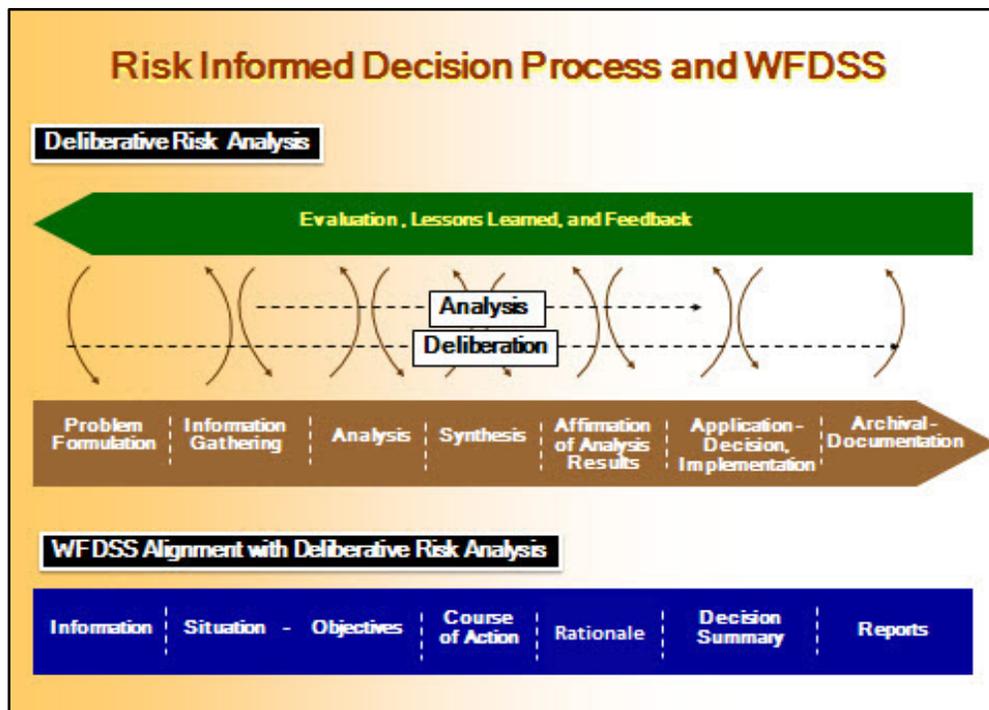# What You Need to Know About WFDSS - 2017

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.

- WFDSS Enhancement Refresher
- Recently Added Data Layers
- IRWIN Updates
- Training Aids
- Little Known Features
- Recommendations
- Preseason Preparation Checklist

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 and WFDSS Decision.

WFDSS Enhancement Refresher

There were no new WFDSS releases in 2016, but featured below are some of the most recent enhancements as a refresher. The top of the Training Resources page in WFDSS contains the most recent application documentation. Please complete the survey to help with the future of training development and expansion of media training materials. Don't forget to check out the Hot Picks menu on the right for recent training materials and guides.

Table 1: WFDSS Enhancement Refresher

Feature	Description
Assessment Tab	The Assessment tab allows consolidated access to the relative risk and organization assessments, customized risk tables, and Benefits slider. Incorporating the Assessment tab into your workflow provides a more intuitive method for accessing these functions and developing inputs for a decision. See About the Assessment Tab.
Creating and Editing Customized Risk Tables	✓ Users can create and edit customized risk tables on the Assessment tab, or on the Risk vertical tab if editing a decision using the Default Decision Editor. ✓ Values tables generated from drawing planning areas or completed FSPro, NTFB, or STFB runs can be saved as custom tables, and then modified to display values information in a way that is meaningful and specific to an incident. You can add rows and/or columns to these tables, as well as modify existing fields, enabling you to align information from both inside and outside of WFDSS to help fire managers and line officers accurate assess and evaluate those influences on the fire that affect risk based decision making. You cannot create a custom risk table without a planning area or a completed analysis. See Creating and Editing Customized Risk Tables.
Fly Out Menus	✓ 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. To disable this feature, navigate to My Home >Systems Preferences and check the box for Enhanced Accessibility.

