



Information Sharing and Working Together – Fire Year 2023

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Who we are

The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC), located in Boise, Idaho is the nation's support center for wildland firefighting. It is a place, rather than an organization. [Nine different agencies](#) and organizations are part of NIFC. Decisions are made using the interagency cooperation concept because NIFC has no single director or manager. NIFC has an interagency external affairs staff who work on agency-specific fire and aviation needs, as well as interagency projects and products to share the wildland fire management story.

What we do

- NIFC external affairs staff work cooperatively and often interchangeably to manage an interagency website and social media; communicate fire and aviation activities; address legislation and policy issues; provide statistical data coordinated with National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) intel; and respond to requests from the public, news media, and elected officials.
- NIFC external affairs is dedicated to sharing the interagency wildland fire management story with the goal of enhancing national and strategic communications and policy planning; especially as real-time information sources continue to expand.
- Last year, NIFC external affairs completed a significant redesign of NIFC.gov and it remains a bookmark-worthy hub for fire information with a new, easy-to-navigate and streamlined design.
- Annually, NIFC external affairs provides national interagency fire year themes for public information officers to help communicate information to the public, media, partners, and elected officials.

NIFC external affairs and NMAC

- An external affairs representative attends the [National Interagency Coordination Center](#) (NICC) briefings and is included in [National Multi-Agency Coordination Group](#) (NMAC) discussions.
- External affairs staff write talking points and speeches, create presentations, and maintain an interagency social media presence. The staff also keeps NMAC apprised of national and local public and news media inquiries.
- External affairs staff coordinate all congressional, secretary-level, and other VIP visits to the fire center. They also coordinate VIP and media visits with incident PIOs.

How we can help

If PIOs receive questions related to any of the below topics, please contact NIFC external affairs staff who can provide the information or arrange an interview with an NMAC member or subject matter expert.

- Large airtanker and Global Supertanker contracts handled by the USDA Forest Service (USFS).
- Single engine air tanker contracts administered by the BLM.
- Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) program talking points and social media material. It is important to contact NIFC external affairs on this topic because of [Secretarial Order 3379](#).
- Agency/department budget, and DOI/USFS suppression cost information from 1985 to 2022.
- National statistics and trends for lightning versus human caused fires, drone incursions, and national preparedness levels. Find the 2022 statistics summary generated by the NICC [here](#).
- National-level fire statistics.



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- Rules and regulations for drone usage by the news media while on incidents.
- Film permitting and projects.
- NMAC related affairs, such as military and international deployment to assist in wildfire suppression.

NIFC external affairs provides national, “big picture” information about the current fire situation; specific incident inquiries will be sent to assigned PIOs and PAOs at the local unit or the InciWeb incident contact identified.

Specific Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC) inquiries, such as requests for information about firefighting personnel assigned to incidents within certain geographical areas, will be sent to the GACC.

2023 fire year themes

- Fire year themes can be found on the NIFC website at [2023 National Fire Year Themes](#).
- Units or field offices are welcome to customize these themes to meet local needs. Feedback on these materials is welcome, as NIFC external affairs would like them to be as useful as possible for the field.

COVID-19 and wildland fire suppression operations

- Wildland fire agencies have remained resilient throughout the pandemic and have adjusted guidance and protocols accordingly to keep firefighters, support personnel, and the public safe.
- All wildland fire agencies remain committed to safe, effective wildfire response during the COVID-19 pandemic. Continued coordination with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on COVID-19 safety guidance helps reduce exposure to the virus and decreases spread potential to firefighters and local communities.
- NMAC will continue to coordinate at all levels to help ensure another healthy and safe fire year.
- For more information, visit [NIFC COVID-19 webpage](#) or for public information officers, visit the [PIO bulletin board hot topics section](#) of NIFC’s website.

Information technology

- The Interagency Resource Ordering Capability (IROC), or resource ordering system, team continues to improve the program and its issues.
- The Interagency Fire Occurrence Reporting Modules (InFORM), or the wildland fire reporting system, team continues to work on the program and national fire reporting data processes.
- The [Wildland Fire Open Data site](#) for fire perimeter maps open to the public replaced GeoMAC in May 2020. All Open Data site requests and questions should be referred to NIFC’s Open Data site support request form.
- The [Fire Enterprise Geospatial Portal](#) (EGP) provides standardized geospatial information for the full range of wildfire activities, from response to planning, and leverages a central source of spatial data for mapping, decision support, business intelligence, and situational awareness.
- The Interagency Incident Applications Helpdesk for Fire and Aviation Management Information Technology (FAMIT) applications can be reached via phone at (866) 224-7677 or [iiahelpdesk.nwcg.gov](#).



