



## Interagency Helicopter Operations Subcommittee

IHOW Meeting Minutes — January 28-29, 2020

Anaheim, CA

### Attendees:

IHOPs Members and Advisors
Dan Boyle (Chair) – State
Matt Shaddle (Co-Chair) – OAS
Bryan Bitting – BLM
Bill Sloan – USFS
Chris Wright – FWS
Don Campbell – USFS
Dave Underwood – BIA
John Waddell – OAS - By Phone for ALSE
Nic Strohmeyer - NPS

Guests/Presenters
Rawley Holiday - BIA
Short Haul NPS
UAS Sling Dragon
UAS overview
Annie – NWCG by phone
Tim Blake, Nancy Turner- NWCG by phone
Guilbert – BLM fire AK

Tuesday, January 28, 2020

### Topic: Tasking

- Aerial Unit – UAS unit will work with the Aerial ignition Unit and seek UAS device approval direct through NIAC. UAS has gone through this program before. The device approval document will go through them, OAS will assist, then go through NIAC. The IAIU will still remain under IHOPs.
- The Sling Dragon was sent to NIAC last month, and they're recommendation were:
  - they won't approve until the language is through entire process for IHOPs to approve it.
  - A tasking was sent for an operation manual for it.
- Re-typing of helicopters- IHOPs recommends go with USFS definitions. NIAC wanted more info. and addressed already. FS has 214 helicopters and definitions excludes the Kamax (Type 1).
- NWCG is working on identification guide, across wildland fire, will come back for updates
- Not a task yet, have a discussion due to the IHOG Unit getting a new Chair, Rawley. Eric retiring February 1st and 2-year re-writes coming up, do we want to officially task them about a plan on how to manage re-writes? Will wait until they present to discuss.
- Risk Management committee has a tasking (Mike Reed under NIAC) and the committee must address the yellow book, is it pre-mature to remove RM from IHOG manual?
- Kara from NICC, is tasked with "Role Call" which is a statusing of positions in Wild Cat, but nothing yet.



## Interagency Helicopter Operations Subcommittee

---

### Task

1. Ops guide for Sling Dragon
2. Aerial Ignition Guide approval language process
3. UAS and IAIU coordinating device approval

### Topic: Incident Position Descriptions (IPDs)

- Annie from NWCG will be removing IPD's out of IHOG and adding as stand alone, which are:  
1. Helibase 2. Crew Member 3. Helicopter Manager 4. Radio Operator 5. Deck
- possible tasking to review on the website after it is up; Due date could be October, and IHOG review possibly; Bryan saw 4 positions to review, not 6 on website at: NWCG website/positions/IPD development
- send any new information to Dan for next month's IHOG meeting

### Topic: Emergency Helicopter Extraction (EHE)

- Don: Does not want it anymore, but if we maintain and keep list from Region 6, what are the standards to be on the EHE list: Who approves vendors
- Will there be enough to meet operational needs without it? What is minimum? Need recommendation, relationship between short haul and guards. EHE falls under NIAC, but no group for it.
  - Bryan - The unit hosting could oversee making the minimum standards. Recommendation to NIAC is to keep, drafting a tasking under Short Haul (talk to Fire Ops).

### Topic: ALSE

Phone Call-In: John Waddell

- An update on ALSE w/ flight helmets: Aviation Life Support guide preparing for revision this month, to include USFS & representative from every DOI bureau, not a lot changing, see if the field has any information, helmet standard is from 2 years ago, with a 2-yr grandfather clause for helmets to be replaced, and for military issue helmets, there are few that are qualified.
- The webpage shows what's approved, and the company Evolution Aviation Helmet, tested large helmet sizes only, a certificate of compliance is for large only. Others will show up in 4-6 weeks on DOI.gov website on aviation site.
- NY crash had an issue with the secondary restraint attaching to people and will tackle a secondary restraint issue.



