

Briefing Paper

InFORM

Interagency Fire Occurrence Reporting Modules



Date: 23 December 2020

Subject: Montana DNRC Fire Reporting

Objectives:

Establish the Interagency Fire Occurrence Reporting Modules (InFORM) as the DNRC's authoritative source for wildland fire reporting of State and local wildland fires across Montana for the 2021 fire year.

Introduction / Background:

The DNRC has used the F300 (Initial Fire Activity) and F1000 (Fire Report) applications for the last 20 years. These applications have served us well over that time but, as reporting requirements have changed and the software has reached its lifespan, we now struggle to meet our fire data needs; including meeting important federal reporting requirements. In addition, our ability to maintain and update the software has also become an issue. Recently we found OIT no longer has the capability to make routine updates and fix even minor issues as they arise; requiring the use of expensive contracted services.

The Interagency Fire Occurrence Reporting Modules (InFORM) is a system supported by the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). InFORM is comprised of three applications: two for field use – Survey123 and InFORM Mobile – and one web-based application – called Inspector. InFORM capitalizes on data already captured and exchanged through the Integrated Reporting of wildland fire Information (IRWIN) service, leaving field personnel with a minimal amount of data entry needed to complete a final fire report. Through IRWIN connected computer-aided dispatch (CAD) systems, all components of an NASF fire occurrence record can be recorded using a streamlined process for reporting. InFORM includes options to directly report new wildland fire incidents, as well as collect incident perimeters and produce a final fire report. In short, users only have to enter data once, eliminating duplicate data entry currently required by dispatch, fire operations, fire managers and planners. The application went live nationally on January 1st, 2020 and most of our federal partners have already transitioned to using the application for wildland fire incidents during the 2020 fire year.

Key Points / Discussion:

The wildland fire report is the legal documentation maintained by the DNRC to document our response and actions taken on wildland fires. In addition, to meet reporting requirements that drive important federal grant allocations including NFC (SFA) and RFC, we must report, not only DNRC fires, but all vegetation fires on state and private land in Montana. The resulting dataset is one of the primary drivers enabling our efforts to justify program preparedness efforts like



training and prevention planning and to allocate resources. In addition, with the current protection exchange in the Northern Rockies, we have requirements to provide fire reports to federal jurisdictional agencies. Consequently, for all these reasons, collecting and archiving accurate fire occurrence data is not discretionary. Our current systems for completing these reporting responsibilities are labor intensive and inefficient; requiring both duplication of data entry and redundant applications in our dispatch centers. By making a transition to a common interagency fire report we eliminate the need for our dispatchers to enter the initial fire information into two separate systems; F300 and WildCAD. By adopting InFORM Inspector, we will establish one application for DNRC fire reports as well as county fire data and enables a more efficient data upload option than we have had access to. Using InFORM, we will consolidate these functions into one comprehensive application for the reporting of federal, state and local government wildland fires. This will improve the quality, completeness and usability of fire data in Montana.

InFORM Capabilities:

Because InFORM is built on the Integrated Reporting of Wildland-Fire Information (IRWIN) service, it can utilize all IRWIN tools, data, and domains.

- Provides the most real-time access to fire occurrence data available
- Collects the minimum required fire report inputs required by NASF
- Records one official record per fire event, regardless of agency jurisdiction
- Allows users to enter, edit, and certify fire reporting data
- Allows users to create Final Fire Reports and summary reports from fire records
- Allows other IRWIN connected systems to collect fire reporting data (WFDSS, FAMWeb209, WildCAD and IROC)
- Automatically derives spatial data given the reported location of an ignition
- Automatically joins point data to fire perimeter data

Actions and Timelines:

The DNRC conducted a field pilot and review of InFORM during the 2020 fire year. At its 2020 Fall meeting, the Fire Advisory Council (FAC) acted on a recommendation to move forward with InFORM, transition to the application, and to form a core group to guide the transition from the F1000 to InFORM for the 2021 fire year.

Starting in January the core team will begin conducting onboarding demos focused on implementing InFORM Inspector and InFORM Mobile modules for the 2021 fire year. Onboarding demos will focus on establishing NIFC ArcGIS Online usernames, establishing user roles, getting user up to speed to complete and certify a final fire report within Inspector and collecting a perimeter for wildland fire incidents through InFORM Mobile.