

Risk – WFDSS – Objectives



4/6/15

Pacific Southwest Region Fire Leadership,
Sacramento, California



Topic for Discussion

- Findings from fire reviews summer 2014.
- Recommended improvements
- Exercise



RISK
MANAGEMENT

THE MORE YOU KNOW, THE HARDER IT IS TO TAKE DECISIVE ACTION.



ONCE YOU BECOME INFORMED, YOU START SEEING COMPLEXITIES AND SHADES OF GRAY.



YOU REALIZE THAT NOTHING IS AS CLEAR AND SIMPLE AS IT FIRST APPEARS. ULTIMATELY, KNOWLEDGE IS PARALYZING.



BEING A MAN OF ACTION, I CAN'T AFFORD TO TAKE THAT RISK.

YOU'RE IGNORANT, BUT AT LEAST YOU ACT ON IT.



“We routinely manage landscape-scale multi-million dollar projects using hundreds to thousands of personnel with vague, boilerplate objectives...we can do better”

Tiering Direction from Strategic To Tactical

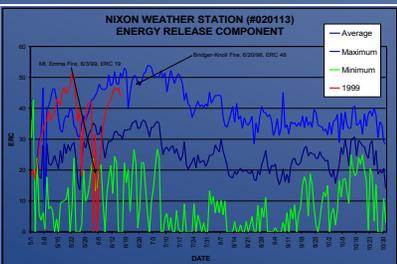
- Land Management Plans
 - WFDSS Decision
 - IAP Incident Objectives (ICS 202)
 - Division Assignments (ICS 204)

Firefighter Assignment Context

- When firefighters on a division understand the overall strategy and the context of their assignments in achieving that strategy they are better able to adapt and improvise as conditions change to continue making progress towards achieving the overall strategy while limiting their exposure to hazards.

Objectives Project

- 24 Fires reviewed in 2014 (PSW, PNW, R1).
- All Incident Objectives and Incident Requirements in WFDSS database as of May 2014.



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Findings

- More than 90 percent of incident objectives are generic, referring to...
 - policy – “full suppression”



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“adhere to LCES”
 - **Core Values – “firefighter safety is the number 1 priority”**



Findings

- More than 90 percent of incident objectives are generic, referring to...
 - policy – “full suppression”
 - Doctrinal – “keep costs commensurate with values at risk”
“adhere to LCES”
 - Core Values – “firefighter safety is the number 1 priority”
 - **Vague Terms – “keep the fire small”**



Findings

- The lack of specificity of objectives makes it challenging to understand the relative importance of one objective to another and how to be fully successful in achieving the objective

Examples

- Keep the fire south of Wolf Ridge
 - Underlying objective: *protect pine plantations north of the Wolf Ridge*

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Examples

- Keep the fire east of Clearwater Reservoir
 - Underlying objective: *protect the Ft Collins municipal watershed*

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Findings

- When wildfire response assets are limited, AAs and IMTs must choose which objectives they have capacity to achieve.



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Findings

- When wildfire response assets are not limited, IMTs may expose firefighters to hazards unnecessarily when objectives and their relative importance are not clearly defined and understood.



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Findings

- In some cases IMTs are not even reading the WFDSS decision.





Findings

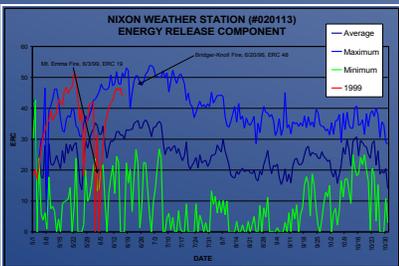
- Incident Objectives and Requirements and other agency administrator direction often differ and sometimes conflict between the WFDSS decision, delegation of authority, the inbriefing, other documents and ad hoc discussions.

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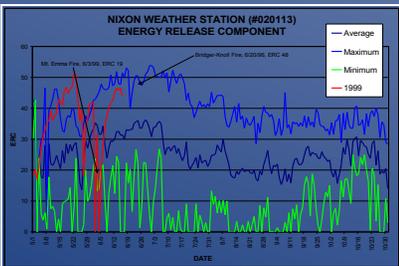
Findings

- The tie from Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) strategic objectives and management requirements to incident objectives, incident requirements, and the course of action was often unclear and inconsistent.



