



***National Wildfire
Coordinating Group (NWCG)***

Budget Guidance FY 2011

***Prepared by the NWCG Program
Management Unit
and the
NWCG Budget Advisory Unit***

***Approved by the NWCG
Executive Board
Date: 2/17/2010***

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 2 |
| Process | 2 |
| Overview | 2 |
| Specific Due Dates, Tasks, Responsible Party | 4 |
| Project Selection and Prioritization | 5 |
| Agency Budget Staff Contacts..... | 7 |
| NWCG Program Management Unit Budget Contacts..... | 7 |
| Appendix A: Training Request Process | 8 |
| Appendix B: Information Technology Process | 9 |
| Appendix C: Roles and Responsibilities | 10 |
| Appendix D: Time Period, Tasks, Responsible Party..... | 13 |

Introduction

This document provides the NWCG organization the FY 2011 program budget guidance and process direction. It is developed in partnership with the NWCG Program Management Unit (PMU) and the NWCG Budget Advisory Unit (BAU) with input from Committees.

In order to be considered for NWCG funding, Committees and other NWCG sponsored projects and programs are required to submit a budget request for new and recurring projects or programs for the period FY 2011-2013 in April, 2011. Even though project approval will only be for 2011 budget requests, it is necessary to also show funds you anticipate your committee or project will need for FY2012 and 2013. The data provided helps with outyear planning, including identifying those projects that are coming to completion, and those that you plan to continue for the next 2-3 years.

NWCG funds come from federal agencies fire management program allocation. The percent each agency invests is negotiated and documented in an MOU. Annually the U.S. Fire Administration determines their level of investment and their program emphasis.

There is little to no change in the total NWCG budget and agency investment from one year to the next. NWCG priorities may shift from one year to the next.

Process

Overview

This Guidance of the NWCG budget process provides a framework to fund appropriate projects and programs to meet NWCG goals in a cost-effective manner. Only projects or programs that are within the scope and meet the goals of NWCG are recommended by the PMU to the Executive Board for funding. This process will be reviewed and updated as needed based on guidance from the NWCG Executive Board, user feedback and lessons learned.

NWCG funding is determined during the regular federal wildland fire budget cycle and is conveyed to the PMU by the BAU. Because the federal budget cycle is two years ahead of the current fiscal year, the cap for NWCG spending for FY 2011 is initially established as an estimate in FY 2009. Adjustments to this estimate may occur during the following year. The initial decisions by the NWCG Executive Board for projects to fund will be based on the most current estimate prior to the Interior Appropriations Bill being signed. Allocations will be based on the final appropriations legislation and each agency's budget. NWCG funding is subject to increases or decreases in funding from any individual agency, and is most likely to occur when the final appropriations legislation is signed and agency budgets are known.

Committees and other NWCG projects or programs will submit accomplishment reports at mid-year (April), third quarter (July), and end of year (October) on projects or program accomplishments and funds expended.

The BAU will monitor NWCG expenditures on a quarterly basis and convey this information to the Branch Coordinators and NWCG Manager. Funds that are not obligated or spent by April each year OR by the end of the second quarter may be rescinded and re-allocated to another project unless the Committee Chair/Project Leads can provide ample justification that the funds will be successfully obligated as intended by the end of the current fiscal year. The Executive Board, based on

recommendations from the PMU and BAU will determine where to reallocate the unspent funds following mid-year and third quarter accomplishment reporting.

Funds do not carryover. All funds should be treated as one year funds and if not expended (obligated) in the year they are approved, they “return” to the funding agency. Projects and programs that did not spend their full allocation and did not complete their project may request funding in the next fiscal year; funding is not guaranteed.

