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To: Service Directorate

From: Principal Deputy Director 

Subject: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Diversity and Inclusiveness Implementation Plan, for Fiscal Years 2020-2024

Meeting the conservation challenges of today demands new approaches and innovative, inclusive thinking. Success hinges on recruiting, welcoming, and empowering bright, driven professionals from diverse backgrounds who can help us find effective solutions and connect with a rapidly changing America.

Fiscal Year 2020 will mark the eleventh year the Service has specifically focused on addressing its workforce diversity deficit. Despite our failure to move the needle over the last decade, America has not stopped changing. If we hope to remain relevant to a rapidly changing constituency, we must take a different approach; one which is focused, adaptive, and accountable.

In support of this effort, I am excited to provide the attached Diversity and Inclusiveness Implementation Plan (DIIP) for Fiscal Years 2020 - 2024. This document reflects the work our Executive Diversity Committee has done with the Office of Diversity and Inclusive Workforce Management, the Barrier Analysis Team, and all of you over the last six months.

The updated DIIP is focused on three key objectives: 1) - Employee engagement; 2) - Barrier analysis/removal; and 3) - Recruitment/hiring. The Action Plan Matrix includes a series of actions we will take, evaluate and adjust over the next five years, starting with our upcoming Directorate meeting where we will facilitate a focused discussion on messaging and communications. Building off of those discussions, we anticipate a Service-wide roll out of this refocused effort in January of 2020.

To move beyond plans and good intentions, we must demand accountability of ourselves and our employees. The DIIP will do this in three ways: 1) - Each Region and Program will have a stepdown plan which spells out the specific actions they will take consistent with the DIIP objectives; 2) - A centralized accountability tool will be used to assess progress and report to the Director's Office quarterly; and 3) - Outcomes will be evaluated and actions will be adjusted annually.

The accountability tool will capture the robustness of the stepdown plans and the timeliness of the actions taken. This will allow the Director's Office to independently assess each Directorate member's progress towards meeting their annual performance commitment to: *Recruit, retain, and develop the talent needed to achieve a high quality, diverse workforce that reflects the nation...* (DOI Executive Performance Agreement, Critical Element 2: Leading people).

I cannot think of a single more important issue for us to be focused on at this current time, because only when we are able to consistently attract and develop a workforce representative of America and provide them with an inclusive work environment, will the Service's mission be assured.

I look forward to working with you on this critical effort. If you have any questions on the DIIP please reach out to our Executive Diversity Committee Chair, Paul Rauch at [paul\\_rauch@fws.gov](mailto:paul_rauch@fws.gov) or 202 208-5078.



# Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Plan, FY 2020-2024

The goal of the Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Plan (DIIP) for FY 2020-2024 is to support the Service's mission by guiding the organization toward a more inclusive work environment where employees are inspired to excel. This DIIP sets forth three strategic objectives that will energize the diversity and inclusion message and engage employees at all levels of the Service to take specific actions. Strong management accountability is a feature of this DIIP -requiring leaders to regularly report progress towards completing each strategic activity.

The three objectives of this DIIP are in the areas of:

1

## Engagement

Engage employees with a consistent and meaningful message that prioritizes inclusion, acknowledges the lack of progress to date, and outlines the actions that will lead to success.

2

## Barrier Analysis and Removal

Continuously learn what the barriers to diversity and inclusion are at the Service, engage in barrier elimination, and monitor the metrics that show how employees are responding to initiatives.

3

## Recruitment and Hiring

Connect with the values of a diverse public and enhance support for conservation with a recruitment and hiring strategy that focuses on excellence and is supported by a large and diverse applicant pool.

## Objective 1

### Engage Employees to Achieve a Diverse and Inclusive Workforce (Communications)

The Service needs a consistent and meaningful message that prioritizes inclusion, acknowledges the lack of progress to date, and outlines the actions that will lead to success. This message will come from the top of the organization including managers, supervisors, and project leaders to ensure all employees understand how success in this area is key to mission accomplishment and to their own career success.

