Minutes from CHPS Meeting Thursday April 1, 2010

Attendees:
ABRFC – Billy Olsen
CNRFC – Rob Hartman
NERFC – Ron Horwood
NWRFC – Harold Opitz
NOHRSC – (on travel)
Deltares – Edwin Welles, Peter Gijsbers
OCWWS HSD – Randy Rieman, Xiaobiao Fan
OHD – Pedro Restrepo, Chris Dietz

Pre-reading:
- o Support Log distributed via chps_ops on March 31

1. Health check on Support Log (major issues, show stoppers)

    ABRFC: No new issues. Hardware chps 4/5/6 installed.

    NERFC: No new issues.

    CNRFC: No new issues. Waiting for new directory structure – believe it will be next week.
    RandyR is coordinating with ChrisM.

    NWRFC: No new issues. Deltares will start investigating the import mods problem soon.

    Deltares is working on a patch with fixes from SAT; they are still on track for releasing on
    Monday April 5.

    The developers in Delft are currently looking into possible ways to enhance how states are
    handled. It seems that the RFCs generate and process millions of model states compared with the
    England & Wales Environment Agency (EA) which has tens of thousands; the huge numbers of
    states has a negative impact on database performance. The EA has a very different forecasting
    process. Deltares is actively engaged in researching the best solution. A memo from Micha will
    be forthcoming.

    The new release will contain some fixes from the Support Log. Peter is testing them on the
    NHOR now. He would like to ask RFCs to run tests, especially for those problems which
    originated at their RFC. Deltares will improve the release notes this time. This release will be
    available to the CAT only for beta testing – the CAT-IIs will get the release after the System
    Manager's class so they can practice doing an installation.

    Action: none.

2. Operational Support Plan - status

    The first draft of a Support Plan was distributed early this week. Billy already provided some
    feedback; RobH has skimmed the document and concurs with Billy's comments. Rob may have
    some additional comments early next week; Harold will try to get to the document today or
    tomorrow.

The main point is that the document lacks detail. There are no numbers or resource identification. It describes the 'what' not the 'how'. We need to describe how we will transition to landing once we race over the cliff. The document doesn't address leveraging field expertise. Chris suggested one way to do that might be to use community oriented tools – e.g., social networking a la Google Wave, which has recently been suggested by Don Cline.

Michael Kane will be in Silver Spring next week and will meet with Chris to review these comments and any others we have before next Tuesday.

Regarding HL operational support training, the HSEB developers who participated in SAT last week appear to have benefitted greatly from the experience; they have made leaps and bounds in their levels of understanding. We are in the process of repeating some SAT tests and are pairing more knowledgeable developers with more junior developers to spread the expertise. We would now like to give some operational (non-urgent) problems to developers, but there are very few real problems available; one EPP3 issue and one ESP problem at WGRFC are the only open trouble tickets.

Action: none.

3. Training – status

    This morning Chris and MarkG held a conference call with Scott Tessmer from the NWSTC. CHPS will be working more directly with Scott to identify training needs for CHPS, define goals, and develop a training strategy. Deltares will play a role, although that's still somewhat unknown. Chris would like to get some CAT members involved in a small team; Scott would like to be on that team himself. Chris expects to pay a visit to Scott in May to further the discussion.

    Action: none.

4. Other Items

    i. RobH discovered during Hank's visit that the Graphics Generator is not available in "batch" mode. Hank reported that the feature would be made available in Phase 2. RFCs can't continue to run ESPADP in the CHPS era because of the dependency on fs5files. Rob wants to raise a red flag for CHPS BOC.

        Chris said the primary requirement for Graphics Generator is that it should recreate ESPADP functionality (which does have a batch mode), but she doesn't know why the batch requirement isn't in the first release.

        Edwin reminded everyone that, as a fallback plan, CHPS has a version of ESPADP which runs with FEWS; that version does not rely on fs5files (Edwin will check with Hank to verify).

        The Graphics Generator is a nice tool and moderately complex because of its flexibility. GraphGen training is not yet defined, but something will be needed. Prior to operational use HSEB will also need to provide:
        ▪ A good user manual with job sheets which describe how to generate products the RFCs usually issue (about half a dozen or so; RFCs will learn to create others themselves).
        ▪ Instructions to describe how to configure CHPS for automated execution in a workflow (when available).

ii. RonH reported that during their recent flooding a forecaster on the overnight shift at NERFC tried to contact HSD on the support cell phone, but got no answer. The individual managed to fix the problem in the end without support. Xiaobiao said the phone battery had gone dead and it was on charge. NERFC wants to raise this as an issue. Some potential solutions that were suggested:
- Deploy more than one cell phone
- Use the NCF
- Use an answering service – CNRFC has one that will call a pre-determined sequence of phone numbers until someone answers; it costs them $30/month

Action: Edwin to check with Hank whether or not the CHPS-based version of ESPADP has dependencies on fs5files
Action: Chris to pass the Graphics Generator requirements to MarkF
Action: Chris to pass the Operational Support feedback to MarkG.

Next meeting: Thursday April 8, 2010