

Minutes from CHPS Meeting Thursday February 11, 2010

Attendees:

ABRFC – Billy Olsen, Eric Jones
CNRFC – Rob Hartman
NERFC – Rob Shedd
NWRFC – Harold Opitz
NOHRSC – John Halquist
Deltares – Edwin Welles
OCWWS – Xiaobiao Fan
OHD – Pedro Restrepo, Jon Roe, Chris Dietz

Pre-reading:

- Support Log distributed on Feb 10

1. Health check on Support Log

NWRFC still can't upload their migrations from the SA (standalone) to the OC (live system). They can only upload one file at a time, not mass quantities. Peter has been able to reproduce the problem on the NWRFC system but not outside – specifically Deltares can't reproduce it on their system in Delft. A complicating factor for Deltares has been the recent serious problems with the NHDR. Frederik is on travel today but will be back tomorrow. Meanwhile Edwin has asked Andre and Eric to investigate as much as possible. Peter is also providing some support from the NWSTC in between his teaching sessions.

Of primary concern is how to get access to an RFC from Delft. At the moment Deltares accesses NWRFC via an account on the NHDR (outside the AWIPS firewall) and connecting to the NHOR (inside the AWIPS firewall), then into NWRFC. Long term this might not be an ideal arrangement. Harold reminded us that he raised concerns about this last year. We need to find a way to get Deltares directly into NWRFC's AWIPS. Technical solutions are easy, but permission is a much more difficult issue in the current security environment. LDAD is not a permissible entry point into AWIPS. For NW's issue Peter is relying on the NWSTC's AWIPS to access NWRFC's system remotely. Could we get someone from the Netherlands to travel to NW? Could we ask one of the trainers in KC to travel on to NW after the training? Neither of these is practical or affordable. Deltares is already under duress training 20 RFC forecasters and conducting follow-on site support visits. What we really need is for Frederik (in NL) to log directly into NWRFC's AWIPS. The NCF could perhaps make it happen, but they will want to see the authorization. Perhaps ATAN 909 provides a vehicle? It's entirely possible AWIPS might not approve of our current support arrangement once they learn of it and shut it down. It isn't clear if the problem is that a non-NWS entity wants access through the AWIPS firewall, or if it's because they're a foreign company. Authorization would have to come from fairly high level management. Tim Hopkins is the AWIPS PM – we could start there. The AWIPS security officer is John England-Gordon. We should consider raising this topic with Tim at the HIC conference.

With the CAT-II RFCs about to complete Migration training the chps_ops list will be bombarded with questions. Are we prepared? The CATs can certainly help ease some of the traffic (some already are). Until others are trained, the burden is essentially still on Deltares. Deltares-USA is working on acquiring another person. The vacancy announcement is not yet ready.

The CAT-II need to understand there's a support issue. The highest priority must be to get CAT RFCs the support they need.

What's the plan support the CAT and CAT-II RFCs simultaneously? "Everyone recognizes we're speeding at 90 mph off a cliff!" HSD/Support did verbally suggest re-assigning one full time person away from WFO support to help with RFC support, but it isn't clear if that's really the intention.

The CAT has been raising the alarm on the need for a new operational support paradigm for CHPS since last year. RobH and Harold developed a draft "white paper", which was presented to the OCWWS Director, Dave Caldwell. At a meeting last year Dave expressed his commitment to addressing the problems described within the paper. However the recent NWS realignment has completely changed the landscape; Dave Caldwell is out of the picture now that the HSD Support Branch is expected to move into OHD. Plans for such a move have not yet been drawn up. OCWWS and OHD are more focused on moving NOHRSC into OHD, which is expected to happen in March.

Chris is working on a 1-5 year CHPS operational support plan. This plan will pull together all the known "pieces" of support activities and information, both current and future. The CHPS 1-5 year plan will incorporate input from HSD/Support, HSEB, HSMB, RFCs, Deltares, OOS, NCF, and any other stakeholders identified. This plan is the same one which RobH, Harold, and Billy recently agreed to support; they will take advantage of the upcoming HIC meeting in SSMC to meet and discuss further with Chris. This short-term plan will be superseded by the longer-term plan being developed by Robin Radlein's National Operational Water Support Center team (progress to be provided at the upcoming HIC meeting).

After the last CAT workshop, Gary Carter has redirected an unfilled contract position being created by OHD PPC to help with CHPS support. Gary would like to find a way to redirect this position to help with more immediate CHPS support needs. The position is referred to as the "RFC Coordinator", and will be filled by Riverside (aka RTi). The focus of the position was originally to help in part with operational support for XEFS and HL-RDHM prototype activities in the field. Chris has been working with Donna Page to enhance the job description. To help relieve Chris's resource crunch Riverside will begin by working with Chris and the stakeholders to pull together the 1-5 year support plan.

Meanwhile Riverside will move forward with interviewing an individual who has hydrology knowledge and experience, but who would need to learn CHPS. Pedro, Jon, and Chris will be participating in the phone interview of a candidate at noon today. Given that it's impossible to identify an individual with CHPS or FEWS knowledge, a new hire could perhaps attend the CHPS Configuration training class to be held by Deltares in May 2010.

The only way to get immediate assistance is to apply extra Deltares people to the contract. Everyone else requires training. In fact numerous people are already in training. OHD has responded to the CAT's request for additional support by working with Deltares to train HSEB and HSMB personnel.

- A total of 6 people (4 from HSEB, 2 from HSMB) will attend this month's CHPS Migration training.
- Deltares has also initiated in-house training for **all** HSEB software developers, with HSMB to be trained next.

All of these individuals can be relied upon to provide some (TBD) percentage of their time assisting RFCs with support issues.

Back to the Support Log: NERFC wonders if Deltares has made any progress with the rolling barrel problem. This is occurring at most if not all CAT RFCs. Is Frederik close to a solution? Edwin will get a progress report from Deltares-NL.

Action: Edwin to get a progress update from Frederik regarding a fix for the rolling barrel failures.

2. Performance discussion

Edwin has not updated the performance document. Deltares is using some of the tests in Delft. He reiterated the notion of each RFC maintaining a local version of the document, customized to make sense for their operational environment. For example ABRFC doesn't use the SREF, so they might customize the ensembles test differently. Each RFC should record their own results and provide an update to Deltares. Most tests will apply to all RFCs. If an RFC modifies the tests please be sure to capture the test as-run. The goal is for Deltares to analyze and summarize all results, making generalizations where they can to address any common issues, but also identifying individual areas to target.

CNRFCC already indicated they might have difficulty completing the tests by the end of February; RobH said they plan to start next week. ABRFC and NERFC both expect to run most if not all tests by the end of February. NWRFC doesn't want to redirect resources at the moment; they are still developing new calibrations, and focusing on spinning up parallel operations.

Action: none.

Next meeting: Thursday February 18, 2010