#### Strategic Activity Highlights:

- External affairs will lead the development of reinvigorated diversity and inclusion messages which will at first be rolled out nationally from the Director's Office.
- Directorate members will prepare an annual step-down communication strategy. The strategy will spell out specific actions they will take to ensure each employee in their Region/Program receives the messages and that each employee is provided the opportunity for engagement.
- Each Directorate member and Deputy will ensure their annual communication strategy includes provisions for communicating clear actions they expect staff to take in support the Service's barrier removal and workforce planning efforts.
- The identified responsible parties will provide quarterly updates on status of their action items on an online accountability dashboard. The Director's Office will be briefed on the status of each action item from each Region/Program. Information will be available Service-wide.

See Page 5 for the detailed action plan (including responsible parties and due dates).

## Objective 2

### Analyze and Remove the Barriers to a Diverse and Inclusive Workforce

This objective calls for leaders to continuously learn what the barriers to diversity and inclusion are, to engage in barrier elimination, and to monitor the metrics that show how employees are responding to initiatives. Leaders will be accountable for supporting the annual Barrier Analysis Team (BAT) and for implementing their recommendations.

#### Strategic Activity Highlights:

The Service involves managers at all levels in the barrier analysis process and the implementation of its EEO Programs, including in the development and successful implementation of action plans -consistent with the requirements of EEOC Management Directive 715 (MD-715).

- The Director's Office will request nominations from each Directorate member on an annual basis to create the Service's Barrier Analysis Team.
- The BAT is a cross-regional, cross-programmatic, multi-grade subset of the Service that engages in barrier analysis and elimination.
- Each Directorate member will respond to this request by nominating an ARD, Division Chief, or Project Leader from their Region/Program and ensure that ample time is allocated to effectively carry out the duties and responsibilities of the team.
- The Executive Diversity Committee (EDC) will submit the BAT's recommendations to the Directorate and Deputies annually, applying a 30-day comment period.
- After the comment period, the EDC will finalize the actions the Service will take for barrier elimination during the upcoming year and provide a summary to the Directorate.

See Page 7 for the detailed action plan (including responsible parties and due dates).

## Objective 3

### Recruit and Hire a Diverse and Inclusive Workforce

To remain relevant and achieve its mission, the Service needs to better connect with the values of a diverse public and enhance support for conservation. We do this with a recruitment and hiring strategy that focuses on excellence and is supported by a large and diverse applicant pool. Leaders will support the National Targeted Recruitment Team and be held accountable for insuring hiring managers are supporting fair and inclusive recruitment and hiring processes.

#### Strategic Activity Highlights:

- The Director's Office will establish National Recruitment Team annually and ensure they are chartered with a clear mandate and a membership commitment to supporting the recruitment of individuals representative of America.
- The JAO will establish the process for HR officials to coordinate and provide timely information to the National Recruitment Team on opportunities that will advertise on OPM's USA Jobs for seasonal and temporary and term entry level positions.
- Deputies will develop a hiring manager toolkit to include the business rules for using the Public Lands Corp Act and OPM's special hiring authorities/flexibilities as well as a toolkit and/or policy for using panel to conduct interviews and/or selections for the Service's positions.
- Deputies will conduct an after-action review/lessons learned for each iteration of the Service-wide hiring initiatives and implement recommendations that will improve the process going forward.

See Page 8 for the detailed action plan (including responsible parties and due dates).