## Interagency Helicopter Operations Subcommittee

---

- Exclusive Use contracts will develop content, more than 300 current contracts, newer 100 contracts will refer to ALSE handbook for authorized equipment; Bryan – '19 & '20 contracts have new requirements in them. ALSE Handbook allows a process to waiver a helmet.

### Topic: IHOG

- NSHO Unit Roster Changes & Role Transitions
- Meeting in April 2020 in Boise, ID
- Annual Publication transition, next planned release is 2021
- 2020 to get call for comments, taskings from IHOPs and 2021 finalize publication release
- Possible to make SharePoint on Office 365
- Revise the Unit Charter, last revised in 2013
- Publication Goals: remove appendices to streamline document, Excel form updates for 508 Compliance, removal of appendix G (Risk Mgmt.)
- NWCG IPD helicopter related positions and Interagency helmet inspection/refurbishment direction

### Topic: Aerial Ignition Guide

- On NWCG website, UAS did not show up in the 2018 revision
- needed changes for fire boss and have worked on it
- in 2015 invited UAS, and introduced Sling Dragon last year
- started Aerial Ignition Workshop in Florida, Montana, and Salt Lake City in the Spring
- issued a Non-Compliance letter in Florida and CO stopped contract; will a change in the re-write, not to let both feet out of the door
- need to get new vendors quicker with the demand; keep pushing things through NTDP
- an Interagency Bulletin for Aerostat will need follow-up through IHOPs
- looking at different lengths of suspension for type 2 helicopters
- aerial ignition training will need to be put on NWCG website

### Topic: UAS

- OAS Fleet Manager working with UAS to develop payload within industry, 1 company came back - Drones Amplified and DJI M600 was just approved, DOI approved DJI products, but there are possible leaks to China though. DJI is the most advanced product after research, OAS approved in July, and NIAC will have final approval for operation in February
- Dragon eggs: current equipment can carry them, can go out about 2 miles, and can make a geofence to not have balls drop outside of parameter



## Interagency Helicopter Operations Subcommittee

---

- Aerial Ignition equipment: Flight Controller/Transmitter and tablet charges about \$50,000 for entire product
  - July-August had contracts totaling about \$2 million in purchases
  - October 10<sup>th</sup> the Assistant Secretary shutdown all contracts, October 30<sup>th</sup> the Principal Deputy stood down entire program, no resource flights except emergency, a Meeting w/ Secretary Burnhardt proved equipment was not leaking, but possible cyber security risks, and DOD working with companies to make American made drones, called blue drone.
  - Draft of order shows what can't order and federal grants that can purchase UAS
  - A memo for a waiver got sent up this week to get approved for currency flights, general course on incident, to authorize for wildfire, search/rescue and waiting for response.
  - FS established IAA with OAS, not sure of status
  - BLM had to cancel 450 trainings.
- ❖ A tasking from NIAC is to have the Aerial Ignition inform IHOPs about feedback and updates on current/future equipment.

### Topic: Short Haul

- Interagency Helicopter Short-Haul Unit (IHSU) - new title proposal
- Organization over the years: 1989 started to become formalized, Grand Teton was a first
- need more peer reviews and in future will need a bigger budget for better equipment
- FS has IAA to partner with NPS since 2015, over the years felt like tug-w-o-war until recently, starting to work together now
- IHSU vision is to continue to integrate across agencies, enhance programs of short-haul services, quality assurance and peer reviews across all programs, and conduct market research with technology design and testing
- there is a difference in budgets across all agencies
- Policy: OPM to supersede DOI Helicopter Short-haul handbook as interim policy; Errata sheet for NPS Short-haul Operations Plan to include reference to OPM, changes were voted on in November 2019 meeting; FS had EMSHOP annual review
- Need one standard design for operation plan that would allow flexibility of updates and changes without effecting the operating ability of fellow agencies
- Industry updates: BOOST dual hook release system, onboard systems developing dual hook system, per OAS all new solicitations will meet 14 CFR 27.865
- Future discussions: funding, project helicopter manager course development, future of EGP and functionality, qualifications can vary between agencies for positions, try to share information for more operations for staff growth
- Standard Operating Plan is approved by IHOPs, need to put on website and possible EHE tasking from IHOPs in future