Specific Due Dates, Tasks, Responsible Party

| Due Dates | Task | Responsible Party ¹ | Comments |
|------------------|--|--|--|
| March 1, 2010 | New IT investments must be submitted by March 1, 2010 to Branch Coordinators. | <i>Project Leads</i> Branch Coordinators | Use <i>Wildland Fire IT Proposal Form</i> . See Appendix B for more information |
| April 2, 2010 | Training requests submitted to Mark Koontz, OWDC representative | <i>Committee Chairs</i> Mark Koontz | Requests for maintenance/revision of all NWCG courses and training related requests (i.e., course assessments) See Appendix A for more information |
| April 5, 2010 | Committees and other NWCG projects and programs report to the Branch Coordinators on mid-year expenditures | <i>Committee Chairs/ Other NWCG Project and Program Leads</i> | Identify savings or additional funds requests. |
| May 3, 2010 | Continuing IT investments must be submitted by May 3, 2010 to Branch Coordinators. | <i>Project Leads</i> Branch Coordinators | Use <i>FY 2011 NWCG Budget Request Form</i> . See Appendix B for more information |
| June 14, 2010 | Committee budget requests are submitted to the Branch Coordinators. | <i>Committee Chairs</i> | Due date is 90 days after Memo is issued |
| July 5, 2010 | Committees & other NWCG projects and programs report to the Branch Coordinators on third quarter expenditures | <i>Committee chairs & Other NWCG Project and Program Leads</i> | Identify savings or additional funds requests. |
| October 18, 2010 | Committees & other NWCG projects and programs submit end of year project expenditure reports to the Branch Coordinators for FY 2010 expenditures | <i>Committee Chairs & Other NWCG Project / Program Leads</i> | This expenditure report will be incorporated into the NWCG Annual Report. |

¹ The "lead" for each task is represented in italics in the Responsible Party column.

Project Selection and Prioritization

NWCG Executive Board Themes

More specific guidance will be given after the development of an action plan which addresses key issues identified at the 1/12/10 Strategic Planning Meeting

FY 2011 – 2013 Areas of Emphasis

Projects and programs requesting **NEW** funding should support the following:

- Implementation of the Federal Fire Policy
- Projects that meet the funding criteria for US Fire Administration funds
 - These funds will be used to support work with fire –adapted communities, predictive services, wildland interface issues. These funds are expected to be obligated in the year they are allocated. The funds are expected to be expended within two years.
- NWCG Strategic Plan: http://www.nwcg.gov/nwcg_admin/strategic-plan.pdf
- Support for NWCG organizational structure
- Operation, management, and development of the NWCG organization
- Successional Planning – positioning the agencies for workforce capabilities for the future, (such as training, details, recruitment of “shortage skills”, etc.)
- Safety programs or projects that add value to existing programs at the national scale or remedy previously identified safety issues

Projects and programs requesting **CONTINUATION** of funding must meet one or more of the following:

- Support safety
 - Maintenance of ongoing national and interagency programs
 - Refresher training
- Wrap-up or finish projects and programs underfunded in FY 2010
- Projects and programs that were funded for one year with second year funding requested/indicated in the original request
- Maintenance of NWCG IT projects that are in “steady state”² (See Appendix B – Information Technology Process)
- Operation, management, and development of the NWCG organization
- Training development scheduled for FY 2011 that does not conflict with the goals and objectives of the NWCG Corporate University initiative

Forward Thinking

There are several concepts under development that should be considered in planning your work in FY2011 and beyond. These concepts will move the NWCG organization forward. A few of these are:

- Corporate University
- Interagency Fire Management Cohesive Strategy
- WFDSS evolutions
- National Wildland Fire Enterprise Architecture (NWFEA) implementation

² Operations and maintenance in this context is defined by OMB Circular No., A-11, Part 7 as those IT investments considered to be ‘steady state’. Steady state (operational) means an asset or a part of an asset, with a delivered component performing the mission.

Important Changes and Reminders in FY 2011

- ❖ All NWCG training proposed (with or without a funding request) by committees other than the Operations and Workforce Development Committee (OWDC) must first be coordinated through and approved by the OWDC (See Appendix A – Training Request Process).
- ❖ State travelers are defined as current employees of state, county, or local governments. Any exception, i.e., retiree, contractor, etc., will be reviewed by the NASF Fire Director and Forest Service Administrative Officer, and a determination will be made. State travel funding will be provided, within the limits of the available funding, for state employees to travel to/from committee meetings and travel in association with accomplishing the committee's program of work. All state travelers must be approved in advance by the NASF representative to NWCG Executive Board. All state travelers must be pre-approved by their committee chairs PRIOR to traveling. It is the committee chairs' responsibility to ensure all state travelers are approved in advance.
- ❖ Funding for state travelers can ONLY be expended for state travel. No other traveler costs are supported by NWCG funds.
- ❖ Funding for federal travelers in association with committee, or NWCG group work, is paid for by the employing agency.
- ❖ Committee "support" such as note-takers, meeting rooms, and outside facilitators will usually not be funded.
- ❖ NWCG publications that are proposed for updates or revised publications must be coordinated with the NWCG publications group before funding is requested. (See *NWCG Operating Principles and Guidelines*, section 10.0).
- ❖ Information Technology (IT) funding requests will only be considered for projects that have been approved by the Wildland Fire Investment Review Board (WFIRB).

