not request a new account!</b> Your WFDSS account is designed to stay with you throughout your career. If you are on a fire assignment, you may want to change your contact information for the duration of that assignment so that people working with you in the WFDSS environment can contact you as needed. See <a href="#">Updating your Contact Information</a>.</p>
✓	<p><b>User Roles</b></p>	<p>Ensure that your User Roles are appropriate for your current position and job duties. To view your current User Roles select <i>My Home &gt; User Roles</i>. 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>
✓	<p><b>System Preferences</b></p>	<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 will be available for display on WFDSS maps. All new available layers are now located in the right hand box, therefore available for viewing from WDFSS maps. 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>.</p>
✓	<p><b>Address Book</b></p>	<p>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>,</p>

✓	Feature	Description
		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> .