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## COMPETITIVE DIVISION-PRACTITIONER

### The NOAA Fire Weather Testbed: User Needs Assessment Team

The NOAA Fire Weather Testbed (FWT) is a physical and virtual knowledge translation platform where cross-jurisdiction and cross-discipline end-users (meteorologists, land/emergency managers) are invited to learn, test, and evaluate the accessibility, operability, and utility of emergent fire weather-related products and processes. Using mixed methods approaches, the FWT translates end-user insights to product developers and the broader research community towards the shared goal of improving products to meet operational needs.

Essential and unique to the FWT efforts is the User Needs Assessment Team (UNAT). Through interviews, focus groups, and observational field work, the UNAT fosters relationships with end-users to understand their dynamic, time sensitive, and regionally influenced decision support needs. Results from UNAT activities help prioritize FWT evaluations based on learned needs and reports back to end-users and the fire community to drive fire weather research priorities.

The UNAT research methods and results from user engagement will be reviewed, including a focus on a user-needs assessment of NWS Incident

Meteorologists (IMETs). IMETs provide weather forecasts to Incident Management Teams while deployed to wildland fire incidents. The UNAT collected qualitative data during the annual IMET training and used this data to identify IMETs' critical needs and gaps, including those related to fire weather forecasting, risk communication, logistics, and resource capacity.

**Presentation Theme:** User-needs assessment for improved fire weather-related decision support

**Collaborators, Advisor(s) and Department(s) that assisted with this research:** Dr. Benjamin Hatchett, CIRAZach Tolby, NOAA