



National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG)

Interagency Helicopter Operations Sub- Committee Annual Workshop November 19, 2025

Present:

Eric Graff, USFS
Chris Wright, FWS
Taylor Schmadeka, NASF
David Frey, OAS
Jonathan Lindley, OAS
Kris Paxton, NPS
John Waddell, USFS
Bill Sloan, USFS
Dave Underwood, BIA

Jamie Knight, States (Notetaker)
David Schultz, NWCG

October Meeting Notes Approval:

Notes approved by the group.

NSHO Update (Tech Bulletin & Standard Weight Reduction):

Weight reduction is moving forward within the agencies for contracting considerations. Tech bulletin has been drafted. **Eric will send the Tech Bulletin to John Waddell for publishing to the web early in 2026.**

NWCG Reorganization (IPTM: HMGB & ABRO):

Reorganization implementation date has been pushed back until July 1.

IPTM-HMGB January 27th SME/Contractor meeting. Project charter has been drafted with Steward Committee Intent included. March 23rd for detailed steward briefing.

IPTM-ABRO recommendations were to add 3 required A-courses and add A-courses for recommended learning. Dave has created the appropriate documents to align this. No guarantees to get this into the 2026 PMS 310-1.

HMLR NWCG Waiver Update:

At the October Executive Board Meeting, NIAC Chairs were in attendance to address the “pause memo” regarding the HMLR qualification moving into 310-1. The Executive Board is reviewing every federal supplement position to align DOI and USFS positions. NWCG is going to present HMLR to the Executive Board in December for a waiver on the position pause.

- What are the impacts?
- What publications need updated?
- What are the required training courses?

If the Executive Board approves it, NWCG will have to put a package together to go to the board. There seems to be broad support for moving HMLR forward. If it goes well, this will be a 2027 addition to 310-1.

Will HMLR be a pathway to Helibase Manager when it becomes a 310-1 position? The original design was a “dead-end” qualification. If the qualification does get into 310-1, the group can re-open the conversation. There are likely a couple of years before Helibase Manager enters IPTM process.

HSHU Annual AAR:

Annual meeting was held in early November. Included BLM law enforcement out of California. The group is moving forward with looking at adding BLM to their unit and changing the HSHU committee membership. They know they will likely not be an NWCG unit, but the expectation is commitment to continuing to work together.

Interagency AHPP:

Moving forward and changes in weight reduction, it makes sense to move forward. Take the BLM, add NPS particulars, and review with the USFS. Manual option or spreadsheet would remain as options. Is this a high priority for the group? **This discussion will be tabled until more of the group is present.**

February In-Person Meeting:

May not be worth trying to coordinate with the NIAC meeting for 2026. Boise seems to make sense for this year with all of the changes coming for all agencies. FWS, NPS, NASF, USFS, NWCG support the plan. **Eric and Joe will determine the official date.**

Round Robin:

National Association of State Foresters:

OAS: Continuing hiring. Creating training products that could work for the HMGB IPTM process.

USFS Safety: Building A-200 and presentations/updates.

FWS: Working on contract awards.

NASF: Contracting and training planning.

NWCG: NWCG website has been having some issues. Aerial Ignition Unit PowerPoints have been inaccessible, and they have been working through that process.

NPS: Working on training and meetings coming up. Looking to stand up some UAS programs.

USFS: Continuing to fight fire in Region 8. Getting ready for Aerial Work Safety Conference in Boise.

Next Meeting is January 21st, 2026
TEAMS