## Interagency Helicopter Operations Subcommittee

---

### Topic: Agency Updates

#### **BLM – Bryan Bitting**

- 2019 Season Stats: Total FT 5,015; Total Gal 2,847,188
- BLM Fire Helicopters & locations chart show there are 25 aircraft in fleet: Type-1 (1), Type-2 (8), Type-3 (16)
- AK non-fire had high hours
- Contracts: 2 new contracts for this year are Apple Valley, CA and Burns, OR
  - Will be one Type 2 next year in Twin Falls, ID
  - Will be eight in 2022
- STEP: working on procedures and there is one BLM STEP Instructor
- 4 EU STEP programs: Salt Lake City, UT, Moab, UT, Elko, NV, Las Vegas, NV
  - Three potential additions this year: Panaca (Ely) NV, St. George, UT, Ravendale, CA
- Standardization platform – AS350B3
- Ravendale will be a Bell 407HP. So, no longer standardized
- Type-1 UH-60 Black Hawk:
  - 2020 is the fourth year of a 5-year contract
  - approved by DOI & FAA for firefighter transportation, no passengers allowed FAR 91.313
  - No USDA Forest Service personnel allowed to be transported
  - firefighters are essential for the type certificate approved missions
  - FRIES (Fast Rope Insertion/Extraction System) will be installed this season
  - Fast Rope training provided by CBP in 2019 and 2020, may be operational in 2020 season
- Type-1 UH-60 Black Hawk Stats 2017-2019:
  - 135-day MAP, 2017 60 days of MAP due to legal issues (protests), all protests dismissed or denied by GAO & Federal Court of Claims
  - Total flight time 804 hours, 56 initial attack assignments, 4.1 million gallons of suppressants delivered, only 8 hours of UA
  - 58% of FT on USFS – 2.4 million gallons; 33% on BLM – 1.3 million gallons
  - Paul Gleason Award in 2019,
  - 24-person helitack crew; 1,426 firefighters delivered

#### **BIA – Dave Underwood**

- National Aviation Inspector Pilot retired, and a PD is being worked on
- There are 2 Aviation Operation Specialists, out of classification and ready to go, in Boise & Albuquerque
- 8 helicopter EU fleet, upgrade to aircraft in Red Lake, try to share crew
- Got rid of 2 tribal helicopters in Florida
- South rim of Grand Canyon on call contract, will need to help them, LE mostly uses it
  - Tried to have fire resources put on but OJS is not approving due to funding



## Interagency Helicopter Operations Subcommittee

---

- Will try to have 407 or B5 there in future
- Formalizing SEAT bases, 3 air attack bases are under contract
- Quiet on Indian Country last year

### **NPS – Nic Strohmeyer**

- Staff:
  - Branch Chief - John Buheler
  - Fleet/UAS Specialist – Kristin Swoboda
  - Safety – Ody Anderson (May 2020)
  - Helicopter Operations – Nic Strohmeyer
- Regional overview: 5 RAMSs & US Park Police (own SOPs); NE/SE/NC - Vacant with Jessica Sherwood acting; USPP - Lt. John Dillon; Midwest - Patrick Pearson (collateral duty); Intermountain - Justin Jager (January 2020); Pacific West – Shad Sitz; Alaska – Lynn Ellis (December 2019)
  - Most parks lack standalone PAMs; highest hours: AKR, IMR, SER
  - 20% fire, 80% Natural resource, LE, SAR and other non-fire
  - 10 time zones
- Fleet: USPP - 2 Bell 412 and 1 Bell 206B3; BICY - 1 Bell 206 B3; EVER - 1 Bell 206 L1
- Capabilities: Hoist, Short Haul, Rappel, STEP
- Helicopter Programs 2020:
  - Alaska: Denali, Yukon Charlie/Gates of the Arctic
  - Pacific West: Sequoia/Kings Canyon, Mt. Rainier/N. Cascades, Yosemite
  - Intermountain: Mesa Verde, Yellowstone, Grand Teton, Grand Canyon
- US Park Police: 3 aircraft 24/7, 365 days/year; South East Region: Everglades 2 aircraft 365/year; Big Cypress 365/year

