

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT WFDSS - 2020

This document is a quick reference and review of WFDSS enhancements, training resources, recommendations/considerations and little-known features that help you use WFDSS more efficiently for every user role.

Managing your WFDSS Account

Users are allowed one account per person that provides access to both WFDSS Production and Training sites. You use the same username and password for both Production and Training. Please check your account information to ensure that a cell number is included, and the GA/Agency/Unit are accurate.

- Your password must be changed every 60 days, or your account will be locked.
- If your account becomes locked, contact the Help Desk (1-866-224-7677) and request a password reset.
- **Do not request a new account if your password is locked**; this causes confusion when preparing decision documents and performing other WFDSS functions.
- Locked accounts are disabled after 270 days of inactivity and require a Geographic Area Editor (GAE) to re-assign user role(s), and then a password reset by the IIA Help Desk.
- 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.

Where Can I Find WFDSS Help?

WHEN YOU NEED ASSISTANCE: knowing which source to access will get the help you need when you need it.

[The IIA Help Desk webpage](#) and hotline provides level 1 technical support for WFDSS; staffers can provide general account support such as password resets, help you reach your agency's GAE, and answer commonly asked questions. The IIA Help Desk cannot provide technical troubleshooting services; these types of questions are escalated to the WFDSS Team for resolution and sometimes result in delays.

Geographic Area Editors (GAE) are responsible for changes to user roles and provide primary support POC for Authors, Dispatchers, Data Managers and Fire Behavior Specialists. This [WFDSS Help Link](#) has instructions on how to identify your GAE or you can contact the IIA Help Desk for assistance.

[The WFDSS Help Link](#) (upper right of all WFDSS screens) is a catalog of descriptions of each section of the program with relevant and "how to" information to help guide users.

[The WFDSS Known Issues](#) spreadsheet is the **FIRST PLACE TO LOOK** if users experience technical issues. Located in the "Hot Picks" section of the WFDSS Home page, it contains known issues, temporary work-arounds and repair timelines.

WFDSS Feedback (upper-right once logged in) provides level 2 support and is the avenue for reporting **NEW** bugs and technical issues with the application which routes the issue directly to the WFDSS Team.

[The Wildland Fire Management RD&A webpage](#) and National Fire Decision Support Center (NFDC) hotline (+1 208-387-5253) are available for help and advice with publishing WFDSS decisions if your GAE is unavailable.

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Recent Changes to WFDSS

Please refer to [“What’s New in WFDSS”](#) on the WFDSS homepage for the full list of enhancements and bug fixes: past, present, and future.

The most notable enhancement from the most recent update is that can now download Decisions for all decisions in the Group from the Incident Groups page, or for one or more incidents, from the Incidents Group > View Incidents page.

Three WFDSS releases occurred in 2019 to improve code and overall system stability, resolve bugs/known issues and deliver long-awaited enhancements. Another release is planned for spring 2020.

As always, the “Hot Picks” section of the WFDSS Homepage has NEW and IMPORTANT topics selected by the WFDSS Team!

Data Layer Updates

See the [Data Refresh Schedule](#) for more information about upcoming updates.

Table 1: Data Layer Updates

Data Layer	Description
FMU/SO Shape Layers	<p>FMU/SO data continues to be updated. A new schedule has been posted for updates or changes to unit Fire Management Unit (FMU) or Strategic Objective (SO) data layers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 are announced to the WFDSS Geographic Area Editors and via the WFDSS GIS Team. Please contact your representative to enquire about updates that are not posted on this schedule. <p>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.</p>
Building Cluster Data	<p>New data for building clusters in the states of Tennessee, Arkansas, Montana, New Mexico, and Utah. Building cluster data for Clark, Madison, and Valley Counties in Idaho, and Custer County in Colorado was added. Numerous areas with existing building cluster data were updated.</p>
Critical Habitat	<p>Line and Polygon data for critical habitat was updated.</p>

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Other Layer Updates	NPS, USFS, BLM Buildings/Counties/Fire WX Forecast Zones/TNC Land Boundaries Fuel Treatments/National Scenic Byways/National Historic Trails/National Recreation Trails/BLM Range Allotments/BLM Horse and Burro Areas/Wilderness Study Areas/Other Designated Areas/Inventoried Roadless Areas/National Recreation Areas/Jurisdictional Agencies/Terrestrial Retardant Avoidance/ Aquatic Retardant Avoidance/LandScan Population/MTBS (2016, 2017)/Power Plants/Electric Sub Stations/Transmission Lines/Protecting Agencies/Wild and Scenic Rivers/USFS, USFWS Trails/Campgrounds/Alaska Fire Management Options/GACC Boundaries
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Training Resources and Reference Material

There is a plethora of interrelated WFDSS training resources and reference materials for every user role in WFDSS.

[1. WFDSS Training Resources webpage](#) (located on the WFDSS home page)

- **WFDSS 101:** This series of lessons that are a stand-alone lessons format to help guide self-paced training in WFDSS (There are “companion” videos on the WFDSS Support YouTube channel that correspond to WFDSS 101 lessons)
- **Spatial Fire Planning:** Resources for Data Managers to incorporate LRMP guidance into WFDSS
 - *Recent Update:* [Spatial Fire Planning Introduction \(2019\)](#)
- **Modeling Learning Resources:** Guides and reference materials for Analysts
 - *Recent update:* [WFDSS Modeling Tips \(2019\)](#)
- **Decision Learning Resources:** Guides and Reference Materials relevant to each WFDSS User Role
 - *Recent update:* [Smoke Resources \(2019\)](#)
- **Quick Tips:** A potpourri of helpful hints and oft-forgotten reminders
- **Videos:** a selection of links to videos located on the WFDSS Support Videos YouTube Channel.

