

## Minutes from CHPS Meeting Thursday January 27, 2011

### Attendees:

ABRFC – Eric Jones  
CNRFC – [absent]  
NERFC – David Vallee  
NWRFC – Joe Intermill  
NOHRSC – John Halquist  
Deltares – Edwin Welles  
OCWWS HSD HSB – Randy Rieman, Dave Riley  
OHD – Pedro Restrepo, Chris Brunner

### Pre-reading:

- Support Log sent to chps\_ops on January 27 by Dave Riley

### 1. Support Log health check

- NWRFC: regarding backlogged approved forecasts (see notes from 1/20/2011), we are still investigating. We have written some scripts to gather times associated with steps in the approval process to get an idea of where the bottlenecks are. We are making good progress with the USACE and by the end of next week expect to have regulations for the entire Columbia River done via the IFD; we plan to work on the Seattle area next. We would like improved control over what the USACE can see and touch; we have submitted an enhancement request for the development registry.
- NOHRSC: CHPS is mostly set up, but we are waiting for RandyR to deliver the database. Randy said he would try to get to it today.
- FogBugZ: the latest from Chris is that there was an apparent misunderstanding about the intended use for FogBugZ, suggesting that the server (Schuylkill) would need to be accessed by the entire CHPS community. This was a sticking point for Alaska Region but is not true. FogBugZ is for the RFCs and NWSHQ only. Ultimately files from FogBugZ will be pushed over to a new CHPS community server, which will be accessible to others beyond the RFCs/NWSHQ. With this misunderstanding cleared up, approval should not be a problem. An alternative suggestion is to move forward with access for those RFCs in Regions which have already approved, and keep APRFC on hold until Alaska Region gives approval.
- Chris notes the support log shows a large number of open issues, some of them dating back to spring 2010. Why do they remain open? We shouldn't be complacent about so many old issues staying open. DaveR noted that he mainly works in "fire fighting" mode, so doesn't have any spare capacity to take on older issues that seem to be quiet. Chris will look into whether HSEB has any spare capacity to take on any additional items to help with the backlog.
- Chris reports that HSB expects to hire 2 new contractors imminently; MarkG has received bids from 3 companies and is in the process of selecting one. Chris does not know how long it will take to get individual contractors on board. She is working with Edwin on 2 basic User & Configuration training classes, one in late February the other in the spring. HSB contractors will attend one of the two classes depending on the timing of their arrival.
- Status of CAT-II software installations? They're still waiting for Randy to give the green light. Randy wants to test the installation on the NHOR first, but he won't get to it this week. He has been too busy of late, and was out all last week at the NWSTC doing their installation. Chris does not know why the NWSTC is higher priority than the CAT-II RFCs.
- CBRFC is back up after their FSS00 stopped running all processes (issue #440, HIGH priority), but something is still not quite right. Randy and Peter are continuing to work on it.

- Upgrade RedHat O/S: (See agenda item #4 below.) DaveR will add a new item to the support log as HIGH priority. It's believed to be a solution for issue #428 (a CRITICAL at NWRFC). Since CBRFC is not yet operational and NWRFC is fully operational, #440 is lower in priority than #428. HSB will apply resources to match.

Action: Chris will look into whether HSEB has any spare capacity to take on additional support log items.

Action: DaveR will add to the support log a requirement to upgrade the RedHat O/S at CAT RFCs. [COMPLETE - #441, HIGH]

## 2. CAT-II state of readiness

The CAT-II's are almost fully trained – only WGRFC and MBRFC to go. Do the CAT buddies have any observations about the real state of readiness, as opposed to CAT-II perceptions of their own readiness?

NWRFC said APRFC has pretty much finished their migration and is about ready to go. They're still working on their esp. NWRFC continues to help out with questions. NWRFC pre-visited APRFC before the recent User training to help with set-up. Their other buddy office is MBRFC. NWRFC noted that even with the best planning there were still numerous things that came out of their “shake down” period – you don't know what's really missing until you really try to sever the link with OFS. In NWRFC's case they eventually learned that tying all operations to a single .Apps\_defaults token enabled them to switch back and forth between CHPS and NWSRFS during testing, and they use it now as part of their backup strategy.

NERFC provided buddy support at OHRFC last week. In general OHRFC appears to be approx one year behind where NERFC is. Of concern to Deltares is the lack of urgency, and a belief that switching over to full CHPS operations can slip to December/January if things don't go as expected.

The observation was that OHRFC is unaware of what sits between them and CHPS operations. Specifically:

- OHRFC doesn't fully recognize the need to do the bulk of the work now, test early to identify problems, and re-work/re-test until everything is working correctly. The notion of beginning full testing in April/May was not originally expected.
- OHRFC has no strategy for assigning specific roles/tasks to their CHPS focal points.