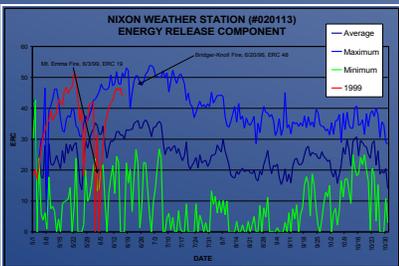
Findings

- In many cases the rationale did not provide an overview of this information or why the decision was made.



Findings

- In most cases there were not clear linkages from the WFDSS decision to the objectives in the IAP and the tasks identified in the 204s



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Recommendation

- **Improve specificity of objectives and requirements – what, when, where, why**



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Recommendation

- Improve specificity of objectives and requirements – what, when, where, why
- **Use SMART objectives to the extent possible**

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Examples

Minimize economic impacts to communities.

Insofar as safely possible, keep FS Road 4422 open to the public for access to Hiawatha Lake and the recreation-based businesses there through Labor Day weekend

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Vague Objective

Minimize the size of the fire.

Keep the fire from entering the Rough River drainage to avoid long duration, costly, and hazardous fire operations.

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Uncertain Objectives

No explanation of “WHY”

- Keep fire south of Bear Ridge.
- Keep fire east of Red River.
- Keep fire north of Blue Lake.
- Keep Fire west of Highway 37.



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Improved Objectives

- Keep fire south of Bear Ridge.
- *Protect high value pine plantations north of Bear Ridge from moderate to high severity fire.*



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Improved Objectives

- Keep fire east of Red River.
- *Protect the high wattage power transmission line that lies on the west side of Red River until arrangements can be made to de-energize the line.*

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Improved Objectives

- Keep fire north of Blue Lake.
- *Protect marten habitat south of Blue Lake from moderate to high severity fire.*

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Improved Objectives

- Keep Fire west of Highway 37.
- *Protect residences and infrastructure along and to the east of Highway 37.*

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Recommendation

IMTs need to engage Agency Administrators in a dialog about the objectives and ensure they are sufficiently specific, realistic and aligned with other direction.

Again, they should address “what where and why” questions

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Recommendation

Some IMTs need to be more diligent in developing ICS 202 objectives that are tiered to the WFDSS incident objectives and then develop ICS 204 assignments that are clearly linked to the higher level objectives

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Recommendations

- Improve linkages between incident objectives, incident requirements, course of action and rationale.



