

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

76<sup>th</sup>

# Honor Awards Convocation

Thursday, September 8, 2022  
Sidney R. Yates Auditorium







# U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR **76<sup>TH</sup> Honor Awards Convocation**

STEWART LEE UDALL DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR BUILDING

---

---



# MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY



It is an incredible privilege to serve alongside the public servants at the Department of the Interior (Department) every day. I am honored to have the chance to recognize some amazing members of our team, who went beyond the call to service and exhibited the best of the Department.

I learned what it meant to be a public servant from my parents—my dad as an active-duty Marine and my mom as a Navy veteran and longtime Bureau of Indian Affairs employee. They made sure that my siblings and I understood what their service meant and what our responsibilities were to our family and our country.

I see the same commitment every day when I meet the people who work to accomplish our mission. The passion that our team brings to the job inspires me to do the best job I can as Secretary.

Your resilience and commitment have helped to ensure that our Department moves forward amid a global pandemic; in the face of a changing climate; and with the growing awareness of the equity, inclusion, and accessibility work we must accomplish to ensure every community can feel the impacts of the mission we set out to accomplish.

For the first time since the pandemic began, we are recognizing our Department's award winners at an in-person convocation, while also giving everyone across the country an opportunity to celebrate their accomplishments virtually.

This year's recipients exhibited courage in unprecedented natural disasters to save lives and protect the livelihoods of the public. Others have dedicated their lives to a particular science, research, expertise, or mission with resulting impacts that will be felt for generations to come. Many of the recipients quietly work behind the scenes, never expecting recognition for the administrative support or legal guidance they provide to make the incredible work of the Department possible.

I feel lucky that this year's awardees decided to pursue their passions at the Department of the Interior. Today's convocation will be an opportunity to reflect on why we dedicate our lives to public service and how much our jobs mean to the communities we serve and the generations to come after us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deb Haaland', written over a horizontal line.

Deb Haaland  
Secretary of the Interior





## PROGRAM

INTRODUCTIONS  
AND NARRATOR

*Vicki A. Brown*  
*Chief Learning Officer and Director,*  
*Office of Employee Development*

NATIONAL ANTHEM

*Ronald E. Tull*  
*Office of Administrative Services*

MOMENT OF SILENCE

*In memory of the Department of*  
*the Interior employees who died in*  
*the line of duty*

CONGRATULATORY  
REMARKS

*Deb Haaland*  
*Secretary of the Interior*

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

*Safety Awards*  
*Environmental Achievement Awards*  
*Secretary's Diversity Awards*  
*Distinguished Service Awards*  
*Citizen's Awards for Bravery*  
*Valor Awards*

CLOSING REMARKS

---

---





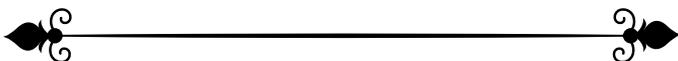
WE HONOR THOSE EMPLOYEES OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR WHO  
DIED IN THE LINE OF SERVICE

*Bureau of Land Management*  
Collin Hagan

*National Park Service*  
Louis Phillip Navarro

---

# SAFETY AWARDS



The Department of the Interior presents the prestigious Safety and Health Award of Excellence and the Aviation Safety Award. These awards are the highest-level safety and health and aviation awards granted by the Department and are presented by the Secretary of the Interior. These awards recognize individuals or groups that have performed an outstanding service for or made a contribution of unusual value to the occupational safety and health of employees, visitors, and volunteers; and aircraft accident prevention. Recipients of the Safety and Health Award of Excellence receive a plaque while recipients of the Aviation Safety Award are presented a certificate and award citation signed by the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget.

## *Safety and Health Award of Excellence Individual Category*

### *Office of the Secretary* **CDR Corey Butler**

As the Senior Industrial Hygienist for the Department's Office of Occupational Safety and Health, Commander Corey Butler is responsible for coordinating public health, safety and industrial hygiene activities for the Department. She is an essential Departmental asset and is the industrial hygiene authority on worker exposures, personal protective equipment, and mitigation measures for safe and healthful work activities. During the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Commander Butler's expertise was vital in the development and maintenance of extremely useful tools to help Bureaus and Offices manage employee risk of exposure to the virus – such as, mitigation strategies to reduce COVID-19 transmission risk in workplaces; policy bulletins to address the non-employee workforce that was critical in managing COVID-19 risk exposure; the COVID-19 risk assessment and decision matrix; the DOI Workplace Safety Plan; masking in conveyances guidance that covered all types of conveyances in use by the Department; and guidance for managing COVID-19 exposures in multi-passenger vehicle operations. The DOI Safety and Health Program significantly improved in service to all stakeholders under Commander Butler's exceptional leadership.



---

## *Safety and Health Award of Excellence* *Group Category*

### DOI COVID-19 Coordination Team

From the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in February of 2020, the DOI COVID-19 Coordination Team provided timely and expert guidance, information, direction, policy, and other resources to proactively protect the agency's employees, volunteers, and visitors. The DOI COVID-19 Coordination Team consists of professionals throughout the Department in the fields of occupational safety and health, human capital, employment law, general law, acquisition and property management, communication, and information management and technology. This group of professionals assisted the Department with providing the most consistent and up-to-date COVID-19 pandemic information and the protective measures needed to prevent peer-to-peer transmission of this highly transmissible virus. The COVID-19 Coordination Team maintained their tireless efforts to ensure the tools and resources needed to work safely were developed, available, and able to be readily implemented. With national safety and occupational health guidance issued in rapid, real-time succession, and no precedent documents available, the COVID-19 Coordination Team quickly created and continuously updated a library of COVID-19 specific management support materials – such as creating Policy Bulletins on events with 50 or more participants as well as congregate and shared housing; creating a COVID-19 risk assessment and decision matrix for manager use; developing and maintaining timely updates to the agency's Workplace Safety Plan; issuing information and FAQs for the general workforce; and conducting extensive work to ensure that masking in conveyances covered all types of conveyances in use by the Department.

#### Team Members:

Jennifer Ackerman  
Ngoc Thuy Teri Barnett  
Vicki Brown  
Joy Buhler  
Corey Butler  
John Castaneda  
Megan Castaneda  
Jacqueline Claudy  
Letitia Coleman  
Susan Eaves  
Theresa Eisenman  
Gavin Frost

Travis Gilbert  
Renaе Griego  
Patricia Houghton  
Tony Irish  
Janet Jacobs  
Melissa Kelly  
Kelly Kim  
Elizabeth Koman  
Chris Lawson  
Rachel Levin  
Jason Liebgott  
Kathleen McSheffrey

Charles Miller  
Danna Mingo  
Landon Mock  
Adetoyese Olarinde  
Michael Quinn  
Donna Riley  
Kate Sawyer  
David Schuller  
Ayanna Sears  
Chen Song  
Peter Symmes  
Jodi Vargas



---

*Aviation Safety Award  
Departmental Award for Outstanding  
Contribution to Aviation Safety*

**Wild Horse and Burro Aerial Survey Working Group**

The multi-agency Wild Horse and Burro Aerial Working Group (WHB-WG) member's years of collective experience in conducting aerial population surveys and collaborative work culminated in a published Standard Operating Procedure that integrates scientific observation methods with aviation safety best practices. The WHB-WG continues to test and evaluate alternative wild horse and burro census methods to improve population accuracy and to reduce the risk and need for personnel onboard aircraft. The use of aerial photography, airborne sensor technology (infrared imagery), satellite imagery, unmanned aircraft systems technology, camera traps, and fecal DNA methods have been discussed and are active and ongoing areas of scientific investigation. Their work is published in several peer reviewed articles. The WHB-WG stated that it is in everyone's best interest to be conducting safe, statistically valid surveys. Emphasis on aviation safety as an integral part of their scientific work is woven into the safety culture of the WHB-WG. Their best practices, especially in their flight protocol, will serve as a model for other scientists and wildland managers conducting wild horse and burro and other wildlife aerial surveys to emulate.

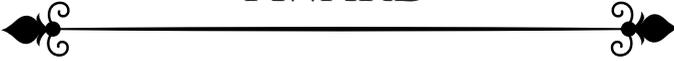
**Group Members:**

Michelle Crabb  
Scott Fluer  
Paul Griffin

Jason Ransom  
Kathryn Schoenecker  
Alan Shepherd

---

# ENVIRONMENTAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



The Department's Environmental Achievement Awards recognize employees and partners who have made exceptional contributions through projects in categories aimed at fostering the protection and preservation of cultural and environmental resources.

## *Environmental Justice Category*

*U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

### **Amy Coffman**

The transition of the National Bison Range (Bison Range) from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) is an historic event. The leadership and coordination of Amy Coffman, Refuge Manager of the Bison Range, have been vital to the transfer. On December 27, 2020, the President signed into law the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, restoring the Bison Range to the CSKT. With the passing of the legislation, Ms. Coffman's stellar leadership, passion, and skills have been instrumental in leading the FWS Bison Range staff through this change, while continuing to build and maintain vital tribal relationships and ensuring a positive outcome for the wildlife and habitat at the Bison Range.

## *Climate Champion Category*

*Bureau of Ocean Energy Management*

### **Vineyard Wind 1 Project Team**

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) led an interdisciplinary team in the review of the 800-megawatt Vineyard Wind 1 energy project that will contribute to the Administration's goal of deploying 30 gigawatts of offshore wind energy by 2030. In July 2021, BOEM approved the Vineyard Wind 1 project plan to construct 62 wind turbines approximately 35 miles from mainland Massachusetts and 15 miles south of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. The Vineyard Wind 1 project is the first of many that will contribute toward meeting the goal of this Administration. The Vineyard Wind 1 project, which started onshore construction in November of 2021, will involve the construction, operation, maintenance, and eventual decommissioning



of an up to 800 MW wind energy facility on the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). The project will be located approximately 12 nautical miles offshore Martha's Vineyard and 12 nautical miles offshore Nantucket in the northern portion of Vineyard Wind's lease area. It will create 3,600 jobs hours and provide enough power for 400,000 homes and businesses. Vineyard Wind 1 will be the first commercial-scale offshore wind project on the U.S. OCS. The Vineyard Wind 1 project exemplifies the ability of agencies and offices to work through complex environmental and technical review processes to get a first of its kind project in place in the emerging offshore renewable energy industry on the federal OCS. Given the unprecedented nature of the project, BOEM produced the Vineyard Wind 1 Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS), which expanded the cumulative activities scenario of the project far beyond what was previously considered to include the impacts of all named wind projects and state demand that could be met with existing leases on the Atlantic OCS. The SEIS also considered previously unavailable fishing data, a new transit lane alternative, and changes to the project.

### **Team Members:**

James Bennett (Team Lead)	Ian Slayton	Michelle Morin
Algene Byrum	Isis Farmer	Motunrayo Kemiki
Angel McCoy	Jeffrey T. Hesse	Pedro Melendez-Arreaga
Annette Moore	Jennifer Bucatari	Robert Sebastian
Arianna Baker	Jennifer Draher	Sid Falk
Brandi Carrier	Jennifer Miller	Stephen Vorkoper
Brian Hooker	John McCarty	Ursula Howson
Brian Krevor	Juliette Giordano	Wendy Money
Cheri Hunter	Kyle Baker	Will Waskes
Christy Lan	Lori Monroe	William Brown
Daniel O'Connell	Mark Jensen	
David MacDuffee	Mark Kozak	
David Bigger	Marty Heinze	
Emily Hildreth	Mary Cody	
Genevieve Brune	Meredith Lilley	
Gina Best		



---

*National Park Service*

**Delaware North at Grand Canyon Partnership**

As an Authorized Concessioner operating at Grand Canyon National Park, Delaware North is being awarded for their efforts in creating a Food Waste Prevention Program at Grand Canyon National Park. Their actions to protect the climate by preventing food waste from entering landfills, have resulted in the successful diversion of over 1,800 pounds of food waste through partnerships with the Grand Canyon community food pantry, assisting local families and employees. Implementing these diversion and efficient prevention methods were critical to eliminating more than 977 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub>e from affecting our planet.

