



## National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG)

### Interagency Helicopter Operations Subcommittee (IHOPS) June 17th, 2026

#### **Attendance:**

##### Primary Members:

|                                    |                                     |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Chair: Eric C. Graff, USFS         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Vice-Chair: Taylor Schmadeka, NASF | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Joe Rogan, BLM                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Chris Wright, FWS                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Dave Underwood, BIA                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Kris Paxson, NPS                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Jonathan Lindley, OAS              | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Sarah Lee, NWCG                    | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

##### Advisory Members:

|                     |                                     |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| David Frey, OAS     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| John Waddell, USFS  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Tori Leshuk, USFS   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Bill Sloan, USFS    | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Ashlee Nelson, USFS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

#### **May Meeting Notes Approval:**

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

#### **June Topics and Presenter:**

- 1. Communication of NSHO Dissolution – Graff**  
EG- communication went out earlier in the week notifying group of current dissolution.  
NSHO survey will be sent July 1<sup>st</sup> to all IHOPs members to distribute to the field for comment.  
Results of survey will determine whether a new group will be formed or if IHOPs takes the task on. If a group is needed, it will reform as appropriate.  
JR- will survey remain open for field's continued input for NSHO changes/updates beyond this year/season?  
EG- only concern with leaving current survey open is that it is hosted by TS, if TS were to take a new position and/or the agencies lose access to Microsoft forms it would no longer work.  
JR- It would be good to have link in the NSHO for the field to provide feedback on a more regular basis  
EG- NWCG may have a process; may be more appropriate to host w/ NWCG in the future but this will work for the time being, will discuss more in the future.
- 2. Distribution of NSHO Survey – Graff**  
NSHO survey will be sent July 1<sup>st</sup> to all IHOPs members to distribute to the field for comment.

3. **IHOPS/RWSC Membership (old & new) – Graff**

EG- It is possible that the RWSC membership will evolve from what was originally submitted due to DOI/WFS transition.

NWCG sent out a new RWSC Teams Meeting invite for next month, some current IHOPs members are on that invite, other are not. EG will review and ensure updated as appropriate. If you will not be a member of RWSC you will not have an invite for next meeting in July. Not sure what is changing and when but EG will continue to update as intel is gathered. Will work to close any gaps that are identified during the transition.

4. **RWSC SOPs & Objectives - Graff**

EG – These were produced by NWCG for the new RWSC. TS & EG reviewed and made a few changes. Will review more in July with all new members and discuss further.

5. **Misc. Discussion - All**

TL: It has been demonstrated with IPTM projects, that SME groups are consistently adding A courses (IAT) to red card (NWCG) qualifications. We have a massive pinch point with IAT instructor pool and it may result in PTBs being held up in FQRCs & continue to result in UTFs.

JR: This group needs to coordinate with IAT/ATSC to ensure appropriate.

TL: Recommend reaching out to the chair of the ATSC subcommittee to establish communication. With the expectation that new qualifications "approved" in the IPTM project will be vetted and communicated prior to them being added into the PMS 310-1.

## Round Robin:

**National Association of State Foresters:** Activity starting to pick up a bit, WA DNR & ODF busier earlier than expected. Discussing bringing on 2 – t1 & t2. Most assets scheduled to come on at the end of the month but looking at bringing them on early, will know more later today.

**BLM:** Prepositioning or committed to incidents as activity picks up. WFS goal is to bring all EU programs into the new agency and identify what that looks like. Struggling w/ legacy policy & authorities & new WFS table of organizations. Everyone is working through; overcommunicating is important during this transition. Ultimately, we need to make sure we are supporting those out there on the ground.

**BIA:** 7 helicopter programs on; 3 in SW are busy with IA. 1 aircraft in southern FL for approx. 120 days. 3 more aircraft are on in MT, not a lot of activity so 1 aircraft moving to WA on legacy BIA agreement. As GAs are filled out with staffing, hope is who is who & who can do what will become more clear. 2 SESs & 2 SEATs on, not a lot of activity for them yet.

**USFS Safety:** QTI training last week. Also busy with Interagency Committee Aviation Policy (ICAP) meeting and Aviation Safety Officer course next week in OKC.

**USFS RW:** All training is done (SH, rappel) and are available or committed. Most of the EU fleet is on (approx. 90%). Congratulations to Tori and Kris on the new positions. Thank you to everyone that has been a part of the group; if you are not on the RWSC please reach out to TS or EG if you need anything.

**FWS:** Things are winding down in SE, activity picking up in SW but nothing major.

**NWCG:** EG: Katie Woods is moving on from NWCG, making SL a very busy person at NWCG; IHOPs needs to do our best to help SL out as much as possible.

**OAS:**

**OAS Training:** Wrapping up water ditching season and training season; moving into development season. Discussions being had to move A-205 to an on-demand course. A-219 triannual requirement may also be a pinch point. A-306 is getting closer to being completed; will get the draft to the COs asap.

**FS Training:** Drafting notes for transition to new position with WFS.

**NPS:** Most everyone has wrapped up initial training, including special training (sh, hoist, step, etc.). Busy start to the SAR season. Do have a few solicitations being worked on. 250<sup>th</sup> having a big impact. Chief Fennessy planned to be in Yosemite mid-July, Susy also coming to address dual function aircraft funded by WFS.

**Next Meeting is July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026**