Feature	Description
	✓ The fly-out menus work with Internet Explorer 11 are incompatible with older versions of the browser.
Accessibility Mode	✓ As a default, many WFDSS features are accessible for users who use assistive technologies. However, some features in the WFDSS application (such as the fly out menus) are not. Users requiring assistive technology can enable the Enhanced Accessibility mode to remove or deactivate the features that are not compatible with assistive technology. This feature is available from the System Preferences option under the My Home tab.
New Set Incident Default Preferences Button	✓ Allows users to set the default preferences for viewing incidents on the Situation tab. Users can now set defaults for which map layers they would like automatically displayed as well as if they want fire perimeters, planning areas, and Management Action Points to automatically display on the Situation tab. In addition, this feature allows the user to specify which map base layer is preferred for auto-generated maps.

Recently Added Data Layers

Table 2: Recently Added Data Layers

Data Layer	Description
MTBS Data	Monitoring Trends in Burn Severity (MTBS) data for the Continental United States as map layers by year; 2010- 2014 are currently available, but 2015 data will become available in WFDSS in 2017. 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. Users may have to manually add this layer to their available map layers (My Home>System Preferences> select the Disturbance>2010 Burn Severity dataset).
Layer Files	WFDSS now offers layer (.lyr) files for data downloads. Data can be downloaded for Near Term Fire Behavior (NTFB) Arrival Time in 1,2,3,4,6,12, or 24 hour periods, as well as, by burn period. FSPro layer files are also available as an ascii or shapefile, or users can choose to download a zipfile of all layer files available.

Data Layer	Description
FMU/SO Shape Layers	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 Schedule • 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 WFDSS GIS Team representative to enquire about updates that are not posted on this schedule. • 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.

IRWIN Updates

Table 3: IRWIN Updates

	Description
IRWIN	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.

Training Aids

Table 4: Training Aids

	Description
An Author's Guide to WFDSS Decision Making	The Author's Guide to WFDSS Decision Making was developed to assist an author through the WFDSS decision process. The Guide uses a Q and A type of walkthrough. The guide was not developed to be a button by button process, but rather designed to guide the author through the decision support process.

	Description
Backup WFDSS Incident Reporting Form	The document provides a paper form Decision Document that can be completed if the WFDSS application is down or internet is unavailable at the time a Decision Document needs to be published.
WFDSS Incident Groups and Decisions	Although the WFDSS Incident Groups feature provides functionality to users managing multiple fires, it cannot be used to create a single decision for multiple fires. Future changes to WFDSS Incident Groups are forthcoming and will provide enhanced functions. Thorough documentation and clarity on incident direction is best completed for individual fires; creation of a single decision for multiple fires should be uncommon.
WFDSS 101	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 will teach you how to use WFDSS tools, as well as ideas for incorporating the tools into your workflow. New for 2017 is a Lesson focusing on Incident Groups. See the Training tab on the WFDSS home page.
YouTube WFDSS Support Videos Channel	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. http://www.youtube.com/user/WFDSSSupportVideos?feature=g-high-u

Little Known Features

Table 5: Little Known Features

Feature	Description
Help	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.
Situation Assessment features	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: ● 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>System Preferences) and allow more efficient access to the most relevant information for an incident. ● 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. ● A zone fire weather forecast for an incident's origin displays by clicking Weather Forecast on the Situation Mao>Info tab. To view fire weather forecasts for other zones in the fire area, turn on the Fire Weather and Danger>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. ● 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>Info tab is for the RAWS closest to an incident's origin. Using the 'i' tool,

