



## NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP

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NWCG Letter 24-002

February 15, 2024

Re: 2024 NWCG Executive Board Annual Letter

As we reflect upon the successes and challenges of 2023, it is my privilege to share with you the Annual Letter for the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). Your commitment to our mission and the exceptional work each of you does serves as the cornerstones of our success. Looking to the future, as we navigate an incredibly complex and dynamic environment, it is important to remain focused on our mission, while continually engaging in conversations nationally on the many wildland fire initiatives.

To highlight a few significant accomplishments and milestones in 2023:

- The initiation of the Incident Performance and Training Modernization (IPTM) effort. NWCG began implementing a \$28 million contract designed to overhaul the current system and replace it with an integrated performance-based training system. Ten positions were started in 2023 and planning for 16 more in 2024 has begun. In total, NWCG intends to analyze over 130 incident positions to incorporate efficiencies and reduce redundancies.
- The Incident Management Team (IMT) Course Steering Committee was developed and tasked with creating two new IMT courses to support implementation of Complex Incident Management (CIM).
- 10 new Wildland Safety Training Annual Refresher (WFSTAR) videos were developed with more than 42,000 views spread across all videos.
- Coordinated the process of moving all the training found in the NWCG Training Catalogue to the Wildland Fire Learning Portal (WFLP) and maintaining the current system.

NWCG welcomed the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) as the newest associate member to the NWCG Executive Board (EB) in December of 2023. 2023 brought several changes to EB membership. We would like to acknowledge the service of those EB members who have left us and express our gratitude for their contributions.

**Jeff Arnberger**, Bureau of Land Management, a well-deserved retirement. Thank you, Jeff!

**Jim Karels**, National Association of State Foresters, a well-deserved retirement. Thank you, Jim!

**Shane McDonald**, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, previous Chair. Thank you, Shane!

**Jim Shultz**, National Park Service, Thank you, Jim!

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

**Greg Smith**, National Association of State Foresters

**Erin Horsburgh**, National Park Service

**Jon Wallace**, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Recognizing the dynamic nature of our work, we acknowledge the challenges associated with managing workloads and ensuring active committee participation, as we navigate these obstacles, we remain committed to finding solutions that support our team members and enhance overall engagement. In 2024 our focus remains on building upon our successes and a commitment to continuous improvement. Key priorities and considerations for this year include:

- **Determining Core Workload:** Identifying essential tasks and responsibilities to ensure they receive proper attention despite workload constraints.
- **Ensuring IPTM Success:** Prioritizing the success of IPTM, including coordination and collaboration among various stakeholders.
- **Improving Efficiencies:** Seeking ways to streamline processes and workflows to maximize productivity and resource utilization.
- **Firefighter Health and Wellness:** Continually prioritizing firefighter mental and physical wellbeing when implementing all aspects of our mission and support efforts acutely impacting the holistic health of firefighter support personnel.
- **Engagement in National Conversations:** Participating in broader discussions about wildland fire management, considering recommendations from the Wildland fire Management and Mitigation Commission report and related areas of national wildland fire interest.

In closing, I extend my deepest gratitude to each committee member and NWCG staff for your dedication and outstanding contributions. I am confident that together we will continue to make significant strides in the challenging and vital work that lies ahead.

Warm Regards,

**Aitor Bidaburu**, United States Fire Administration, Chair

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**Erik Litzenberg**, International Association of Fire Chiefs, Vice Chair

**Garth Fisher**, Bureau of Indian Affairs

**Kyle Cowan**, Bureau of Land Management

**Anne Jewell**, Department of Defense

**Sara Brown**, Forest Service, Research and Development

**Jim Durglo**, Intertribal Timber Council

**Jim Shultz**, National Park Service

**Dave Haston**, Forest Service, Fire and Aviation Management

**Greg Smith**, National Association of State Foresters

**Jon Wallace**, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Kim VanHemelryck**, Office of Wildland Fire (Associate Member)

**Heath Hockenberry**, National Weather Service (Associate Member)

**Parmial Kopardekar (PK)**, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Associate Member)