Current Forest Service Perspective on UAS

• Several UAS missions conducted in recent years
  – Operational, research and demonstration/evaluation

• Agency leadership recognizes the potential and importance of UAS operations
  – Fire management
  – Law enforcement
  – Research
  – Forest health
  – Resource mapping/inventory
  – Engineering
  – Communications
Current Forest Service Perspective on UAS

- UAS in the context of agency manned aircraft program
  - Augment, not replace
  - Identify niche applications
  - Technology transfer benefits
Current Forest Service UAS Policy

- UAS are considered the same as manned aircraft (FSM 5713.7)
  - Acquisition
  - Carding of pilots/aircraft
  - Inspections
  - Maintenance
  - Avionics
  - Training
  - Operations

- Agency requirements to utilize UAS (FS NASMMP)
  - Coordination with WO F&AM UAS technical contact and RAO
  - Completion and approval of USFS and FAA documentation/procedures

- Agency aviation policy and procedure reviews are needed
  - Recommendations to facilitate UAS program development and operational implementation
Forest Service UAS Committee

- **Committee scope/focus areas:**
  - Assess implications of UAS policy decisions on the current or proposed manned aircraft programs
  - Risk assessment of any proposed UAS operations
  - UAS strategic planning

- **Charter developed and committee organized in early CY2012**
  - Membership representation from USFS deputy and staff areas
  - Charter to be signed soon

- **Meeting schedule**
  - First meeting: February 28 - March 1, 2012
  - Next meeting: March 23, 2012
Forest Service UAS Committee

- Committee objectives:
  - Agency aviation policy review/recommendations
    - Related to the acquisition and operational use of UAS and associated technologies.
  - Develop agency UAS mission protocols
    - To conduct requisite interim UAS missions and inform future operational use of UAS.
  - Prepare agency UAS guidance documentation
    - Communication plan, strategic plan, and risk assessment documentation
First UAS Committee Meeting Summary
(Notable Items/Needs)

- Interest in conducting UAS missions
  - Several deputy/staff areas and field units
  - Demo/eval, research and operational missions
  - Large and small platforms

- Leverage UAS capabilities and resources of external agencies
  - Support operational Forest Service objectives
  - Utilization of facilities with restricted airspace

- Implement support for agency UAS application areas
  - Identify/define specific mission requirements
  - Establish long-standing advisory groups
First UAS Committee Meeting Summary
(Notable Items/Needs)

- Rulesets for UAS vs. manned aircraft in conducting specific missions
  - Based on mission requirements, safety, information needs, etc.

- Establish protocol to conduct UAS risk assessment
  - Relative to type of UAV used
  - Identify areas of high aviation risk to avoid

- Establish contracts to acquire UAS services from vendors
  - Demo/eval missions
  - Operational missions
First UAS Committee Meeting Summary
(Notable Items/Needs)

• Address frequency spectrum planning, allocation and management for conducting UAS missions
  – USDA approved spectrum frequencies for authorized use
  – Reduce inadvertent interference with data/communication links

• Develop UAS airworthiness inspection procedures and documentation

• Develop strategic planning documentation
  – Review documentation of other agencies
  – Develop similar policies where feasible

• Conduct workforce planning/staffing analysis to address UAS operational costs
First UAS Committee Meeting Summary
(Action Items)

• Finalize and sign committee charter
• Identify effects of FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 on UAS committee objectives and tasks
• Develop project plan for UAS committee objectives and tasks
• Develop agency UAS communications plan
• Conduct review of frequency spectrum issues
• Develop strategic planning documentation
• Identify resources to complete UAS committee tasks
Forest Service UAS Committee Membership

- Committee Chair (Bob Roth)
- Airworthiness/Aircraft and Pilot Inspection (Gil Elmy)
- Aviation Policy (Eddie Morris)
- Aviation Safety (Ron Hanks)
- Communications (Steve Jenkins)
- Engineering (Everett Hinkley)
- Forest Health Protection (Jeff Mai)
- Forest Service Information Technology (Sean Triplett)
- ICS/Fire Suppression (Mike Quesinberry)
- Law Enforcement and Investigations (Tim Lynn)
- Remote Sensing Applications Center (Brad Quayle)
- Regional Aviation Officer (Dan Zimmerman)
- Research and Development (Matt Dickinson)
- Technology and Development (Rey Farve)

(SMEs will be added as interim members)
Thanks

Comments/Questions?