[2. Wildland Fire Management Research, Development & Applications webpage:](#) An encyclopedia of resources and reference material for all WFDSS user roles including “Latest News” from the WFM RD&A Team.

[Technology Transfer](#)

- Potential Wildland Fire Operational Delineations
- Spatial Fire Management Planning in WFDSS
- Incident Objectives Project
- Benefits Analysis Framework
- Risk Assessment
- Example Decisions

[Agency Administrator Toolbox](#)

- Line Officer Guide
- Decision Making for Wildland Fire Incidents
- Forest Service Agency Admin Certification
- USFS Fire Response Protocols
- WFDSS Refresher Training

[Decision Support Toolbox](#)

- Wildland Fire Decision Support
- WFDSS GAEs
- Data Management

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- National Fire Decision Support Center

3. WFDSS Support Videos YouTube 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.

Recommendations and Additional Information

Table 2: Recommendations and Additional Information

Feature	Description
IRWIN Updates	<p>WFDSS receives data and information from IRWIN (Integrated Reporting of Wildland Fire Information). The data flow between applications is based on rules, where the information from an application is given a ranking based on its level of authority. IRWIN Version 6 release planned for March 9th, it incorporates IROC, IQCS, and INFORM. WFDSS-related changes are minimal, but there are a few:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incidents will continue to stay in synch with IRWIN, even if the type changes to a non-Wildfire type (Rx or “Other:”). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In previous versions, if a wildfire incident in WFDSS changed type, whether that change occurred in WFDSS or in another application connected to IRWIN, WFDSS would cease exchanging data until the incident became a wildfire again. • If an incident is created in WFDSS as an “Other” or “Rx” type, it will not be sent to IRWIN unless its type is changed in WFDSS to a Wildfire. This remains the same as earlier versions. ▪ Tools for National Editors have been enhanced to improve their ability to resolve duplicates and other data issues. ▪ If an incident is “Certified” in the INFORM final fire reporting application, a message will appear to users at the top of the incident information screen. Most data elements are greyed out when an incident is certified, as the INFORM app becomes most authoritative for data associated with final fire reports. If needed, records can be “Un-Certified” in INFORM Inspector by appropriate fire reporting officials, such as an FMO.
How can I get through a preliminary decision quickly?	<p>When a decision is necessary, create a decision first thing and then work through the list of requirements on the Decisions page. The only step not listed is creating an incident objective, which is not required for all agencies.</p>
Management Action Point (MAP) Displays	<p>MAP displays help users differentiate between pending, active, and deactivated MAPs</p> <p>Pending MAPs display as dotted lines. Activated MAPs, those that are included in published decisions, display with a solid line. Deactivated M.A.P.s display with a dashed line. Once a decision is published, pending MAPs become active and display with other, previously activated MAPs and appear as solid lines.</p> <p>When you exclude MAPs and publish a new decision, excluded MAPs are 'deactivated' and display with dashed lines in map displays.</p>

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Feature	Description
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.
Upload Associated Rationale Documents as Images	Agency Administrators may be required to produce agency-specific rationale documents or prefer to use other word processing applications to initially document decision rationale. Sometimes the formatting is incompatible when transferred to WFDSS. There are a multitude of applications or free online services that convert documents to image files. Image files can then be uploaded to the rationale section in addition to, or in lieu of the written rationale. <u>Make sure to uncheck the "compress image to fit" box to ensure the image is full-sized in the PDF decision.</u>
Capitalize on the Reviewer role and/or Create a PDF Decision Draft	<p>Decision Reviewers, 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, other than 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>Incident Owners/Editors can also generate a Draft PDF decision prior to approval in the "Decisions" tab by selecting the "Pending Decision" radio button followed by the "PDF..." button. Users can generate a Draft Decision PDF which can also be useful for proofreading and ensuring that all desired content is included and formatted properly prior to publishing a final decision.</p>
Decision Content Rationale	<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"> ● 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. <p>See Creating Rationale.</p>

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Little Known Features

Table 3: Little Known Features

Feature	Description
<p>Measure tool</p>	<p>Did you know you can easily measure the circumference of your fire using the measure tool? It measures more than just a straight line!</p>
<p>Subscribing to Planning Area Notifications</p>	<p>From the account system preferences page, some WFDSS user roles (Viewer, Dispatcher, Author, GA Editor, National Editor, and Data Manager) can subscribe to planning area notifications for one or more units. Planning area subscriptions are optional but can help facilitate communication between neighboring units and promote cooperation early in the life of an incident and decision-making process.</p>
<p>Access the Planning Area Spatial Inventory easily on the Objective tab</p>	<p>Some may think that the planning area’s values inventory can only be accessed by expanding the dropdown arrow beside the planning area map layer and clicking the Spatial Inventory link. Instead, quickly access it on the Objectives tab by clicking the “Display Planning Area Spatial Inventory” link above the Incident Objectives & Requirements list. Accessing it here makes it much easier to access values information when developing incident objectives and requirements.</p>
<p>Situation Map pop out</p> 	<p>Quickly view the situation map in a separate browser window for an incident at any time by clicking on the small map icon on the right-hand side of your screen. 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.</p>
<p>Quickly View Incident Content Library</p>	<p>Did you know you can quickly access ALL Incident Content to review available inputs (such as images) for a decision? Select Incident Content Library from the fly-out menu on the left. Remember that 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.</p>
<p>Estimated Ground Evac Time</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 Estimated Ground Evac Time Overview.</p>
<p>Basic Fire Behavior Hauling Chart</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>

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Feature	Description
Incident Groups	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.
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 format and both edit/publish the report as you would a decision. See To create Management Action Point Reports .
Smoke Dispersion Forecast	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 it updates every three hours. Any user with an active WFDSS account can access it.