

**ROSS Partner Conference Call Notes  
December 19, 2002**

Participants:

ROSS Team: Jon Skeels, Nancy DeLong, Rod Chaffee, Sue Roussopoulos, Dennis Derr, Jerry Clements, Mary Toews, Rex Alford, Rex Alford and Andy Gray.

ROSS Partners: Jennifer Trudeau, Larry Elder, Stacy Lensing, Kit Kemsley, Rick Squires, Lani Williams, Brian Lee, Cheryl Dickson, Flint Cheney, Debbie Bozarth, Rob Juhola, Jay Wickham, Kathy Wiegard, Dave Hart, Karen Feary, Dave Quinn and Pat Boucher, etc.

Other Guests: Linda Roose (NIFC)

**Note: Additional “post-conference call information” is shown in bold text below.**

Business Community Update - (Neal Hitchcock was unable to participate today)

Project Update – Jon Skeels

Today I'd like to talk about the project and also respond to some questions we've received

- Project is going well
  - SMEs are reviewing test case data this week for version 1.2.5 (to be tested beginning January 27, and released Feb/March)
  - Also reviewing test case data for v 1.2.6 (to be released June)
  - Roster (a feature of v 1.2.5) took 5 weeks longer than expected to build
  - Roster is very complex to build, but should be easy to use
  - Some highlights of v 1.2.5:
    - Roster
    - Aviation Hazard screen cleanup
    - Cancel Request function will be operational
    - Developmental Positions added to catalog
    - CWN-BPA Contract Screen change
    - Food Service Request form will allow lunch before breakfast!
    - Lots of changes to Incident screen
      - Incident Numbering allowed by host or dispatch center
      - NWCG has tasked a group to pursue incident numbering standardization – (not a ROSS initiative, but we've provided information to the group)
    - Incident Screen – when host unit is changed, frequencies will change
    - Incident Resources screen – if a resource has been released but has not left the incident, you'll be able to view it
    - Location screen will be enhanced
    - Formatting of decimal degrees in Lat/Longs will be fixed
    - The Township/Range/Section conversion will be operational for all areas of the country that have official (USGS) survey info
    - New Request screen cleanup
    - Organization screen – you will be able to delete an organization
    - Pending Request screen – a number of improvements
    - Request Status screen cleanup
    - There will be four more reports dealing with incidents

- Quick Request screen will show last time statused (this will particularly help with resources that are statused via the web)
- Pre-positioning – will let you dispatch resources on a preposition order to another incident as if they're your resources
- Travel screen – lots of cleanup on this screen
- Training is going well nationwide
  - We're taking the opportunity to test the network using training sessions
  - Although we don't control the networks, this testing helps us tune our servers to operate better with the networks
    - ROSS questions and answers
  - Q: How do you know if an incident is open or closed?
  - A: On the Incident screen, if the "Close Incident" button is available, the incident is still open. If the button appears as "Open Incident" (an opened folder), the incident has been closed. In Version 1.2.6 we are hopeful that you will be able to remove incidents from your Incident List and Most Recent Incidents list. As planning progresses on this, we will advise folks.
  - Q: Auto documentation is not recording opening or closing incidents.
  - A: This will be fixed in Version 1.2.6 or 2.1.
  - Q: Suggestion to change "Travel Plan" to "Transportation Plan" or "Transport Plan."
  - A: Like any automation effort, there are some issues with terminology we're using. A good example is "cancel request," currently used by dispatchers for several different things. We're working on a list of "ROSS terms" that will be presented at the start of the ROSS dispatch course
  - Q: Some would like to see unit I.D.s on forms
  - A: Dispatchers use a lot of abbreviations. We will look at using unit I.D.s and other abbreviations where we can, but NWCG has a "clear text" standard that drives us to spell out organizations, etc. on most printed material (like the resource order form).
  - Q: Can navigation instructions print out on the resource order form?
  - A: Yes, this and special instructions will print out when v 1.2.6 is released.
  - Q: Need to show Finance Codes.
  - A: Many dispatchers use Block 4 of the resource order form to show finance codes, but technically it's not the correct use of that block. We'll add a new block for that info which will be there when you print the resource order.
  - Q: (Questions about Selection Areas)
  - A: We're going to develop a paper describing the use of Selection Areas to help dispatchers.
  - Q: Do Rural Fire Departments need a unit I.D.?
  - A: NWCG says if an RFD provides resources or hosts an incident, it needs a unit I.D.
  - Q: (Questions about qualifications imports into ROSS)
  - A: Here are a few issues that might help you:
    - In the SACS database, "character 103" needs an extra space in order to import correctly into ROSS. Contact the ROSS Helpdesk if you need help.
    - We're know that at least one unit is using SACS as the qualification system for Forest Service overhead. NWCG maintains that SACS is the official record for only DOI personnel and that any FS records in