Selection Criteria

The following criteria will be used by NWCG to develop and prioritize recommendations for funding to the Executive Board. These criteria are not considered to be all-inclusive, or listed in any priority order.

1. How the project supports the project selection and prioritization themes and emphasis areas
2. Successful past performance by the committee, project or program
 - a. Prior year's budget management
 - b. Accomplishments
3. Projects and programs that:
 - a. Have been obligated on contracts exceeding the current fiscal year, and have a defined end state
 - b. Personnel funding that cannot be dropped without adverse impacts to the NWCG program (mandatory) accomplishments
 - c. Other items or projects that cannot be dropped without adverse impacts to the NWCG program (mandatory) accomplishments
4. Operations and Maintenance (this section is under revision for 2011)
 - a. IT systems that will be in a steady state (See Appendix B)
 - b. Publications - Updates to publications that support NWCG goals and objectives and have been coordinated with the NWCG publications support group and are ready to proceed
 - c. Training - Maintenance of training curriculum that meets NWCG goals and objectives, and has been approved by OWDC
 - d. Project costs to maintain established products/services
5. Reasonableness of funding and workload to any one committee

Agency Budget Staff Contacts

| Agency | Budget Contact for NWCG Projects |
|--|--|
| NWCG Budget Advisory Unit Chair (BLM) | Denise Schmitz (208) 387-5161 |
| Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) | Maggie Moran (208) 387-5932 |
| Bureau of Land Management (BLM) | Grant Beebe (208) 387-5568 Lisa McDevitt (208) 387-5540 |
| Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) | Kathy Perez (505) 248-6812 |
| Forest Service (FS) (Includes State Travel and Fire Administration) | Bobbe Bilyeu (208) 387-5678 Cheryl Molis (208) 387-5608 |
| National Park Service (NPS) | Jeff Scott (208) 387-5210 |

NWCG Program Management Unit Budget Contacts

| NWCG Position | Name, Phone Number |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Equipment & Technology Branch Coordinator | Paul Schlobohm (208) 387-5269 |
| Preparedness Branch Coordinator | Tim Blake (208) 387-5262 |
| Policy, Planning & Management Branch Coordinator | Elaine Waterbury (208) 387-5276 |
| Portfolio Coordinator | Carol Saras (208) 387-5266 |
| NWCG Manager | Bonnie Wood (208) 387-5265 |

APPENDIX A
Training Request Process
Due Friday, April 2, 2010

This includes:

- course assessments, new training proposals, maintenance and/or revisions of existing courses, and digital training media, whether or not you are requesting NWCG funds,
 - NWCG funding requests for maintenance/revision of NWCG courses and training related requests (i.e., course assessments).
-
- Submit your *FY 2011 NWCG Budget Request Form* to the Operations & Workforce Development Committee (OWDC) Representative, Mark Koontz, Mark_Koontz@nps.gov, 208-387-5090, by Friday, April 2.
 - The OWDC will review all submitted NWCG training budget requests to validate they are within the scope of NWCG training.
 - OWDC will also review the full list of submitted NWCG budget requests for training request with the three Branch Coordinators to discuss OWDC's prioritization process and recommendations for alterations to the original committee funding requests.
 - If within the scope of NWCG the OWDC will prioritize these training requests as part of their committee project prioritization and submit the OWDC project prioritization list to the Preparedness Branch Coordinator for inclusion in the NWCG Budget requests.
 - All committees that submit NWCG budget requests for training are expected to fully coordinate and discuss their requests with OWDC prior to submission of the budget request.

Funding requests for NWCG sponsored training, submitted through any other channels will not be considered for NWCG funding.