**Partners:**

Dan Conforth  
Kaitlin Christiansen

***Cultural Resources Protection Category***

*Bureau of Land Management*

**BLM Salt Lake City Field Office Team**

A team of archaeologists volunteered their time, talents, and resources to complete a comprehensive study of the Transcontinental Railroad on Bureau of Land Management (BLM)-administered land in Utah. This study was printed by the BLM-Utah as part of its Cultural Resource Series. This publication represents the most comprehensive study of any historic resource on BLM administered lands in Utah. It is the culmination of 3 years of on-the-ground and in-the library research. It contains over 300+ pages, 115 figures, and 23 tables. The estimated value volunteer time for this research project is in the 100's of thousands of dollars. The BLM-Utah is extremely grateful for the volunteers who supported BLM's Cultural-Heritage Program by completing this monumental task.

**Team Members:**

Mike Sheehan  
Chris Merritt  
Mike Polk  
Ken Cannon  
Molly Boeka-Cannon



---

## *Bureau of Land Management*

### **Historic Watson Cabin Stabilization Team**

A dedicated crew of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Paria River District staff and SUWA (Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance) volunteers came together over 3 days to put the finishing touches on and complete a decade-long historic structure stabilization project. Situated in spectacular Hackberry Canyon within Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (GSENM), a once dilapidated log cabin now stands strong, a testament to the pioneering spirit upon which it was built. As a federal land management agency, GSENM is responsible for the protection and documentation of cultural resources, which includes archaeological sites and historic structures. On GSENM, prehistoric sites vastly outnumber our historic sites, and therefore tend to get the lion's share of our time and effort. However, GSENM also contains very interesting historic sites, including an impressive series of cowboy and livestock trails, civilian conservation corps-era corrals, abandoned town sites, and mines. The GSENM does not, however, have very many intact early pioneer structures. Watson Cabin is unique in that it is the oldest standing structure on the Monument - many other historic-period structures have fallen to the elements or were scavenged for materials as were abandoned or fell into disrepair. As a National Monument, GSENM is charged with protecting, preserving, and studying what are considered National treasures for future generations. As a result of this stabilization project, hiking or horseback-riding visitors to Watson Cabin can continue to learn about and appreciate the historic-period pioneer history of the area, long into the future.

### **Team Members:**

Valerie Russell  
Matthew Zweifel  
Brian Storm  
Jean Hall

Lawrence Harper  
Sarah Bauman  
Jack Hanley

## *Bureau of Reclamation*

### **Dr. Zachary Nelson**

Dr. Zachary Nelson protects cultural resources and the Bureau's project timelines by developing statewide programmatic agreements that streamline reporting requirements, demonstrate trust relationships with State partners, protect cultural resources from harm, and provide path-setting frameworks for mitigation. This progress has been demonstrated since 2017 through FY21 and is expected to continue. Dr. Nelson has been instrumental in negotiating agreements for Utah and Wyoming and is negotiating a similar agreement for Colorado. For example, the Utah agreement annually results in about \$96,000 of savings and moves projects forward quicker without compromising cultural resource protections.



---

## *National Park Service*

### **Cultural Resources Flood Adaptation Team**

In June 2021, the National Park Service issued the Guidelines on Flood Adaptation for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (Guidelines) to assist Federal agencies, State, Tribal, and local governments, local historic preservation commissions, historic property owners, and the general public on how to adapt historic buildings to be more resilient to flooding risk in a manner that preserves their historic character. Flooding risk has long been a major challenge for the protection of cultural resources. Due to climate change, flooding events are occurring at increased frequency and magnitude, with some historic properties that have never flooded before now exposed to this risk and those that flooded infrequently experiencing more instances of flooding and/or of water reaching higher levels than ever before. The Guidelines, several years in development, are the first-of-their-kind and are intended to help guide projects to increase the capacity of historic buildings to withstand and recover from a flooding event while meeting The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and preserving the property's historic features, spaces, materials, site, and setting.

#### **Team Members:**

Jenny Parker  
Jennifer Wellock  
Jenifer Eggelston

## *National Park Service*

### **The Blackstone River Valley Old Slater Mill Revitalization Team**

The Team successfully incorporated the Old Slater Mill National Historic Landmark District (the District) into the Park boundary of the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park. The Slater Mill, established in 1793, is America's first successful water-powered cotton spinning mill and is thought to be America's earliest factory. The acquisition integrated precedent-setting legal, political, financial, cultural, and natural resource strategies to advance national and local objectives. For future acquisitions, particularly those in urban park settings where historical environmental contamination may exist, this initiative established a framework able to be replicated across the country. Today, the National Park Service's presence at the park is a positive influence in this underserved area - creating opportunities for conservation, historic preservation, economic redevelopment, tourism, education, and recreation.

#### **Team Members:**

Mike Caldwell	Rosalyn Fennel	Shawn Mulligan
William Breitreutz	Jennifer Cherry	Brianna Kenny
Jennifer W. Smith	Sarah Love	
Gay Vietzke	Andre Petro	

---

# SECRETARY'S DIVERSITY AWARD

---

The Secretary's Diversity Awards recognize and honor employees or groups of employees of the Department who have provided exemplary service and/or have made significant contributions to the Department in its efforts to increase diversity at all levels. Recipients receive a special certificate and citation signed by the Secretary.

## *Bureau of Indian Education*

### **Gloria Yepa**

Ms. Gloria Yepa, a member of the Dine (Navajo Tribe), born into the Tl'aashchi'i clan and born for the T'od'ch'i'nii clan, became the first supervisory education specialist in the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE). Under her leadership, special education programs that support BIE-funded schools across Indian Country were designed under the reauthorization of the 2005 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Since then, Ms. Yepa has ensured alignment between BIE and IDEA statutes and regulations, and has also addressed the unique needs of children experiencing both a disability and being English-language learners. She has 44 years of Federal service and dedicates every day of her career to some of the most vulnerable children in Indian Country. In addition to her service as an Indigenous advocate for diversity within the field of education, Ms. Yepa provides training, guidance, and mentorship to colleagues, working to ensure that future generations of students at BIE-funded schools are served by future generations of caring and effective educators.

## *Office of the Secretary*

### **DOI Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility Strategic Plan Team**

The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) Strategic Plan Team (Team), led by Ms. Robyn Rees, established the framework for the planning, development, and submission of the Department of the Interior (Department or DOI) DEIA Strategic Plan (Plan) and facilitated the collaboration of cross-Bureau and cross-functional teams to develop and agree upon enterprise-wide priorities. The Office of Human Capital has led the effort on Executive Order 14035 across the Department and successfully submitted the first-ever Plan, driven by data-based decision making. This collaborative effort with human capital experts, equal opportunity professionals, and data professionals, led the Department to making a timely submission. The Team facilitated the development of a foundational, enterprise-wide human capital data capability to look at workforce demographics in comparison to the U.S. Census Civilian Labor Force and other benchmarks, over an 8-year period. These data visualizations were completed in just 60 days and were a product of daily meetings from every Bureau/Office in multiple disciplines. The Team exhibited decisiveness after considering input from subject matter experts, to enable rapid creation and sharing of data products that would enable further collaboration between functional teams. The Team created a safe space for dialogue about



differences of opinions in each of these meetings, elevating conversation and ensuring all had a voice. This facilitation required skills in conflict management and leveraging diversity to result in team-building at both the Bureau level and the enterprise level. This approach, which is counter to a traditional top-down approach between the Department and its Bureaus/Offices, resulted in a DOI-level Plan that embodied true collaboration. The Team demonstrated strategic thinking by ensuring alignment with the DOI Agency Strategic Plan, connecting to administration priorities, and with the intent to transition the Department to an organization that can deploy capabilities rapidly to the field to keep pace with ever-changing dynamics of the human capital lifecycle.

### **Team Members:**

Robyn Rees	Thomas Dabolt	Tyvonnia Ward
Alesia Pierre-Louis	Landon Mock	Howard Caro-Lopez
Melanie Navarro	Dr. Vicki Brown	Dava Deschler
Jeremy Buzzell	Patricia Currier	Kim Oliver
Noah Van Gilder	Kelly Kim	Ann Miller
Paul Quimby	Jacob Malcom	Patricia Houghton
Dr. Shakiyya Bland	Ayanna Sears	
George McDonald	Megan Castaneda	

### *Office of the Secretary*

#### **DOI Equity Action Plan Team**

The Department of the Interior (Department) Equity Action Plan Team (Team) lead the Department-wide effort to implement Executive Order 13985, entitled, “Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government,” and to develop the Department’s first-ever Equity Action Plan (Plan). The Plan focuses on three high-equity-impact areas: (1) contracts for businesses with characteristics that align with the definition of underserved communities; (2) discretionary grants to better support Tribes in improving long-term sustainable development and quality of life for their members; and (3) addressing barriers to recreation on Department-managed lands and waters. The Plan is the Department’s first-ever blueprint for pursuing a comprehensive approach to advancing equity for all, including people of color, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality. The members of the Team, led by Ms. Kim Oliver, demonstrated outstanding commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) by participating in a multitude of strategic planning meetings; conducting data analytics; identifying triggers and barriers to access; and engaging with members of the public during listening sessions to hear how policies and programs can be improved upon to remove barriers and promote equitable access. The listening sessions reached more than 1,700 diverse stakeholders across the country. These efforts will serve as a catalyst for much-needed change for



generations to come and will embed DEIA into the fabric of the workforce culture so that the Department continues to thrive at achieving its mission. As a result of their excellent work, the Plan was submitted to the Office of Management and Budget and the Domestic Policy Council by the required deadline and is now being fully implemented.

**Team Members:**

Kim Oliver	Colleen Finnegan	Heather Passchier
Ronnie Baca	Crystal Keys	Victoria Phaneuf
Christopher Bell	Brian Lawler	Robert Ratcliffe
Whitney Boone	Davie Nguyen	Alyssa Samoy
Quinn Brett	Stephan Nofield	Krista Sherwood
John Cannella	Rachael Novak	Stephanie Tepperberg
Michael Carlo	Maggie O’Connell	Kaprice Tucker
Sarah Conlin	Kevin Oliver	Ximena Diaz Velasco
Christian Crowley	Megan Olsen	Laroy Williams

*Office of the Secretary*

**Office of International Affairs Team**

A group of Office of International Affairs staff members, who identify as persons of color—Kossivi Amegan, Tabitha Anderson, Tiffany Cephas, Crystal Franklin, Cynthia Perera and Olivia Sierra—took the bold and unprecedented step of reaching out to the Office Director to express concerns about the Office’s lack of diversity in general, opportunities for hiring and promotion, and unconscious bias. The group met with the Director several times to share candid views of their own experiences and to brainstorm on how to help the Office better embrace all American cultures, not solely international cultures. The group also worked to develop concrete steps for the Office to expand its recruitment of interns and new hires to more proactively seek candidates from underrepresented communities. In addition, the group made specific suggestions for how the Office could offer more developmental assignments and more opportunities for growth to all staff members—including persons of color. As a result, the Office has completely overhauled the way it hires, promotes, and develops its staff, and is working on issues of unconscious bias to make the workplace more welcoming to all cultures.