### **USFS – Don Campbell**

- Type-1 contracts are out and there are 28 Type-1 contracts, are awarded by April 1<sup>st</sup>, and the acquisition plan is 800 pages now
- There are 34 Type-2 contracts, renewed 2 contracts but not looking good
- There are 64 Type-3 contracts across regions, looking at consolidations if hours remain low on eastern regions
- Modernization Summit April 14<sup>th</sup> in Boise, invite vendors for available aircraft
- Compliance reviews, Region 8 review coming up with possible issues
- Positions: Paul is detailed in DC for 4 months, possibility of Jason Baldwin to fill in the Branch Chief Operations in Boise; Coordinator is filled, ASM/light fixed wing filled, Air Tanker Manager open, Assistant Helicopter Specialist selection sent in



## Interagency Helicopter Operations Subcommittee

---

- R66 MOU to change horsepower minimum

### **OAS – Matt Shaddle**

- Josh Haney filled Program Analyst position for SMS
- Tech services hired a National Science Foundation position
- Dave Rosser National Aviation Manager
- Filled position at BSEE
- TPEC at bureaus, A200 should be out in 2 weeks
- Year-end report in 2 weeks
- Training Aces - March 9<sup>th</sup> and Phoenix April 13<sup>th</sup>
- Consolidated regions from different bureaus

### **State – Dan Boyle**

- States Aviation meeting in Sacramento
- Fire boss investigation, the panel had recommendations: change how to card them and inspect for agency-owned or contract
- Cooperator letter to be the same between all, USFS & OAS to work on letter changes
- Proposal to have everyone in Washington state give \$1.00 per insurance policy for fire and forest-health programs; New bill will help to fund a new helicopter proposal

### **FWS – Chris Wright**

- Agency helicopter had 325 hours for wildfire
- 1 EU ship had 125 hours
- New pilot contract
- Steve acting RAM

**Wednesday, January 29, 2020**

### **Bin Items / Misc.**

- IHOG re-writes
- EHE - NIAC to maintain, and task under Short Haul
- Short haul to be kept under NWCG, and maintained by field, with recommendations from agency reps?
  - Recommend to NIAC that we keep it with letter memo, task the short haul group with recommendations, Dan will start drafting a memo and task to be ready
- Matt work on tasking to NWCG to update the Roster and the date on IHOPs Chair



## Interagency Helicopter Operations Subcommittee

---

### Topic: PSD Machines in Cache

- Need to reach out to Cache group for recommendations
- Talked to Hector, the co-chair of committee, and he would like them to go away
- When machines come back, they are robbed of parts and returned in bad shape, no depth of knowledge in Cache, there are very few of them, 3 Caches have them, they get ordered by large fires, are older than 20 years old, sell them in surplus, ran out in AK
- If keep, need to be trained and watched
- Proposing to reach out to Cache in AK and discuss numbers of equipment and possibility to transfer some/all to AK