# Action Plan Matrix

## Objective 1: Engage Employees to Achieve a Diverse and Inclusive Workforce

Strategic Activity	Responsible Parties	Action Items	Due Date	Performance Outcomes
1.1 Develop Messaging.	Lead: External Affairs  Support: Directorate Deputies External Affairs ODIWM Chair, BAT	a) Develop messages to support consistent and meaningful Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) communication by Service leadership in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The conservation/relevancy case for diversity</li> <li>• Owning our lack of progress to date</li> <li>• Inclusiveness is key</li> <li>• CLF as our yardstick</li> <li>• Three pronged strategy:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Build Awareness</li> <li>○ Eliminate Barriers</li> <li>○ Plan our Workforce</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What success looks like</li> </ul>	November 2019-2023 (Report out annually at Fall Directorate meeting)	Consistent, meaningful messages which foster understanding of the need for diversity and inclusiveness in the workplace and inspire action.
	External Affairs	b) Develop a template for regions/programs to use for their stepdown communication strategies.	December 2019	Each region/program owns their process but messaging is consistent.
1.2 Step down key messages throughout the organization.	Director's Office	a) Provide a national communication incorporating the key messages approved at the Fall Directorate Meeting.	January 2020-2024	Sets organizational tone for D&I messaging.  Organization-wide clarity on expectations for barrier removal and workforce planning.
1.3 Engage Service staff to become part of the solution.	Directorate & Deputies	a) Prepare and post to the D&I dashboard (see 1.4 below) their annual step-down communication strategy which spells out the specific actions they will take to ensure each employee in their Region/Program receives the D&I messages and is provided the opportunity for engagement (Q&A) with Regional/Program leadership.	February 2020-2024	The integrity of the D&I messaging and expectations will be established throughout the organization.

## Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Plan (FY2020-2024)

Strategic Activity	Responsible Parties	Action Items	Due Date	Performance Outcomes
1.3 Engage Service staff to become part of the solution.	Directorate & Deputies	b) Ensure their annual communication strategy includes provisions for communicating clear guidance on the Region/Program specific actions (1.1 b) they expect staff to take in support the Service’s barrier removal and workforce planning efforts.	February 2020-2024	Service employees will complete the action steps outlined for them in support of barrier removal and workforce planning.
	Directorate & Deputies Managers & Supervisors	c) Implement current year actions identified in the annual communication strategy.	September 30, 2020-2024	Barriers are reduced and hiring practices are improved.
1.4 Establish Accountability.	ODIWM	a) Develop an online D&I accountability dashboard.	November 2019	Accountability mechanism is established.
	Entities identified as Responsible Party for each action in this document	b) Responsible Parties will provide regular updates on status of their action items. Information will be available Service-wide.	First update will be due February 28, 2020, then Quarterly thereafter.	Directorate members and subordinate staff are held accountable for performance.
	ODIWM	c) Provide quarterly Dashboard updates to the Director’s Office highlighting progress and challenges.	March 2020, then quarterly thereafter.	Proposed actions are completed.
	Director’s Office	d) Follow up as needed with Regions/Programs to ensure adequate progress towards meeting commitments.	As needed.	Proposed actions are completed.

## Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Plan (FY2020-2024)

### Objective 2: Analyze and Remove the Barriers to a Diverse and Inclusive Workforce

Strategic Activity	Responsible Parties	Action Items	Due Date	Performance Outcomes
2.1 Identify barriers to a diverse and inclusive workforce.	Lead: Director's Office  Support: ODIWM	a) Request nominations from each Directorate member annually to create a cross-regional, cross-programmatic, multi-grade, Barrier Analysis Team (BAT) to engage in barrier analysis and elimination Service-wide.	Memo Due Date: December 2019 Subsequent  Memo Dates: December 2020-2024	Service staff will be given the opportunity to be part of the solution by participating in this annual evaluation. Employee awareness and engagement will be increased.
	Directorate	b) Respond to this request by nominating an ARD, Division Chief, Project Leader, etc. from their program or region and ensure that ample time is allocated to effectively carry out the duties and responsibilities of the BAT.	Start Date: December 2019  Submission Dates: January 2020-2024	The BAT will have the skills and the time resources it needs to successfully analyze and remove identified barriers.
	BAT	c) The BAT will assess the Service's organizational climate and culture by using climate assessments (e.g. Service-specific assessments, FEVS, among others), exit survey data, focus groups, interviews, internal and external reports, and other investigative methods consistent with the requirements of EEOC Management Directive 715 (MD-715).	Start Date: January 2020  Completion Date: September 2020-2024	Identification of barriers that prevent the Service from obtaining a diverse, inclusive, and engaged workforce.
2.2 Eliminate barriers to a diverse and inclusive workforce.	BAT	a) The BAT will brief the EDC on the findings and develop an annual action plan to address perceived barriers. The findings and recommendations will include: the status of previous recommendations, areas for continued focus, and additional actions where warranted.	Brief EDC: January 2021-2025	The Service will reduce barriers by taking a corporate approach to addressing interconnected themes that compromise the Service's mission.

## Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Plan (FY2020-2024)

Strategic Activity	Responsible Parties	Action Items	Due Date	Performance Outcomes
2.2 Eliminate barriers to a diverse and inclusive workforce.	Lead: EDC  Support: ODIWM BAT Deputies Group	b) The EDC will provide the Directorate with a summary of barrier removal and workforce planning actions to be taken in the upcoming fiscal year in accordance with Objectives 2 & 3 below.	February 2021-2025	Specific action items will be strategically prioritized each year to eliminate barriers.
	EDC	c) The EDC will submit recommendations to the Directorate and Deputies, applying a 30-day comment period. After the comment period, the EDC will finalize the actions the Service will take for barrier elimination and provide a summary to Directorate.	Comment Period: March 2021-April 2021 (Each March-April through 2025)	Specific action items will be strategically prioritized each year to eliminate barriers.

### Objective 3: Recruit and Hire a Diverse and Inclusive Workforce

Strategic Activity	Responsible Parties	Action Items	Due Date	Performance Outcomes
3.1 Recruit a diverse applicant pool for entry level positions.	Lead: Deputy Director, Operations  Support: JAO ODIWM EA NCTC	a) Assess recruitment and outreach related activities Service-wide and consolidate efforts and activities to align with Service's workforce planning goals.	October 2019	Improve efficiency and ensure consistency of messages and desired outcomes across the Service's recruitment effort.
	Lead: JAO  Support: ODIWM	b) Establish the requirement and process for HR officials to coordinate and provide timely information to the Recruitment Program Manager on opportunities that will be advertised on OPM's USA Jobs for seasonal and temporary and term entry level positions.	December 2019	Increase the diversity of the applicant pool for these "gateway" positions.
	Lead: Director's Office  Support: ODIWM	c) Request members from each Directorate member annually to establish a National Recruitment Team. The team will be charged with a clear mandate and a membership commitment to supporting the recruitment of individuals representative of America.	Memo Due Date: April 2020  Subsequent Memo Dates: April 2021-2024	Establish key relationships with partners to support the development of targeted recruitment strategies.

## Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Plan (FY2020-2024)

Strategic Activity	Responsible Parties	Action Items	Due Date	Performance Outcomes
3.1 Recruit a diverse applicant pool for entry level positions.	Directorate	d) Respond to request in 3.1.b above and ensure that ample time is allocated to effectively carry out the duties and responsibilities of the National Recruitment Team.	Start Date: May 2020  Submission Dates: May 2020-2024	Establish key relationships with partners to support the development of targeted recruitment strategies.
	Lead: ODIWM  Support: Deputies NWRS	e) Establish requirements to evaluate partner organizations on their ability to conduct targeted recruitment and work collaboratively with the Service on the outreach and recruitment strategies.	May 2020	Partnerships will advance the Service's recruitment goals.
	Lead: ODIWM  Support: JAO	f) Brief the Deputies Group on recruitment actions recommended for current year informed by 3.1 a, b, c and d above in year 1 and 3.1 a, b, c, d, e, f, and g in subsequent years in support of 1.2 b above.	July 2020-2024	Identify specific actions for implementation.
	Lead: Deputies Group  Support: ODIWM	g) Evaluate previous quarter's recruitment success, modify approach as needed, and brief EDC on needed adjustments.	November, February, May, August, 2020-2024	Strategies are adapted to improve success.
3.2 Hire a diverse and inclusive workforce.	Lead: Deputies Group  Support: JAO ODIWM	a) Develop a hiring manager toolkit to include the business rules for using the Public Lands Corp Act and OPM's special hiring authorities/flexibilities.	December 2019	Clarifies for hiring managers when and how to use these tools consistent with the Service's workforce planning goals.
	Lead: Deputies Group  Support: JAO ODIWM	b) Develop the toolkit and/or policy for using panel to conduct interviews and/or selections for the Service's position.	December 2019	Provides additional consistency in the hiring process

## Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Plan (FY2020-2024)

Strategic Activity	Responsible Parties	Action Items	Due Date	Performance Outcomes
3.2 Hire a diverse and inclusive workforce.	Lead: Chair, Deputies Group  Support: JAO ODIWM	c) Brief EDC on hiring actions recommended for current year informed by 3.2 a, b above in year 1 and 3.2, a, b, d, e, f, and g, in subsequent years in support of 1.2 b above.	December 2019 - 2023	Identify specific actions for implementation.
	Lead: Deputies Group  Support: JAO ODIWM	d) Develop the plan that includes the positions, frequency, timeline and business rules for the Service-wide recruitment and hiring process for entry-level biologist positions.	Development period: March - September, 2020-2023	Service-wide hire for entry level biologists is institutionalized into Service's workforce planning process.
	Lead: Deputies Group  Support: JAO ODIWM	e) Conduct after-action review/lessons learned for each iteration of the Service-wide hire and implement recommendations that will improve the process going forward.	Within two months of the completion of each iteration. 2020-2024	Process improves with time.
	Lead: Deputies Group  Support: Managers and Supervisors	f) Identify the processes used for all non-federal programs that supervisors and managers use to provide non-paid and paid opportunities for interns/students and others to work with the Service.	February 2020	Experience enhancing opportunities will potentially be provided to a more diverse group of people.
	Lead: Deputies Group  Support: ODIWM JAO	g) Evaluate to determine if the processes should be improved to broaden the opportunities to a more diverse pool of candidates. Issue guidance as appropriate.	February 2020	Experience enhancing opportunities will potentially be provided to a more diverse group of people.
	Evaluation lead: ODIWM  Modify approach lead: Deputies Group	h) Evaluate previous quarter's hiring success, modify approach as needed, and brief EDC on needed adjustments.	November, February, May, August 2020-2024	Strategies are adapted to improve success.

## Evaluate and Adapt

### Measure Progress and Adjust Strategies for Continual Improvement

As with conservation plans, the DIIP's success will be enhanced through an adaptive management strategy. Note that for each objective in the Action Plan Matrix, there is an evaluation and adjustment process built in to create a nimble, living Plan which will adjust as needed to ensure success over the five-year life cycle as follows:

- Objective 1: Each Region/Program will update its step-down communication plan annually. The updates will be informed by updated messages and barrier removal / workforce planning actions.
- Objective 2: The Barrier Analysis Team (BAT) will be refreshed each year and will evaluate progress to date, while recommending follow-up or new actions to inform the annual updates to the regional and programmatic plans referenced in Objective 1.
- Objective 3: Recruitment and hiring success will be evaluated quarterly and mid-course adjustments will be recommend as needed and will also inform the annual updates to the regional and programmatic plans referenced in Objective 1.

## What Success Looks Like

Meeting the conservation challenges of today demands new approaches and innovative, inclusive thinking. Success hinges on recruiting, welcoming, and empowering bright, driven professionals from diverse backgrounds who can help us find effective solutions and connect with a rapidly changing America. Only when we are able to consistently attract and develop a diverse workforce and build on its strength, will the Service's mission be assured.