---

## *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

### **Lorena Wada**

Ms. Lorena Wada has long championed the need for greater diversity. She has provided unwavering support for recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce in the Pacific Islands. Ms. Wada is a regular attendee at recruitment events and career fairs in Hawaii and Guam. She has helped to mentor Directorate Fellows Program participants and several cohorts of interns at the Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office (PIFWO). Ms. Wada also supported developing the youth of Hawaii by participating in mock interviews, providing assistance with résumé writing, judging at the Hawaii State Science Fair, and being chair for the Hawaiians Conservation Alliance's Nāhululeihwakuipapa Subcommittee. Maintaining this support has ensured that more youth of color gain awareness of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and begin to recognize it as a possible place of employment and an eventual career path. Ms. Wada has worked to develop recruitment workshops that are designed to build a strong local hiring pool from which to recruit qualified applicants to FWS. These workshops are targeted to local colleges and universities, as well as to community conservation partners throughout the Pacific islands. Ms. Wada's leadership has helped to provide the tools for local candidates—often from underrepresented groups such as Native Hawaiians or Pacific Islanders—to apply for Federal jobs and understand the variety of Federal career paths in conservation. Over the past two decades, her efforts have resulted in dozens of local hires, all of whom continue to be valued Federal employees. Furthermore, Ms. Wada has recognized challenges to the retention of new hires in her office and has voluntarily served as a mentor to many. She has created onboarding processes to orient employees into the Federal service and PIFWO; these processes have resulted in smoother transitions and navigation within the Federal Government. Ms. Wada has demonstrated strength and courage in recognizing barriers to recruiting and retaining employees from historically underrepresented communities in FWS.

## *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

### **Office of Law Enforcement Leadership Team**

The Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) Leadership Team took on the challenge of thoughtfully evaluating its workforce and putting forth a succession strategy that focused on diversity. With the expansive mission of OLE within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), prior approaches to hiring and training were not sufficient, given the international focus of its attachés and wildlife inspectors, and given the need for multilingual agents to reflect the diversity of the public FWS serves. Through various advertising and recruitment initiatives, OLE was able to leverage a targeted recruitment approach to increase the number of candidates from historically underrepresented demographics across multiple levels of the organization. As a result of their efforts, OLE was able to onboard many exceptional and diverse candidates—amounting to 45 percent of OLE's new hires—and increase the number of women entering the FWS OLE workforce by 20 percent. In the last year, OLE has diversified its team of regional special agents in charge, including hiring the first



African American female in that leadership role; selecting its first-ever Hispanic female wildlife inspector in charge; and diversifying selections for assistant special agents-in-charge and resident agents-in-charge across the organization to serve as new first-line supervisors. Overall, diverse personnel selections now comprise 46 percent of all supervisory GS-14 and GS-15 positions within the OLE organization. The OLE Leadership Team serves as outstanding champions and role models in FWS for the Department of the Interior's goals regarding diversity, inclusion, and engagement activities.

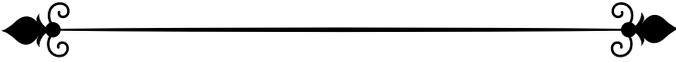
**Team Members:**

Edward J. Grace  
Keith A. Toomey  
Corey W. Grant

Victoria A. Owens  
Mynetta Denise Shorter

---

# DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARDS



The Distinguished Service Award is the highest honorary recognition an employee can receive within the Department of the Interior. It is granted for an outstanding contribution to science, outstanding skill or ability in the performance of duty, outstanding contribution made during an eminent career in the Department, or any other exceptional contribution to public service. Recipients receive a special certificate and citation signed by the Secretary along with an engraved gold Distinguished Service Medal and a gold lapel pin.



---

# DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARDS

## *Award Recipients*

### **ASSISTANT SECRETARY—INDIAN AFFAIRS**

*Mary Alsace LaFramboise*

*Anthony Morgan Rodman*

### **BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS**

*Monty K. Gibson*

*Steven K. Juneau*

*Jason M. Thompson*

### **BUREAU OF INDIAN EDUCATION**

*Dr. Carmelia Becenti*

*Dr. Danielle Lansing*

*Lawrence Palmer*

*Teresa Ramone-Wilson*

*Dr. Daniel R. Wildcat*

### **BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT**

*Sharon A. Randall*

*Mark A. Storzer*

### **BUREAU OF SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT**

*Lars Herbst*

### **BUREAU OF TRUST FUNDS ADMINISTRATION**

*Boarding School Initiative Core Team*

*Richard Garcia, Jr.*

*Rochelle Lorenzo*

*Margaret Williams*



---

# DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARDS

*(Continued)*

## **INTERIOR BUSINESS CENTER**

*Bruce Seelenfreund\**

*Kathryn L. Stevens\**

## **NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

*Laura Joss*

*William D. Shaddox*

*Woodrow N. Smeck*

## **OFFICE OF NATURAL RESOURCES REVENUE**

*Robert J. Kronebusch*

*Robert J. Winter*

## **OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

*Steven T. Hargrave*

*Raymond A. Limon\**

*Barbara Anne Pitkin*

## **OFFICE OF THE SOLICITOR**

*Mariagrazia Caminiti*



---

# DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARDS

*(Continued)*

## **U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**

*Laurel M. Barnhill*

*Michael D. Sciortino*

*Gina M. Shultz*

*Michael R. Stroeh*

*Barbara W. Wainman*

*Dr. Priscilla Wheeler\**

*Christopher Wilcox*

## **U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY**

*Dr. Rufus D. Catchings*

*Paul E. Exter*

*Dr. Martin Fitzpatrick*

*Tracy J. Fuller*

*Manuela Huso*

*Dr. Jeffrey L. Marion*

*Christina A. Neal*

*Timothy W. Saultz*

*Dr. Nathan L. Stephenson*

*(\*Award Previously Presented)*



# DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARDS

## *Award Recipients*

### **Mary Alsace LaFramboise**

Ms. Mary Alsace LaFramboise is a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, and she has never forgotten where she calls home—as evidenced by her advocacy on behalf of Native Americans. In the Southwest Zone, Ms. LaFramboise administers the Indian Loan Guaranty and Insurance Program, with servicing responsibility for Tribes, Tribal entities, and individuals located in the States of Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah. In her 39 years of Federal service, Ms. LaFramboise has acquired extensive experience in negotiating, structuring, and securing financing for economic and business development projects throughout Indian Country. She has been involved in nearly every aspect of entrepreneurial development, including training and accessing small-business financing on reservations. Ms. LaFramboise has extensive knowledge of Tribes nationwide; she has worked as a loan specialist in the Great Plains, Midwest, and Pacific regions. Currently, she serves in the Southwest region in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where she provides program guidance in the Bureau of Indian Affairs Southwest, Navajo, and Western regions. Ms. LaFramboise has also served as the Director of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's Business Equity Loan Fund under an interagency personnel agreement. While at Standing Rock, she was actively involved in planning and developing the infrastructure for the Community Development Finance Institution and forming a Community Development Corporation on the Reservation. Ms. LaFramboise has played a pivotal role within the Division of Capital Investment by sharing her extensive knowledge of the Indian Finance Act, Loan Guarantee/ Loan Insurance program(s). She is well-known for her advocacy on behalf of Tribal members. Above all, Ms. LaFramboise cares about Indian Country and all Tribal members. Her passion to help Indian business owners and Tribal enterprises succeed is what drives her to perform the duties of Zone Manager with excellence. She understands how Indian businesses help support and improve the local economies in Indian Country.



### **Anthony Morgan Rodman**

As Executive Director, Mr. Anthony Morgan Rodman revived the White House Council on Native American Affairs (WHCNAA) and is responsible for the organization's current dynamic, constituent-focused, and wide-ranging activities performed on behalf of Indian Country. He was personally asked to serve as Executive Director of the WHCNAA after it had been inactive in recent years. His reliable outreach and coordination with Tribes, stakeholders, and Federal partners have been outstanding. Upon assuming his role, Mr. Rodman initiated and led an



interagency approach to working across agencies and with Tribes. His meticulous planning and his skills in management and diplomacy have developed the WHCNAA into an interagency conduit that convenes Federal officials to address systemic barriers and improve services to Tribes and the public. Mr. Rodman works closely with a wide range of officials—from senior-level, Senate-confirmed political appointees to mid-level career staff—to discuss and plan administration initiatives to address the needs of Indian Country. More than just a planning entity, the WHCNAA has produced concrete interdepartmental action during his tenure, through two memoranda of understanding and one memorandum of agreement—all of which have clauses that commit agencies to action in achieving the administration’s goals. This interdepartmental approach fosters accountability for WHCNAA committees and conveys to Indian Country that the WHCNAA is an effective forum for its American Indian and Alaska Native constituents. Mr. Rodman, whose Tribal affiliations are the Cherokee Nation and the Osage Nation, is the driver behind this push for accountability to improve how the Federal Government notifies the public regarding its work on Native issues.

### **Monty K. Gibson**

As a senior manager at the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) since 2003, Mr. Monty K. Gibson has demonstrated effective leadership through his many efforts, including helping establish national programs at the Office of Justice Services (OJS). In 2003, Mr. Gibson became the Deputy Chief of Training at the Indian Police Academy, where he took numerous steps to enhance and revise the training programs for police officers and correctional officers. In addition, he established a partnership program with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Indian Country unit that brings newly hired BIA/Tribal and FBI special agents together for joint training exercises. Later, as Associate Director, a position he began in 2005, Mr. Gibson restructured the OJS Internal Affairs Division—which has always been a critical component of law enforcement in Indian Country—to improve investigation response times and enhance internal efficiency. He also oversaw the development of the first edition of the BIA OJS Correctional Handbook and its second edition, which have both proven critical to carrying out the operations of Tribal law enforcement and corrections programs. In 2016, Mr. Gibson became special agent in charge of the District II office, which oversees all BIA and Tribe-contracted police and criminal investigations programs in Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas. During his tenure at the District II office, he prioritized the development of positive working relationships with Tribal leaders and fostered an environment in which Tribes are treated as equal partners and allies. Since 2020, Mr. Gibson has served as the Associate Director for Field Operations, where he continues to work toward enhancing BIA’s relationships with Tribes. Mr. Gibson has demonstrated outstanding and exemplary commitment to protecting Tribal communities and providing support and opportunities to his employees.



## **Steven K. Juneau**

For more than 29 years, Mr. Steven K. Juneau has proudly served the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Office of Justice Services (OJS) and the broader Indian Country law enforcement community. From the outset of his career, Mr. Juneau has consistently worked to establish meaningful crime prevention partnerships with Tribal communities throughout Indian Country. Beginning with his service as a police officer, Mr. Juneau has excelled in the wide variety of positions he has held within BIA OJS. As an instructor at the Indian Police Academy, he was instrumental in implementing a culturally relevant curriculum that included consideration of the Tribal backgrounds of prospective officers. Later, when he oversaw the Indian Police Academy, his actions resulted in increased graduation rates across the board. Mr. Juneau was instrumental in the development of BIA's first leadership-command schools and BIA's first Advanced Training Center, which provides specialized instruction. As a supervisor, he developed BIA's first successful crime reduction strategy in Arizona, Utah, and Nevada. Mr. Juneau also helped establish the Nevada Indian Country Intelligence Network and the Federal Bureau of Investigation Safe Trails Task Force—efforts designed to increase information sharing and enhance the investigative resources available to Indian Country law enforcement. Throughout his career, Mr. Juneau has personally dedicated himself to making a meaningful difference in the safety of Indian Country. He has exemplified what it means to be a public servant and an Indian Country law enforcement officer.

