



What You Need To Know About WFDSS - 2015

This document is a quick reference and review of recent enhancements, 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 5.1 (December 2014) and Release 5.2 (March 2015) are the latest releases affecting users. Below are a few highlights from these releases.

Table 1: New WFDSS Features

Feature	Description
WFDSS Login Screen, video link	➤ A link to a short video describing the most recent WFDSS enhancements is available above the login fields on the Training and Production login pages. The video and link were created to efficiently deliver enhancement information to the widest audience possible. Release information and associated videos are available in the Hot Picks section (previously known as Latest Information) on the right side of WFDSS Home. Links to videos are available at the bottom of the WFDSS > Training page.
WFDSS Training Page Header changed from Blue to Orange	➤ The top of the WFDSS Training page is now orange. In contrast, the Production system continues to display blue. This enhancement will help users be more cognizant of which system they are using, and help ensure they don't inadvertently create incidents or analysis in the wrong system.
Validation Tab Removed	➤ The Validation tab has been removed from WFDSS. This will help simplify the steps required to develop a decision document and reduce redundancy.
Costs Tab Added	➤ A new Costs tab consolidates all cost related information for an incident. Here, Incident Owners and Editors can document the Estimated Final Cost for an incident, select the Cost Estimation Method used, and access the Estimator Spreadsheet and Stratified



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	<p>Cost Index tools. (Note the name change from Estimated Cost to Estimated <i>Final</i> Cost.)</p> <p>Prior to this enhancement; cost-related information was located on the COA tab and the Stratified Cost Index was a menu option on the left. These have been consolidated on the Cost tab and are no longer available in their previous locations.</p>
<p>New Strategy Slider Bar on the COA Tab</p>	<p>➤ A new Strategy slider bar has been added on the Course of Action tab. This <i>optional</i> tool is intended to be used to describe how an incident will be managed on the continuum from Monitor to Full Suppression. A comment box is provided to document an overarching 'umbrella statement' on the strategy and from this, subsequent detailed Action Items are developed. If used, an image of the slider bar will appear in the decision content.</p>
<p>LANDFIRE 2012 has replaced LANDFIRE 2010 as the Default Data Source</p>	<p>➤ The LANDFIRE 2012 1.3.0 landscape data source is now the default data source in WFDSS and its' data has national coverage. This latest product from LANDFIRE incorporates disturbances, management activities and succession through 2012. For additional information about the data source, visit the LANDFIRE.gov website.</p>
<p>KBDI-Adjusted Dynamic layer added to the Southeast Geographic Area</p>	<p>➤ A KBDI adjusted dynamic layer has been added for the Southeast Geographic Area. Over time, additional Geographic Areas may receive a similar layer that applies fuel conversion rule sets based on a given weather variable. See KBDI Adjusted LANDFIRE Layer for further information.</p>
<p>Situation Map</p>	<p>➤ The Situation Map now opens in its own window. It can be accessed three ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ by clicking the Assess Situation button located above the Incident List, ✓ by clicking the Situation tab in the incident perspective, and ✓ By clicking the Situation Map quick access link located on the right side of the screen and from any tab in the incident perspective. <p>This new feature allows users to view the map while entering content on other tabs instead of having to navigate back and forth in one browser window.</p> <p>On the Situation map display, only the Map and Info subtabs are available above the LayerSwitcher. To access options that used to be located on the Menu tab, you can navigate quickly back to the Main application in the other, open window.</p>



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Feature	Description
Addition of Incident Notes and Data Management Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Incident Authors and Editors can enter incident notes for an incident at any time regardless of whether a decision has been created or is in the review process. These notes are not included in a decision and as a result, are not intended to document critical decision making or actions taken on an incident. ➤ Data Managers can add data management notes to document changes to the fire planning process and other related events. When developing a note, Data Managers specify its' relation to FMU/SO Codes, Strategic Objectives, Management Requirements, Unit Shapes or General.
Skip to Content feature added for use with Screen-Reading Technology (508 Compliance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Skip to Content feature was created to meet federal requirements for 508 compliance and accessibility and increase overall usability for the application. This feature is for WFDSS users utilizing screen readers, which are a form of assistive technology that provides audible explanation of fields/items visible on a screen. Users of these technologies use the tab function to move from section to section on a screen. The Skip to Content option allows the screen reader to skip right to the primary fields of interest on that page. The Skip to Content feature only works when using screen reader technology; without it, the option appears to do nothing.
Simplified Default Decision Editor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A simplified Default Decision Editor has been added that streamlines decision documentation and is more intuitive to use. The previous decision editor (that's been in use since WFDSS' inception) is now available as the Advanced Decision Editor. The majority of decisions can be successfully documented using the new Default Decision Editor, but the Advanced Decision Editor contains additional formatting tools that may be useful when documenting complex decisions with abundant text, formatting and images. The new Default Decision Editor opens automatically when you choose to edit a decision on the Decision tab.
Assessment portion of a Decision split into four distinct sections: Weather, Modeling, Risk, and Benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Weather vertical tab displays the current Predictive Services Significant Fire Potential. ➤ Modeling vertical tab allows the editor to select which modeling runs to include in the decision. ➤ Risk vertical tab allows editor to add risk content to the decision, as well as, access the Relative Risk and Org Need Assessments. ➤ Benefits vertical tab includes a slider bar that allows an editor to select whether the fire is achieving benefits associated with Strategic Objectives for the unit. This portion is optional, but can be included in the decision.
Decision Learning	The WFDSS website has been improved with Decision Learning



