

Fire Weather Public Focus Groups

Welcome and thank you for joining us! This focus group is entirely voluntary, and you may decide to leave at any time. We're excited to hear about your experiences. Before we get started, we will briefly introduce ourselves, explain the logistics of the focus group, and allow you all to introduce yourselves.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 2 hours per person, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other suggestions for reducing this burden to Gina Eosco (703-841-1705, gina.eosco@erg.com)

Notwithstanding any other provisions of the law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subjected to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act, unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB Control Number.

Statement on anonymity:

Eastern Research Group will not release your name or information that could identify you as part of this focus group process or in our subsequent reports to NOAA NWS.

1. Introductions
 - a. Go around the room and have everyone say their first name only, and how long they've lived in the area (or what brought them to the area).
 - b. ERG gives background on project
2. Logistics
 - a. Describe focus group format
 - b. Announcements (location of restroom, etc.).

Section 1.

Purpose. *During the first half of each focus group, we will gather perspectives on current fire weather needs without mentioning specific NWS products.*

- Where do you prefer to access your weather information and why?
 - Probe for channels (TV, website, preferred broadcaster, etc.)
 - (for travelers/out of the area people): <<Where do you prefer to access your weather information when you are traveling and why?>>
- What types of weather or hazardous events are more prevalent here?
 - Probe for wildfire events
 - (for travelers/out of area): <<What type of weather or hazardous events do you think are more prevalent here?>>
- During fire season, what sources do you seek information from? [Probe for channels such as TV, websites, preferred broadcaster, social media, etc., as well as sources, such as fire managers, local officials, media.; Listen for specific mentions of the NWS and SPC, specifically]

- (for travelers/out of the area people): <<If you learned that you were visiting [location] during fire season, the time of year when wildfires are likely/expected to occur in the area, what sources would you seek information from?>>
- When you are accessing your preferred *weather* source, how do you learn about a fire risk?
 - Are there special terms or types of information you are searching/listening for? (*probing for awareness of fire weather watch or red flag warning **without** ever mentioning it*)
 - Are there ways that your preferred source expresses (or describes) a fire risk?
- What type of information are you looking for when accessing those sources?
 - Probe for time, spatial area, specific fire weather information such as temperature or humidity, actions.
 - If they have wildfire experience, what do you wish you had known about the fire risks prior to the fire?
 - What information do you feel you need to prepare for or prevent a potential wildfire?
- During fire season, how would you like your preferred weather source to describe the potential for fire to you 48 - 72 hours before hand?
 - (for travelers/out of the area people): <<If you learned that you were visiting [location] during fire season, how would you like your preferred weather source to describe the potential for fire to you 48 – 72 hours beforehand?>>
- During fire season, how would you like your preferred source to describe the potential for fire to you the day of?
 - (for travelers/out of the area people): <<If you learned that you were visiting [location] during fire season, how would you like your preferred source to describe the potential for fire to you the day of?>>
- During fire season, weather sources often convey fire weather risks to you every day. How do you feel about this?
 - (for travelers/out of the area people): <<During fire season, weather sources often convey fire weather risks to people in the area every day. How would you feel about this? Would these repeated messages make you feel more or less risk about wildfires?>>
 - Probe for complacency, the necessity of the repeated message
 - Do these repeated messages make you feel more or less risk about wildfires?
- What actions, if any, are you taking (or would you take) based on this information?
 - Probe for maintain the status quo, simply monitor the news, clear brush in your area, etc.
 - i. (*If wording doesn't resonate with the group, try the following*) Imagine I am visiting your area, what recommended actions could you share with me to make sure I remain safe during fire season?
 - <<*facilitator check*>>: *At this point, does the group want fire weather info, but take no actions? If so, ask the group politely:* Earlier, many of you stated that you want fire weather information, but later suggested no intention of using it. Could you please

explain why you still want the information? Does the information serve a different purpose?

- Probe for if they know what actions to take?
 - i. Please explain to me what actions are appropriate to take during fire season?
- [For those with experience] Given your direct wildfire experiences, what do you wish your sources would have communicated to you?
 - How would you like it communicated to you?
 - i. Probe for Social media, apps, special warnings, etc.

Section 2.

Purpose. The second half of the focus group will focus entirely on NWS products and services.

- What do you think about the term “fire weather watch”? What does it mean to you?
 - <<show the definition on a power point slide>>
- What do you think about the term “red flag warning”? What does it mean to you?
 - <<show the definition on a power point slide>>
- Are you aware that the National Weather Service issues these products for your area?
- Have you ever heard the phrase “fuels” in reference to wildfires? What does this phrase mean to you?
- Are you at all familiar with fire weather outlooks?
 - Do you know of any sources that issue them?
 - Have you ever heard of the Storm Prediction Center?
 - <<show the fire weather outlook on a power point slide>>
 - Have you ever seen this image?
 - *Offer explanation of what it conveys, and gather group feedback*

After defining NWS fire weather terms, ask:

- Is this information helpful to you?
 - If yes, what about it is helpful? How?
 - If no, what could the NWS convey to you that would be helpful
 - Does this information complement the information you hear from other sources (fire managers, local officials, etc.)?
- Specifically, what do you want the NWS to tell you about fire weather?
 - *Show example(s) call(s)-to-action statement.*
 - What is your reaction to these messages?
- How do you want fire weather information packaged for you?