## **Jason M. Thompson**

For the past 24 years, Mr. Jason M. Thompson has demonstrated a fierce commitment to protecting and serving Tribal communities throughout Indian Country. He began his law enforcement career as a deputy sheriff and canine handler. Due to his tenacity and skills, he has developed as an officer and a leader throughout his years of service. Since joining the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in 1998, Mr. Thompson has quickly risen through the ranks and assumed a number of roles, including patrol officer on the Wind River Reservation, training sergeant, chief of police, assistant special agent-in-charge, acting chief of staff to the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs, Acting Director of Office of Justice Services (OJS), and Assistant Director of OJS. He has been instrumental in the development of Federal policies and initiatives that have shaped Indian Country law enforcement over time, including the U.S. Department of the Interior's (Department) High Priority Performance Goal to reduce crime in Indian Country, the Dorgan Report, the Department's Opioid Reduction Task Force, and the OJS Missing and Murdered Unit. Mr. Thompson has also led deployments to oversee narcotics operations, to lead joint task forces, and to provide emergency responses to communities ravaged by hurricanes. Throughout his career, he has exemplified what it means to be a public servant and an Indian Country law enforcement officer.



### **Dr. Carmelia Becenti**

In 2000, Dr. Carmelia Becenti began her career in education, serving in multiple roles at Bureau of Indian Education (BIE)-funded schools. As a supervisory education program specialist, Dr. Becenti strengthens relationships among colleagues, Federal education agencies, and external stakeholders. As an advocate for at-risk students, she provides support for school improvement initiatives across 183 BIE-funded schools and garners inclusive approaches to program development.

Most recently, Dr. Becenti spearheaded the Comprehensive Support and Improvement initiative to improve academic achievement and increase graduation rates in two thirds of BIE's lowest-performing schools. Additionally, she is instrumental in improving the effectiveness of the organization by developing staff trainings and by providing technical assistance and peer mentorship to her colleagues. Dr. Becenti has developed BIE-wide resources for Federal grant guidance and ensures her work is shared with policymakers within BIE. Her contributions to BIE will provide resources for school leaders and staff for years to come.



### **Dr. Danielle Lansing**

As an outstanding faculty member of the Southwestern Indian Polytechnical Institute, a post-secondary institution funded by the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), Dr. Danielle Lansing's work has included developing innovative approaches to early childhood education by securing grants to support research on community engagement for teacher development programs. In addition, while using inclusive approaches to support

Indigenous education for the youngest children, she published numerous articles that paved a path for cocreating meaningful educational opportunities with communities. Most recently, Dr. Lansing contributed a chapter to the compilation entitled "Teacher Education Across Minority-Serving Institutions: Programs, Policies, and Social Justice." In her work as the appointed lead for BIE's organization wide strategic plan, she consistently helps shape the future pathway of Indian education. Dr. Lansing is an acknowledged expert in her field and serves as a reviewer on several American Indian and Tribal college and university journals.



### **Lawrence Palmer**

Since joining the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), Mr. Lawrence "Larry" Palmer has managed its School Operations, Budget, and Finance team where his responsibilities include administering BIE's billion-dollar budget for the operation of 183 K-12 schools and 2 post-secondary institutions. In addition, he manages the funding of post-secondary scholarships and funding for 33 Tribally-controlled colleges and universities. In the shorttime that Mr. Palmer has been a part of BIE, he has also led a multitude



of initiatives, achieving great success with each one. His achievements include (1) concluding fiscal years (FY) 2020 and 2021 with 100 percent of BIE's appropriated funds obligated; (2) administering nearly \$1.2 billion worth of COVID-19 relief funds in accordance with spend plans supporting continuity of educational school service; (3) completing BIE's FY 2022 submissions to the Department of the Interior and Office of Management and Budget by the established deadlines and in accordance with the BIE Director's strategic priorities; and (4) completing BIE's FY 2023 budget request—the largest budget request in BIE history. Prior to joining BIE, Mr. Palmer served as a budget analyst in both the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Office of Inspector General. His selfless style of leadership and his ability to anticipate and quickly respond to abrupt and unforeseen changes in BIE's operations have made it possible for his staff to successfully administer BIE's budget by furnishing the financial services and support BIE schools have required to provide quality education to students in new remote-learning environments. Mr. Palmer achieved this success while BIE was transitioning from being part of the Bureau of Indian Affairs to becoming a separate Bureau.



### **Teresa Ramone-Wilson**

Ms. Teresa Ramone-Wilson embodies the core values of her school—Lake Valley Navajo School—by cultivating a culture of family, commitment, and perseverance. During the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ms. Ramone-Wilson, a principal at the school, faced an unprecedented time in education. Her staff and students live in some of the most remote areas in the Navajo Reservation and could no longer attend class in person during the pandemic. Unable to provide the culture of support she had developed on her campus, Ms. Ramone-Wilson needed to conceive new ways of educating. First, she focused on meeting the basic needs of students and their families and began community organizing with off-reservation food pantries to provide food and water to the students' families. Next, she made it possible for all of her students to attend class virtually. In addition, rather than asking her staff to conduct visits, Ms. Ramone-Wilson safely visited students' homes during the pandemic to help set up their Wi-Fi, laptops, and phones to ensure that the students would be able to connect with their teachers and classes. Through her visits to students' homes, Ms. Ramone-Wilson provided more than education services—she helped numerous families seek additional support during a time of unprecedented challenges. Throughout her 12 years of service at the Bureau of Indian Education, Ms. Ramone-Wilson has consistently put the well-being of her students and families first, and she commends her staff for all that is being accomplished. Her leadership and commitment to community service are a testament to her dedication to the students and families of Lake Valley Navajo School.



### **Dr. Daniel R. Wildcat**

Dr. Daniel R. Wildcat epitomizes commitment to serving Indian Country. His service as a professor and administrator spans nearly 40 years. Dr. Wildcat's scholarship within Tribal colleges and universities in promoting awareness of the impact of climate change on the environment was groundbreaking. In 1994, he helped form a partnership with the Hazardous Substance Research Center at Kansas State University to create the Haskell Environmental Research Studies Center as a nonprofit Native American research center. The center facilitates technology transfer to Tribal governments and Native communities; the transfer of accurate environmental information to Tribes; and research opportunities for Tribal college faculty and students throughout the United States. Dr. Wildcat's work in this partnership provided him with the opportunity to mentor Indigenous students throughout Indian Country on community-based research and the implementation of better environmental practices. In 1996, he helped organize an American Indian educational program to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Earth Day. At the commemoration, Dr. Wildcat moderated a live, nationally broadcast dialogue between traditional American Indian elders and American Indian scientists and engineers about how to live in a way to ensure a healthy planet for future generations. Dr. Wildcat helped plan and design a four-part video series entitled *All Things Are Connected: The Circle of Life* (1997), which dealt with land, air, water, and biological topics related to environmental science and policy issues affecting Indian Country. Most recently, he formed the American Indian and Alaska Native Climate Change Working Group, which is comprised of Tribal colleges and organizations that are working on climate change issues. Dr. Wildcat is an author and coauthor of many books in his field.

### **Sharon A. Randall**

Throughout 32 years of Federal service, Ms. Sharon A. Randall has worked at several levels of Government in addition to working in the private sector. She began her career with the National Park Service (NPS) in 1984 as an outdoor recreation planner and later conducted and analyzed public-area visitor-use surveys across the Nation. After serving 3 years in the private sector, Ms. Randall's passion for the management of public lands then led her to a research position with the U.S. Forest Service's (USFS) Outdoor Recreation and Wilderness Assessment Group in 1990, followed by a position with Alaska's National Forest System and the Chugach National Forest. She spent over 24 years as a forest planner, environmental coordinator, and program manager overseeing the management of one of the most heavily trafficked visitor centers in Alaska. In addition, Ms. Randall partnered with the Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, offering work experiences for clients while achieving mission critical tasks, such as conducting a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) comment analysis for a forest plan revision. She taught hundreds of employees the intricacies of NEPA implementation as a member of the USFS national teaching cadre. In 2014, Ms. Randall's extensive



resource management, environmental analysis, research, and supervisory experience led her to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's (BOEM) Alaska regional office. As a NEPA coordinator, section chief, and now the regional supervisor for the Office of Environment, she has applied her skills and experience toward stewardship of the Outer Continental Shelf. Ms. Randall consistently promotes an interdisciplinary approach to ensuring NEPA documents support fully informed decisions. She ensures that resources invested in BOEM's scientific research are based on need, support the Bureau's mission, and represent a wise use taxpayer dollars. Over the last 8 years, Ms. Randall has often led her team through times of transition in support of BOEM's mission, while also providing the support necessary for personal success.



### **Mark A. Storzer**

Mr. Mark A. Storzer began his career with the U.S. Forest Service, followed by nearly 25 years with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and nearly 7 years with the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM). He worked at the field, district, regional, and national levels at 10 locations in Alaska; Wyoming; Wisconsin; Washington, D.C.; Nevada; Colorado; Oregon; and Idaho. He spent 13 years as a hydrologist and 18 years as a line officer. As a hydrologist in Oregon, Mr. Storzer supported a citizen-based watershed association where his ability to transform complex technical issues into plain language and establish trust with landowners allowed numerous salmon habitat restoration projects to be implemented on private lands. He negotiated agreements with various partners to jointly manage isolated parcels of public land in the Eastern United States. Mr. Storzer was signatory on a memorandum of understanding with a private landowner and the Lake Superior Chippewa Tribe to cooperatively manage a traditional cultural property in northern Wisconsin for wild ricing. As a field manager and district manager with BLM, Mr. Storzer led a staff ranging in size from 30 to nearly 300 and was responsible for multiple-use resource management of millions of acres of public land. As a regional supervisor and deputy regional director with BOEM, he instilled a culture of teamwork and promoted an interdisciplinary approach to ensure National Environmental Policy Act documents were balanced to support fully informed decisions. After consulting with three Alaska Native communities on mitigation measures, Mr. Storzer led an interagency team in developing an environmental impact statement for the first oil and gas development island on the Outer Continental Shelf in the U.S. Arctic. By reducing conflicts in the balancing of the multiple uses of public resources for the benefit of the American people, Mr. Storzer is renowned as a collaborative leader in establishing trust with local, State, and Federal agencies; Tribal partners; nongovernmental organizations; industry groups; user groups; and the public.



## Lars Herbst

Mr. Lars Herbst is recognized for his career efforts to strategically guide operations and decision making ensuring the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement effectively promotes safety, protects the environment, and conserves offshore resources through vigorous regulatory oversight and enforcement. As the Regional Director of the Gulf of Mexico Region, Mr. Herbst was instrumental in establishing the many processes and managerial controls critical to the Region's and Bureau's sustained and successful operations. He is recognized throughout the Bureau, the Department, and internationally as a leader in the effective regulation of the offshore energy industry. Mr. Herbst led an organization of over 400 professionals responsible for the safe operations and environmental protection of the Gulf of Mexico region. During his career, Mr. Herbst demonstrated exceptional leadership in the implementation of numerous improvements to the complex and high-risk Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) program. He developed processes critical to providing accurate financial assurance estimates for OCS operations, improved the content of exploration and development plans, enhanced the inspection program by moving to risk-based inspections, developed processes to provide subsea leak detection, and led the modernization of information technology systems. Mr. Herbst began his career with the Minerals Management Service in 1983 as a staff engineer in the Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, and went on to serve as a Petroleum Engineer, Drilling Engineer, District Manager, and Regional Supervisor. He was also an active member of the Louisiana State University Petroleum Engineering Advisory Board and the International Regulators Forum. He supported the U.S. Department of State on energy development issues for foreign governments throughout the world. His efforts were instrumental in all activities surrounding the response and securing of the Macondo well during the *Deepwater Horizon* incident. His record of extraordinary accomplishments is recognized across the ranks of Federal senior officials.

