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NWCG User Guide for Glossary of Wildland Fire

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The *NWCG User Guide for Glossary of Wildland Fire* provides guidance on the development and review of glossary entries approved by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). The *NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire*, PMS 205, provides the wildland fire community a single source for accurate and consistent wildland fire and incident management terminology used by the NWCG and its subgroups. Within this guide, users and committees can find instructions on the glossary process; tips for viewing the glossary on the NWCG website; guidance for committees and subcommittees assigned ownership of glossary terms, including how to request, develop, and revise a glossary entry; technical requirements for complete glossary entries; and a list of contacts for support.

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) provides national leadership to enable interoperable wildland fire operations among federal, state, tribal, territorial, and local partners. NWCG operations standards are interagency by design; they are developed with the intent of universal adoption by the member agencies. However, the decision to adopt and utilize them is made independently by the individual member agencies and communicated through their respective directives systems.

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Understanding the Glossary Process

The *NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire*, PMS 205, provides an extensive listing of approved terms and definitions used by the NWCG community. It contains terms commonly used by NWCG in the areas of wildland fire and incident management and is not intended to list all terms used by NWCG groups and member agencies. The NWCG has directed that all committee and subgroup product glossaries be contained within the *NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire* to maintain definition consistency and clarity among documents.

What is a Glossary Entry?

A glossary entry includes a term and one or more definitions for that term. Most terms only have one definition. However, in some cases a term may be used in differing contexts by various business areas so multiple definitions are warranted.

Consistent use of terminology promotes the efficient sharing of information, facilitates analysis of data from disparate sources, improves data integrity, and maximizes the use of shared resources.

NWCG glossary terms must:

- Be specific to wildland fire,
- Relate to NWCG committee work or publications,
- Not be defined in a common dictionary.

Examples of excluded glossary terms:

- *Organizations*: Agency and Bureau names which can be easily researched on-line, e.g., National Park Service, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, etc.
- *IT Applications*: Publications should address them generically (for example: Resource ordering system vs. ROSS). An inventory of IT Investments is managed by the WFIT Program Management Office (<https://sites.google.com/a/firenet.gov/www/>).
- *NWCG Positions*: Information about approved NWCG positions is centralized under the NWCG website.

Quick Steps

1. Go to <https://www.nwcg.gov/glossary/a-z> or find the *NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire*, PMS 205, from the publications list at <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications>.
2. Find an individual glossary entry by:
 - a. Browsing through the list alphabetically by the first letter of the glossary term.
 - b. Hit **Ctrl. F** on your keyboard for **search** function.
 - c. Search terms by committee or publication with the **Glossary Tags** menu.
3. Click on a term for more information.

Term Development and Maintenance

A monthly update of the glossary allows committees and organizations responsible for products to incorporate changes on a continual basis. An NWCG committee or subgroup is assigned as the steward to develop or revise a glossary entry. These stewards are – or represent – the subject matter experts and can ensure accuracy of definitions and consistency across agencies. The following entities are involved in development and maintenance of NWCG glossary entries: requestor, Data Standards and Terminology Subcommittee (DSTS), stewards, reviewers, and the NWCG Web Manager.

See Figure 1 for more specific definitions for each entity involved and the steps in the maintenance of the NWCG Glossary.

Glossary Request Participants

Figure 1: Diagram key for participants involved in maintenance of the NWCG Glossary.

Participant	Definition
 Requestor	A person (within NWCG or the public) that proposes the need for a new or revised glossary entry.
 Data Standards and Terminology Subcommittee (DSTS)	A subcommittee within NWCG that assures all proposed changes to <i>NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire</i> follow a standardized development process, are properly vetted, approved, and submitted for publication.
 Glossary Stewardship Group (NWCG committees and subgroups)	An NWCG committee or subgroup assigned to develop or revise a glossary entry that ensures consistency across agencies (or whose use has interagency support). This group may identify a member as point of contact.
 Internal Reviewers (NWCG committees and subgroups)	Persons within the wildland fire community who review draft glossary entries and provide feedback.
 NWCG Web Manager	Person responsible for maintaining the NWCG website.

The Process

New Term Requests

A requestor can submit a proposal for a new or revised glossary entry. The development and maintenance processes are shepherded by the DSTS, which assures that all glossary proposals follow a standardized development process, and are properly vetted, approved, and submitted for publication.

Stage	Responsibility	Description
1	Requestor	Submits a proposed need for a new or revised glossary entry.

