

The ISST Forum

Over the course of the past few months it has become apparent to the ISST that we need ongoing input and discussion with a broad cross-section of the NWS to successfully define and address the critical science issues related to GFE. We have already taken advantage of inviting topic-specific experts from both within and outside the NWS when discussing a particular topic and will continue to do so. In addition to this specific feedback sought out by the ISST, many groups and individuals have made the effort to provide valuable input to the team, which has been very helpful and much appreciated.

The team was approached recently by a number of groups and individuals who have expressed an interest in joining or becoming members of the team. The team recognizes the value each of these members will bring to the team and very much appreciates their willingness to participate, but is equally concerned that the team needs to maintain its small tight-knit form in order to remain effective and optimally efficient.

In our first meetings the ISST established procedures to ensure field personnel (generally SOOs) and Regional management were routinely informed and had an easy way to provide feedback to the ISST. However, for other groups within the NWS the procedures to engage the ISST have not been defined and are more *ad hoc*. Fortunately, this exchange of ideas and information has been reasonably successful to date; yet the team is uncomfortable relying on such a loose process for this important step. In order to formalize and better ensure the information exchange, we are proposing a quarterly ISST Forum as an alternative to increasing membership.

The forum will be held quarterly and immediately follow the required ISST quarterly update of the team's progress to the Science and Technology Committee. The idea is that following this ISST update the briefing material used will be made available on the ISST webpage. An open teleconference will then be announced to a broad list of interested parties including the development, training, and policy organizations within the NWS, as well as the Regions. Depending upon the discussion topics, additional experts might be invited to participate. During the forum, the ISST will present an overview of the S&T Committee briefing and then solicit ideas, feedback, and general discussion. Ideally this forum will provide the ISST with much needed bottom-up, lateral, and expert feedback and guidance from all interested NWS colleagues while maintaining the efficient team structure. Furthermore, the forum will promote an open dialogue and increase awareness of the IFPS issues being discussed and those groups involved in their solutions.