## Boarding School Initiative Core Team

The BSI Core Team (Core Team) assisted in writing and editing the final report to the Secretary. In addition, the Core Team completed research and analyses of historical photographs that were incorporated in the final report. The Core Team began the complex and fast-moving project by developing the Bureau of Trust Funds Administration BSI Project Plan, which served as the groundwork for achieving results anticipated by the Secretary. In May 2022, the Secretary released volume I of the findings and recommendations made by the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs based on the work completed by the Core Team and a group of volunteer civil servants. The Core Team created a digest of historic information that resulted in a comprehensive report issued in less than a year. While many more employees worked on the BSI, the Core Team members included Colleen Stegner, Maria Meredith, Nikki Oliver, Danelle McQuillen, Michael Estes, Lawrence Dunmore, Robert Davis, Mary Beth Roberts, John McClanahan, Katherine Ramirez, and Lisle Pino. A list



of Federal Indian boarding schools, maps of the boarding school locations, or a list of boarding school resources did not exist when the Secretary announced the BSI. To accomplish the primary task of locating records for the boarding schools, the Core Team needed to create a list. The Core Team then developed important definitions and search criteria before launching into the massive research of the federally held boarding school records. The Core Team created contracting plans to accomplish the records work, implemented a memorandum of understanding, and met weekly with the Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition.



### **Richard Garcia, Jr.**

Mr. Richard Garcia, Jr. provided credentialing support for a three-state-wide area in a maximum-telework environment for Federal employees in the midst of an international pandemic. During the pandemic, he took the initiative to develop a proposal for, and obtained approvals to establish, a new Federal Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12 (HSPD-12) credentialing center at the Bureau of Trust Funds Administration (BTFA) headquarters in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Since August 2020, Mr. Garcia has staffed the BTFA credentialing center. His efforts have helped hundreds of Federal employees and contractors with enrollments, activations, and certificate updates for their HSPD-12 identification credentials. The BTFA credentialing center was the only open location for many months during the pandemic, and today it continues to be one of the few credentialing centers open in New Mexico. Additionally, Mr. Garcia has assisted many Federal employees and contractors from outside the immediate Albuquerque metropolitan area with credentialing services. In September 2020, he began taking appointments to assist employees from 10 different Federal agencies across New Mexico, Colorado, and Arizona. In addition, Mr. Garcia reacted immediately to assist President Biden's political appointees from New Mexico. As a result of his foresight and initiative, strict COVID-19 safety procedures were followed, and a contactless service was implemented. In all, more than 200 Federal employees and contractors were able to maintain continuity of Government operations during the COVID-19 pandemic.



### **Rochelle Lorenzo**

Ms. Rochelle Lorenzo provided credentialing support for a three-state-wide area in a maximum-telework environment for Federal employees in the midst of an international pandemic. As a result of her initiative, strict COVID-19 safety procedures were followed, and a contactless service was implemented. Since August 2020, Ms. Lorenzo has staffed the new Federal Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12 (HSPD-12) credentialing center at the Bureau of Trust Funds Administration (BTFA) headquarters in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Her efforts have helped hundreds of Federal employees and contractors with enrollments, activations, and certificate



updates for their HSPD-12 identification credentials. The BTFA credentialing center was the only open location for many months during the pandemic, and today it continues to be one of the few credentialing centers open in New Mexico. Additionally, Ms. Lorenzo has assisted many Federal employees and contractors from outside the immediate Albuquerque metropolitan area with credentialing services. In September 2020, she began taking appointments to assist employees from 10 different Federal agencies across New Mexico, Colorado, and Arizona. In addition, she reacted immediately to assist President Biden's political appointees from New Mexico. In all, more than 200 Federal employees and contractors were able to maintain continuity of Government operations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Margaret Williams**

Ms. Margaret Williams, who currently serves as Senior Advisor to the Director of the Bureau of Trust Funds Administration (BTFA), was selected to serve as the Executive Sponsor of the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative (Initiative), which was established in June 2021. Immediately after being selected as the Executive Sponsor, she developed a blueprint to address the objectives laid out by the Secretary of the Interior. At the start of the Initiative, Ms. Williams led a team of volunteers from all facets of BTFA. This team—20 percent of the BTFA workforce—was responsible for researching historical records held at the American Indian Records Repository. This research allowed the team to gain access to archival Government records regarding the administration of the Federal Indian boarding schools program which has become essential to completing a comprehensive report on the matter. Ms. Williams began her work in leading this Initiative during the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. She had to work quickly to develop plans to increase staff volunteers and prepare boxes of relevant documents for digitization. Despite the uncertainty and challenges brought about by COVID-19, Ms. Williams' leadership ensured that milestones and deadlines were met as a result of the robust project management plan and a strategy she developed to mitigate risks. Her leadership and collaborative efforts have paved the way to shape the plan to address the profoundly negative consequences of the Federal Indian boarding schools program and its lasting and damaging impact on American Indian culture, heritage, and language. As a result of her leadership and research, the public will better understand the full truth about the history of Federal Indian boarding schools.

### **Bruce Seelenfreund**

Mr. Bruce Seelenfreund has served as the technical programming lead for the Federal Personnel and Payroll System (FPPS) since 1991. His work, which has allowed the Department of the Interior (Department) to have a single payroll system for more than 30 years, began with the development and implementation of early versions of FPPS and progressed to oversight of the evolution of FPPS into the fully integrated personnel and payroll system that the Department and more than 50 other federal agencies use today. During his 31-year career at the Department, he has been



instrumental in the successful completion of several high-visibility projects, including the migration of 54 federal agencies to FPPS and the Federal Government's consolidation of more than 20 payroll processing centers into 4 payroll shared service centers. Mr. Seelenfreund also led the development of two major components of FPPS: (1) the Casual Pay System, which pays wildland firefighters; and (2) and the Monthly Pay System, which pays U.S. Supreme Court Justices. He has sacrificed countless nights and weekends to personally monitor biweekly payroll processing—a critical FPPS function—to ensure that Department employees and more than 200,000 other federal employees receive timely and accurate pay. He has proven himself indispensable by developing FPPS functionality to address nonroutine and complex situations, such as off-cycle and retroactive pay following Federal Government furloughs and new pay categories, such as paid parental leave. Most recently, Mr. Seelenfreund worked tirelessly to implement legislation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the social security tax deferral and additional pay and leave benefits. His uncompromising dedication during the pandemic also guaranteed that employees adversely impacted by COVID-19 received timely relief in the form of emergency paid sick leave and emergency family medical leave.

### **Kathryn L. Stevens**

Ms. Kathryn L. Stevens began her 37-year Federal career as a GS-03 Clerk-Typist with the Bureau of Reclamation's Administrative Services Center, the precursor of the Interior Business Center (IBC). Throughout her career, Ms. Stevens has been a trusted partner, recognized for her commitment to operational excellence and collaboration with customers. Her hard work and a demonstrated work ethic led to her selection as an entry-level Facilities Services Specialist. Ms. Stevens' 32 years in facilities management required countless hours of behind-the-scenes planning and execution to provide safe, secure, and inviting workspaces for IBC employees. One of the first facilities projects Ms. Stevens tackled was the successful furniture installation in building 7201 of the Mansfield campus in Lakewood, Colorado, which involved furnishing 70,000 square feet of space. As IBC grew, Ms. Stevens continued to manage extensive facilities projects, including three space expansion projects where she managed furniture acquisition and installation and data cabling, earning a reputation for finishing on time and below budget. When the Department and the General Services Administration came together to form the Denver Federal Center (DFC) Long-Term Space Strategy Working Group, Ms. Stevens served as the IBC's Working Group Principal. Charged with developing a detailed, multiyear DFC space strategy and action plan, Ms. Stevens' efforts brought about the IBC's move from commercial-leased space into building 48 at the DFC, which will ultimately save taxpayers nearly \$6 million, annually. As the IBC's lead on the DFC building 48 modernization project, Ms. Stevens oversaw planning for the conversion of 150,000 square feet of warehouse space—that once served as a World War II munitions plant—into an energy-efficient, modern workplace for the IBC.



## **Laura Joss**

Ms. Laura Joss is recognized for her illustrious career spanning 32 years with the National Park Service (NPS). During this time, she has distinguished herself as a consummate professional and has devoted herself to advancing the mission of NPS. Ms. Joss began her career as a volunteer at Mesa Verde National Park before transitioning in 1989 to a position as a museum technician at Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. For more than a decade, she served in various roles in the cultural resources program within the Rocky Mountain region before moving on to serve as branch chief for cultural resources at Yellowstone National Park. Ms. Joss later served as superintendent at both Fort McHenry National Monument and Canyonlands/Arches National Park. Additionally, she served in the Intermountain regional office, including as a member of cultural resources program leadership and as deputy regional director. Later, Ms. Joss became regional director of the Pacific West region, where she oversaw more than 60 parks, a budget of nearly \$300 million, and more than 3,600 employees. In 2017, she became superintendent at Golden Gate National Recreation Area (NRA). In that capacity, Ms. Joss oversaw a busy, year-round national park in a major urban area, which includes within its boundary two additional NPS sites—Muir Woods National Monument and Fort Point National Historic Site. Golden Gate NRA is the second-largest urban national park in the country, with annual visitation of more than 15 million people. Her extensive experience in cultural resources contributed deeply to the preservation of an unusual variety of significant cultural resources, including a large collection of classified historic and coastal defense structures, 5 national historic landmarks, and 13 properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In short, Ms. Joss has provided leadership that has contributed to both regional and national successes by NPS.



## **William D. Shaddox**

Mr. William D. Shaddox is recognized for his outstanding leadership, dedication, and exceptional achievements as Chief of the Land Resources Division of the National Park Service (NPS). Throughout his years of service, Mr. Shaddox strategically handled complex land acquisitions and innovatively advanced the NPS mission by acquiring more than 15,000 tracts of land totaling 1.9 million acres with a total value of nearly \$1 billion for inclusion in the National Park System. A highlight of his career and one of the most notable and poignant land acquisitions he guided to completion was the acquisition of land for the establishment of the Flight 93 National Memorial. Other significant achievements during his career include the acquisition of more than 160,000 acres in Big Cypress National Preserve and Everglades National Park, as well the acquisition of land to remove dams and restore the Elwha River ecosystem at Olympic National Park. Mr. Shaddox is recognized for his remarkable leadership and foresight in working with many nonprofit conservation organizations in joint

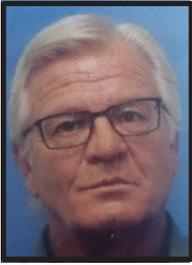


land protection efforts and partnerships for numerous parks, including Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Petrified Forest National Park, Grand Teton National Park, Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, Minidoka National Historic Site, and Mojave National Preserve. A mentor to many, he exemplifies the best in public service, having assumed responsibility for NPS's right-of-way program, including its management, the development of an inventory system for the program, and the formulation of program policies to help provide consistent guidance to parks. In addition, Mr. Shaddox's efforts helped establish the first nationwide boundary management program, which provides support and resources to park management and assists with a myriad of boundary-related issues.