Stage	Responsibility	Description
2	Data Standards and Terminology Subcommittee (DSTS)	Reviews the request and assigns a NWCG committee(s) or subgroup(s) as the Glossary Stewardship Group. Note: The Glossary Stewardship Group is selected based on the subject matter expertise required to develop and maintain the glossary entry.
3	Glossary Stewardship Group and DSTS	Conducts two levels of review within NWCG Note: The reviews are open for committee, subgroup, and public comment during the review stage.
4	Glossary Stewardship Group and DSTS	After all comments have been addressed, the draft glossary entry is finalized and approved Important: terms are not static; changes in policy, business requirements, processes, and technology may necessitate changes to the glossary.
5	NWCG Web Manager	Updates the glossary located within the NWCG website.

Revised Term Requests

The process for revising an approved glossary entry is similar to the new glossary entry request process, which includes careful consideration by the steward and the DSTS, as well as a comment period from the committees, subgroups, and the public. See [Developing a Glossary Entry](#).

How Long Does the Process Take?

The process for creating or revising glossary entries can vary based on the complexity of the request and the steward's schedule. If glossary entries are proposed, they are posted to the glossary webpage monthly for review. All revisions are immediately incorporated into the *NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire* upon approval.

Glossary Entry Management

The NWCG website <https://www.nwcg.gov/about-the-nwcg-glossary-of-wildland-fire> facilitates the publication and maintenance of glossary entries by providing the following capabilities:

All users, which include the public, can:

- View the *NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire*, PMS 205.
- Submit a request for a new glossary entry or a revised glossary entry.
- Comment on proposed revisions or new glossary entries.

Glossary Entry Status

As a glossary entry is developed or revised, it is tracked by the DSTS and assigned a status.

The status indicates the stage the glossary entry is in, from the time the request for a new or revised glossary entry is submitted, until the glossary entry is approved. Only approved glossary entries are published in the *NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire*. Contact the DSTS via email at blm_fa_nwcg_glossary@blm.gov for information about glossary entries that may be in the process of being revised. The following table describes each status.

Glossary Entry Status	Status Description
Requested	A proposal for a new or revised glossary entry that has been submitted to the NWCG Data Standards and Terminology Subcommittee (DSTS).
Received	A proposal for a new or revised glossary entry that has been received and reviewed by the DSTS for validation.
Assigned	A new or revised glossary entry has been assigned to a steward through a Glossary Steward Point of Contact (POC) within that group for drafting.
Review	The draft glossary entry is available for review by all committees and subgroups of NWCG, as well as members of the wildland fire community.
Final Review	The draft glossary entry is going through a final review by the DSTS before approval for publishing.
Approved	The glossary entry is approved and is published in the <i>NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire</i> .
Archived	The glossary entry is made an historical record and is no longer in use.

Things to Consider When Submitting a Request

The requestor should answer the following questions prior to submitting a request for a new or revised glossary term or definition.

Pre-work checklist	How do you find out?	What does that tell you?
✓ Does the glossary term already exist within the <i>NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire</i> ?	Search the <i>NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire</i> to determine whether the term and the appropriate definition are already published.	You can use the term.
✓ If the glossary term exists within NWCG, does it need to be revised to meet my needs?	View the term and its definitions to determine if it accurately represents the current wildland fire policy and business processes.	If the term is not defined accurately, submit your request as a revision to the existing term.

Pre-work checklist	How do you find out?	What does that tell you?
✓ If the term does not exist within NWCG, does the term exist within another agency's glossary?	Contact other professional organizations or government agencies that you think may also use the term or search the internet.	If you find a similar term in a glossary or publication outside of NWCG, submit your request specific to wildland fire, but include documentation referencing the term's definition as used by other agencies or professional organizations.

A definition should:

- Not use the term it is defining.
- Not refer to terms or concepts that might be misinterpreted by others.
- A term may have more than one definition if needed to address multiple uses.
- Not contain acronyms that are not clearly defined or linked to other precise definitions.
- Be consistent between related concepts.
 - Terms identified as **see also**, **synonyms**, etc. for a glossary entry should be reviewed together to ensure consistency.
 - Terms that are often used interchangeably.
 - Definitions should distinguish why it is different from related concepts.
 - See Jurisdictional Unit (<https://www.nwcg.gov/term/glossary/jurisdictional-unit>) and Protecting Unit (<https://www.nwcg.gov/term/glossary/protecting-unit>) for examples.
- Not define policy but must align with it.
 - The Glossary can consolidate terms and definitions used in policy and will include the policy document name/number for reference.
 - If policy changes a term or definition, the NWCG Glossary should be updated appropriately.
- Utilize a Definition Extension to provide examples, highlight key business usage, or provide additional information about relationship to other terms.
- Consider if the term is used in wildland fire IT applications.
 - A good definition will facilitate better data enterprise wide.

