

NWCG Health & Wellness Subcommittee (HWSC)

Meeting Minutes

Agenda: 7/15/2026 1200-1300 (Mountain Standard Time)

Attendees: Alyssa Givens, Bill Waln, Steven Gaskill, Craig Bondra, Buzz Lechowski, Narisa Tappitake, Stuart Scott, Candace Shepherd, Mike Proud, Johnny Torgeson, Scott Bovey, Darryl Jones, Dana Lee, Carmen Thomason, Catherine Kaminski, Alexis Waldron, Persephone Whelan, Nathaniel Hartinger, David Vitwar

Agenda Items

1300 Welcome, Introductions & Updates (10 Minutes) –Alyssa Givens, Chair

Updates:

- Safety/Risk Management Committee (SRC) (previously Risk Management Committee (RMC)) had their meeting yesterday. Although there is a lot happening with fire season it was well attended. 6 Minutes for Safety (6MSC) are working on development of videos.
- Members for the Subcommittee workgroups – participation in the workgroup is not limited to rostered members.
- Rostered members include:
 - Alyssa Givens – DOI – Chair
 - Buzz Lechowski – IAFC – Vice-Chair
 - Johnny Torgeson – DOW
 - Alexis Waldron – USFS
 - Bill Waln – NASF
 - Scott Stuart – NASF
 - Narissa Tappitake – DOI – Alternate
 - Mike Proud – NWS – Associate
 - Dave Vitwar – MC Liaison
 - Steven Gaskill - Coordinator
- Current SRC liaison is David Vitwar, but this may change soon.

1310- Round Robin & Updates:

- Steven Gaskill- Website information needs to be migrated over to the new page by August 19. Reviewed all the information. Will be getting invites to the new Teams' sites. Clean up the roster of members.
Committee Reorganization
 - Reorganization goes live July 1.
 - All old committee websites have been archived.
 - New committee pages will now display mission statements, objectives, SOPs, and rosters.
 - If you need content migrated from the old sites to the new pages, please notify your coordinator.New Committee Team Sites
 - Management committee Teams sites have been provisioned.
 - Awaiting final confirmation on external sharing configuration.
 - Channels for each subcommittee, owners, and membership will be added soon.
 - Transition of content from old platforms to new Teams will begin following setup.NWCG Website Transition
 - Significant backend updates are in progress, including product stewardship and roster linkages.
 - Continued collaboration with the web team will occur throughout the week.

Coordinator Availability

- Coordinator Gaskill is currently on assignment in Arizona.
- Will attend committee meetings as availability allows.
- For critical questions or concerns, please reach out via email or Teams chat.
- Buzz Lechowski — IAFC — Health and Wellness task force was stood up in the IAFC national organization.
- Craig Bondra — USFA — In firefighter health and wellness at large, there is a lot going on to increase the information.
- Bill Waln — NASF — Stood up some mental health training to provide resources. Continue to find clinicians and determine how to collaborate. Due to multiple deaths in the Rocky Mountain area (three fire fatalities, one pilot death, and one suicide) they are planning a stand-down.
- Candace Sheperd- For acute response, moving away from Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) to understand there is more than just that resource.
- Johnny Torgeson — DOW — No updates.
- Narisa Tappitake — USWFS Alternate — No updates.
- Stuart Scott — NASF — No updates.
- Mike Proud- NWS — Looking for Incident Meteorologists (IMETs) for national response. Smoke is going to be an issue.

1325- Current Projects:

- Suicide Prevention Awareness Week (SPAW) - Theme: “Changing the Narrative on Suicide”- Letter is in review with NWCG publications. Once received back, will pass it over to Craig’s team for formatting and 508 compliance. Should be ready to release in September.
 - Get blessing from SRC after completed.
 - NWCG needs working file and PDF file -**Complete by August 28.**
 - International Association for Suicide Prevention – need links to toolkits.

1340- New Business

- Suggestion from the field: #RUGood Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG), PMS 461 update for 2029 — Publication steward is Operations Management Committee (OMC). Present to OMC as potential update. Include content change, location, and timelines. Push to August/Sept.
- Darryl Jones offered his team to create a SPAW forever toolkit with graphic design, etc.
- Possible project: Create health and wellness inspired templates for inclusion into the Incident Action Plan (IAP).

Discussion Notes:

- Group discussed changing the SPAW objectives from awareness to action-oriented focus. The fire industry is great at the awareness piece but needs to shift focus. Creating a campaign increases peer support to all. Like the idea that everyone is responsible for safety, not just one individual or group. Efforts to make everyone comfortable while being a peer supporter.
- HWSC will continue with the course of getting the letter from the chair out for the 2026 SPAW then look at framing the messaging differently as discussed above for 2027.
- SPAW letter will go to SRC for approval. Once received, will send to Craig’s team for formatting and graphics (two weeks). The final version needs to be submitted to NWCG no later than August 28, 2026 for posting. The documents will be submitted in Word and PDF versions.
- Steven requested and links to current toolkits be submitted no later than August 28 but earlier the better.

Chat Notes:

- [NWCG HWSC](#)
- [NWCG Standard Operating Procedure, PMS 900](#)

Topics for Next Meeting & Upcoming Meetings/Calls

Topics from Previous Meeting Minutes:

#RUGood

SPAW Committee Chair Letter

Funding Request denied due to having no graphics as a part of the current contract

Upcoming Meeting

- Date: August 19, 2026
Time: 1400-1500 Eastern Time
1300-1400 Central Time
1200-1300 Mountain Time
1100-1200 Pacific Time
1000-1100 Alaska