



Connections Call

April 3, 2025

Executive Board: Aitor Bidaburu (USFA — Chair), Erik Litzenberg (IAFC — Vice Chair), Jim Durglo (ITC), P.K. Kopardekar (NASA), Steve Shaw (BLM — Acting), Greg Smith (NASF), Ryan Sundberg (DoD-Acting), Steven Weidner (NASA), Jon Wallace (FWS)

NWCG Staff: Katie Wood (NWCG Program Manager), Sarah Lee (NWCG Deputy Program Manager and Coordinator), Dave Schultz (Coordinator), Erica Lamb (Publications Manager and Coordinator), Eric Coulter (Communications Lead), Toni Suminski (IPTM Project Manager), Steven Gaskill (Training Program Manager — Acting), Johanna Ostling (Executive Secretary — Acting)

Committee Chairs/Reps: Kent Nelson (CEPC-Acting), Cole Belongie (DMC), Roshelle Pederson (DMC), Christopher Moore (FBSC), Darren Clabo (FENC), Nick Nauslar (FENC), Angie Simpson (FMC), Julie Bennett (IBC), Michael Froelich (IPSC), Sean Peterson (NCSC), Matt Woodwick (NIAC), Catherine Koele (PIOSC), Jessica Riesenberg (READSC), Persephone Whelan (RMC— Acting)

Topic & Notes

NWCG Staffing Update:

- Currently operating with reduced staffing levels, with vacancies in the coordinator, publications, training, and media positions.
- Erica Lamb accepted an NWCG Coordinator position (vice-Carmen Thomason). She will continue supporting publications during the transition.
- We appreciate your patience and understanding as we navigate these changes and work to fill our vacant positions.

NWCG Publications and Media Updates:

- Publications:
 - Currently 2 out of 3 Writer/Editor positions are vacant.
 - The publication priorities will be IPTM, CIM, and safety-related materials. Please note that timelines for publications will be extended:
 - For electronic-only publications, the timeline may extend up to two months.
 - For hard copy publications, the timeline may extend up to seven months before they are available from the cache.
- Media:
 - Eight new WFSTAR modules have been released for 2025.
 - A new communications strategy enhanced amplification and coordination of distribution, resulting in increased viewership statistics.

Incident Performance and Training Modernization (IPTM) Update:

- Next Generation Position Task Books (Next Gen PTBs) are published and available for 19 incident positions.
- Changes for the *NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications*, PMS 310-1 are being tracked for the 2026 update.
- Several new courses are currently in development and are tentatively scheduled to be released by the end of the year.
- Approval decision matrix and workflow:
 - Outlines the approval path for incident positions based on recommendations from Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and the Position Steward that constitute significant changes to incident qualifications and/or training.
- To view the status of completed, in process, or scheduled positions, please visit: [Incident Performance and Training Modernization](#).

Additional information beyond these meeting notes (i.e., handouts, presentations, maps, etc.) will require a FOIA request to ensure proper privacy regulations are followed. Please request via FOIA Online website at <https://www.doi.gov/foia/make-a-request>.



Topic & Notes

Incident Management Team (IMT) Courses Update:

- The S-320, Introduction to Incident Management Teams course is nearing completion, with the third (Charlie) test course scheduled for July 2025 in Reno, NV.
- In February, the decision was made to establish a three-tier IMT course system.
- IMT Course Steering Committee (IMTCSC) will began work on the intermediate course in late April.
- Recent modifications to the pathway now allow individuals to open PTBs for Type 3 Command and General Staff (C&G) positions prior to completing the S-320 course.

Committee Reports:

- **Communication Education and Prevention Committee (CEPC):**
 - A face-to-face meeting is being planned for the fall.
 - Fire Cause Task Group:
 - This group has been re-established in collaboration with the Data Management Committee, Fire Reporting Subcommittee, and various agencies to address the significant number of undetermined fire causes.
 - Fire Prevention Education Team Subcommittee (FPETSC):
 - Reviewing the digital library.
 - Discussing the potential use of ADs during the 2025 season.
 - Actively seeking instructors for the P-410, Fire Prevention Education Team Leader course.
 - Public Information Officer Subcommittee (PIOSC):
 - Working on the updated S-203, Introduction to Incident Information course through IPTM.
 - Wildland Fire Investigation Subcommittee (WFISC):
 - The *Guide to Wildland Fire Origin and Cause Determination*, PMS 412, has returned from the editor and is nearing completion.
 - The process to update the FI-210, Wildland Fire Investigator course is has begun.
- **Data Management Committee (DMC):**
 - Upcoming updates to the IRWIN system are in progress.
 - The Fire Cause Task Group work is in the data consolidation and clean-up phase.
 - Data Summit is scheduled for next week.
 - Planning to discuss data sets and their authoritative status.
- **Emergency Medical Committee (EMC):**
 - Working on the implementation of the Rapid Extraction Module Support (REMS) standards
 - Efforts continue, closing out the Big Swamp and Rum Creek tasking.
- **Equipment Technology Committee (ETC):**
 - Mobile Fire Equipment Subcommittee (MFES):
 - Established standards for Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) typing.

