



NWCG Meeting Notes

October 21, 2025

Executive Board Primary Members (EB): Erik Litzenberg (IAFC) — Vice Chair, Brad Sawyer (BLM — Acting), Heath Cota (USFS), Jim Durglo (ITC), Garth Fisher (BIA), Greg Smith (NASF), Russell Babiak (NPS — Acting), Eric Fransted (FWS) **Associate Members:** Annie Benoit (OWF), Heath Hockenberry (NWS), Mike Rubenstein (IMTA)

NWCG Staff: Katie Wood (NWCG Program Manager), Sarah Lee (Deputy Program Manager), Erica Lamb (Coordinator), Dave Schultz (Coordinator), Steven Gaskill (Coordinator), Toni Suminski (Training Program Manager), Chelsea McKinney (Publications Manager), Michael Rodriguez (Executive Secretary—Detailed), Joe Schindel (Audiovisual Specialist, EB Facilitator)

Guests: Matt Woodwick (NIAC), Beau Dobberstein (NIAC), Michael Froelich (IPSC)

Topic & Notes	Decision/Action Item
(I) Pause Memo Exemption for New Helicopter Manager Limited Use/Restricted (HMLR) Position: - Developed by Interagency Helicopter Operations Subcommittee (IHOPS) with consensus in National Interagency Aviation Committee (NIAC). - Purpose: - NIAC is requesting an exemption to <i>NWCG Pause on New Incident Positions and Courses</i>, NWCG Memorandum 24-006-AMENDED to potentially incorporate HMLR into <i>NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications</i>, PMS 310-1. - Issues/Desired Outcomes: - A national shortage of Helicopter Manager, Single Resource (HMGB) leads to frequent Unable to Fill (UTF) critical-need or time-critical resource orders for helicopters. - HMLR would provide managers for helicopters designated for limited or restricted use. - Removes Single Resource Boss qualification requirement for helicopter managers due to HMLR's primarily administrative nature. - Aligns operational complexity with appropriate skillset and increases manager availability in ordering systems. - If an exemption is approved, a full position package, including Incident Position Description (IPD), Qualification Sheet, Position Task Book (PTB), and Transition Plan will be submitted through the Incident and Position Standards Committee (IPSC) Request for Change process. - Incorporation of HMLR would require updates to ten NWCG publications and seven training courses.	ACTION ITEM: EB members will continue internal vetting within their agencies before determining whether to grant an exemption to the pause memo. See the notes on the request-for-change process for guidance

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• Background: ○ HMLR was included in the <i>2025 Federal Wildland Fire Qualification Supplement</i>. ○ Endorsed by U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and National Park Service. ○ Additional endorsements anticipated from Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and state fire/aviation agencies before 2026 fire season. • Next Steps: ○ The group will explore both the importance of the position and the implications of a potential exemption.	
(I) Incident Management Team Course Steering Committee (IMTCSC) - Monthly Update: • S-320, Introduction to Incident Management Teams: ○ IMTCSC completed their review, and the course is now with IPSC. IPSC will vote for approval during the first week of November 2025. ○ Anticipated to be uploaded to the Wildland Fire Learning Portal (WFLP) in mid-December 2025. • S-420, Intermediate Incident Management: ○ Alpha Test will be held at the National Advanced Fire and Resource Institute (NAFRI) in Tucson, AZ, the first week of December. ○ Beta Test will be held in Bakersfield, CA in the spring 2026. ○ Currently, there are no shutdown related impacts. Future impacts are possible if travel becomes restricted.	
(I) Training Program & IPTM Monthly Update: • Staffing Update: ○ All hiring and new details are currently on hold, with exception of one Audio/Visual Specialist. • IPTM Project Highlights: ○ StoryMap is live and being actively updated. ○ Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), and their respective supervisors, have all been notified of their selection for Incident Commander Type 4 (ICT4), Heavy Equipment Boss, Single Resource (HEQB), Single Engine Airtanker Manager (SEMG), Ramp Manager (RAMP), and HMGB position projects.	



