National Wildfire Coordinating Group

Executive Board Meeting Notes

October 20, 2026

Attendees

Executive Board Primary Members (EB):

Erik Litzenberg (IAFC, Chair), Anne Jewell (DOW, Vice Chair), Heath Cota (USFS), Aitor Bidaburu (USFA), Jim Durglo (ITC), Greg Smith (NASF), Eric Fransted (USWFS)

Associate Members:

Heath Hockenberry (NWS)

NWCG Staff:

Sarah Lee (NWCG Program Manager — Acting), Toni Suminski (Training Program Manager), Steven Gaskill (Coordinator), Chelsea McKinney (Publications Manager), Michael Rodriguez (Executive Secretary), Joe Schindel (EB Facilitator)

Guests:

William Bunting (NWS), Robyn Heffernan (NWS), Nick Nauslar (NWS)

National Weather Service (NWS) Primary Membership Presentation (Informational)

☐ Decision: N/A
☐ Action Item: N/A

Notes:

- NWS Fire Environment Support
  - The agency is a founding organization of the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) and continues to expand its wildland fire role.
  - Executive Order (EO) 14308 establishes Joint Fire Intelligence Decision Support (JFIDS) and outlines an interagency technology roadmap.
  - The agency is expanding its operational response capacity.
  - The NWS is developing a prototype dedicated to the Incident Meteorologist (IMET) cadre.
- Public Safety & Wildland Fire Response
  - The NWS is a designated Federal Public Safety Organization under the Department of Commerce.
  - Its authorities derive from the Weather Service Organic Act of 1890 and the Coast and Geodetic Survey Act.
  - IMETs are deployed under interagency and Incident Command System (ICS) standards.
  - The 122 Weather Forecast Offices (WFOs) provide continuous forecasting and warning services.
  - Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) hydrologists support post-fire assessments.
  - Air Resource Advisors model and assess smoke impacts.
- Financial & Operational Commitments
  - The organization provides $740,000 per year to fund IMET base salaries.
  - It allocates $275,000 per year to support dedicated IMET equipment.
  - It provides $500,000 per year to fund two to three meteorologists for JFIDS.
  - To date, a total of $1 million has been invested in SPC Gridded Fire Danger (FEMS).

  - The organization actively participates in the NWCG EB and 14 of its committees and subcommittees.
  - The NWS produces 21,000 annual spot forecasts in addition to daily fire weather products.
  - The NWS instructors and subject matter experts (SMEs) contribute to NWCG training.
  - The NWS funds EB and subgroup participation and travel.
- Membership & Leadership Readiness
  - The organization has more than 20 years of active NWCG leadership.
  - It has served as an Associate EB member since 2020 with a commitment to more than 75% in-person attendance.
  - It provides active representation across 14 NWCG groups.
  - The addition of new IMET positions helps meet the 75% SME participation criteria.
  - In 2026 so far, the organization has supported 216 fire support missions, of which 42 incidents are for prescribed fire safety and operations.

U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and U.S. Wildland Fire Service (USWFS) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – NWCG Impacts (Informational)

☐ Decision: N/A

☐ Action Item: N/A

Notes:

- An MOU (USWFS No. MOU27WFS001; USFS No. 27-MU-11132543-001) between the USWFS (DOI) and USFS (USDA) for the Wildland Fire Workforce Development, Training, and Education (WDTE) Division has been established to support cooperative funding and shared responsibilities for the interagency WDTE Division.
- The purpose of this MOU is to:
  A. Establish cooperative procedures to enable the funding of the shared responsibilities of the participating agencies for the interagency WDTE Division.
  B. Establish the USFS National Program Director WDTE (“NPD”) and USWFS Division Chief, NWCG, Training and Standards, Workforce Development (“DC”) who will serve as the co-directors of the integrated, interagency WDTE program.
  C. Enable program consistency and continuity by ensuring the following:
     1. Project funding, personnel funding, and personnel management decisions are made by the NPD and DC, working personnel actions through their respective agency human resources systems.
     2. Personnel positions can be filled, removed, or changed by either agency pending NPD and DC concurrence.
  D. Enable effective supervision and administration of the WDTE Staff.
  E. Support and enable effective and efficient WDTE operations.
- USDA Secretary’s Memorandum (SM) 1078-017 (2025) and DOI Secretarial Order (SO) 3443 (2025) provides opportunities for strategic alignment.
- There is no change to the budgetary process and management, recognizing the legacy of NWCG.

