



## *Wildfire Workflows & Considerations for Emergency Management*

This Emergency Management (EM) Geo Forum was conducted virtually on August 27, 2020, and focused on geospatial response to wildfires from an emergency management perspective. The following questions and answers were addressed during the session.

**Question:** How is NIFC using unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) with real-time streaming visible (VIS) and infrared (IR) data collected and disseminated to the public?

**Answer:** UAS use in wildland fire is still in an early stage. There are individuals in the wildland fire community focused on the use of this data for fire incidents, but there is no standard at this point. One big issue moving forward is the IT support and infrastructure needed to store, access, and stream the data. That is still a work in progress. You can reach out to the Department of the Interior (DOI) Office of Aviation Services for additional information: <https://www.doi.gov/aviation>.

**Question:** How often do the Wildland Fire Open Data (<http://data-nifc.opendata.arcgis.com/>) wildfire perimeters update?

**Answer:** The Open Data site's current Wildfire Perimeters service is updated every 5 minutes from the national incident feature service. That does not mean that the perimeter itself changes every 5 minutes. Typically, fire perimeters are updated at least once a day. That update frequency is increasing due to the use of mobile data collection tools.

**Question:** Does the InFORM system allow end users to conduct wildland fire assessments at the parcel level?

**Answer:** No. The InFORM system is for fire occurrence reporting, tracking where fires are occurring, and collection of fire perimeters. The NIFC Org (<https://nifc.maps.arcgis.com/home/index.html>) includes a Structure Triage feature class for use during incident response. There are users in the NIFC Org that have done wildland fire assessments. The National Park Service (NPS) has done assessments for most of our 33,000 structures nationally as well. The mobile capabilities of ArcGIS Online are used to do that.





**Question:** What type of simulations do you run to best locate resources to fight the fire? Do you run simulations daily or more frequently?

**Answer:** The fire community uses the fire behavior tools in the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) application:

[https://wfdss.usgs.gov/wfdss\\_help/WFDSSHelp\\_Fire\\_Behavior\\_Ref.html](https://wfdss.usgs.gov/wfdss_help/WFDSSHelp_Fire_Behavior_Ref.html). Additional information about the tools and how they function is provided there.

**Question:** When will the next S-341 class be held?

**Answer:** The National Wildfire Coordination Group (NWCG) will not be hosting the S-341 training spring of 2021. They will roll out a refresher type class for existing GIS Specialists. What they are finding is that with the pace of GIS technology change, existing qualified individuals are having trouble keeping up. They need a targeted refresher to be ready for fire season. Look to 2022 for another S-341 class.

**Question:** Is the 2020 California Lightning Fires Map Journal publicly available?

**Answer:** It is, yes! You may access it at <https://arcg.is/Dyv800>.

**Question:** Is there an estimated time frame for deploying InFORM?

**Answer:** It is currently operational and has been since the first of the year.

**Question:** I'm a GIS Analyst with a county fire rescue, I'm also a GISS-T with a Type 3 FDEM AHIMT. I would like to begin working with NWCG. How would you suggest I get started?

**Answer:** Consider reaching out to any local wildland fire teams in your area. You can talk with GISS personnel or the Situation Unit Leaders. Here are a list of the teams in the Southern Area Coordination Center: <https://gacc.nifc.gov/sacc/overhead.php>.

They are always looking for people to help and get out as trainees. The link above provides information about the Priority Trainee Program. That is a great way to get out as a GISS-T. You can reach out to someone on that list.

Finally, consider contacting the Department of Forestry in your state. They may have GISS personnel who would be good contacts.

It is all about the contacts.

**Question:** Will evacuation zone mapping become a standard across the country?

**Answer:** We do not know of any national agency pushing for a national evacuation zone standard, but working from the bottom up can be a sound approach. As shown during this webinar, the tools are available. However, it is important to have a strong relationship with both your emergency managers and the first responders, as the latter often designate evacuations and other alerts and warnings.