### **Woodrow N. Smeck**

Mr. Woodrow N. Smeck has had an illustrious career spanning 30 years with the National Park Service (NPS). He has distinguished himself as a consummate professional and has devoted himself to advancing the mission of NPS. Mr. Smeck started his career in 1991 as a landscape architect for Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. For more than 20 years, he served in various roles at the park, including as the Superintendent. Mr. Smeck's career also includes serving as Deputy Superintendent at Yosemite National Park, Superintendent at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, and Deputy Regional Director for Regions 8, 9, 10, and 12. In his role as Deputy Regional Director, Mr. Smeck provided innovative leadership in implementing the Great American Outdoors Act. Following initial passage of the act, he recognized the importance of this landmark legislation and the impact it would have on the legacy of NPS. He also saw the urgent need to organize a strategic approach to project development and selection to ensure that the region was successful and competitive in how it handled parks' project proposals. Mr. Smeck established an interdisciplinary team to review and vet park proposals for quality and accuracy. He was personally involved in the success of these proposals, sharing his deep knowledge and experience in project planning and offering advice and counsel to parks to improve the quality of their proposals. Mr. Smeck has been a national leader in the development of NPS policy and guidance for program implementation. He oversaw the establishment of the Pacific West Region's Investment Review Board (IRB), which was established to meet national policy requirements. He later expanded the IRB's functions to include leasing of property, assessing of housing needs, conducting major planning efforts, and reviewing of investments as required under national policy. Mr. Smeck's leadership has ensured both regional and national success in the implementation of the Great American Outdoors Act, securing a lasting legacy in Regions 8, 9, 10, and 12, and throughout NPS.



## **Robert J. Kronebusch**

Throughout 32 years of Federal service, Mr. Robert J. Kronebusch has applied technical accounting and auditing skills to the Office of Natural Resources Revenue's (ONRR) primary mission of collecting, accounting for, and distributing Federal and Indian royalties from oil, gas, and solids production. Early in his career, Mr. Kronebusch designed and finalized the Minerals Management Service's Royalty in Kind program and contributed to policy and regulatory efforts, including the Federal

Gas Negotiated Rulemaking Committee and numerous oil and Indian gas valuation rules. By 2012, ONRR represented the Department of the Interior (Department) as the Nation's primary representative to the global Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. Mr. Kronebusch played a critical role in coordinating mineral revenue reporting and reconciling that data with company-reported revenue data, resulting in heightened transparency and detail that continues today. He also developed the Department's method to implement the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board's requirement to report the estimated quantity and present value of all domestic oil, natural gas, and coal reserves in the Annual Financial Report, providing unprecedented clarity and accuracy to our understanding of U.S. mineral resources and production. Over the last decade, Mr. Kronebusch has applied his technical understanding of Federal and Indian royalty payment on many misreporting cases, supporting legal challenges by the Office of Inspector General (OIG), Government Accountability Office, and ONRR. His support of the Solicitor's Office allowed ONRR to collect nearly \$47 million in the Deepwater Horizon settlement. In a False Claims Act action resolved in 2022, Mr. Kronebusch's comprehensive royalty summaries aided ONRR, the Department of Justice, and OIG staff in recovering nearly \$20 million. His years of Federal service have been consistently defined by exceptional competence and unwavering commitment to Indian and United States lessors.



## **Robert J. Winter**

Mr. Robert J. Winter began his Federal career in 1992 and, during his 30 years of public service, has worked for the Office of Trust Funds Management and the Office of Trust Reporting and Reconciliation, in the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST). In these offices, he directly influenced operations, improved fiscal accountability for Tribes and individual Indian mineral owners, and established improved processes for financial transactions. In 2010, Mr. Winter served as acting Deputy

Special Trustee for Trust Services, a senior executive position managing Indian and Tribal trust funds that exceeded \$4.3 billion. He then served as Director of Trust Operations in OST overseeing Indian and Tribal trust funds that were valued at more than \$5.2 billion. In 2019, Mr. Winter transferred to the Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR), where he manages all custodial accounting functions, financial



reporting, and reconciliation of oil and gas revenues with an annual value of more than \$14 billion. He is a recognized expert in energy and mineral royalty reporting, accounting, distribution, and disbursement to the Department of the Treasury (Treasury), States, counties, and individual Indian owners/allottees. Since joining ONRR, Mr. Winter's significant accomplishments include implementing enhanced internal accounting controls resulting in unqualified audit opinions and working with Treasury to ensure Indian Tribes and allottees receive their full royalty payments without loss from fees or administrative burden. Mr. Winter has provided the highest level of professional accounting management while ensuring the accurate collection and disbursement of mineral royalties.



### **Steven T. Hargrave**

Mr. Steven Tyrone Hargrave is recognized throughout the Federal Government, Department of the Interior (Department), and facility-security community, as a leader, collaborator, and humanitarian. Mr. Hargrave has served at the Department for 20 years and has exemplified the core values of honor, integrity, and service throughout his distinguished career. He has protected the Department's mission, facility, workforce, and visitors by establishing a trusting, courteous, responsive, and transparent facility-security program at the Stewart Lee Udall Interior Building. Mr. Hargrave received a delegation of authority from the Department of Homeland Security to manage security in the building, and successfully managed the construction of the command center, situation room, visitor processing center, turnstiles, and guard booths to ensure that security exceeded industry standards. He transformed the guard force into one of the most highly respected in the Federal Government by instituting mandatory de-escalation and use-of-force training. He also upgraded myriad security systems in the building, ensuring protection of the priceless Thomas Moran paintings currently on display in the Department's museum. In addition, Mr. Hargrave successfully managed the building's Occupant Emergency Plan and Active Threat training program, which ensured the Department's emergency preparedness. Furthermore, he commanded the Department's operational response when protesters occupied the lobby of the building on October 14, 2021. Mr. Hargrave led and oversaw the response and coordinated seamlessly with the Federal Protective Service, U.S. Park Police, and the District of Columbia's Metropolitan Police Department; this coordination mitigated violence, de-escalated the situation, and ensured the safety and security of Department personnel. Additionally, he has ensured that his security team reflects the diversity of our country and the communities being served in the District of Columbia. His many accomplishments are founded in selfless collaboration and teamwork.



## **Raymond A. Limon**

During his 7 years of service at the Department of the Interior (Department), Mr. Raymond A. Limon served with distinction. As Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Capital and Diversity and the Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO), he supervised a multi-office team that was responsible for carrying out the Department's strategic human capital management and oversight responsibilities for human capital policies and operations; employee and leadership development; and protecting the safety and health of our employees and public land visitors. Mr. Limon led numerous efforts to strengthen and advance strategic goals and Secretarial priorities by improving strategic hiring, placement, and retention efforts to ensure mission-critical service delivery through data-driven processes and increased employee engagement efforts. Examples of these efforts include implementation of the first-ever single talent management system; launching the My DOI Career portal, an award-winning online career enhancement and recruitment/succession planning tool; and deploying a new paperless performance management system for General Schedule employees. A consummate champion of workplace safety, Mr. Limon established a comprehensive anti-harassment program in 2018. In response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, he sponsored a variety of initiatives and fostered a team approach to managing pandemic-related issues. These successful efforts included leading the release of a series of human capital and safety policies related to COVID-19 testing; attestation of vaccination; the collection and storage of documentation; privacy use adherence; issuance of employee benefits related to leave administration; and new policies on telework and remote work. In addition to his many achievements at the Department, Mr. Limon positively impacted external organizations as one of the longest-serving members of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management/Office of Management and Budget CHCO Council. Through his membership, he developed and maintained strategic and collaborative partnerships that helped solve critical human capital management challenges and strengthened the Federal workforce.



### **Barbara Anne Pitkin**

In 1995, Ms. Barbara Anne Pitkin started the Department of the Interior's (Department) International Technical Assistance Program (ITAP) as a biodiversity conservation pilot project in three countries with \$300,000 from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Since then, she has grown ITAP into a global program spanning 40 countries, supported by 17 employees, who manage a portfolio of projects spanning the breadth of the Department's mission. Ms. Pitkin designed

ITAP to foster technical exchanges on the international stage, helping thousands of Department employees hone their skills and exchange best practices with their counterparts in foreign countries; many of the employees report that these experiences are the highlights of their careers, and many Department field stations have ongoing ITAP-forged ties to international counterparts. In addition, Ms. Pitkin has helped solidify the Department's reputation as a reliable and effective interagency partner in supporting U.S. foreign policy objectives while furthering the Department's mission. An energetic and effective spokesperson for the Department, she has developed a constellation of partners at the Departments of State and Commerce, USAID, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the World Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank. These partners support ITAP's staffing, operating expenses, and project activities with approximately \$12 million a year. Under Ms. Pitkin's consistent leadership, ITAP has logged an impressive track record of results, and the Department has contributed to more effective stakeholder engagement in the conservation of natural and cultural resources in Central America and sub-Saharan Africa; enhanced women's leadership in marine and coastal conservation in Southeast Asia; improved management of protected-area systems in Eastern Europe; strengthened sustainable tourism practices in the Middle East; and enhanced the capacity for combating wildlife trafficking across the globe.



### **Mariagrazia Caminiti**

Ms. Mariagrazia Caminiti began her tenure in the Office of the Solicitor (Office) in 1993. For nearly three decades as executive assistant to the Solicitor, she has been the mainstay of the Office, providing unparalleled support and counsel to seven Solicitors. Her institutional knowledge, attention to detail, and unflappable demeanor have been pivotal in the sustained success of the Office providing legal advice and litigation support to the Secretary, Department of the Interior (Department) Bureaus, and 70,000

employees. Ms. Caminiti's commitment to public service has advanced the mission of the Department and of the Office; she strives to ensure every member of the public who contacts the Office has a voice. Ms. Caminiti has facilitated the seamless transitions of Solicitors from administration to administration and has ensured the successful onboarding of countless career and noncareer executives. This onboarding goes beyond the technical processes and includes mentorship and guidance to



individuals new to Federal service. Immediately, new employees recognize her value as a trusted advisor in navigating the Department's broad mission and unique structure. With her keen eye for detail, she reviews all written statements and decisions issued by the Solicitor—including comprehensive, complex M-Opinions—addressing issues before they manifest. She sets the highest standards for the Office and is a fierce advocate for ensuring those standards are never sacrificed. As a voice of calm in chaos, with the utmost trust of her colleagues, her supervisors, and numerous others across the Department, the depth of Ms. Caminiti's commitment to and knowledge of the Office is unmatched. Her close professional relationships established throughout the Department and her nuanced understanding of organizational operations helped the Office successfully weather countless challenges, including lapses in appropriations and the COVID-19 pandemic. Her ability to cut through bureaucratic impediments to facilitate efficient coordination with leaders throughout Government is impressive.