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Social media

- The external affairs interagency team shares management of NIFC’s social media accounts and welcomes content from the field at any time.
- NIFC social media goals:
 - Share wildland fire management stories and other all-hazard incidents with the public.
 - Show how NIFC supports wildland firefighting efforts at all levels of the organization and highlight interagency cooperation.
 - Build long-term relationships with our audience to increase trust and continue an online dialogue with our followers.
 - Assist with recruitment by sharing and highlighting wildland fire careers, positions, career fairs, and open positions.
 - Each of the five federal agencies have fire and aviation social media accounts that are used for agency specific posts. NIFC accounts share content in the spirit of interagency cooperation and coordination. If PIOs do not already, be sure to follow and tag NIFC on social media. A list of all agency accounts can be found [here](#).
 - Follow and tag NIFC by using the following handles. [Facebook](#): @NIFCFire; [Twitter](#): @NIFC_Fire (note the underscore); [NIFC YouTube](#) (for all fire and all agencies); and [NIFC Flickr](#).
 - The external affairs team strives to share the wildland fire management story through field and incident photos. Submit fire photos following the instructions on the [NIFC.gov website’s New Media Submission page](#).
 - » Ongoing hashtags include:
 - » #FireYear2023
 - » #WildfirePrevention
 - » #WildfireSafety
 - » #FirefightingResources
 - » #VeteransFireCrew
 - » #WomeninFire
 - » #FireName (incident specific)
 - » #NationalFireNews,
 - » #WildlandFireOutlook
 - » #FireScience
 - » #NotYourOrdinaryJob
 - » #WildfireWeatherAWARE
 - » #NeverForgotten
 - » #IfYouFlyWeCant; #NoDroneZone
 - » #RxBurn; #RxFire; #PrescribedFire
 - » #SparkSafety
 - » #RecreateResponsibly
 - » #LeaveNoTrace
 - » #BeOutdoorSafe
 - » No ‘s’ for #PreparednessLevel, #FireJob



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Complex Incident Management (CIM) transition

- The NWCG Executive Board supports the systemic change from type 1 and 2 Incident Management Command and General Staff (C&G) to Complex Incident Management (CIM) C&G.
- The [NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications, PMS 310-1](#), was published January 20, 2023, to include the position qualification requirements for the seven C&G positions.
- Stay up to date with the latest information on the CIM transition by reading the [NWCG Executive Board memorandums](#) and the [Incident Workforce Development Group \(IWDG\)](#) updates. The [IWDG StoryMap](#) contains the history, updates, and FAQs for the CIM transition.

PIO subcommittee

- The Public Information Officer Subcommittee (PIOSC) was created in 2018 under the Communication, Education, and Prevention Committee (CEPC) under NWCG. The PIOSC provides national leadership in all areas of wildland fire public information management. It is comprised of representatives from all NWCG federal agencies and state representatives. Learn more [here](#).
- PIOs or others who want to engage with PIOSC can contact their respective agency representative. The current roster is available: [Roster | NWCG](#).
- Social media guidelines for the entire fire community are available on the [NWCG Public Information Officer Social Media Reference and Guidance page](#) and it is also linked on the NIFC [PIO bulletin board](#).
- The PIOSC has finalized Incident Position Descriptions (IPD) for all four PIO positions including PIOC, PIO2, PIO3, and PIOT (technician). All current PIO position descriptions and requirements are available in the [NWCG position catalog](#).
- The PIOSC is working closely with the Incident Positions and Standards [Committee](#) during the transition to the Complex Incident Management Teams. The PIOSC will provide updates specifically for the PIO positions during the transition. Updates are regularly provided on the PIO Incident Management Response Roundtable calls and any documents produced by PIOSC will be shared on the PIOSC website.
- The PIOSC created a graphic to explain the new PIO positions to aid PIOs in deciding when and how to proceed with training and development: [What type of PIO are you? \(nwcg.gov\)](#). This graphic will be updated soon for PIOC inclusion.
- The PIO technician, PIO3, and PIOC positions are approved and available to order in IQCS. PIO2 and PIO1 positions will remain in IQCS until phased out, this process is dictated by other committees and the NWCG Executive Board and not controlled by the PIOSC.
- PIOSC is working on updating the S-203 course for the PIO3 level and a new on-line self-study course for the PIOT.



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Unmanned aircraft systems

Verify whether your agency prefers “Unmanned Aircraft System” or another term through agency public affairs staff.

