



NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP

National Interagency Fire Center
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MEMORANDUM

Reference: NWCG#033-2010

To: NWCG Committee Chairs
Geographic Area Coordinating Group (GACG) Chairs
National IC/AC Council Chair

From: NWCG Chair *William Raage*

Date: July 19, 2010

Subject: NWCG Wildland Fire Institute (WFI)

July 2009, the NWCG Executive Board accepted the recommendations of the NWCG Corporate University Business Case to explore a corporate university concept that would provide “hire to retire” career planning and training for the wildland fire community. A contract to produce the NWCG Corporate University Business Plan and Launch Plan was awarded to Corporate University Enterprises, Inc., a national firm well known for working with large and complex organizations and companies to design and establish training or learning programs to meet the needs of the organization. NWCG established a Design Team to work with the contractor in the development of the Business Plan and Launch Plan. As these two plans are developed, the Executive Board has accepted the Design Team’s recommendation to refer to the Corporate University as the Wildland Fire Institute (WFI).

The intent of the NWCG WFI concept is to unify existing training resources and collectively address gaps in learning and development associated with incident and non-incident related skills and leadership. The need for this change in the existing NWCG approach to training was clearly identified in the background data collection during the development of the Business Case.

Three key drivers were identified in the Business Case that support the need for change:

1. A shrinking talent pipeline influenced by anticipated retirements and the pace at which qualifications are met;
2. Changes in the fire environment and the influence of fuels management, budgetary processes, and smoke management; and
3. Changing workforce demographics with new learner profiles.

The Wildland Fire Institute would not be a new training group, nor is it intended to physically centralize all training functions. The intent is for an integrated, collaborative network of existing training groups throughout the wildland fire and aviation community for training development and implementation. The purpose is to provide training, education, succession planning, and

talent management for the wildland fire and aviation community to address incident and non-incident management into the future.

The Business Plan was presented to the NWCG Executive Board on July 7th, 2010. The Executive Board will continue discussions about the Business Plan at their July 21st Meeting. Following a decision regarding the Business Plan by the Executive Board, the Design Team and contractor will continue with the WFI Launch Plan. The Launch Plan will establish the “how”, “when,” and “where” for implementation of the WFI, and guide the phased establishment of the Institute over time.

Workforce development and succession planning may currently be a higher priority for Federal agency members of NWCG than the other members due to changes in the Federal workforce over the past decade. As we proceed, there will continue to be opportunities for all NWCG partners to be engaged and contribute to the discussion and outcomes. NWCG is committed to maintaining and sustaining the strong cooperative and collaborative training and qualification foundation that has served us well for many years.

We will continue to provide updates to you as the WFI concept moves forward. Information and Plans are posted on the NWCG website at:

<http://www.nwcg.gov/branches/pre/owdc/index.htm>

For further information, contact Deb Epps, Project Manager for WFI, at deb_epps@nifc.blm.gov, or Bonnie Wood, NWCG Manager, at bonnie_wood@nifc.blm.gov.

cc: NWCG Executive Board
Kim Christensen, NICC
WFI Design Team