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○ Call Order 8: Contract started last week. Analysis workshops scheduled at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) include, unless delayed due to staffing and SME availability: ▪ ICT4 and HEQB: January 26-30, 2026 ▪ SEMG/RAMP and HMGB: February 9-13, 2026 ○ Courses slated for revision under Call Order 8: ▪ S-200, Initial Attack Incident Commander ▪ S-236, Heavy Equipment Boss ▪ S-273, Single Engine Airtanker Manager ▪ S-372, Helicopter Manager ● IPTM Developed Incident Position Standards and Next Generation Position Task Books: ○ Resource Advisor, Fireline (REAF) on track to be approved November 2025. ○ Engine Boss, Single Resource (ENGB) on track to be approved November 2025. ○ Public Information Officer Type 3 (PIO3) on track to be approved Spring 2026. ● IPTM Course Development: ○ M-280, Resource Advisor, Fireline: Final project position package; Incident Position Standards (IPS), PTB, and course materials, will be presented to Resource Advisor Subcommittee (READSC) for final approval and acceptance to finalize the certification process. ○ S-219, Firing Operations (Blended): Certified and live on portal. An error was published on the WFLP about prerequisite experience requirements. NWCG training published a correction memo sent to Training Delivery Committee (TDC) and Fuels Management Committee (FMC) with acknowledgement and correction of the error. ○ S-131, Firefighter Type 1: Test course did not yield desired results due to cadre not being prepared to deliver new material. Additionally, the instructor was far removed from the Firefighter Type 1 (FFT1) role. The course was not delivered as it was designed, and a second test course is necessary. ○ S-231, Engine Boss (Single Resource): Test course was conducted in Texas at the Texas Wildfire Academy. Do not anticipate need for a second test course. In the process of compiling and incorporating feedback. On track for December 2025 certification.	



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○ S-203, Introduction to Incident Information: Alpha test course scheduled for November 17, 2025, in Las Vegas, NV. Beta course is tentatively scheduled for February 2026, Rocky Mountain Area; certification projected for May 2026. ○ S-229, Single Resource Boss: In development. Target completion March 2026. ○ S-212, Intermediate Faller: Test course completed, feedback being incorporated by contractor, on track for January 2026. ○ S-312, Advanced Faller: Project Scoping Call this week. ● Planning: ○ Call Order 9: On hold due to staffing. ● Non-IPTM Course Progress: ○ S-290, Intermediate Wildland Fire Behavior (Blended): Observed course delivery at the Texas Wildfire Academy. ○ L-280, Followership to Leadership: Observed delivery of recently certified materials. ○ S-390, Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior Calculations: Final updates have been made to content. On track for certification before December. ○ S-490: Test course this week at NAFRI; certification on track for December. ● Key Takeaways: ○ SME availability and commitment continue to be a challenge. ○ Government shutdown will impact IPTM progress; specifically, SME availability, SME travel, and NWCG employee hiring. ○ Staffing remains a significant challenge as slow progress continues across IPTM and non-IPTM projects. Currently, IPTM will not meet the targeted completion date, Sept 30, 2028. ○ Multiple courses are on track for certification by year-end and early spring. ○ Multiple positions are on track for approval by year-end and early spring. ○ IPTM implementation, Evaluation and Maintenance Plans, and Training Program SOP development are top priorities for completion in FY2026.	
(D) FY2027 NWCG Annual Budget Guidance: ● Edits to Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 NWCG Budget Guidance: ○ Additional viability criteria for funding requests: ■ Is the project appropriate for NWCG, or is it more closely tied to another governance body's mission?	DECISION: Approval of the FY2027 Annual Budget Guidance.



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▪ Does this fall within the committee's approved workplan? ○ Travel Funding for NASF Members: ▪ This is dependent on available grant funding. ▪ The EB agreed to add that NWCG tasking work meetings are also an appropriate use of the NASF travel grant funding.	
(I) Incident Strategic Alignment Process (ISAP) User Guide: • Previous discussions that an ISAP User Guide would be the starting point for NWCG inclusion. ○ Concerns raised about the current guide not reflecting all the agency's perspectives. ▪ Some agencies may not prefer the "shall" verbiage. ▪ Input will come from agencies on how to move forward with the ISAP User Guide. ▪ A steward for the guide needs to be chosen. ○ The Incident Management Training (IMT) courses will likely be finalized before an NWCG ISAP standard can be approved. ▪ A user guide may serve as the starting point.	ACTION ITEM: EB will reassess the ISAP User Guide in Spring 2026.
(I) Committee Reorganization Update and Status: • Revised Full Implementation Target Date: July 1, 2026. ○ NWCG operations will continue under the current structure and coordinator assignments through July 1, 2026. Once agency committee names are assigned, NWCG staff will begin working on the back-end work to support this transition (SOPs, webpages, chair rotations, etc.). • Assumptions ○ NWCG will be able to fill current vacancies and move forward with pending offers (if not, we will be unable to continue with IPTM).	DECISION: Approval of the NWCG Committee Reorganization full implementation target date of July 1, 2026. ACTION ITEM: Invite both current and incoming committee and subcommittee chairs/ vice chairs to the February 2026 Annual Meeting. ACTION ITEM: The EB Vice Chair will send a formal message confirming that committee work will continue as usual until instructions are provided for transition and full implementation.

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EB Executive Session — October 29, 2025: • IPTM Project Schedule — updates • Committee Reorganization — status check • EB Standard Operating Procedures — discussion • Travel for NWCG meetings — decision • Executive Session meeting schedule — ad hoc	DECISION: During the government shutdown, all travel by federal agency representatives for NWCG meetings – excluding travel for training course development, testing, or delivery – will be conducted virtually, unless approved as an exception by the Executive Board.

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