



National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG)

Interagency Helicopter Operations Subcommittee (IHOPS) May 20, 2026

Attendance:

Primary Members:

Chair: Eric C. Graff, USFS	☒
Vice-Chair: Taylor Schmadeka, NASF	☒
Joe Rogan, BLM	☐
Chris Wright, FWS	☒
Dave Underwood, BIA	☐
Kris Paxson, NPS	☐
Jonathan Lindley, OAS	☐
Sarah Lee, NWCG	☐

Advisory Members:

David Frey, OAS	☒
John Waddell, USFS	☐
Tori Leshuk, USFS	☒
Bill Sloan, USFS	☐
Ashlee Nelson, USFS	☒

Guests:

Benjamin Thayer – S-372 Lead SME
Nicole Oke - NWCG

April Meeting Notes Approval:

YES ☒ / NO ☐ If no, provide corrections below. Once accepted, post to NWCG website.

May Topics and Presenter:

1. **HMGB Performance Support Package Review** – Graff / Oke / Thayer

NO – Provide PARR briefing/overview for S-372

Require S-229, new single resource boss 2.5 OLT, will be added to every SRB position

Remove S-230, S-270 (unless updated in timely manner), slowly being removed from every course that did require it; outdated & not meant for aviation, was more designed for ground personnel to understand what's going on in the air

Require L-280 8 hrs. ILT / 8 hrs. field exercise

Add other training to support position: A-200, A- 205, A-303, A-310, S-112 Wildland Fire Chainsaws, S-211 Portable Pumps & Water Use (112 & 211 came about because of additional tasks that are going into PTB & IPS)

310-1 Updates: Change fitness level from moderate to arduous – supported by tasks added to PTB/IPS

- Add HMGB maintains currency for ICT4 to mirror other SRB qualifications.

S-372 course to be updated, timeframe remains the same, no change to job aids.

Out of IPTM Scope – HMGB maintains currency for HMLR (if added to 310-1)

- Adding a task to PTB regarding review of IPS
- Create a reusable learning object that focuses on aircraft & FSV carding for both rotor wing & Fixed wing aircraft.

Review of IPS, PTB, Training Outline Documents

- 52 tasks in PTB, lots of “O” and “I,” w/ a few specific W/Rx. Committee should review coding to see if they agree with.

EZ: what is the process for feedback?

NO: Process is, the committee adds comments into the documents & returns to NWCG. Committee has ability to say “Y/N” to some things i.e.: can change coding &/or eliminate tasks in PTB.

Before documents go back to SMEs it will go to Nicole/Sarah to address NWCG level items first. Then the documents will go to ICF (contractor) for cleanup, then documents will go to the SMEs w/ a briefing w/ what was changed by IHOPs & why. Can get SMEs & committee together if there are concerns with changes to discuss further.

EZ: Not enough time as a group to go through every document together; assigning everyone to review & comment individually. **48hrs to review & provide back to EZ -by end of shift Friday, May 22nd.** This will allow him time to consolidate comments into one document to return to NWCG.

TS: Used to have common core tasks across SRB PTBs when all in one PTB. Do we need to see them complete each individual task in each SRB, even if they have already been done?

NO: SMEs acknowledged that some of the tasks may be difficult to get signed off on the fireline; did not want roadblocks so set those tasks as an “O.” Can get tasks signed off while on non-HMGB assignment (ie: go out on an assignment not as a HMGB & complete a firing op, can sign off in HMGB PTB)

TL: NWCG may need to provide some messaging if we can complete PTB tasks while not in that position. Not how agencies have operated/completed PTBs in the past.

BT: SME group had long convos, not willing to compromise on the number of skills required for the position as it is a dynamic position; was willing to compromise on coding so as to not prevent people from becoming qualified.

EG: Maybe committee can have agencies identify process (signing off PTB tasks when not assigned in the HMGB role) and help reduce communication burden. Will work with others in the group & NWCG as they’d like to distribute communication across the agencies.

2. **Dissolving the NSHO Unit / NSHO Request for Change Form** – Graff

EG: Anyone opposed to dissolving or does anyone have any thoughts/ideas for the future?

CW: It may be time to let it go; re-evaluate in June/July & reinvigorate w/ new personnel from WFS & USFS. May be better suited to have someone such as helitack sup. to be lead/tied in.

EG: Re-org in all organizations, may be best to dissolve for the time being. Will touch base with everyone & send out an email. Survey/form intent is to try to figure out what changes the field wants to see, are they minor or major changes? Feedback from the form may help IHOPs decide if changes are done in house or stands back up a committee. Send survey out in June, leave open for approx. 4 months and see what comes back. We are at a point where we need to make a decision and move forward.

CW: DOI in a holding pattern with re-org; trying to identify what new policies will look like.

NSHO will serve fire well regardless, combining four agencies for natural resources, lots of work to do to decide what policy will be.

EZ: NSHO dissolved, will reach out & communicate/update others as needed.

Round Robin:

National Association of State Foresters: MN picking up with activity; PNW getting ready for fire season, completing trainings.

BLM:

BIA:

USFS Safety:

USFS RW: Will be helping w/ Short Haul training – Missoula and Monument new SH crews this year; Missoula standup Friday w/ 145. Monument stands up on June 1. Now that HMGB PTB done, will start to process HMLR PTB & will share with the group. HMLR will be like HMGB, just less complex & not as fire oriented, more contract/administrative to match knowledge/skill set of HMLR.

Expansion of NVG is delayed, not likely for 2026, looking at 2027.

FWS: Transition is still the big word, Monday was first day under new Geographic Area Management. Southeast is still dry & busy with activity, many areas significantly behind with precip. Started with a deficit last fall, some rain coming but not enough. May do some summer burning in the next couple of weeks in the northern part of the area. If there are any T3 helicopters available let CW and/or Sullivan know.

NWCG:

OAS:

OAS Training: Things have been busy, HMGB PARR sounds great, will spend some time reviewing. Working on a STEP procedures out of Blackhawk; will be on a trial basis up to next spring, if it doesn't fit it won't continue. Evaluating power on landings

NPS:

USFS Training: Field training season is on the cusp; busy with administrative duties to get field personnel operational.

Next Meeting is June 17, 2026