Alison walked OHRFC through her perspective of what needs to be completed between now and full operations, while Edwin captured everything in a document. TomA has taken ownership of the document and is making improvements/adjustments. Chris thinks this would make a great template for all CAT-II RFCs, and she will ask Alison/Tom for a copy; this could form the basis for tracking progress during the CAT-II calls.

ABRFC said WGRFC is still waiting for OHD to resolve a problem; this morning WGRFC provided HSEB with a configuration for testing.

ABRFC has been helping LMRFC with some issues, and can log in remotely to their live system to identify potential problems. No observed issues have been sent to the list.

Eric isn't sure what SERFC's progress is.

Action: Chris to contact Alison/TomA for a copy of the detailed planning document.

### 3. Training

MarkG initiated a recent email thread concerning some HICs' reluctance to participate in the CHPS training module being developed by the NWSTC. The proposal is that NWSTC develops one basic web-based CHPS module; representatives from the RFCs would travel to Kansas City later this year (June was suggested) to participate in an on-site evaluation. The training team members on the call believe the NWSTC intends to develop additional modules beyond this first one, but they are not sure what or when. Deltares has not been contracted to review any material.

Perhaps the reluctance at the HIC meeting was simply a misunderstanding about cost? It does not need to come from local budgets. Some HICs feel it makes no sense to spend money on travel to a central location to review a web-based course. Some RFCs are skeptical that this will be a worthwhile effort; the NWSTC has a poor track record with respect to RFC training.

The NWSTC has put a lot of funding and effort into this; they purchased a full suite of CHPS hardware last fall, and have 2 full-time individuals dedicated to CHPS. They plan to clone ABRFC's configuration onto their system, and "play" with it in order to learn and stay proficient. ABRFC will be able to provide some support, but can only go so far. Chris is concerned about the support load on HSB, who are already stretched too thin. Plus the CAT-II offices are higher priority.

In the past the OFS expertise was in OHD, but we're in a new environment now where core expertise is outside. At issue is which paradigm to adopt. Does the NWS have Deltares conduct training or do we introduce a 2<sup>nd</sup> party to do training? The NWSTC has decided on the latter. In the future should Deltares train the RFCs and NWSTC at the same time, or should we have Deltares train the NWSTC then the NWSTC train the RFCs? Will NWSTC focus on basic training and Deltares provide more advanced topics, or will NWSTC do both?

All new releases/information about FEWS will originate with Deltares. The NWSTC will have to ensure all new material is incorporated into their modules.

What role, if any, does NWSTC play in the National Water Center? We don't know what training will be at the NWC. No specifics for the Training Branch have been discussed.

If Deltares were to create a basic configuration training module, would it be valuable to others outside the NWS? Most FEWS users are not as technically engaged as the RFCs, so it isn't clear. As an aside, Deltares is looking into novel ways of conducting training – at the FEWS User Days there was a side session on the application of "serious gaming" techniques for training purposes.

**Action: none.**

### 4. Standard configuration; updating RedHat O/S

Upgrading RedHat: last week NWRFC asked about HSB's plans to upgrade the O/S. The CATs are running 5.0 on their earliest machines (chps 1/2/3) and 5.3 on the later machines (chps 4/5/6). The LXs run 5.5.

Generally, HSB will determine when an O/S upgrade is appropriate, and will provide the distribution via a central server behind the firewall. RandyR had begun this effort just before OHD ITSG/Cornelius Henderson left, and has not had time to resume.

Due to specific needs of CHPS, there is an intermediate step required before performing the upgrade itself.

The upgrade of chps 1/2/3 for the CATs is a higher priority than upgrading chps 4/5/6 for the CATs; which is also a higher priority than any CAT-II issues. Refer to the action in agenda item #1 above.

Regarding a standard configuration, information seems to be in many different places. Chris wants to bring it together so we can make sure the CAT-IIs get off on a proper footing before they all go operational. She has started to document everything. Information includes the server concept, the directory structures, Triple View, among others. DaveR will provide Chris with the Excel spreadsheet from the System Manager class – it describes some additional directory structures. When

**Action: DaveR to provide Chris with the Excel spreadsheet from the System Manager class describing directory structures.**

#### 5. Dev Registry – next steps

With NWRFC's recent email, all CAT RFCs have now submitted their entries. The top development priorities are: a) making sure BOC-II is safe; and b) incorporating any requirements that are operationally necessary and/or ensure forecasters have a positive experience.

Edwin will review the registry today. Entries currently in the Support Log ("Enhancement Development Registry" sheet) are already in the Dev Registry.

Deltares will next assign a preliminary LOE (e.g., small-medium-large-massive); Edwin will get it back to the RFCs at the beginning of next week.

Then the RFCs will take one week to prioritize.

The group confirmed that the CAT-II RFCs should submit any enhancement requests through their CAT Buddy.

**Action: none**

#### 6. Other

Chris said a Calibration demo/presentation might occur next Thursday during the CAT call. Peter is currently preparing the material but hasn't set a firm date yet. We will confirm next week.

**Action: none**

**Next meeting:** Thursday February 3, 2011.