Training Program and Incident Performance & Training Modernization (IPTM) Update (Informational)

☐ Decision: N/A
☐ Action Item: N/A

Notes:

- IPTM
  - S-200 name change based on Issue Paper #133, Modification of Course Name for S-200, Initial Attack Incident Commander and S-300, Extended Attack Incident Commander
  - S-372 — Authoritative data source name change
    - Wildland Fire Learning Portal (WFLP), Website, etc.
  - FWPT — New approved course — proposed name and number: S-174, Fixed Wing Parking Tender
  - Analysis Workshops
    - Oct 19-23: STCR, STEN, STEQ
    - Nov 2-6: FAL1, EQPM, MXMS, RTCM
    - Nov 16-20: TFLD, PIOC, INVF, FWPT
    - Feb 2027: FSCC, ICCI, LSCC, OSCC, PSCC, SOFC, BCMG, IRIN, RXB1, SITL
  - Design/Development
    - SEMG/S-374, HMGB/S-372
  - Evaluation — Test Course
    - Dec 3-4: HEQB/S-236 — Utah Fire and Rescue Academy, Provo, U
    - Jan 25-26: ICT4/S-200 — Tennessee Fire Service and Codes Academy, Bell Buckle, TN
  - Call Order 10
    - Covers 28 low/low positions, $1.8M, through Spring 2029 staffing dependent
  - Call Order 4 — PIOT/PIO3 — Contract ends early March 10, 2027, no more extensions allowed
  - Future work plan — 22 positions remain, projected cost $12M
- Completed courses include:
  - ATIM, COST, COMP, CREP, DECK, FEMO, FOBS, GISS, ORDM, RCDM, STAM, S-420.

Incident Strategic Alignment Process (ISAP) Principles Check-in (Informational)

☐ Decision: N/A
☐ Action Item: N/A

Notes:

- ISAP continues to serve as the industry standard for risk assessment and strategic alignment on complex incidents, but members noted ongoing questions about how much of ISAP should be a formal process.
- ISAP can be used to capture metrics and analysis, but some find it overly prescriptive for lower-complexity incidents.

- ISAP is intentionally scalable, making it suitable for high-level strategic conversations or deeper, data-driven analysis using tools such as the Strategic Risk Assessment (SRA) Worksheet.
- A user guide has been proposed previously but faced consensus issues due to its complexity, requirements, and frequency of required updates. A simpler, foundational document may be a more practical alternative.
- A foundational ISAP document could define core pillars and concepts while remaining non-prescriptive, giving agencies flexibility in how they apply or teach ISAP.
- This approach aligns with current Incident Management Teams (IMT) course deliveries, where ISAP is presented in a non-prescriptive way.
- An ISAP Principles document tasking will be discussed during the November EB meeting.

Committee Branch Briefs (Informational)

☐ Decision: N/A

☐ Action Item: N/A

Notes:

- The NWCG Coordinators provided the EB with an overview of ongoing work across the three committee branches, highlighting key leadership changes, vacancies, and current efforts related to publications, incident positions, training courses, and other projects to provide a common operating picture.

Review of FY2027 Approved Budget (Informational)

☐ Decision: N/A

☐ Action Item: N/A

Notes:

- The FY2027 NWCG budget was approved by the EB on March 17, 2026.
- Core NWCG operational items and licensing renewals remain funded.
- The overall budget reflects EB directives, required program maintenance, and updated staffing needs.
- All funding is subject to agency allocation timing and changes.

NWCG FY2028 Annual Budget Guidance (Decision)

☒ Decision: **Approval of the FY2028 Annual Budget Guidance.**

☐ Action Item: N/A

Notes:

- Only minor changes from the approved FY2027 Annual Budget Guidance.
- NWCG funding for FY2028 is provided by member agencies according to the interagency shared funding agreement, with contributions supporting committee work aligned to NWCG mission and objectives.
- Funding requests must directly support NWCG committee objectives.
- Committees submit prioritized project and training requests, which are evaluated for viability, relevance to NWCG mission, purview, likelihood of success, and mechanism for spending before being ranked for funding.

- Prioritization emphasizes scope and national impact, sustainability, feasibility, continuation of multi-year efforts, efficiency, and alignment with IPTM priorities for training products.

EB Executive Session (Decisional)

☒ Decision: **NWCG will host the ICS-100, ICS-200, IS-700, and IS-800 courses on the WFLP as allowed by the Coordination of On-Line Design and Delivery Efforts MOU with USFA.**
☐ Action Item: N/A

Date, Time, and Location of Next Meeting

Date: November 17, 2026
Time: 0900-1600 MST
Location: NIFC, Old Admin Building #110, NWCG Conference Room (second floor)