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Feature	Description
Resources section on WFDSS Website > Training	Resources consolidated on the WFDSS Website > Training page. The Related References page also contains valuable reference information but core learning materials are now in one location on the Training page.

New Data Layers

Table 2: New Data Layers for WFDSS

Data Layer	Description
Updated and simplified critical habitat layer	The updated and simplified Critical Habitat layer now features categories Endangered, Threatened, and groups all other categories into Other.
Fuel Treatment Data	As of July 2014 interagency fuel treatment data are included in WFDSS. These data are sourced from the individual federal agencies and combined into one layer. The layers can be found under the Disturbance History heading in the layer tree.
LANDFIRE 2012	The LANDFIRE 2012 1.3.0 landscape data source is available in WFDSS and its' data has national coverage. (However, LANDFIRE 2010 remains the default data source at this time.) This latest product from LANDFIRE incorporates disturbances, management activities and succession through 2012. For additional information about the data source, visit the LANDFIRE.gov website.
KBDI-Adjusted Dynamic layer added to the Southeast Geographic Area	A KBDI adjusted dynamic layer has been added for the Southeast Geographic Area. Over time, additional Geographic Areas may receive a similar layer that applies fuel conversion rule sets based on a given weather variable. See KBDI Adjusted LANDFIRE Layer for further information.

IRWIN updates

Table 3: IrWIN Updates

	Description
IrWIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ IrWIN receiving incident information from FireBeans (the CAD system for BLM Alaska Fire Service) ➤ IrWIN receiving incident information from DispatchTracker (Texas Forest Service and USDA FS in TX)



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➤ WFDSS incidents shared with E-ISuite and ROSS in read only manner

Training Aids

Table 4: WFDSS Training Aids

	Description
Quick video preview of What's New in WFDSS	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 > Videos menu options.
What's New in WFDSS menu option on the WFDSS Website	A new menu option has been added to the WFDSS Website called <i>What's New in WFDSS</i> . 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.
Example Decisions	Two example decision documents have been created to give users a point of reference when crafting a decision document (examples include the Gold Pan long duration incident and the Salt Cove Type 3 incident). These Example Decisions are located on the Reference & Guidance section of the WFM RD&A Website and are linked to the <i>WFDSS Website > Training > Decision Learning Resources</i> location as well.
2014 Incident Objectives Project findings	Examination of wildland fire incident decisions revealed that most incident objectives are written general enough that they could apply to any fire in the country. A systematic evaluation of wildfire incident decisions was undertaken in 2014, to better understand the situation and recommend solutions. This included site visits to 23 fires and interviews of agency administrators, incident commanders and WFDSS authors. An analysis of all objectives in the WFDSS database as of May 2014 was also conducted. Findings from this work are summarized in a briefing paper while more explanation and detail can be found in the white paper titled Improving WFDSS Incident Objectives and Incident Requirements and Relaying Leader's Intent . Both of these documents are linked to the WFM RD&A Website and WFDSS Website > Training > <i>Decision Learning Resources</i> locations, and more is available on the WFM RD&A site > Reference & Guidance location as well.
WFM RD&A Decision Support	Decision support information for a wide variety of audiences is available on the WFM RD&A website . Line Officers, WFDSS Geographic Area Editors, Data Managers and general WFDSS users will all find supporting information specific to their tasks and roles in incident decision-making.



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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. See the Training tab on the WFDSS home page. Lessons will be improved upon on 2015.
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
Decision Learning Resources section on WFDSS Website > Training	The WFDSS website has been improved with Decision Learning Resources consolidated on the WFDSS Website > Training page. The Related References page also contains valuable reference information but core learning materials are now in one location on the Training page.