APPENDIX B
Information Technology
NEW IT Proposals due Monday March 1, 2010
Continuing IT Proposals due Monday May 3, 2010

This appendix provides guidance for following the 2011 NWCG budgeting process that involves information technology.

IT projects are those that involve the development, implementation, and maintenance of computer hardware and software systems to organize and communicate information electronically.

Examples of IT projects:

- ASCADS – Automated Sorting, Conversion, and Distribution System
- FEIS – Fire Effects Information System
- National Lightning Detection Contract
- LMS – Learning Management System
- GIS Web Portal
- NFMD – National Fuel Moisture Database
- RAWS Web Data Archive
- SAFENET Maintenance
- Group Website Redesign

For 2011, any new IT project must submit a *Wildland Fire IT Proposal Form* to the appropriate Branch Coordinator by **March 1, 2010**.

Continuing IT projects must submit a *FY 2011 NWCG Budget Request Form* by **May 3, 2010**.

Call Carol Saras, Portfolio Coordinator, 208-387-5266 with questions.

APPENDIX C

Roles and Responsibilities

Project Management Unit (PMU)

- Develop annual budget guidance to committees and other NWCG sponsored projects and programs.
- Prioritize projects submitted through Branch Coordinators
- Annually, in collaboration with the BAU, recommend for funding projects to the NWCG Executive Board. Review mid-year, third quarter and end of year accomplishment reports. Collaborate with the BAU to provide recommendations to the Executive Board regarding unexpended current year funds and allocation adjustments of these funds at mid-year and third quarter.
- Prepare NWCG annual report.

Branch Coordinators

- Develop a budget template for NWCG project requests and execution tracking with assistance from the BAU, NWCG Manager
- Assist NWCG Manager with NWCG guidance.
- Develop a template for NWCG budget requests and execution tracking with assistance from the NWCG Manager and BAU.
- Assist committees with questions on budget and direct to appropriate agency budget contact as needed.
- Provide guidance to Committee Chairs on how to complete the NWCG budget process.
- Receive committee funding requests.
- Facilitate Branch Board prioritization of all projects submitted within the Branch.
- Annually advise committees of approved projects.
- Collaborate with other Branch Coordinators, Portfolio Coordinator, Application Architect and NWCG Manager to prioritize annual funding requests, and mid-year and third quarter adjustments. Identify if there is overlap within requests and rectify them.
- Review Committee program of work and work with committee chair to resolve any discrepancies in funding requests and workload.
- Monitor accomplishment reports through-out the year for committee's in relation to their program of work.
- Receive mid-year, third quarter, and end of year accomplishment reports from committees and subcommittees.
- Resolve budget differences with agency budget coordinator based on midyear and quarterly accomplishment reports.
- Collaborate with the BAU to provide recommendations to the Executive Board regarding unexpended current year funds and allocation adjustments of these funds at mid-year and third quarter.
- Monitor committee expenditure of funds and/or accomplishments.

NWCG Budget Liaison

- Maintain all budget project files for the NWCG Staff.
- Key contact for PMU budget processes

Committee Chairs

- Follow specific processes to get prior approval for projects that include: training, publications and IT
- Develop project request.
- Prioritize projects within committee and Subcommittees.
- Submit prioritized requests on the NWCG budget template to Branch Coordinators.
- Participate in Branch Board prioritization process. Support agreements of Branch Board.
- Monitor and ensure project and program budget obligations are accomplished in a timely manner.
- Report to Branch Coordinators on accomplishments and budget status at mid-year, third quarter, and end-of-year.

Budget Advisory Unit

- Execute the budget process.
- Work with Branch Coordinators to resolve any issues identified in the budget review process.
- Agency facilitating the funds distribution will prepare the NWCG Shared Costs Spreadsheet.
- Develop a process to account for funds allocated to the committees or projects.
- Monitor committee/project expenditures quarterly at mid-year, third quarter, and end-of-year; advise Branch Coordinators of concerns.
- Review prioritized project list and identify concerns/issues to the PMU.
- Work with Branch Coordinators and NWCG Manager to develop recommendations for the Executive Board for modifications to committee/project funds.
- Comply with budget timelines.
- Determine funding available for annual NWCG allocations by Agency.
- Assist PMU with development of the NWCG Budget Guidance.
- Advise all agencies budget personnel annually of NWCG budget allocations.
- Assist in review of results and recommendations to NWCG Executive Board for any changes based on committee and other reports at mid-year and third quarter accomplishment reports.
- Collaborate with the PMU to provide recommendations to the Executive Board regarding unexpended current year funds and allocation adjustments of these funds at mid-year and third quarter.
- Advise PMU and Executive Board of project funds not obligated by April each fiscal year which may be rescinded or re-allocated.
- Monitor expenditures monthly beginning in April (mid-year) each fiscal year.
- Annually determine any NWCG carryover funds by agency and advise PMU.