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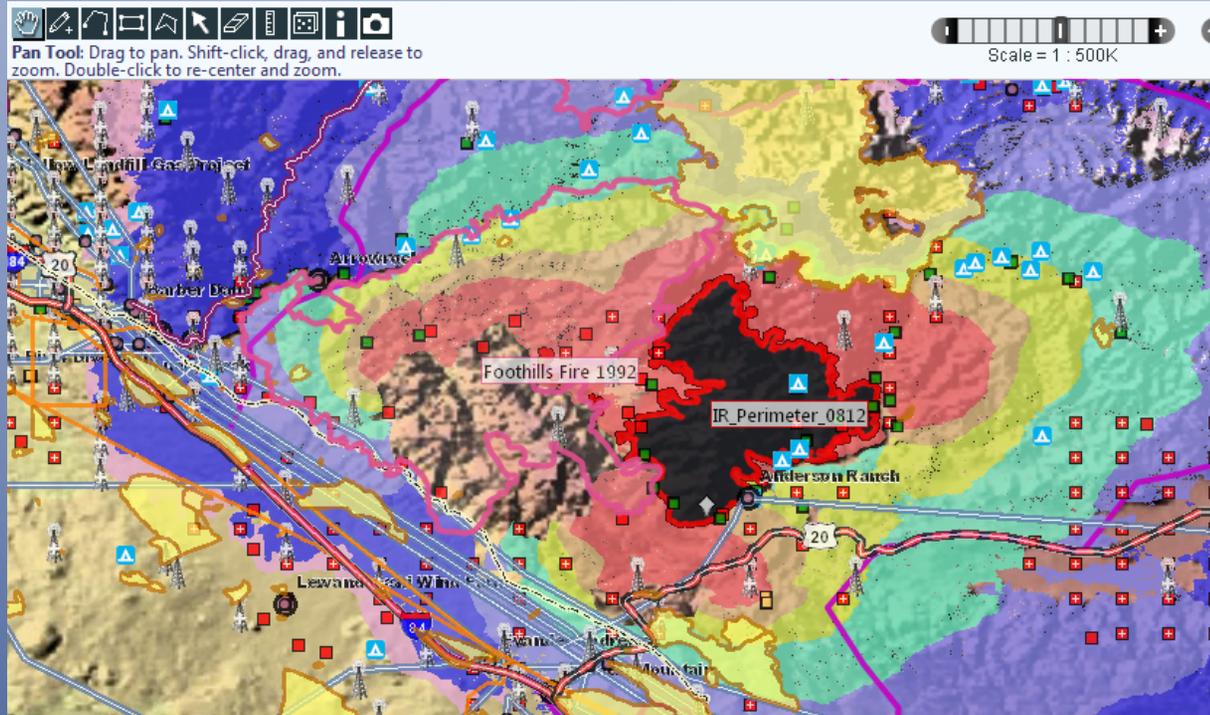
Agency Administrator Limitations

- Especially in multiple fire situations, AAs often cannot develop a Delegation of Authority, Inbriefing package and a quality WFDSS decision before the IMT arrives....even though many of the elements of these efforts are the same.
- **Oftentimes this results in misalignment of direction among these guiding documents and presentations**