Little Known Features

Table 5: Little Know WFDSS 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.
Smoke	The <i>Wildland Fire Air Quality Tools</i> link is available from the <i>Fire Related Links</i> 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 smart phones 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 <i>Sign Into Mobile Website</i> , or Mobile web sites can be found at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training: https://wfdss.usgs.gov/training_lite/faces/jsp/login/wlLogin.jsp ▪ Production: https://wfdss.usgs.gov/wfdss_lite/faces/jsp/login/wlLogin.jsp
Estimated Ground Evac	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



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Feature	Description
Time	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 Help> Estimated Ground Evac Time Overview .
Incident Groups	Users can group incidents on the Incident Groups tab to enable viewing of more than one fire in their area, regardless of unit or ownership. This feature is helpful for units dealing with multiple active fires. Each individual incident has its own content; however, grouping incidents provides a way to manage multiple incidents at the same time. From the incident groups feature you can easily navigate to individual incidents and their decisions as well as download one KMZ that includes spatial data for all incidents. While complexing fires in WFDSS is not a recommended practice, the incident groups feature alleviates frustration that comes from managing/monitoring multiple incidents and related information sharing.
View Section button in the Default Decision Editor	Allows users to preview the section in a new window, and without having to navigate away from the page. It is recommended that users use this feature to review their content for accuracy or gaps.
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.

Recommendations

Table 6: Recommendations for Using WFDSS

Feature	Description
Internet Explorer 9 and 10	These older versions of Internet Explorer may result the default decision editor not working properly. Recommendation is to use a different browser or use Internet Explorer 11.
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	Due to the Situation Map now opening in its own window, opening the Situation Map <i>first</i> will enable easy reference of spatial components as decision inputs are created.



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Feature	Description
Delegation of Authority	<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 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. 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 cover what, where, and why and should be communicated consistently in incident documentation. See the WFM RD&A Reference & Guidance webpage for additional information and links to the USDA FS Briefing Paper and white paper titled Improving WFDSS Incident Objectives & Incident Requirements and Relaying Leader's Intent.</p>
Decision Content Rationale	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What their decision is. • 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 WFDSS Help for content to consider when creating rationale.</p>
Complexing Fires	<p>There are advantages and disadvantages to complexing fires in WFDSS. Carefully consider the long term consequences of complexing two or more fires. One team managing two or more fires does not necessarily require combining the fires in WFDSS. Multiple fires can be managed under one financial code, and managed separately in WFDSS. Trying to un-complex fires as one fire is declared controlled, out or the situation changes significantly, can be a problem. Use of the Incident Groups feature in WFDSS allows users to view spatial information for multiple active incidents in an area and can help alleviate the desire to complex. Complexes entered into WFDSS have to be marked as Incident Type > Other in order to comply with the iRWIn project data feeds from WFDSS. See WFDSS Complexing</p>



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Preseason Preparation Checklist (My Home tab)

Table 7: WFDSS Preseason Preparation Checklist

✓	Feature	Description
<input type="checkbox"/>	Passwords	Users are allowed one account per person and it provides access to both WFDSS Production and Training sites. 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.
<input type="checkbox"/>	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. Do not request a new account! Your WFDSS account is designed to stay with you throughout your career. See <i>Help > Updating your Contact Information</i> .
<input type="checkbox"/>	User Roles	Ensure that your User Roles are appropriate for your current position and job duties. To view your current User Roles select <i>My Home > User Roles</i> . You may also reference <i>Help > Requesting Additional System Privileges</i> or <i>WFDSS User Roles</i> 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.
<input type="checkbox"/>	System Preferences	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 <i>Help > Changing your System Preference</i> .
<input type="checkbox"/>	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 <i>Help > Address Book</i> , or see the other WFDSS Help topics related to the address book such as, <i>Creating a Group</i> and <i>Editing a Group</i> .



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Enhancements Planned for May 2015 Release

Table 8: Planned Future Enhancements to WFDSS

Feature	Description
Org Assessment	<p>Future enhancements will include changes to the Organizational Assessment to better reflect what is being completed by the field in the Risk and Complexity Assessment.</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The graphic on the top of the initial Organization Assessment page will be a bar graph as shown in figure 1.• The graphic on the final page of the Organization Assessment has also been changed to reflect it as seen in figure 2.• The WFDSS system will no longer provide a recommended organization. It is up to the Line Officer to evaluate the inputs and determine the incident organization based on what was selected when completing the Relative Risk and Organizational Assessments.• In the following example, the IMT type would likely fall as at Type 4 incident yet when looking at the results an Agency Administrator may determine that additional staffing is needed in public information to ensure success.