### **Laurel M. Barnhill**

Having served as a leader in two different State agencies, Ms. Laurel M. Barnhill was already a respected biologist when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) hired her to lead the National Wildlife Refuge System's Inventory and Monitoring Program in a bold new direction. Ms. Barnhill served as the first branch chief, establishing the first regional network of agency scientists, supporting and connecting to the work of other conservation partners. Her thoughtful creation of the organizational structure and her fostering of individual staff development were recognized as the model for the organization. Ms. Barnhill's vision and leadership efforts continued in her role as the division manager for the region's Migratory Bird Program. She brought her exceptional abilities as a scientist, leader of partnerships, and leader of people to influence her staff and key national and international partnerships, including FWS's Waterfowl Regulations Committee and the water-bird-focused Atlantic Coast Joint Venture. Ms. Barnhill exhibited creativity, savvy, and innovation as a problem solver, deftly resolving real-world challenges involving the implementation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. She now serves as the regional chief of staff and helps lead more than 1,300 employees located in 10 Southeastern States, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Her vision, organization, and dedication are essential to the region's success; she led a large and dispersed workforce throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms. Barnhill is the driving and organizing force which helps ensure that the region works efficiently. Her vision, focus on priorities, and careful concern to ensure all voices are heard, help the team and the entire region to be more effective.



### **Michael D. Sciortino**

Mr. Michael D. Sciortino's career with the Department of the Interior (Department) has been marked by exceptional achievements in accounting and by his career progression as a steward of financial resources, systems, and human capital. He was instrumental in the development of the Department's Financial Business Management System at the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and he has continued leading systems improvements as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) Chief of Financial

Operations and Deputy Chief Financial Officer. In addition to his technical expertise, Mr. Sciortino's career has been characterized by his renowned skills as an innovator and leader. His efforts to centralize processes, pilot new business methods, and improve services—combined with his impeccable oversight of a centralized Division of Finance—served as models for FWS's transformation of business services into the Joint Administrative Operations national team. Also, he has led the implementation of numerous technological innovations, such as a mobile phone payment application and kiosks for visitors at several premier visitor destinations across the National Wildlife Refuge System. Mr. Sciortino's astute financial acumen has led FWS to numerous clean audit opinions, and his professional standards have served as an example for others. His efforts to champion workforce development and create competency standards to prepare his staff for the future have resulted in abundant developmental assignments and training opportunities for employees. Mr. Sciortino sets the example for diversity and inclusion in his hiring and employee-development efforts, utilizing various special hiring authorities to attract diverse talent and expertise. He has fostered a culture of appreciation and recognition, resulting in high morale, positive retention, and outstanding customer service.



### **Gina M. Shultz**

Ms. Gina M. Shultz is highly regarded—both internally and externally—for her expertise and acumen in all aspects of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and other authorities administered by the Ecological Services Program of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). She has created a dynamic and visionary workforce culture that has focused the Ecological Services headquarters team around achieving three identified key results of (1) creating an inclusive, equitable, and welcoming culture of “us”; (2) balancing excellence and pragmatism in the delivery of FWS work products; and (3) making good decisions by prioritizing communication horizontally and vertically. Equally notable has been Ms. Shultz's leadership in developing effective processes for ESA consultations with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on their registration of pesticides under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act. Her efforts set the stage for a constructive and collaborative relationship with EPA, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the Department of Agriculture during the recent nationwide consultation on the registration review of



the pesticide malathion. Ms. Schultz's leadership and guidance during the malathion consultation established a strong foundation for future national ESA pesticide consultations that will help protect over 1,600 threatened and endangered species and 700 critical habitats. Throughout her career, she has remained focused on the highest priorities of the Department of the Interior (Department) and FWS; demonstrated agility and creativity in responding to and leading change; and actively sought the input of employees at all levels in the organization within and outside her program to streamline work processes, make decisions, and improve customer service.



### **Michael R. Stroeh**

Mr. Michael R. Stroeh is the current project leader of the South Arkansas National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Complex (Felsenthal, Overflow, and Pond Creek NWRs) and has dedicated over 33 years to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) at more than a dozen NWRs across three regions. Throughout his career, Mr. Stroeh has focused on investing in partnerships that continue to yield significant improvements in habitat and species management; increased opportunities for and improved support from the public; and the conservation of public lands for future generations. Championing the protection of wildlife habitat at the landscape scale through innovative and visionary partnering will be one of his many legacies. In 2017, Mr. Stroeh won the National Realty Land Legacy Award. He has contributed to the protection of more than 50,000 acres over the course of his career. Mr. Stroeh serves on regional and national teams and believes in the One Service approach, regularly sharing his resources and knowledge with others. He and his staff have assisted in the development of numerous regional monitoring protocols with national impacts. Mr. Stroeh is a leader in addressing the rapid expansion of feral swine, which is a complex issue affecting many States. His team received a U.S. Geological Survey grant of \$1 million to help advance the state of science on feral-hog impacts to resources of concern on NWRs. Mr. Stroeh's management practices have been used as models of exemplary actions to implement nationwide. In 2019, at a congressional subcommittee hearing about wildfire resilient communities, Representative Bruce Westerman referenced Felsenthal NWR's habitat management use of prescribed fire as an example of what should be occurring on public lands throughout the Nation. Mr. Stroeh is a true team leader for employees and serves as a respected mentor for students in the field of conservation.



## **Barbara W. Wainman**

Ms. Barbara W. Wainman's career is recognized throughout the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and the Department of the Interior (Department) as one that is distinguished by exceptional performance and unwavering commitment to public service through her expertise and leadership in the evolving field of communications and outreach. During her 41 year tenure as a Federal employee, she has played a critical role in the Department's communications and outreach efforts on a myriad of natural resource issues of national significance. In 1999, she joined USGS, where she led the Office of Communications for 18 years. Her career at USGS was highlighted by numerous communications and outreach efforts, including overseeing the communications response to some of the Nation's worst earthquake, volcano, and flooding disasters and establishing one of the first internal communications programs in the Government. In 2017, Ms. Wainman joined FWS, where she immediately became a critical part of its leadership team. As Assistant Director for External Affairs, she was responsible for developing and launching FWS's first-ever content management system, a project that spanned nearly 8 years, required a total investment of over \$10 million, and has improved public engagement and access to information. Due to Ms. Wainman's leadership and vision, FWS's External Affairs program changed how communications funding and personnel resources are managed across FWS, resulting in a truly national program that better supports the successful delivery of the organization's unified conservation message, while also improving efficiency and consistency in FWS. She is also responsible for establishing FWS's first-ever internal communications platform that proved to play a key role in successfully communicating with employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout her career, Ms. Wainman's contributions to communications strategy, policy, and operations have expanded and modernized USGS and FWS programs, and her positive influence on communications and outreach is significant and lasting.

## **Dr. Priscilla Wheeler**

Dr. Priscilla Wheeler serves as the Region 8 Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS). Throughout her career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), she has demonstrated outstanding leadership. Her tireless commitment to conservation and those who practice it has contributed significantly to the success of the NWRS in Alaska, California, Nevada, and the Klamath Basin. Dr. Wheeler is unmatched in ensuring that both day-to-day refuge management and administrative needs are addressed. All the while, she provides strategic counsel for unprecedented conservation threats affecting refuges, including the challenges resulting from a years-long historic drought that persists in California and the Klamath Basin. Dr. Wheeler successfully navigates the extremely complex issues affecting refuges, including water law, ecology, and visitor use. Her work and decisions are consistently guided by the goal of maximizing benefits to national wildlife refuge resources. She works tirelessly to advocate for the NWRS and the people committed to the

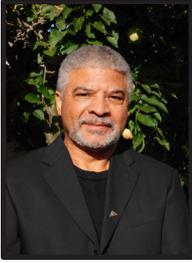


management and enjoyment of refuges. Dr. Wheeler's efforts have contributed directly to FWS's success in meeting its mission while also addressing the ongoing challenges of COVID-19 and keeping FWS employees and the American public safe. She has exhibited inspiring leadership and steadfast competency during this time and is, first and foremost, a persistent advocate for employee and public safety. Throughout her career, Dr. Wheeler has been an extremely influential advocate for diversity and inclusion. This advocacy is at the forefront of what defines her legacy. Dr. Wheeler inspires others by championing the need for increased diversity among FWS's workforce.



### **Christopher Wilcox**

The global COVID-19 pandemic compounded the challenges for wildland firefighters. As they responded to some of the most active western wildfire seasons in our country's history, traditional approaches to risk management proved inadequate to address the novel pandemic-related health and safety issues affecting them. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fire Chief Christopher Wilcox was a key leader in charting a path forward, expertly navigating volumes of health and safety information while he focused on the importance of the core firefighting mission. His persistence and influence led to meaningful discussions and change as he collaborated with fellow decision makers at the Interagency Fire Management Board, the Fire Executive Council, and the Wildland Fire Medical and Public Health Advisory Team. Through these frequent interactions, Mr. Wilcox proposed the "Module of One" concept, with standards that outlined how fire crews would manage their interaction with others while on a fire assignment and while at the home unit. These standards helped keep fire crews healthy through mindful interaction while on the fireline, in remote spike camps, traveling to and from wildfire assignments, and at normal duty stations. An incalculable number of firefighters were protected from becoming infected with COVID-19 because of Mr. Wilcox's unflinching leadership to challenge the status quo and break through misconceptions about what is possible. Additionally, he developed procedures within the agency for tracking COVID-19 infections within the firefighting community to manage deployments more effectively and minimize additional exposures. When firefighters did contract COVID-19, Mr. Wilcox designed a standard-of-care protocol to ensure that they were accounted for throughout their quarantine and recovery.



### **Dr. Rufus D. Catchings**

Dr. Rufus D. Catchings is an internationally recognized expert in seismology known for his fundamental contributions to understanding Earth's crustal structure, its implications for earthquake hazards, and the impacts to human life and property. Among his many research investigations, he has imaged the detailed features of earthquake faults that reside directly beneath urban settings, detected the pathways traveled by seismic waves that generate strong ground shaking, and identified the effects of subsurface faults on groundwater mobility. Dr. Catchings produces key seismic structure information and has used his expertise to help guide large projects, including deep drilling of the San Andreas fault in California and the Chesapeake Bay Impact Crater. His trademark work style is to conduct cross-disciplinary collaborations to investigate Earth's features in both the shallow and deep crust. Many of the investigations he led were the first of their kind and set precedents for subsequent endeavors, including a technique for imaging in interlayered basalt, a rock type that scatters and attenuates seismic waves. Dr. Catchings partners with, and technically advises, industry, State and local governments, other Federal agencies, and educational institutions, all with the goal of producing the best science for our Nation. In addition, he selflessly served 3 years as the leader of a 200-member U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) science center. Dr. Catchings is passionate about mentoring the next generation of scientists and has served on students' academic committees. For decades, he has thoughtfully guided students and new graduates, thereby improving access to and inclusion in Earth science careers. Dr. Catchings' scientific and leadership contributions have been recognized through a fellowship with the Geological Society of America (GSA). In addition, he received the GSA Bromery Award and has been recognized by USGS through an award named in his honor—the Rufus Catchings Diversity Outreach Award. Further honors include the Department of the Interior's Superior Service Award and Unit Award for Excellence of Service.



### **Paul E. Exter**

For more than 30 years, Mr. Paul E. Exter has led efforts to implement and modernize information technology (IT) to expand the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) science capacity. His efforts have increased the capability, security, efficiency, and capacity of IT systems in USGS and the Department of the Interior (Department). Serving as the USGS Chief Technology Officer, Mr. Exter used his significant Federal IT knowledge and exemplary leadership skills to develop strategic plans, policies, governance, and infrastructure while implementing enterprisewide projects that enhanced software licensing, cybersecurity, end-user support, IT management, and data center consolidation. His career contributions, beginning in a USGS water science center and advancing in roles at the regional, headquarters, and Department levels, afforded him unique insights and skills that he used to foster



collaboration while furthering USGS's IT strategic vision. He was instrumental in creating and realigning enterprise IT services under a single organization at a time when these services were just beginning on the Federal landscape. Mr. Exter also became a change agent, rallying the IT community, representing each of the Department's Bureaus and Offices. His successes over his career are reflected in the IT landscape of the Department, as it operates today. Mr. Exter designed a distributed communication and collaboration strategy across the many diverse and independent organizations throughout USGS. This matrix approach streamlined the management of IT infrastructure and ensured that science requirements drove the direction of the strategic IT vision. Mr. Exter's leadership is not confined to IT infrastructure and technical operations of USGS. He dedicated a sizable portion of his career to mentoring, training, and being a partner with hundreds of IT specialists across the Department, and he pioneered a cultural change to improve the management of IT assets across USGS. Mr. Exter's dedication to serve and support every employee and customer is a hallmark of his commitment to improving USGS performance.