### Topic: USFS HOS Update

#### Rappel Update

- IHOPs: there will be no more Interagency Rappel guide
- 5-year strategic plan for the Rappel Program analysis:
  - Modernization and diversity of fleet, facilities, utilization, adapting to change, risk management, findings
- Staffing: revised the 15-person crew, proposing 20-person module per rappel helicopter (2021)
- Helicopter upgrades: safety attributes, range, speed, payload
- Interagency Helicopter Modernization Summit will be April 14-16, 2020
- Requested Info. for the Conklin and de Decker Report, 5-yr. Rappel Program Strategic Plan, USFS Type 1 Helicopter letter, Iron 44 Mitigation
- Rappel training facilities: Tower/Simulators/Infrastructure
  - 2020 Rappel Training Facility Plan has been completed
  - 2 new FS Rappel Towers in Central Oregon (2021), 1 new Rappel Tower in Redding, CA (2022)
  - Repurpose of R-5 tower (Peppermint to Sierra) (2022), needs maintenance funding support and minor infrastructure upgrades
- Validation of Rappel Training Model: tasked group in 2019
  - Fiscal Accountability: travel, class size, 10-year plan for date/location
  - Quality: review of training and progression, standardization, review/revise pilot practical test standards, evaluation of typical terrain training sites
- Training will be April 21-24 in Missoula
- All FS rappel crews completed
- Next Gen: new ropes came with a new auto-stop descender, two-point connection to skid, increased durability, controllability
- Eric Bush - Rappel Specialist





## Interagency Helicopter Operations Subcommittee

---

### Topic: NWCG Update to IHOPs

Phone Call-In: Briefing from NWCG Tim and Nancy Turner:

- An Executive Order was done in January for a new chair: a 2-year rotation, the FS NWCG chair replacing BIA chair, FWS next up, then Brad with UAS
- Formalize training w/ State Dept.
- Proposal with NWS to add member to NWCG
- Annual meeting was a 2-day event covering neuroscience and organizational leadership
- Passing torch to Helicopter Ops
- Reached out a concern to get to supplemental docs
- Nicole Oke is training liaison for group, question on if she is full-time or no? length of employment? Nicole is a detail at NPS, helps between NICC & NWCG; if any new training comes up to let Tim and Nancy know and can help
- When needing to send something to NIAC, how does it get pushed to entity regarding that item? Submit a document with decision, NIAC will go over at their meeting, Krista will notate the decision in minutes, and if needed a NIAC memo, and sent out to entity, all of information or Memo would be posted on website
- If there are any updates on website let Nancy know, Matt will reach out with changes
- will hear from short-haul group on updates and EHE updates

### Topic: All Hazard/Resource HBMG Position - NPS

- Formalize helicopter manager for non-fire, trainee/trainer go over
- There is a task book from 2017 and would like to change to a task sheet
- NPS is using for resource
- Searching if there is a crosswalk for all hazard and will ask IAT group for crosswalks, need help from IHOPs
- UAM is trying to catch everything but is off now, and might need A-100 for helicopter manager
- Kirk will try to address 3-year redundancy on IAT committee
- Representative Glen Kesser might want direct tasking by IHOPs
  - Dan- Draft a White Paper format, IHOPs recommend white paper through NIAC,
  - Nic- IAT rep. brought up, all risk/all hazard shared in IAT
  - Bryan- IAT should draft white paper, route through IHOPs for opinion

### Topic: NIAC Update to IHOPs

Joel Kerley did not call in



## Interagency Helicopter Operations Subcommittee

---

### Topic: Update on IHSES, Fixed Weight Reduction

- Interagency Helicopter Screening and Evaluation Subcommittee (IHSES)
- Membership includes FS and DOI under NIAC
- Download to weight reduction, have to reform to, there is a disparity in makes and models that do not make sense to folks, and a desire to accurately calculate weight reduction
- Recommendation for NIAC to consider: Assessing weight reduction based on helicopter type
  - Type-1 300 lb. weight reduction, Type-2 200 lb. weight reduction, Type-3 100 lb. weight reduction
- Report Provides a summary, the research documents of how final amounts were decided, pros/cons, etc.
- NIAC endorsed recommendations but they want to grant a deviation from contractual standards
- Is a harder way to determine if risk has increased or decreased, is inconclusive as of now

### Topic: Review SOP and IHOPs website

#### Website:

- Matt will update Roster
- Dan upload 2019 Memos
- Sling-able water bags aka blivets. IHOPS Recommended and NIAC approved 134 gallon not in catalog yet
- Short Haul not under Sub-committee