Portfolio Coordinator

- Review IT funding requests and provide recommendations to Branch Coordinator on project readiness, need, or other issue.
- Review mid-year and quarterly accomplishment reports on IT projects and provide recommendations for modifications to project funding based on accomplishment and mid-year requests.

IT Project Managers

- Serve as the agency point of contact to expend the funds.
- Develop project request and submit to the Branch Coordinator
- Report Branch Coordinator on accomplishments and budget status at mid-year, third quarter, and end-of-year.
- Make appropriate arrangements (contracts, agreements, job code, etc.) in order to execute requested project upon NWCG Executive Board approval of funds.

NWCG Executive Board

- Issue annual NWCG Budget Guidance,
- Approves annual NWCG funding and projects or programs to be funded
- Approves mid-year and third quarter requests based on recommendations from the PMU and BAU.

APPENDIX D

Time Period, Tasks, Responsible Party

| Time Period | Task | Responsible Party³ | Comments |
|--------------------|--|--|---|
| November 2009 | Determine funding available for FY 2011 NWCG allocation | <i>Budget Advisory Unit Chair</i> | Funding based on decisions from FY 2010 |
| November 2009 | Identify funding level from National Association of State Foresters (NASF) for State Travelers | <i>Forest Service Budget Officer</i> | FY2010 capped at \$150,000 |
| January 2010 | Develop final draft of annual budget guidance | <i>NWCG Manager</i> BAU Branch Coordinators | Collaborate with BAU to ensure adherence to agency policy, rules, and regulations, etc. <i>(For the out years this would be done in the Fall)</i> |
| January 2010 | Review 2011 Budget Guidance with Committee Chairs | <i>Branch Coordinators</i> | This will be done annually |
| February 2010 | Issue NWCG budget guidance | <i>NWCG Manager</i> prepares memo, NWCG Chair signs | Project worksheet will be an attachment to the guidance. Issue guidance at least 90 days prior to budget request due date. |
| February 2010 | Memo to Committees and project managers to develop and submit FY 2011 budget request | <i>NWCG Manager</i> prepares memo, NWCG Chair signs | 90 days prior to budget request due date. |
| February 2010 | NWCG Publications – updates/revisions coordinated thru NWCG publications group. | <i>Committee Chairs</i> | Prior to funds being requested, See <i>NWCG Operating Principles and Guidelines</i> , section 10.0 |
| March 1, 2010 | New IT investments must be submitted by March 1, 2010 to Branch Coordinators. | <i>Project Leads</i> Branch Coordinators | Use <i>Wildland Fire IT Proposal Form</i> . See Appendix B for more information |
| April 2 2010 | Training requests submitted 30 days after guidance released. See Appendix A | <i>Committee Chairs</i> Mark Koontz | Requests for maintenance/revision of all NWCG courses and training related requests (i.e., course assessments) must be submitted to OWDC |
| April 2010 | Develop budget request and submit to committee chair | <i>Project Leads/ subcommittee chairs/task group leads</i> | Use best cost estimate |
| April 2010 | Determine Committee State Travel funds | <i>Branch Coordinators</i> | |

³ The "lead" for each task is represented in italics in the Responsible Party column.