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Feature	Description
	<div data-bbox="570 352 1286 1239"> <p>Organization Assessment (Draft)</p> <p>Select the appropriate radio buttons for Implementation Difficulty and Socio/Political Concerns to calculate the Organization Assessment.</p> <p>Continue Return</p> <hr/> <p>Relative Risk</p> <p>Assess Relative Risk</p> <p>Relative Risk Notes</p> <hr/> <p>Implementation Difficulty</p> <p>Difficulty Notes</p> <hr/> <p>Socio/Political Concerns</p> <p>Socio/Political Concerns Notes</p> <p>Continue Return</p> </div>

Figure 1: Organizational Assessment



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Feature	Description																																																									
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <table border="1" style="width: 45%;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Description</th> <th>N/A</th> <th>Low</th> <th>Mod</th> <th>High</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Relative Risk</td> <td></td> <td>L</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Potential Fire Duration</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>M</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Incident Strategies (CoA)</td> <td></td> <td>L</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Functional Concerns</td> <td>X</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Objective Concerns</td> <td></td> <td>L</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>External Influences</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>M</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ownership Concerns</td> <td></td> <td>L</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Totals</td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>4</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <div style="width: 45%; text-align: center;"> </div> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px;"> <p>Unit Recommended Organization</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Organization</th> <th>Description</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Type 5</td> <td>Majority of items rated as "N/A"; a few items may be rated in other categories.</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Type 4</td> <td>Majority of items rated as "Low", with some items rated as "N/A", and a few items rated as "Moderate" or "High".</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Type 3</td> <td>Majority of items rated as "Moderate", with a few items rated in other categories.</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Type 2</td> <td>Majority of items rated as "Moderate", with a few items rated as "High".</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Type 1</td> <td>Majority of items rated as "High"; a few items may be rated in other categories.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><small>Use this section to document the incident management organization for the fire. If the incident management organization is different than the Organization Assessment recommends, document why an alternative organization was selected.</small></p> <p><small>*Organization Notes</small></p> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; height: 30px; width: 100%;"></div> <p style="text-align: center;"> <input type="button" value="Publish"/> <input type="button" value="Back"/> <input type="button" value="Return"/> </p> </div>	Description	N/A	Low	Mod	High	Relative Risk		L			Potential Fire Duration			M		Incident Strategies (CoA)		L			Functional Concerns	X				Objective Concerns		L			External Influences			M		Ownership Concerns		L			Totals		1	4	2	Organization	Description	<input type="radio"/> Type 5	Majority of items rated as "N/A"; a few items may be rated in other categories.	<input type="radio"/> Type 4	Majority of items rated as "Low", with some items rated as "N/A", and a few items rated as "Moderate" or "High".	<input type="radio"/> Type 3	Majority of items rated as "Moderate", with a few items rated in other categories.	<input type="radio"/> Type 2	Majority of items rated as "Moderate", with a few items rated as "High".	<input type="radio"/> Type 1	Majority of items rated as "High"; a few items may be rated in other categories.
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Default Decision Editor Enhancements	A future enhancement will allow users to create simple tables within the default decision editor.																																																									
New Assessment tab	A new Assessment tab will be added beside the Situation tab, to address each of the elements currently included in the Assessment portion of a decision. These elements include Weather, Modeling, Risk and Benefits. Links to the Relative Risk Assessment and Organization Assessment will be available from this new tab.																																																									

Figure 2: Unit Recommended Organization



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Feature	Description
New Format for WFDSS Decisions	<p>Users can expect to see a new decision document format in 2015. This format is generally reversed from the current template, showing the rationale and summary information up front, then the Incident Objectives, Incident Requirements, and Course of Action followed by the assessment information.</p> <p>Proposed changes are below:</p> <div data-bbox="667 636 1188 1283" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 20px auto; width: fit-content;"><p>TABLE OF CONTENTS</p><p>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</p><ul style="list-style-type: none">Incident InformationMapEstimated CostRelative Risk & Organization Assessment SummariesRationale<p>INCIDENT STRATEGY</p><ul style="list-style-type: none">Incident ObjectivesIncident RequirementsCourse of ActionManagement Action Points<p>ASSESSMENT INFORMATION</p><ul style="list-style-type: none">Incident MapValues InventoryRelative RiskOrganization AssessmentSituation –<ul style="list-style-type: none">Preparedness LevelWeather<p>LAND & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN INFORMATION</p><p>DECISION DOCUMENTATION INFORMATION & HISTORY</p></div>

Figure 3: Proposed New Decision Document