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- **Fire Environment Committee (FENC):**
 - Discontinuation of Haines Index (HI) and Lighting Activity Level (LAL) is progressing smoothly.
 - Coordinating with the National Weather Service (NWS) to prevent gaps in forecasts.
 - Moving forward with S-290, Intermediate Wildland Fire Behavior; S-390, Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior Calculations; and S-490, Advanced Fire Behavior Calculations courses and have been receiving positive feedback.
 - Briefed the Executive Board on the transition of WIMS to FEMS.
 - Fire Continuing Education Subcommittee:
 - Continuing to assist with updates to the Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS).
- **Fuels Management Committee (FMC):**
 - Development of the Interagency Declared Wildfire Guide as a standalone document is underway.
 - Reviewing the RX-300 pre-course training elements for accessibility.
 - SMEs presented on the Firing Boss, Single Resource (FIRB) position, and FMC approved the IPTM training schematic.
- **Incident and Position Standards Committee (IPSC):**
 - Spring meeting scheduled for April 21-23, in Boise, ID.
 - Focus on standardizing the process for archiving positions.
 - Will continue to work on IPTM projects.
 - The Operations Branch Director (OPBD) position has been updated.
 - Anticipating how to move forward with Requests for Change (RFC) once the pause memo is lifted.
- **Incident Business Committee (IBC):**
 - Working on Personnel Time Recorder (TIME) and Procurement Unit Leader (PROC) PTBs in conjunction with SME group.
 - Updates are being made to the *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*, PMS 902, and electronic files.
 - AD Pay Plans are being distributed for signatures and should be released soon.
- **Interagency Fire Planning Committee (IFPC):**
 - **Resource Advisor Subcommittee (READSC):**
 - Continuing work on the Resource Advisor, Fireline (REAF) position.
- **Leadership Committee (LC):**
 - Focusing on the L-280, Followership to Leadership course revision.
 - Nominations for the Paul Gleason Lead by Example awards are being prepared.
 - Virtual annual meeting scheduled for next week.
- **National Coordination System Committee (NCSC):**
 - The final draft of the aircraft schedule form is nearing completion in conjunction with NIAC.
 - Finalizing the dispatch qualifications memorandum, clarifying changes that were not included in the 2025 310-1 update.
 - Clarifying unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) airspace deconfliction management.

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- Approved additions to *Interagency Emergency Helicopter Extraction Source List*, PMS 512.
- New dispatch courses are receiving positive feedback and testing should be completed in June.
- **National Incident Management System Integration Committee (NIMSIC):**
 - Currently reviewing and updating positions for the endorsement process.
- **National Interagency Aviation Committee (NIAC):**
 - Updating publications and progressing through incident positions in IPTM process.
 - Addressing various taskings and overseeing substantial work in the **subcommittees that report to NIAC**.
- **Risk Management Committee (RMC):**
 - Collaborating with IBC on issues related to firefighter fatigue and personal protective equipment decontamination.
 - Updates regarding the incident Safety Officer positions are being made on the website with courses in the final stage of approval.
 - The development of SAFENET 2.0 is underway to enhance its relevance for our responders.
- **Smoke Committee (SmoC):**
 - Upcoming Air Resource Advisor trainings are scheduled.
 - Continuously monitoring for the impacts of updated regulations for air quality.
 - Ensuring smoke management and air quality resources are updated and available to the field.
- **Training Delivery Committee (TDC):**
 - Continuing to support IPTM initiatives and collaborating with other committees.
 - Exploring opportunities to streamline training deliveries through the Wildland Fire Learning Portal (WFLP).
- **Wildland Urban Interface Mitigation Committee (WUIMC):**
 - Coordinating WUI training updates with CEPC.
 - Updating Fire Operations in the S-215, Wildland Urban Interface course.
 - Additional agencies endorsing the positions in the Federal Supplement.

Closeout:

- Next Connections Call is scheduled for July 3, 2025.