- In fire year 2022, there were a total of 15 SAFECOM reports of wildland fire drone incursions, which was less than what was recorded in 2021 (23).
- All DOI UAS operations are still regulated by Secretarial Order 3379, issued in January 2020 and Executive Order 13981 issued in January 2021. In preparation of relief from these orders, bureau UAS programs are drafting plans for transition to new fleet, training and policy expectations congruent to bureau priorities, and [Dingell Act](#) legislation mandating the deployment and integration of optionally piloted technologies.
- [Agency-specific talking points](#) will be available on the PIO bulletin board. Each agency at NIFC continues to educate the public about wildland fire UAS incursions and the issues associated with them.
- It is important to talk with aviation personnel when PIOs arrive at an incident to determine what is allowed by the host agency’s aviation policy and attempt to develop a plan for media UAS flight requests.
- When there is a Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) in place, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is the authorizing agency, so work with your aviation personnel to refer the media to the FAA. If the FAA approves the media to fly within the TFR, you and the media will work with aviation personnel to determine the best flight time, location, flight duration and other safety-oriented logistics.
- As a PIO, please direct the media to work with incident aviation personnel to determine if, when, and where they can safely fly their UAS. If the media is not willing to coordinate with fire officials, they should be instructed not to fly. Document your conversation and notify the unit aviation manager, air operations branch director and/or other fire officials. They will work on the issue from there.
- Visit [NIFC.gov](https://www.nifc.gov) for more educational information concerning UAS and other hot topics.
- NEW for fire year 2023, NIFC external affairs partnered with the FAA to launch this [Know Before You Fly webpage](#).

Administration priorities

The Biden Administration is working to address the four intersecting challenges of our time: COVID- 19, economic recovery, racial equity, and climate change. These priorities can be found [here](#).

- President Biden recognizes the urgency of this moment with converging crises. Each of the president’s plans work toward his commitment to create millions of good-paying union jobs and ensure the country has the tools it needs to build back better.
 - » COVID-19: President Biden will move quickly to contain the COVID-19 crisis and launch a national vaccination program to inoculate the U.S. population efficiently and equitably.
 - » Economy: President Biden is taking bold steps to address the inequities in our economy and provide relief to those who are struggling during the COVID-19 pandemic, including by working with Congress to pass the American Rescue Plan to build a bridge towards economic recovery.
 - » Racial Equity: President Biden is putting equity at the center of the agenda with a whole of government approach to embed racial justice across Federal agencies, policies, and programs.
 - » Climate: The Biden Administration is ensuring we meet the demands of science, while empowering American workers and businesses to lead a clean energy revolution.



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Administration action to address the growing wildfire threat

In response to the growing wildfire threat, the Biden-Harris Administration initiated steps in 2021 to prevent, prepare for, respond to and protect the communities from extreme weather events and wildfires.

- Establishing the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
 - » The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides more increased funding towards federal wildland fire programs.
 - » Fire staff on the frontlines deserve the right tools and training to keep themselves safe while protecting our communities and public lands from the increasing threat of fire.
 - » This funding goes towards improving firefighter pay, reducing hazardous fuels on the landscape, detecting wildfires earlier, supporting local communities in addressing wildfire risk, and restoring lands after a fire.
- Building a more responsible and resilient wildland firefighting resources by:
 - » Bolstering firefighter pay.
 - » Extending hiring of temporary firefighters to ensure effective response throughout the fire year.
 - » Transforming the workforce to a more permanent federal firefighting resource to enable a more consistent response to the growing wildfire season.
- Improving wildfire responsible capabilities by:
 - » Providing a robust response through federal firefighters and additional surge capacity.
 - » Continuing to train and equip military personnel to be ready to quickly support wildland fires as needed.
 - » Increasing aviation capacity to support immediate response and provide critical financial support to assist in wildfire response.
- Using data and technology to protect communities by:
 - » Including leverage satellite and emerging technologies to rapidly detect new, often remote, wildfires.
 - » Using research to improve early detection wildfire sensors.
 - » Using the latest science and technologies to enhance wildfire response.
 - » Preparing to address potential power impacts as a result of wildfires.
 - » Using research and modeling to protect firefighter and residents from smoke and dangerous air; Providing actionable information to help Americans stay safe during a wildfire.
- Reducing risk of wildfires through hazardous fuels management and mitigation investments by:
 - » Providing assistance to mitigate the impact of future wildfires and protecting communities.
 - » Investing in infrastructure to build resilience to wildfires and helping western communities prepare for drought and extreme wildfires.
 - » Implementing more effective treatment of hazardous fuels.



