

# Public Information Officer Subcommittee

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## Meeting Minutes: 9/26/2024

### Attendees:

Kerry Greene (USFS – Chair), Chris Barth (USFS – Alt. Rep.), Jenner Harsha (USFWS - Rep.), Lessa Peter (BIA – Rep.), Candice Stevenson (NPS - Rep.), Lisa Wilkolak (BLM – Rep.)

### Also in Attendance:

Katy O’Hara (NWCG Coordinator), Angie Lane (WA-DNR – CEPC Liaison), Kevin Maier (NWCG Training Specialist)

### Committee Business:

- The regularly scheduled August 2024 PIOSC meeting was cancelled due to national fire activity and commitment of subcommittee personnel on incidents.
- The PIOSC June 2024 meeting notes were approved for web posting. The July meeting notes were approved for posting with minor changes. Nick Terrell (PIOSC Admin.) will amend the July notes document and resubmit to PIOSC leadership for approval.
- Communication, Education, and Prevention Committee (CEPC) update (Angie) – This year’s in-person CEPC meeting will be held October 8<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup> at the Schoodic Institute at Acadia National Park in Maine. The PIOSC has an invite. Members will discuss and report back to the Subcommittee Chair with interest. Kerry sat in on the last CEPC meeting and provided updates to the PIOSC:
  - The NWCG Executive Board members will be increasing communications with parent committees.
  - CEPC recommended the PIOSC members review the subcommittee webpage on the NWCG site for errors and outdated links.
  - The Fire Prevention and Education Team Subcommittee is looking at changing the PIO qualification level for team members from PIO3 to PIOC. They will likely be reaching out to the PIOSC for input.
  - The fiscal year 2026 budget process begins next week. CEPC has posed an inquiry to the PIOSC for funding. Members should brainstorm funding requests and discuss at the next monthly meeting.
- NWCG Update (Katy) – Omaira Falcon has been selected for the NWCG Webmaster vacancy and will start this coming pay period. Katy’s NWCG connections call is this week where she will update all committees on each’s respective business.
- Agency Updates –
  - BLM – Working on a “Day in the Life at Fire Camp” NIFC video product.
  - BIA – Will be getting a new Public Affairs Specialist sometime next month.
  - NPS – No agency specific updates. Shared that NIFC External Affairs does not wish to make a statement at this time regarding the Watch Duty Application or Facebook shutting down public safety information.
  - USFWS – No update.
  - IAFC – Representative not present for call.
  - USFS – Shared updates on FY 25 budget impacts.

- NASF – Representative not present for call.

## New Business:

- Incident Performance and Training Modernization (IPTM) position review updates and discussion points –
  - PIO Pocket Organizer/Job Aid document creation: The PIOSC held discussion on the benefits of standardizing the PIO Pocket Organizer as a NWCG publication (Job Aid). Kevin Maier and Katy O’Hara advised the importance of standardization and its benefits to the PIO field in helping to maintain the document through future revision. The PIOSC made the recommendation to the SME group during the job aid workshop to standardize the PIO Pocket Organizer for interagency use and to remove some of the specific references (InciWeb, Firenet, etc.) to simplify document maintenance.
  - S-203, *Introduction to Incident Information* course rewrite and proposal for “S-103” online training (OLT) introduction course. The NWCG Executive Board released a memo on August 16<sup>th</sup> that placed a hold on projects that fall outside the scope of the IPTM effort. This would include development an S-103 course. The S-203 course rewrite will include a module that will be recommended training for the Public Information Officer Technician (PIOT) position.
  - Motion to change the name of the PIOT position: PIOSC members agree to proceed with a Request for Change (RFC) of the PIOT position title. The PIOT position is not intended to be a Public Information Officer and the PIOSC feels the position title should accurately reflect the job to be done. Because of the NWCG EB pause memo from August 16<sup>th</sup>, the Incident Position Standards Committee (IPSC) will not be processing RFCs but will accept submissions to hold until the Executive Board lifts the pause.
  - PIO Subject Matter Expert (SME) group next steps: the SME group will meet next week to discuss job aid creation and a communication strategy. The PIOSC will have an opportunity to review this material prior to finalization.
- PIOSC reorganization in NWCG committee structure – As stewards of command and general (C&G) staff positions, the PIOSC is raising the question with CEPC and NWCG if the PIO group is best represented as a subcommittee. Does it make sense for the PIO group to be organized under CEPC? CEPC is requesting a white paper to document how the PIOSC needs to align with other C&G positions. On a related note, Katy O’Hara will pass the request up the NWCG chain of command for the PIOSC to receive an invite to the 2024 Complex Incident Management Team (CIMT) After Action Review (AAR).
- Pending Action Item: Update to PIO Social Media Guidance – Project delayed due to fire activity. Candice and Catherine will re-engage after system drops out of Preparedness Level 4/5.
- Pending Action Item: Creation of “What Kind of PIO am I” Document – Adrienne Freeman (previous member tasked with this project) has not yet provided a response to a request to consult with the PIOSC on this project. The current version of the graphic on the NWCG PIOSC webpage is outdated. PIOSC members will continue to reach out to Adrienne for response.
- Pending Action Item: PIOSC Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Document – Nick had sent a finalized (and PIOSC approved) document to Katy O’Hara on August 14<sup>th</sup> with request to share with CEPC for approval prior to web posting. The PIOSC has not heard response yet – Katy O’Hara will check on the status of the SOPs with CEPC.

## Old Business:

- National Lead PIO Teams Channel – PIOSC members furthered discussion on setting up a quarterly PIO Team leads meeting. Chris will send an email to the current group roster to solicit feedback for the CIMT AAR.
- PIOSC Representation on the Incident Management Team Course Steering Committee (IMTCSC) – The Basic IMT course will be undergoing an alpha test session in Sacramento this week. Katy O’Hara will check to see if there are any PIO representatives included in this session.

## Other Business:

- InciWeb Subcommittee – Following yesterday’s meeting, the field should expect big updates to the platform in the coming weeks. The updated manual is on hold with the rollout of pending updates. There was discussion at this meeting regarding the future use of InciWeb – which is largely dependent on the lifecycle of the contract. PIOSC members are encouraged to attend this subcommittee’s next meeting to provide input.
- New agenda item for next meeting – Discuss future PIO use of Facebook and Watch Duty social media platforms.

## Action Items:

- Draft a white paper for CEPC to document how the PIOSC needs to align with other C&G positions in the NWCG committee structure (Kerry task).
- Send email to the PIO Leads group regarding CIMT feedback (Chris task).
- Update PIO Social Media Guidance (Candice and Catherine task).
- Create “What Kind of PIO am I?” graphic – continue to reach out to Adrienne Freeman with request for consultation work (Adrienne task).
- Research the Request for Change (RFC) process for PIOT name change (Kerry task).
- Verify dates for June and July meeting notes (Nick task).
- Make requested edits to July meeting notes (Nick task).
- Brainstorm fiscal year 2026 budget requests to discuss at the October meeting (all members).
- Review the PIOSC webpage on the NWCG website for errors and omissions to bring up at the October meeting (all members).

**Next Call:** October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024 – 1330 ET, 1230 CT, 1130 MT, 1030 PT.