

Experimental “Grid-based” Emergency Communications Center Dispatch Area (ECCDA) Forecast Summaries for Radio Broadcast (ECCDA Radio)

Product Description Document (PDD)

Part I – Mission Connection

a. Product Description –

Land management and fire suppression agencies serving California have expressed a need for more generalized fire weather forecasts suitable for agency radio broadcasts from Emergency Communication Center Dispatch Area (ECCDA) offices. These twice-daily fire agency radio broadcasts are critical to relaying life saving information to fire fighting crews in the field. The current official ECCDA Forecast Summary methodology outlined at:

<http://products.weather.gov/detail.php?selrow=176> was developed to fulfill this need.

Because of their reliance on one or more WFO Fire Weather Planning Forecasts (FWF), the current ECCDA production methodology is deficient in several aspects:

- Software difficulties limit expansion of the ECCDA product beyond California;
- ECCDA products cannot easily be updated because of their reliance on multiple FWFs;
- Current ECCDA products, while easier to read than multiple FWFs for a given dispatch area, are still not a truly radio-friendly conversational product;

WFO Medford has developed a stand-alone ECCDA formatter based on fire weather grids and available on the Western Region server at 2.5 sq. km resolution. This formatter produces the ECCDA product automatically once all needed grids are available and the ECCDA discussion has been issued as is done for the current ECCDA product. No further forecaster input is required. ECCDA text resulting from the grid-based formatter is written in a shorter, conversational style. This style will be easier for fire dispatchers to read on agency radio and easier for listeners to understand and retain, thus the title “ECCDA Radio”.

The new formatter will be tested at four WFOs serving northern California fire weather users: Medford, Eureka, Sacramento and Reno, from approximately January 1 to October 1, 2009. Existing ECCDA products will continue to be available and all other aspects of the ECCDA program, including web availability, remain the same.

b. Purpose – ECCDA Radio products for northern California will be tested to better meet fire weather user requests obtained over the past several years.

c. Audience – All land management and fire agencies in northern California, especially at the state and federal dispatch level. Customers include the Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC) Predictive Service office in Redding, California.

d. Presentation Format – ECCDA Radio summaries will be available to customers from an internal link in the current California Fire Weather web page:

<http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/sto/cafw/>, under the “North ECCDA” tab:
<http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/sto/cafw/ifpsecc.php>. No other dissemination of this test product will be made.

e. Feedback Method – From approximately January 1 to October 1, 2009, user comments for the experimental ECCDA Radio product will be gathered. The experimental page referenced above will request specific comments back to the WFO Medford, Science and Operations Officer (SOO), so that the formatter can be improved as comments are received. Additionally, the approved web user survey as outlined in NWSI 10-102 will be available for users on the same page. Finally, the four WFOs included in the test will seek user comments in the course of their routine fire weather program outreach. If user comments are positive, the ECCDA Radio test will be expanded to all for California beginning approximately January 1, 2010.

Technical and policy questions and comments on the ECCDA Forecast Summaries and the California Fire Weather web page may be addressed to:

NOAA National Weather Service
Attn: Roger Lamoni
Western Region Fire Weather Program Manager
125 South State Street, Room 1235
Salt Lake City, UT 84138

Or, e-mail questions and comments to: Roger.Lamoni@noaa.gov.

f. Example –

ECCDA Radio summary for: Willows ECC Dispatch
National Weather Service - Sacramento, CA

Forecast Issuance time: 930 AM PDT MON SEP 29 2008

DISPATCH AREA DISCUSSION...

SOUTH TO SOUTHEASTERLY FLOW ALOFT IS PULLING MOISTURE NORTHWARD. THIS WILL BRING ISOLATED LIGHT SHOWERS ACROSS THE AREA THIS MORNING, WITH ISOLATED THUNDERSTORMS THIS AFTERNOON. A DEEP TROUGH OVER THE EASTERN PACIFIC WILL MOVE TOWARD CALIFORNIA CAUSING A COOLING TREND WITH INCREASING HUMIDITIES AND A CHANCE OF RAIN BY THE END OF THE WEEK.

TODAY...MOSTLY SUNNY EARLY IN THE MORNING THEN BECOMING PARTLY CLOUDY. ISOLATED SHOWERS THROUGH THE DAY. ISOLATED THUNDERSTORMS IN THE LATE MORNING AND AFTERNOON. HIGHS 80-95. MINIMUM HUMIDITY 15-25 PERCENT. SOUTH WINDS 5 TO 12 MPH. CHANCE OF WETTING RAIN 0 PERCENT.

TONIGHT...PARTLY CLOUDY. ISOLATED SHOWERS AND THUNDERSTORMS IN THE EVENING. LOWS 45-55 LOWER ELEVATIONS...AND LOWS 55-65 HIGHER ELEVATIONS. MAXIMUM HUMIDITY 50-60 PERCENT LOWER ELEVATIONS...AND MAXIMUM HUMIDITY 55-75 PERCENT HIGHER ELEVATIONS. SOUTH WINDS 5 TO 12 MPH. CHANCE OF WETTING RAIN 0 PERCENT.

TUESDAY...MOSTLY SUNNY. HIGHS 85-90 LOWER ELEVATIONS...AND HIGHS 75-85 HIGHER ELEVATIONS. SOUTHEAST WINDS 5 TO 11 MPH IN THE VALLEYS AND SOUTHEAST 6 TO 13 MPH OVER THE RIDGES. MINIMUM HUMIDITY 20-30 PERCENT. LIGHTNING ACTIVITY LEVEL 1. CHANCE OF WETTING RAIN 0 PERCENT.

EXTENDED...

WEDNESDAY...MOSTLY CLEAR. LOWS 50 TO 60. HIGHS 80 TO 90. SOUTH WINDS 10 TO 15 MPH.

THURSDAY...MOSTLY CLOUDY WITH SLIGHT CHANCE OF RAIN. LOWS 50 TO 55. HIGHS 75 TO 85. SOUTHWEST WINDS 10 TO 15 MPH.

FRIDAY...PARTLY CLOUDY. SLIGHT CHANCE OF RAIN. LOWS 50 TO 60. HIGHS 75 TO 85. SOUTHWEST WINDS 15 TO 20 MPH.

Part II – Technical Description

- a. Format and Science Basis – Using a customized formatter, experimental ECCDA Radio summaries provide user-requested fire weather information in a single easy-to-read product, suitable for radio broadcast. No post-editing of the product will be done.
- b. Availability – Experimental ECCDA Radio products will be available at least daily during the testing period.
- c. Additional Information – Information regarding the availability of the California Fire Weather web page and all types of ECCDA products is included in the California Fire Weather Annual Operating Plan (AOP).