Feature	Description
	click on alternate locations to display ERC-G data for alternate RAWS. These graphs show a 7 day ERC-G forecast in green. ● 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>Info tab. ● 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>System Preferences. ● See Estimated Ground Evacuation Time.
Estimated Ground Evac Time	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 Estimated Ground Evac Time Overview.
Basic Fire Behavior Hauling Chart	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.
Incident Groups	WFDSS populates incident complexes 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.
Reports	✓ 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

Feature	Description
	format and both edit/publish the report as you would a decision. See To create Management Action Point Reports. ✓ 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 Creating Delegation of Authority Reports.
Hyperlinked Decision Requirements available in two Locations	Requirements that must be met before publishing a decision are available in two locations. In the Default Decision Editor, Decision Requirements are listed on the vertical tab located furthest to the right. The Decision Requirements are also listed on the Decisions tab.
Smoke	The Wildland Fire Air Quality Tools link is available from the Fire Related Links in the menu. This link provides you with a suite of smoke modeling and forecasting tools. See http://firesmoke.us/wfdss/.
WFDSS Lite	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: ➢ Training: https://wfdss.usgs.gov/training_lite/faces/jsp/login/wlLogin.jsp ➢ Production: https://wfdss.usgs.gov/wfdss_lite/faces/jsp/login/wlLogin.jsp

Recommendations

Table 6: Recommendations

Feature	Description
Disabling Fly-Out Menu Enables Access to Menu Options on Mobile Devices	The Fly-Out menu slides in and out from the left side of the screen, providing more screen space for users. However, use of this default feature prevents access to menu options on mobile devices. To disable this feature, navigate to My Home >Systems Preferences and check the box for Enhanced Accessibility.

Feature	Description
Default Decision Editor Limitations	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. It is recommended that a plain text editor is used (WordPad or Notepad) when copying and pasting text into WFDSS. This will maximize character allowance.
Situation Map	✓ 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. ✓ 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 Little-Known Features section of this document.
Delegation of Authority	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 Authority template is available in WFDSS that pulls key elements from the decision to provide an editable Delegation of Authority letter. See About Report Templates.
Incident Objectives Project	The Incident Objectives project (mentioned in Training Aids above) 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

Feature	Description
	cover what, where, and why and should be communicated consistently in incident documentation.
	See the WFM RD&A Reference & Guidance and Line Officer Resources webpages for additional information and links to the USDA FS Briefing Paper and white papers titled Creating Incident-Specific WFDSS Incident Objectives and Improving WFDSS Incident Objectives & Incident Requirements and Relaying Leader's Intent.
Decision Content Rationale	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:
	• Their decision.
	• Who the cooperators are that share the decision process and why.
	• What the values of concern are and the likelihood of impact on them.
	• What the relative risk assessment and organization needs indicate.
	• What the current fire situation is.
	• What triggers would indicate revisions to the decision or when a new decision is needed.
	See Creating Rationale.

Preseason Preparation Checklist (My Home tab)

Table 7: Preseason Preparation Checklist

	Feature	Description
☐	**Passwords**	Users are allowed one account per person and it provides access to both WFDSS Production and Training sites. 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 Do-It Yourself Password Reset and Requesting a Password Reset 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 since your last log in, you are likely locked out. Contact the Help Desk (1-866-224-7677) and request a password reset. **Do not request a new account**; this will cause confusion when preparing decision documents and performing other WFDSS functions.
☐	**Disabled Accounts**	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.
☐	**Contact Information**	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. See Updating your Contact Information.
☐	**User Roles**	Ensure that your User Roles are appropriate for your current position and job duties. To view your current User Roles select My Home > User Roles. See Requesting Additional System Privileges or WFDSS User Roles 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.
☐	**System Preferences**	You may select preferred default settings to customize specific items, for example the default base map layer. New map layers are added

	Feature	Description
☐		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 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 Changing your System Preference.
☐	**Address Book**	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 Address Book, or see the other WFDSS Help topics related to the address book such as, Creating a Group and Editing a Group.