



Interagency Aviation TECH BULLETIN



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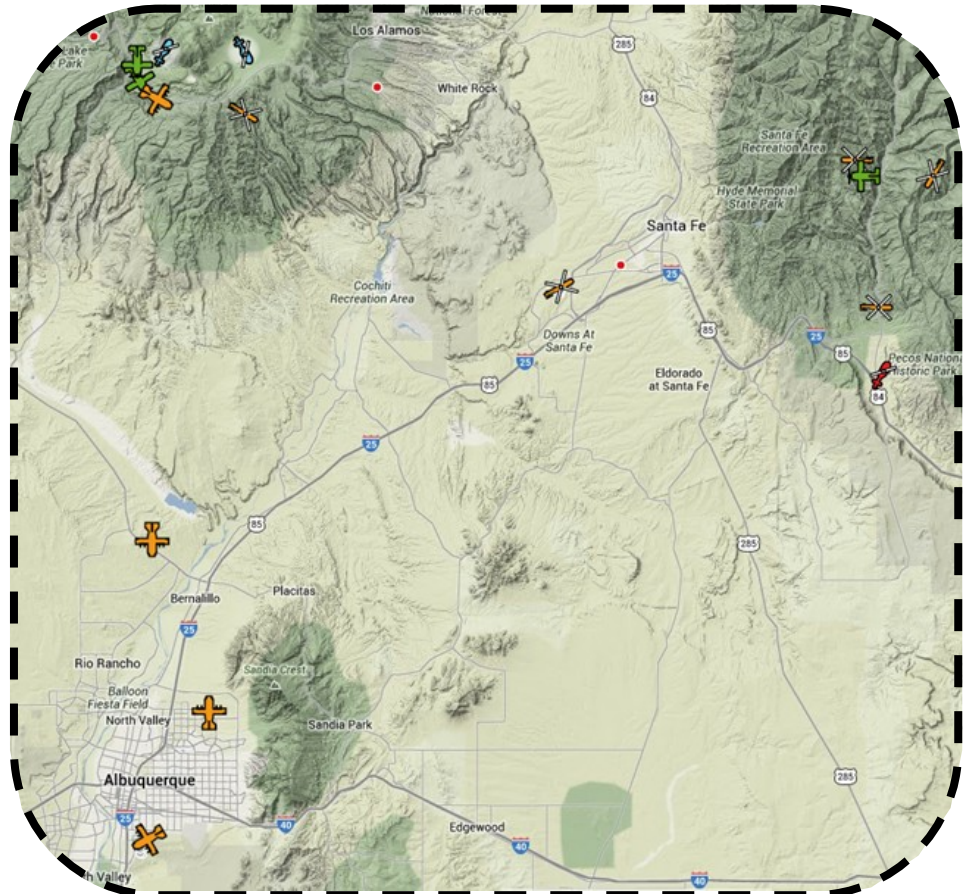
SUBJECT: Major Changes to Automated Flight Following

DISTRIBUTION: Aviation and Dispatch

DISCUSSION: Since its inception, Automated Flight Following (AFF) has used Web Tracker as the primary software for flight following aircraft. Due to increasing security vulnerabilities that could not be corrected in the outdated software, AFF was forced to remove Web Tracker and release a new viewer, **AFF 2.0**. At the time of Web Tracker's need for replacement, AFF 2.0 was still in Beta Testing; fortunately, the new viewer was far enough along in development to perform the primary safety purpose of AFF and mission critical tasks of flight following to avoid reverting to other methods of flight following (e.g. 15-minute radio check-ins).

During the pre-release testing, AFF 2.0 was tested on Forest Service and DOI networks and all modern browsers. After the release, the helpdesk was contacted by various offices with reports of browser problems when attempting to use AFF 2.0. The FS continues to work with DOI Specialists to resolve the issue; however, troubleshooting has been very difficult due to computer operating system, browser, and network differences across the various agencies using AFF. The FS and BLM have authorized temporary use of an alternate browser as an interim solution to use AFF. AFF users are recommended to contact their local IT to obtain a compatible browser with their agency network to access AFF 2.0 and to visit <https://aff.gov> for more information.

To inform end users throughout the transition to AFF 2.0, a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document and a Quick Start Guide have been continually updated and posted at <https://www.aff.gov>. The USFS AFF Team worked with OAS to develop a video demonstration of AFF 2.0 for training on the IAT website at <https://www.iat.gov/Training/modules/aff/> while the formal A-115 course is revised.



Since AFF 2.0 had to be released sooner than planned, the new application currently does not have all of the features available in the old Web Tracker. For example, the “bread crumb” track history is not currently available. Nevertheless, the most important task was to have a replacement application that continues and improves the core mission of flight following with no interruption in service. AFF is continually developing AFF 2.0 to integrate additional features as time and resources are available. The new viewer has improvements based on end user feedback. Some of these features are improved background maps, rapid viewing of aircraft status, and improved search capabilities.

The short notification to the field due to the urgent circumstances has caused justifiable concern. The AFF staff will continue coordinating with the IBM Help Desk and the National Fire Applications Support Help Desk on any updates. The AFF staff will work with stakeholders and leadership to mitigate any issues. AFF will continue working with IAT to develop formal training for the new viewer and update the video demo to include new features as they are released.

AFF is one of several approved methods for flight following. If for any reason AFF is not available, flight following is still required and must be performed using another approved method.

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