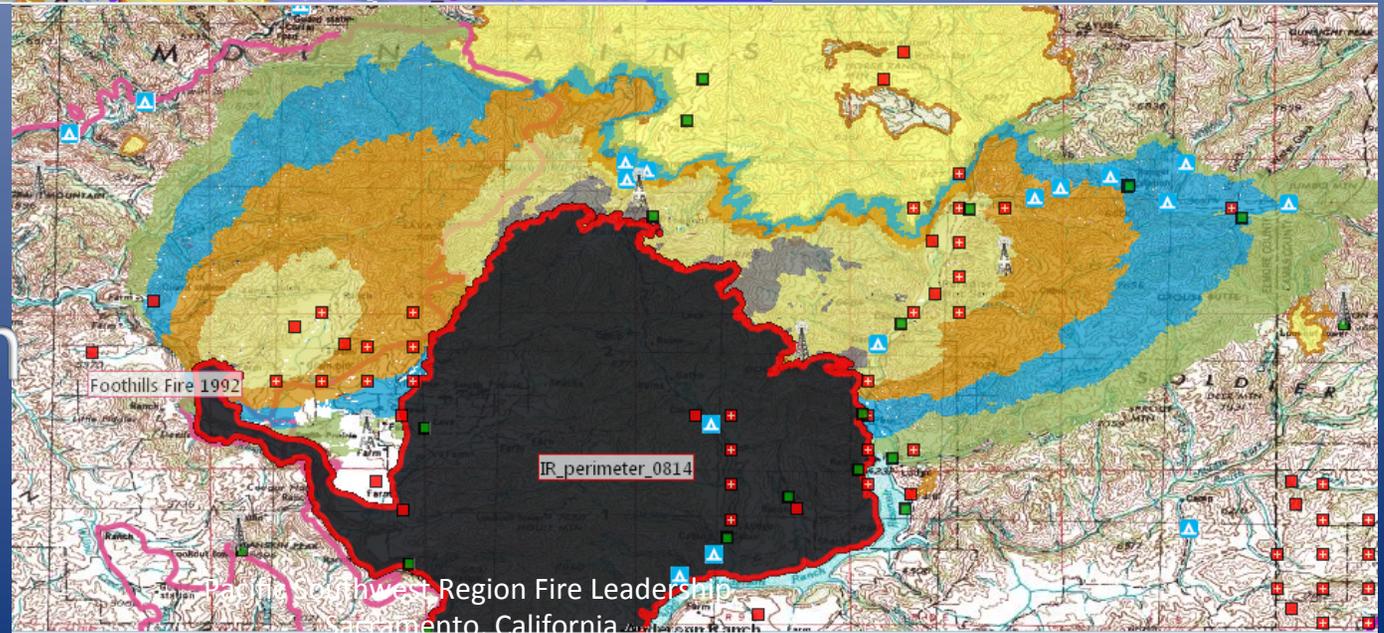
Recommendations

- Streamline transitions documents to ensure incident objectives and requirements are delivered and leader's intent is understood.
- Agency administrators, IMTs and fire personnel must align their understanding of priorities for the fire.



Strategic Operational Planner

Long Term
Analyst

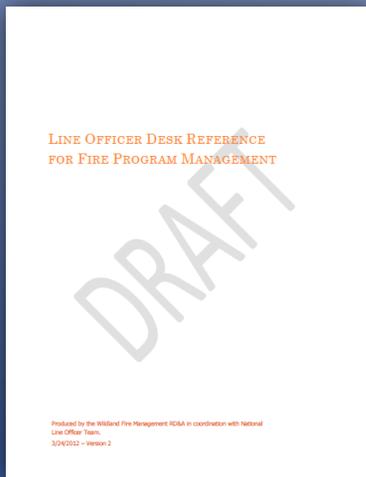
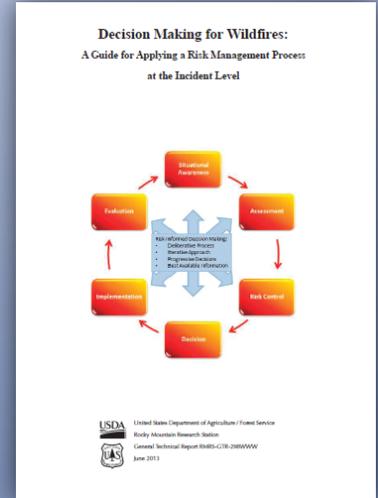


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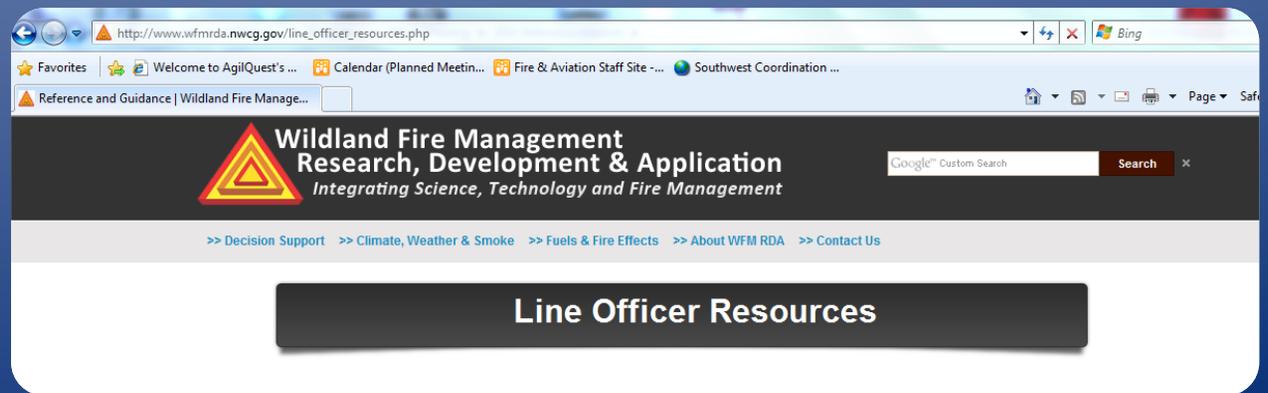
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References

**Decision Making for Wildfire Incidents:
A Reference Guide for Applying the Risk
Management Process at the Incident
Level** RMRS-GTR-298