SACS are not to be imported into ROSS. If you're aware of any other units like this, let us know.

- A single IQS import into ROSS is limited to 10,000 records, so if you have more than that, break it into multiple imports.
- Q: Can a listing of states that have been officially surveyed be provided to the Partners?
- A: It wouldn't really help, since many states have portions that have been surveyed, surveyed under a different system and not surveyed at all.
- Q: We need a solution for resources that have been "farmed out" to different dispatch centers (e.g. on the Toiyabe NF). The GACC can use the Person screen to view the resource's phone numbers, but the Local Dispatch Centers don't have access to the Person screen. What do you suggest?
- A: The resource's phone number can be viewed by looking at the resource details on the Resource Status screen

#### Implementation Update – Nancy DeLong

- New logistics contact
  - Shep Crim has now taken over duties as the ROSS Logistics Leader for setting up training sessions
  - Course coordinators will need to work closely with Shep to eliminate current "holes" in schedule information
  - Shep's phone number is: **208-947-3711 (E-mail: [shep\\_crim@dms.nwccg.gov](mailto:shep_crim@dms.nwccg.gov))**
  - Rob Juhola did a great job for the ROSS Team and is, in fact, now working for the Rocky Mountain area to help coordinate implementation
- Implementation Plans
  - On request, Kathy Wiegard shared the Great Basin ROSS Implementation Plan with the Coordinators and Partners
    - GB Center Managers set implementation dates
    - Plan is simple and can be used by other areas if desired
  - Partners in other areas can send sample plans to Andy for distribution to the Partners if desired
- Area/NICC practice sessions:
  - Eastern Area: (no one on call)
  - Southern Area (Pat Boucher): some practicing going on within area, but area-wide practicing will begin after the December holidays
  - Southwest Area (Cheryl Dickson):
    - Another area-wide practice yesterday (fifth one)
    - Being held each Wednesday
    - Using ROSS is becoming routine for most dispatchers
    - Will have post-practice conference calls Wednesday or Thursday and would like ROSS Team representation to help field questions (Nancy DeLong will arrange for a ROSS Team member to participate when Cheryl calls with dates and times)
  - Rocky Mountain Area (Flint Cheney):
    - Planning a week-long real-time practice session last week in March
    - Each Dispatch Center will fill orders and host multiple incidents
    - Hope to involve NICC
  - Northern Rockies (Larry Elder): Individual centers will practice after the holidays
  - Eastern Great Basin (Dave Hart): Will follow Kathy Wiegard's implementation plan template.
    - Western Great Basin (Kathy Wiegard):

- 4-hour practice sessions each week following formal training (February through March)
- Conference calls beginning first week in March
- North Ops (Tom Evans): Since we're just setting up training, we haven't started practice sessions. I'm just glad we're moving forward.
  - South Ops (No one on call)
  - Northwest Area (Kit Kemsley):
  - Training still going on – two more this week
  - Practice began on Wednesday
  - Conference call line with NWCC during practice
- Alaska (Jennifer Trudeau): We haven't had dispatch training yet and our dispatchers are laid off, so we haven't begun practice sessions.
- NICC (Rick Squires): We're ready to participate in your practices, so just give us a call.
  - Nancy DeLong:
  - Remember, the data on the practice server is replaced with new production data the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month
  - If you plan a two-week practice session, make sure you work around this so all your incidents don't disappear on Saturday!
  - Practice is the key to success and our complements to you for getting this going!