#### SOP:

- Term for Chair to be changed in 2 years, will be 2022
- Vice-Chair, should it be OAS? Take out of rotation?
  - Change rotation-take OAS out, BIA vice-chair
- Let Tim know we need a contact from NWCG to update on courses, join monthly conference calls when have an update
- Recommendation to NWCG through NIAC?
- Aerial Ignition to take over when BLM (Bryan) retires
  - FWS volunteers to take over

#### IHOG Electronic Archive:

NIAC tasking to us, have IHOG digitized

- Is there a need? Group agrees does not think so



## Interagency Helicopter Operations Subcommittee

---

### Topic: NWCG Update to IHOPs

Annie and Shawn from NWCG - on phone call:

- IPD's, how they fit in Management cycle
- IPD import to Standards Management cycle
- NWCG: Primarily establishes and supports nationally common standards for wildlands fire operations
- IPD is "What" of position, Standards are "How" of position
- Reducing redundancy of positions, working on training design process, make how-to videos online
- IPDs online show a large intro, 1-24 list of responsibilities, now has a small intro, and is in a chronological order
- Wait until we formalize a tasking to IHOG, then Annie will call that group to work out details of IPDs.
  - Dan will create a Memo for Deck and Abro to IHOPs as Steward, HLCO to be changed to IASS as Steward IPD, to go through NIAC

### Topic: New Items

#### Next Annual Meeting 2021:

Dan will check the NIAC calendar to plan between February-March

#### Next Conference Call:

March 4<sup>th</sup> 9:00 MT

### Tasking

1. Let Tim know we need a contact from NWCG to update on courses, and join monthly conference calls when have an update
2. 2-year re-writes coming up, officially task IHOG about a plan on how to manage re-writes, then pass through NIAC
3. IAT draft white paper, route through IHOPs for opinion
4. EHE: Recommendation to NIAC is to keep, draft a tasking under Short Haul (talk to Fire Ops) to determine the Standards, Distribution, Approvals, and how to Maintain



***IHOps/IHOW***  
***January 28-29, 2020***

Anaheim CA

**Purpose:** The workshop will identify current and emerging challenges, updates, issues and propose potential solutions. The workshop's success will be directly related to the interaction and contribution of the participants.

**The objectives include:**

- **Identifying, updating and briefing Interagency Helicopter Operations Subcommittee Members on topics/issues that are common to all partners.**
- **Encouraging interaction and networking among the Interagency Helicopter Operations Subcommittee/Units and NIAC.**
- **Providing a forum that challenges us to think about how to anticipate change to meet future.**

**Workshop facilitator: Dan Boyle - Chair**

**Note Taker: Andrea Vigil**

**Tuesday Jan 28th**

Time	Topic	Lead
0830-0900	Welcome to the Workshop & Introductions	Dan
0900-0930	IHOPs Chair Position	Group
0930-1000	Review current Unit tasking(s)	Dan
1000-1030	NIAC Tasks	Dan
1030-1100	EHE	Group
1100-1130	ALSE/Flight Helmet	Matt Shaddle for John W
1130-1245	Lunch	

1245-1430	Unit Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IHOG</li> <li>• Aerial Ignition</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>	
1430-1530	IPDs	Dan
1530-1700	Agency Updates	Group

### Wednesday Jan. 29<sup>th</sup>

Time	Topic	Lead
0830-0900	Review Bin/task items	Group
0900-0930	PSD Machines in Cache	Dan/Group
0930-1000	USFS HOS Update	Donnie
1000-1100	NWCG Update to IHOPs	Tim Blake/NWCG staff
1100-1200	NIAC Update to IHOPs	Joel Kerley
1200-1300	Lunch	
1300-1330	All Hazard / Resource HBMG position	Nic S.
1330-1400	Update on IHSES, Fixed Weight reduction	Bill S
1400-1500	Review SOP and IHOPs website	Group
1500-1530	IHOPs/IHOW meeting spring 2021	Dan
1530-1630	<b>Bin Items/new items/Tasks</b>	Group