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InciWeb

- InciWeb is a public, information sharing website for current wildfires, fire-related activities, and all- hazard incidents. It is considered an interagency tool, although the USFS is the lead agency responsible for managing the site, IT maintenance, etc.
- The open-source web content management system behind InciWeb has changed to Drupal. The public-facing aspect is mostly the same, but the update significantly changed the back end of the system to make it more user-friendly. There are trainings on the PIO bulletin board [here](#).
- InciWeb is for active, current incidents. It is NOT for archival or historical purposes. Incidents older than one year must be cleared from the system to help ensure there is server space for use on current active incidents. This includes manually clearing out photos, maps and video after an incident is closed out.
- Federal, Tribal, state and county officials can use InciWeb to create and update incidents on their units.
- For questions, contact InciWeb business lead Brian Reublinger at brian.reublinger@usda.gov or the Interagency Incident Applications Helpdesk at iaahelpdesk.nwcg.gov.
- Important InciWeb documents and instructions are located on NIFC.gov [here](#).

Photographers contracted by NIFC partners

- PIOs cannot name request photographers.
- The USFS has several contractors on blanket purchase agreement (BPA) and can mobilize them based on availability and proximity to requesting incident.
- Some of the contractors can do both videography and photography. Please identify what services are needed.
- Contract specialists likely do not work weekends or after hours. It is important to anticipate a need for a photographer ahead of a holiday or weekend.
- If a PIO wants to order a USFS contract photographer or videographer, he/she can contact Stanton Florea at stanton.florea@usda.gov with the request information.
- The BLM also has a BPA, but it takes one to two weeks to get the process approved. If PIOs would like more information about it, please contact Jennifer Myslivy at jmyslivy@blm.gov.
- USFS contracted photographers can only be used on USFS fires. The same goes for BLM fires and BLM contract photographers.

NIFC website

- The NIFC.gov website underwent a much-needed update last year. The new site is responsive, meets web accessibility standards, includes a search feature, and has an easy, simple navigation.
- NIFC.gov should be the go-to source for PIOs working in the field. Please share any feedback regarding the site.



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PIO bulletin board

- The [PIO bulletin board](#) is a place where PIOs can obtain current information to help prepare for a fire assignment. The PIO Toolbox on FireNet, offers current information and other useful resources for PIOs working on incidents.
- If you have a specific topic or a question, please contact NIFC external affairs staff members.

Agency specific information

- Before PIOs go out on fire assignments this year, please take a moment to visit agency-specific information on the [PIO bulletin board](#).
- PIOs will find talking points, fact sheets, communication plans, etc. specific to each agency. Please do not hesitate to reach out if there is additional information that would be useful on this page.

FireNet

- Since 2018, FireNet is recognized by NMAC as the official electronic messaging and file system in support of the interagency wildland fire mission, which complies with legal and policy mandates regarding security and privacy. The FireNet transition to Microsoft Teams occurred in 2020.
- The PIO Toolbox is a public group located on FireNet SharePoint. It was developed for PIOs to share resources and network with wildland fire PIOs nationwide.
- Follow [this link](#) to request a FireNet365 account.

PIO webinar

- NIFC hosts an annual national PIO webinar to discuss and review national wildland fire management issues and topics. **Please save the date for the #FireYear2023 NIFC PIO webinar on Wednesday, May 17, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. Mountain.** An invitation is forthcoming.

International assignments

- NIFC will continue to assist with providing fire personnel on international assignments as requested. Sharing resources between countries has taken place for many years on an as-needed basis.
- NMAC works with the respective GACCs to locate available resource for the positions requested.
- International agreements can be found on the [NIFC website](#).



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NIFC external affairs contacts

Agency	Name	Office #	Govt. Cell #	Email
BIA	Lessa Peter*	-	986-200-1941	lessa.peter@bia.gov
BLM	Samantha Storms*	208-387-5895	916-205-9166	sstorms@blm.gov
BLM	Hannah Lenkowski <i>Detailed to NIFC until May</i>	-	385-315-3361	hlenkowski@blm.gov
BLM	Sheri Ascherfeld	208-387-5144	208-582-3420	sascherf@blm.gov
BLM	Carrie Bilbao	208-387-5457	208-871-1832	cbilbao@blm.gov
BLM	Jennifer Myslivy <i>Detailed to OWF until April</i>	208-387-5545	208-789-6181	jmyslivy@blm.gov
BLM	Jenn Smith	208-387-5456	208-809-1987	J81smith@blm.gov
NPS	Tina Boehle*	208-387-5875	208-484-5712	tina_boehle@nps.gov
NPS	Candice Stevenson	208-387-5239	208-519-0611	Candice_stevenson@nps.gov
USFS	Stanton Florea*	208-387-5437	707-319-9194	stanton.florea@usda.gov
USFS	Brian Reublinger	775-772-3426	775-772-3426	brian.reublinger@usda.gov
USFWS	Kari Cobb*	208-387-5508	208-296-9800	Kari_cobb@fws.gov
BLM detailer	Morgan Rubanow <i>Detailed to NIFC until April</i>	-	503-545-9717	mrubanow@blm.gov

*Agency leads