#### Infrastructure Update – Jon Skeels (Steve Simon was unable to participate today)

- Facing budget issues like everyone
  - New production servers being procured next month for installation this fall
  - The BLM and Forest Service will be doing major network upgrades this summer – should help performance in many places
  - Security for all government applications is tightening up
    - All users will sign a "Rules of Behavior" document

#### Business Team Update - Rod Chaffee

- SMEs have been busy reviewing test cases
- Helping with training as much as we can
- Reviewing requirements for v 1.2.6
- It's been a busy month

#### ROSS Partner Update – Andy Gray:

- Nancy and I are putting together a ROSS Primary Contact and ROSS Partner workshop the last week in January
  - Wednesday/Thursday January 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> in Denver
  - **Group size: 1 or 2 people from each Geographic Area and NICC**
  - Topics:
    - Implementation planning
    - Area/NICC data review
    - ROSS readiness review template(s)
    - Disaster recovery plan template
    - Version 1.2.5 review
    - Future functionality
    - We'll get a letter out as soon as we finalize the logistics

#### Other Business/Comments/Questions -

Brian Lee:

- Southwest folks have put a lot of time and effort into submitting ROSS suggestions/comments/questions to the team and it'd help to get a response

Jon Skeels:

- I've got about 300 questions here in front of me that we'd like to try to address, but a personal response is not always possible.
- We're working on listing frequently asked questions/suggestions and providing them to instructors (and Partners) so the same ones don't have to be written up and submitted over and over
- Send suggestions/comments/questions to the ROSS Helpdesk (**helpdesk@dms.nwcg.gov**)

Nancy DeLong:

- Would one response back to the Geographic Area be acceptable and then you can distribute?

Brian Lee/Cheryl Dickson – Yes. Also, we'll be having a Southwest Area conference call on January 8 that we'd like ROSS representation on.

Andy Gray:

- With more and more training and practice sessions occurring, the volume of questions to the team is growing geometrically. Responding to the questions is an issue we're working on.

Rick Squires:

- NICC will be developing 2003 National Mob Guide and needs input for the transition to ROSS
- National Airtankers need to be "given back" to NICC by the GACCs so NICC can work on the data
- NICC has entered the contracts for National contract engines and crews, but the ROSS SMEs need the GACCs to enter the resource items for each contract.
  - The crew numbers and engine numbers need to be changed to reflect the national contract crew/engine numbers
  - These are found at: <http://www.nifc.gov/contracting/support/support.html>
  - Rick sent a message out to a ROSS Partner in each GACC on these items
- Appreciate everyone's work on eliminating duplicate vendors and general ROSS database cleanup work

Question (Rick Squires): Are NICC and "militia dispatchers" in Boise being considered for Great Basin ROSS Training?

(Kathy Wiegard): Yes, we've taken them into account in our planning.

Question (Cheryl Dickson): We plan to use ROSS Practice for expanded dispatcher mini-training sessions following our formal classroom training of the primary dispatchers. Are there any problems with this?

(Jon Skeels/Nancy DeLong): No problem, that's what it's there for, but be aware that the Practice and Training servers are not guaranteed to be available 24/7. We might need to take them down from time to time to test components of the system.

Final Comments - Jon Skeels:

- Very impressed with how you all have taken on this job and are making it work

- The size of this challenge is incredible
- Keep going
- Thanks to the ROSS Team members, too
- Have a great holiday season

**Next Conference Call: January 16 with the same numbers and times. Note: Andy will be making ROSS presentation at the Southern Area Center Managers' Meeting the afternoon of January 16 and will most likely not be able to lead/participate in the call.**

**Correction to November 21 Conference Call notes:**

We stated, "Fifteen programmers are working on ROSS." **Paul Condit, Lockheed-Martin ROSS Project Manager, has since clarified that while up to fifteen people might be working on the Lockheed-Martin ROSS project team, about half a dozen of those are programmers actually working on the application. Other personnel are involved in testing, producing reports and training materials, and are providing basic administrative support to the Lockheed Martin operation.**