WFDSS Incident Groups and Decisions

The Main Point:

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.

Incident Groups

An Incident Group in WFDSS, visible from the Incident Groups Tab, is a collection of fires lumped together to provide user functionality. They can be created as public or private, which dictates whether other users can see them. Incident Groups manually created in WFDSS are not shared via Integrated Reporting of Wildland Fire Information (IRWIN).

Incident Groups are automatically populated in WFDSS from Incident Complexes shared via the IRWIN system, and these Incident Groups are public. The fires within these Incident Groups are the fires within the Incident Complex shared via IRWIN, created from either ICS-209 or a Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system.

Decisions cannot be created for an Incident Group regardless of whether it was created in WFDSS or shared via IRWIN.

Current Functionality

Incident Groups allow users to:

- View Incident Details for all incidents (up to 80) in a Group
- Download one file with all perimeters in the Group
- Generate a single KMZ for one or all incidents in the Group, including Planning Areas, M.A.P.s, Incident Objective shapes, Fire Perimeters, and Analyses (caution: a KMZ with a high volume of analyses may not work properly)
- Capture a map image from the Group Map
- Review a list of the Group's decisions (each incident's decision is hyperlinked from the list)
- Display map information for all incidents within the Group, including:
  - Current and Published Planning Areas
  - Fire Perimeters
  - Management Action Points
  - Objective Shapes and Points of Origin
  - Analyses for the entire Group

Users cannot run analyses, reports, or create decisions for an Incident Group. These are created and processed for individual incidents using the Incident's Decisions, Reports, and Analyses sub-tabs and menus.

Future Functionality

The current WFDSS contract transition limits the ability to make changes for fire season 2016. A team of Geographic Area Editors and the WFM RD&A are working to prioritize enhancements to Incident Groups based on user feedback in the 2015 and 2016 fire seasons. These changes will be phased in and tested during the winter months and incorporated, based on user feedback, funding, and developer capacities for the 2017 fire season.

Decisions

WFDSS Decisions provide direction for an incident to the incident commander regarding Incident Objectives and Requirements, Course(s) of Action, Management Action Points, and more.

It is currently not recommended to combine multiple incidents in a single decision within WFDSS as this creates challenges at the local, regional, and national levels (addressed below). It is recognized however, that certain circumstances may warrant publication of a single decision for multiple fires until future functionality is added to WFDSS. Creating individual decisions may not be practical for multiple fires for which the Planning Areas, Incident Objectives and Requirements, Course(s) of Action, and Organizational and Risk Assessments are identical, where fires are in close proximity, or merging may be imminent.

Units choosing to combine incidents under a single decision should document which WFDSS incident contains the Decision and for which incidents the Decision is valid. For the incident that contains the Published Decision, it is suggested that all the included incidents be listed in the Incident Information section, mentioned in the Rationale, and displayed in a Map Capture that is added to the Incident Information section. For the other incidents, suggested ways to document this include, if incident ownership is accepted, documenting in the Incident Notes of all the fires involved or creating a Course of Action Item, indicating which incident the Decision resides in. However, be aware that accepting ownership will generate reminder messages that a decision was not published until the incident is contained.

In addition, editors and owners should address the following challenges when publishing a single decision for multiple fires:

- Confusing or incomplete decision support documentation:
  - Incident Objectives/Requirements, Course(s) of Action, Analysis, etc. should specifically state they apply to all fires OR specify which fire(s) the direction is applicable to, ensuring all fires are clearly addressed.
  - If a fire must be "split" out from the Decision, this should be documented in the Decision Periodic Assessment and a new decision published, and noted in the "new" single incident Decision Incident Information and Rationale sections.
- Confusion with regard to:
  - Incident Size: Because incident size is passed to other applications via IRWIN, the Incident Size field located on the WFDSS Information tab should only be equal to the size of the single fire as named on the Information tab. Additionally, because the most recent fire perimeter updates the Perimeter Size field only the single fire perimeter for the fire named on the Information tab should be loaded to WFDSS.

- o   Estimated Final Cost: The Estimated Final Cost entered for the Decision should be for all fires included in the Decision, which is particularly important as this could affect decision approval thresholds for the DOI bureaus.
- o   Fire Out Dates: The Fire Out Date should be entered specifically for each individual fire. Agencies have specific guidance on entering control and out date/times for fires in a merged fire situation. Please refer to the fire reporting guidance of the agency with jurisdiction at point of origin for specific guidance.

It should be recognized that choosing to combine incidents under a single decision will produce some data gaps or challenges that cannot be addressed. Additionally, the recommendations identified above are interim and are likely to change in the future when new functionality is provided in WFDSS.

IRWIN

The Integrated Reporting of Wildland Fire Information (IRWIN) data exchange environment shares authoritative data for incidents between several fire reporting and management systems. IRWIN tracks Incident "Parent" Complexes and the associated "Child" Fires provided they are created and managed according to proper methodology. IRWIN passes Complexes (created and managed in ICS-209 and Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) systems) to WFDSS as Incident Groups with the associated "Child" Fires. WFDSS does not currently pass manually created Incident Groups to IRWIN but, IRWIN does track the status of incident decisions ("No Decision", "Pending Decision", "Approved Decision") and shares them with other applications. For more information about IRWIN, visit: http://forestsandrangelands.gov/WFIT/applications/IRWIN/index.shtml

References

For more information see the following WFDSS Help topics:

- *About Incident Groups*: http://wfdss.usgs.gov/wfdss_help/WFDSSHelp_about_groups.html
- *Creating an Incident Group*: http://wfdss.usgs.gov/wfdss_help/WFDSSHelp_creating_group.html
- *Viewing an Incident Groups Decisions:* http://wfdss.usgs.gov/wfdss_help/WFDSSHelp_WFDSS_view_grp_decisions.html
- *Editing a Group* http://wfdss.usgs.gov/wfdss_help/WFDSSHelp_editing_group.html