**Line Officer's Desk Reference For
Fire Management Program**



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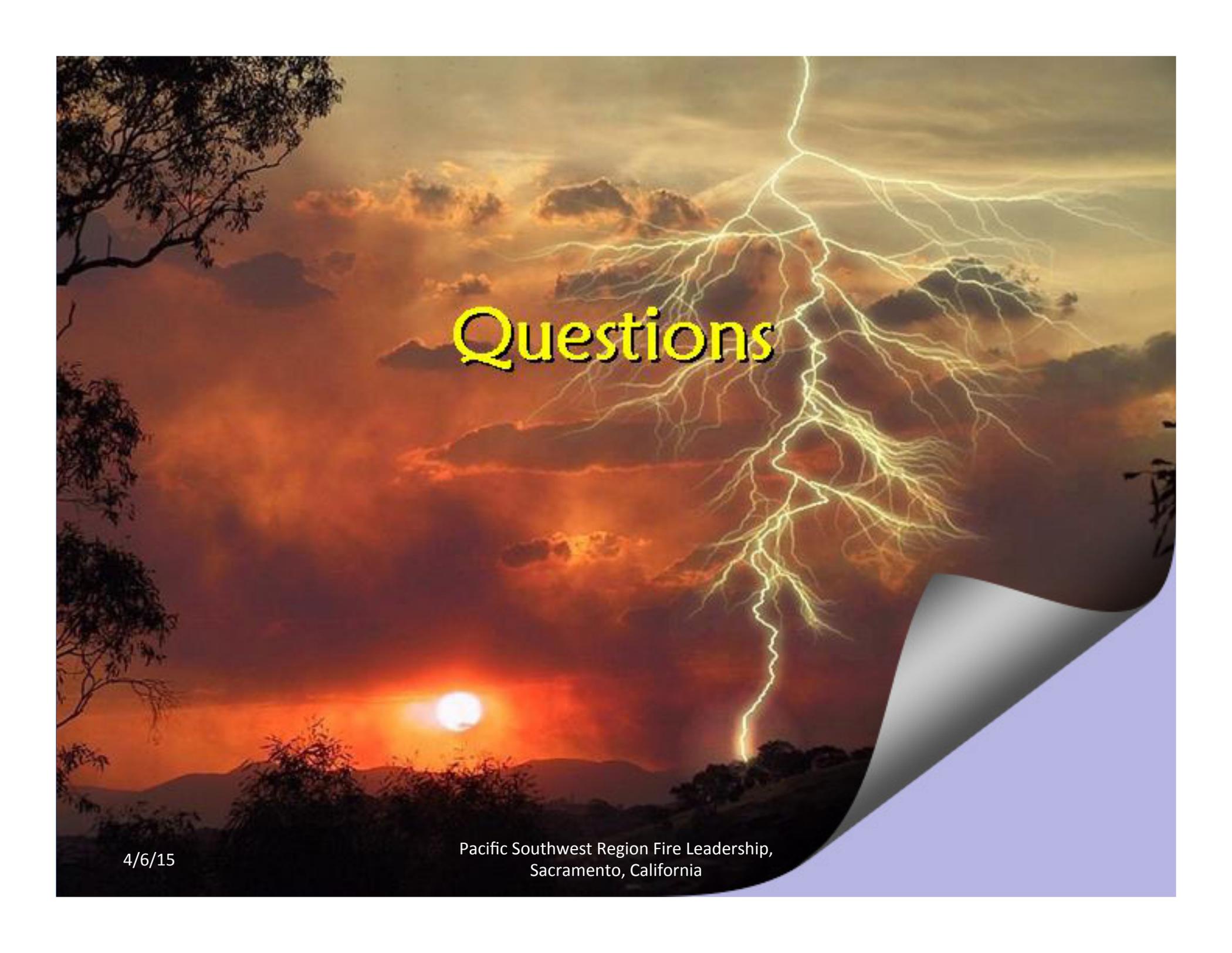
For Additional Information

**Wildland Fire Management
RD&A**

<http://www.wfmrda.nwccg.gov/>

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Questions

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