| Time Period | Task | Responsible Party³ | Comments |
|--------------------|--|--|--|
| May 3 2010 | Continuing IT investments must be submitted by May 3, 2010 to Branch Coordinators. | <i>Project Leads</i> Branch Coordinators | Use FY 2011 NWCG Budget Request Form. See Appendix B for more information |
| June 14, COB 2010 | Committee budget requests are submitted to the Branch Coordinators. | <i>Committee Chairs</i> | Due date is 90 days after Memo is issued |
| June 17, 2010 | BAU to review non-committee funding requests | <i>BAU</i> | |
| June 2010 | Branch Board review of all funding requests within Branch | <i>Branch Coordinators</i> <i>Committee Chairs</i> | Branch Coordinators and Branch Board prioritize all funding requests submitted in Branch |
| July 2010 | Branch Coordinators and NWCG Manager review and prioritize projects within available budget | <i>Branch Coordinators</i> <i>NWCG Manager</i> | List will include alternate projects in priority order for funding |
| July 2010 | BAU review proposed FY 2011 list of projects or programs for funding. Identify issues or concerns with proposals. | <i>BAU</i> | Joint meeting with the BAU, Branch Coordinators, NWCG Manager, to discuss and resolve issues or concerns with proposals. |
| August 2010 | FY 2011 NWCG tentative budget allocations decision | <i>NWCG Executive Board</i> | This is a tentative discussion for planning and POW. Decision may be altered when final budget received |
| September 2010 | -BAU advise agency's budget personnel of FY 2011 NWCG tentative budget decisions -Branch Coordinators advise committees of tentative budget decisions -Advise other NWCG projects and programs of tentative budget decisions | <i>BAU</i> <i>Branch Coordinators</i> | This is a tentative discussion for planning and POW. Decision may be altered when final budget received |
| September 2010 | Apply project information to NWCG Shared Costs Worksheet | <i>BAU Lead for</i> Interagency Budget allocation spread sheet. | Official budget allocation tracking sheet for the NWCG partners |

³ The "lead" for each task is represented in italics in the Responsible Party column.

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|--|--|--|--|
| October 2010 or once Appropriation is signed | BAU work with Committee Chairs regarding cost coding structure and accountability tracking. | <i>Agency Budget Staff, Committee Chairs</i> | |
| Mid-Year Review of Current Year | | | |
| February 2010 | Reply due memo to committees/project managers requesting mid-year expenditure report. | <i>NWCG Manager</i> prepares memo, NWCG Chair signs | This will include the committee's project expenditure report |
| April 5 2010 | Committees and other NWCG projects and programs report to the Branch Coordinators on mid-year expenditures Identify savings and/or request for additional funds. | <i>Committee Chairs/ Other NWCG Project and Program Leads</i> | NWCG Chair send reply due memo in February to committees with project expenditure report |
| April 2010 | Review reports and provide recommendations to NWCG Executive Board for any changes in allocation. | <i>NWCG Manager, Branch Coordinators, and BAU</i> | Recommendations include use of contingency funds if available. |
| April 2010 | Decisions on mid-year requests. | <i>NWCG Executive Board</i> | Including contingency funds if available. |
| Third Quarter Review of Current Year | | | |
| June 2010 | Reply due Memo to committees chairs, requesting third quarter expenditures | <i>NWCG Manager</i> prepares, Signed by NWCG Chair | This will include the committee's project expenditure report. |
| July 5 2010 | Committees & other NWCG projects and programs report to the Branch Coordinators third quarter expenditures | <i>Committee chairs & Other NWCG Project and Program Leads</i> | Identify savings or additional funds requests. Submit on project expenditure report provided in memo. |
| July 2010 | Review reports and provide recommendations to NWCG Executive Board for any adjustments to allocations. | <i>Branch Coordinators NWCG Manager & BAU</i> | Recommendations include use of contingency funds |

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|---|--|--|--|
| July 2010 | Decisions on third quarter requests for funding adjustments | <i>NWCG Executive Board</i> | Based on recommendations provided by the Branch Coordinators and BAU. Recommendations include use of contingency funds |
| End-of-Year Review of Current Year | | | |
| September 2010 | Reply due Memo to committees chairs, requesting EOY expenditures. | <i>NWCG Manager</i> prepares, Signed by NWCG Chair | This will include the committee's project expenditure report. |
| October 18 2010 | Committees & Other NWCG projects and programs submit project expenditure reports to the Branch Coordinators for FY 2010 expenditures | <i>Committee Chairs & Other NWCG Project / Program Leads</i> | This expenditure report will be incorporated into the NWCG Annual Report. |