



## NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP

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NWCG Letter 23-001

January 13, 2023

Re: 2023 NWCG Executive Board Annual Letter

Happy New Year!!

The last few years have seen a high tempo operational pace throughout the wildland fire community, and the operations of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) are no exception. The NWCG Executive Board (EB) would like to recognize the efforts of all involved in the work of NWCG - from the NWCG employees to the hundreds of collateral duty subject matter experts (SMEs). Your collective expert knowledge is critical to the success of our shared mission which is to provide national leadership to enable interoperable wildland fire operations among federal, state, local, Tribal, and territorial partners.

2022 brought several changes to EB membership. We would like to acknowledge the service of the EB members who left us and express our gratitude for their contributions.

**Frank Guzman**, USFS Fire and Aviation Management. Thank you, Frank!

**Mark Koontz**, National Park Service. Thank you, Mark!

**Tim Sexton**, USFS Research, Development, and Application. Thank you, Tim!

We would also like to welcome new EB members and express our appreciation for their willingness to join our team.

**Sara Brown**, USFS Research and Development

**Heath Cota**, USFS Fire and Aviation Management

**Anne Jewell**, Department of Defense

**Jim Shultz**, National Park Service

There were numerous NWCG accomplishments in 2022, here are a few highlights:

The NWCG EB continually prioritizes firefighter mental and physical wellbeing when implementing all aspects of our mission and support efforts acutely impacting the holistic health of firefighters and support personnel. Specifically, in 2022 the Mental Health Subcommittee:

- Released a WFSTAR video on Wildland Fire Mental Health (<https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/training-courses/rt-130/medical/me709>)
- Finalized the Preparedness Guide for Wildland Firefighters and Their Families (<https://www.nwcg.gov/sites/default/files/publications/pms600.pdf>)

NWCG staff worked diligently to define the ongoing systems improvement effort and secured the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding to significantly reinforce that effort. Now known as Incident Performance and Training Modernization (IPTM), this effort will be funded for \$4.5 million annually over the next five years to establish staffing and fund the contracts required to modernize approximately 125 NWCG courses.

The transition to Complex Incident Management (CIM) required the EB and others to operate in shortened time frames to ensure NWCG requirements were met. Specifically, the Incident and Position Standards Committee (IPSC) did an incredible amount of work through 2022 and deserves recognition for what they did with many other priorities needing attention. When you have an opportunity, please let your IPSC member know their efforts are recognized.

As NWCG continues to implement our role in modernizing the wildland fire workforce, looking forward to 2023 it is clear the portfolio of critical work within NWCG extends beyond highlighted accomplishments or identified priorities. Nevertheless, we expect the continuation of the high tempo operational pace so acknowledging there will be important matters competing for limited time and staff, the EB identifies the following as priorities for the upcoming year.

**Incident Performance and Training Modernization (IPTM):** We will continue good stewardship of the funding allocated to work towards modernizing incident position management and standards, creating next generation position task books, and streamlining training. To accomplish this, there will be a heightened need for SME availability and an expectation of member agencies to assure that need is met.

**Complex Incident Management (CIM):** NWCG has a key role in the national transition to achieve CIM in 2024. It is important to clearly articulate the CIM pathways available to wildland fire personnel, evaluate 2023 CIM transition elements to adjust where needed, and begin to outline and develop training to sustain and prepare current and future CIMT members.

**Standardized Business Practices:** Standardizing some aspects of the EB and committee business practices will make us more effective, efficient, and resilient moving into the future. NWCG staff will focus time to assist the EB to adapt business practices and provide these updates to committees early this year.

Looking back over the previous year, it stands out how much we can accomplish when we work together towards one mission. Encouraged by that, we look forward to acknowledging our collective successes when we look back at 2023 and forward to 2024. Thank you ahead of time for the critically important work you will do in the coming year.

Sincerely,

The NWCG Executive Board

**Shane McDonald**, Fish and Wildlife Service, Chair  
**Aitor Bidaburu**, United States Fire Administration, Vice Chair  
**Garth Fisher**, Bureau of Indian Affairs  
**Jeff Arnberger**, Bureau of Land Management  
**Anne Jewel**, Department of Defense  
**Sara Brown**, Forest Service, Research and Development  
**Erik Litzenberg**, International Association of Fire Chiefs  
**Jim Durglo**, Intertribal Timber Council  
**Jim Shultz**, National Park Service  
**Heath Cota**, Forest Service, Fire and Aviation Management  
**Jim Karels**, National Association of State Foresters  
**Kim VanHemelryck**, Office of Wildland Fire (Associate Member)  
**Heath Hockenberry**, National Weather Service (Associate Member)

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