NWCG Glossary Request Template

Quick Steps

1. Go to <https://www.nwcg.gov/glossary/nwcg-glossary-request>.
2. Complete the request. While requester name and contact information are optional, they are helpful in the event that there are questions related to the submission of the request.
3. Upon completion of the form, click **Submit**. A copy of the form is automatically sent to blm_fa_nwcg_glossary@blm.gov.

Contact Requestor for More Information

Once the request has been submitted to blm_fa_nwcg_glossary@blm.gov, the DSTS will review the request and contact the requestor by email or phone if they feel they need more information to clearly understand the proposal.

How to Develop a Glossary Entry

Assigning a Glossary Steward

Based on the term's subject area, the DSTS will determine which committee(s) should be the steward for the proposed term. There may be terms that have joint stewardship between two or more committees.

Developing a Glossary Entry

The steward is responsible for developing or revising the glossary entry. The Glossary Steward POC is responsible for managing the process for developing the draft with the steward. Their duties include distribution of information, task assignments, and scheduling. The DSTS is available to provide support and guidance to the steward in developing the draft. The DSTS will email an NWCG Glossary Request to the Glossary Steward POC. This email initiates the process for the steward to begin developing or revising a glossary entry. Supporting documents may need to be included in drafting the entry such as source references, change management process, or discussion papers. The DSTS will provide the initial research for new terms as a starting point for the steward.

Once the definition is drafted, the steward needs to make a final determination that the definition is ready for review. Once that determination has been made, the Glossary Steward POC emails the updated Glossary Request (plus any supporting documents) to the DSTS indicating the glossary entry is ready for review.

Conducting Review

After receiving the draft glossary entry from the Glossary Steward POC, the DSTS coordinates with the NWCG Web Manager to post the terms for review on the NWCG website. Terms will be posted monthly and anyone wishing to comment may fill out the associated form.

Notice will be emailed to NWCG committee chairs monthly as needed to review posted terms and provide desired feedback.

Quick Steps

- Go to <https://www.nwcg.gov/about-the-nwcg-glossary-of-wildland-fire>.
- Click Review and Comment on Proposed Glossary Terms (<https://www.nwcg.gov/glossary-request>).
- Click on a term to review.
- Use the web form located at the bottom of the page to comment.

Final Review, Approval, and Publishing

The DSTS will collect and synthesize the NWCG Glossary Entry Change Review Worksheets. For those glossary entries that have comments regarding a drafted entry, the DSTS will forward those to the appropriate steward. The steward is responsible for evaluating all comments, formulating responses to the comments, and making updates to the draft glossary entry based on comments as necessary.

The steward should update the NWCG Glossary Request as needed to reflect any updates to the draft. Once the comments have been addressed, the steward determines that the glossary entry is ready for final review by the DSTS. The Glossary Steward POC should forward the NWCG Glossary Request and any supporting documentation to the DSTS at blm_fa_nwcg_glossary@blm.gov indicating the entry is ready for final review.

The steward will strive for unanimous agreement from all stakeholders for glossary entry changes. In the case of unresolved disagreement, the steward will determine the most appropriate changes for its subject area. Disagreement may indicate the need for more than one definition to meet the needs of multiple subject areas.

The DSTS will synthesize all the unanimously approved glossary entry changes from the review cycle and conduct a final review of the new or revised glossary entries before they are approved for publishing. This final review focuses mainly on technical editing of the proposal and not on content. Once the final review is complete, the DSTS coordinates with the NWCG Staff to document approval of the new or revised entry for publishing. The new glossary terms will be posted monthly to the NWCG glossary webpage.

The *NWCG User Guide for Glossary of Wildland Fire* is developed and maintained by the Data Standards and Terminology Subcommittee (DSTS), under the direction of the Data Management Committee (DMC), an entity of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG).

Previous editions: 2014.

While they may still contain current or useful information, previous editions are obsolete. The user of this information is responsible for confirming that they have the most up-to-date version. NWCG is the sole source for the publication.

This publication is available electronically at <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/937>.

Comments, questions, and recommendations shall be submitted to the appropriate agency program manager assigned to the DMC. View the complete roster at <https://www.nwcg.gov/committees/data-standards-and-terminology-subcommittee/roster>.

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