### **Dr. Martin Fitzpatrick**

Throughout his 16-year career with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Dr. Martin Fitzpatrick has performed some of the most challenging jobs, serving in multiple leadership roles at the USGS Forest and Rangeland Ecosystem Science Center (Center). He became one of the most well-respected members of the Ecosystems Mission Area and Northwest Regional communities. In his career, Dr. Fitzpatrick has held or acted extensively in every Center leadership role, including research manager, Deputy Director, Director, and even administrative officer. Dr. Fitzpatrick has been a multidisciplinary scientist, learning and communicating every field of science within his Center. Although the limelight falls on the scientists he supervised, he worked behind the scenes championing their science, describing their capacity relative to the priorities of the Department of the Interior, and promoting their findings. Dr. Fitzpatrick built partnerships across mission areas, Federal agencies, and with multiple universities, and has served on regional- and national-level teams, such as the Columbia Basin Leadership Team. He created the Center's first Animal Care and Use program and developed risk liability language for university agreements. Dr. Fitzpatrick has managed deep budget cuts, late appropriations, and multiple Government shutdowns, and he repeatedly restructured the Center's budgets and fiscal reporting structure. He is an outstanding strategic thinker, developing 5-year science plans, 5-year budget forecasts, and workforce plans. Throughout his career, Dr. Fitzpatrick has been a nurturing and fair supervisor to scientists and support staff, always supportive of their success. He has been an unwavering advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Center's hiring and succession planning efforts. Dr. Fitzpatrick assisted regional directors with three Center Director searches, mentored four research managers, and managed three field stations across two States.



Across this stunningly diverse array of challenges, Dr. Fitzpatrick's hard work and success have truly advanced the great science the American people need from the Department and USGS.



### **Tracy J. Fuller**

Mr. Tracy J. Fuller is recognized throughout the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the Department of the Interior, and the geospatial community for his many years of scientific, technical, and programmatic leadership of the Alaska Mapping Initiative. As a direct result of his efforts, key geospatial datasets of Alaska have been updated and modernized to the same standard as the rest of the United States, to include statewide high-resolution elevation data, high-resolution satellite imagery data, and revised large-scale topographic maps. This data is vital to a wide range of applications in Alaska and the Arctic, including aviation safety, resource management and conservation, economic prosperity of Alaska Natives, and U.S. national security. The updated Alaska geospatial data provide significant value not just for present applications, but will serve as a critical scientific baseline for assessing the impacts of an ever-changing Arctic environment for decades into the future. Mr. Fuller is responsible for the successful development and implementation of partner-engagement strategies needed to meet and exceed congressional and administration priorities over the last decade. He led U.S. efforts to implement a geospatial elevation infrastructure for the Arctic Region through his participation on the eight-nation Arctic Council. Mr. Fuller was responsible for the Arctic Council adoption of the Arctic Digital Elevation Model as the official elevation base product for use by Arctic Council member nations. The positive impact of his contributions to Arctic Council activities resonates not only within the U.S. Government, but across the international Arctic community and stands as a model of successful multinational collaboration. He has been an exemplary employee, faithfully demonstrating the high personal and technical standards that characterize USGS science in the public service.



### **Manuela Huso**

Ms. Manuela Huso has made significant, highly impactful advancements in biological statistics and wildlife conservation ecology. A recognized leader among Federal, academic, and industry researchers, she has made groundbreaking contributions to the body of statistical theory and tools needed to assess the effects of renewable energy development on our Nation's species and to our understanding of the ecological processes applicable to reducing energy development's impact on wildlife. Most notably, Ms. Huso led innovative, collaborative research of statistically robust estimators of wildlife fatalities associated with energy development, while accounting for uncertainty in how impacts of turbine collisions are monitored. Understanding that this work was too crucial to the policymakers, regulators, resource managers,



and operators of energy facilities to publish results only in scientific journals, she packaged the statistics into user-friendly software—namely GenEst and Evidence of Absence—and conducted numerous training workshops to guide practitioners in their use. The importance of this effort is clear—the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service now requires use of these tools as part of their permitting process for incidental take of wildlife at wind-energy facilities. Ms. Huso’s research has significantly informed evaluation of whether mitigation strategies, such as changes to wind turbine design and placement, acoustic deterrents, and collision detectors will reduce impacts of energy development to wildlife. These combined efforts were critical to the successful execution of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan across 10.8 million acres of Bureau of Land Management lands in the deserts of California. Additionally, Ms. Huso has elucidated animal behaviors associated with turbine collision risk, explored the application of unmanned aircraft systems and search dogs for wildlife carcass detection, and tested the applicability of turbine operational changes to protect wildlife. Her work has critically informed the Nation’s efforts to reduce dependence of fossil fuels and combat climate change while conserving wildlife resources.



### **Dr. Jeffrey L. Marion**

Dr. Jeffrey L. Marion is recognized throughout the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) for his decades of leadership and support in recreation ecology. During the past 30 years, he has traversed and studied North America’s most notable national parks and forests, national trail systems, and wilderness areas in efforts to improve the sustainable management of these fragile, dynamic systems. Dr. Marion forged an understanding of how America’s love for the outdoors can alter Federal trust resources

and how the public can assist in maintaining the integrity of parks and protected areas (PPA) for the enjoyment of future generations. He leveraged the knowledge gained from these studies by authoring the book, “Leave No Trace in the Outdoors,” a comprehensive guide for modern-day outdoor recreationists, the premise of which is now an international paradigm for the use and stewardship of public lands. His pioneering work has helped firmly establish the discipline in the scientific arena, whereby land managers can now successfully protect and maintain PPAs using the scientific method. Dr. Marion has been a teacher and mentor to dozens of graduate students and young scientists at several universities and organizations; these students and scientists are now a force in the pursuit of recreation ecology. His lifelong efforts to integrate science-based low-impact practices into the literature and courses of the Boy Scouts of America have fostered increased respect in American youth for the outdoor environment. Dr. Marion has served on numerous advisory boards and is the recipient of awards from the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Boy Scouts of America, and the Leave No Trace Center. He has been an exemplary employee, faithfully displaying the high personal and technical standards that characterize USGS science in the public service.



## **Christina A. Neal**

During her years of service to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) at the Alaska Volcano Observatory and the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory (HVO), Ms. Christina A. Neal led major efforts to prepare communities for volcanic eruptions. After the 1992 eruption of Mount Spurr in Alaska, she led the development of the “Alaska Interagency Operating Plan for Volcanic Ash Episodes,” first published in 1994 and updated biannually.

This plan, which includes contributions from the National Weather Service (NWS), Federal Aviation Administration, and other Federal and State agencies, has served as the model for similar plans around the world to mitigate volcanic ash hazard to aircraft. Ms. Neal led the USGS-NWS effort to develop ashfall advisories and the ashfall severity index to inform the public of the ashfall threat during eruptions. In 2003, she led the U.S. effort to establish Russia’s Sakhalin Volcanic Eruption Response Team to monitor and report on Pacific routes. As scientist-in-charge at HVO, Ms. Neal led the response to the 2018 eruption of Kilauea. This incredibly complex, 3-month eruption presented myriad hazards—both at the volcano’s summit and along its lower East Rift Zone—and led to the evacuation of the observatory building and the destruction of more than 700 homes. Response to the event required Ms. Neal to apply her vast experience in synthesizing monitoring data to make decisions and effectively communicate with HVO staff, the National Park Service, Hawaii County, and the public. Under Ms. Neal’s leadership, HVO was a finalist for the prestigious Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals program in 2019. After the eruption, she led a transformational rebuilding of HVO with the planning and design of a new observatory facility.

## **Timothy W. Saultz**

Mr. Timothy W. Saultz is recognized throughout the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and across multiple Federal and State agencies for his more than 25 years of excellent work in the coordination of national-level elevation-data acquisition. He is particularly accomplished and celebrated for collaborating with the private sector, in conjunction with other Federal agencies, in the development of an acquisition model that serves as the baseline for the 3D Elevation Program, which is recognized as a best practice across the Federal geospatial community. Mr. Saultz served a vital role in this multi-agency program, ensuring that the most appropriate mapping techniques were used to acquire modern elevation data for the Nation. In his role as the Contracting Officer’s Representative (COR) for the Geospatial Products and Services Contract (GPSC) suite of contracts, he has provided exceptional leadership in the rapid deployment of resources to assist in emergency-response activities for natural disasters, including hurricanes, landslides, wildfires, and flood events. Mr. Saultz’s professionalism and diligence in this regard were responsible for the effective execution of multiple Departmental supplemental efforts, including the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act and the emergency supplemental appropriations received following Hurricanes Harvey, Maria, and Irma. He provided oversight for



millions of taxpayer dollars during his tenure as COR. In addition to his valuable contributions to Federal contracting, Mr. Saultz has been a champion for equality and diversity. He actively supported diversity efforts within his own team, including leading trainings on diversity for both the private-sector contractors on GPSC and the entire USGS National Geospatial Technical Operations Center. He ensured that all employees supporting USGS science are treated with respect and dignity in this organization.



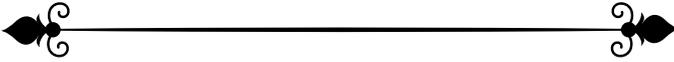
### **Dr. Nathan L. Stephenson**

Dr. Nathan L. Stephenson dedicated his career to understanding and developing the science to manage the majestic forests of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks and the Sierra Nevada. His innovative and groundbreaking research advanced scientific understanding of fire, drought, disease, and climatic change in the Sierra Nevada and worldwide. Dr. Stephenson adopted, expanded, and improved what has become one of the world's longest annual-resolution forest dynamics datasets, tracking the

fates of more than 30,000 trees over nearly four decades. He was at the forefront of groundbreaking collaborations, including the “Leaf to Landscape Project,” bringing together scientists to assess forest vulnerability in the face of extreme drought. His work has appeared in premier scientific journals—including “Nature” and “Science”—and it is part of an enduring scientific legacy. Dr. Stephenson's ability to break down the complexities of the natural world into bite-size morsels of compelling information for lay audiences has made him the go-to source for the most-respected outlets, including “Scientific American,” “Los Angeles Times,” “New York Times,” BBC, and public radio. His work has informed fire management in montane ecosystems, quantified global climate change impacts to forests, and played a significant role in the formation of the Giant Sequoia National Monument. Land managers have consistently relied on his expertise, accessibility, and insights. Dr. Stephenson has exemplified the mission of the Department of the Interior, has deepened knowledge of Sierra Nevada forests and giant sequoias, has been a valued partner and colleague, and has made the world a better place through his science and his humanity. He has been an exemplary employee, faithfully displaying the high personal and technical standards that characterize the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) science in the public service.

---

# CITIZEN'S AWARD FOR BRAVERY



The Citizen's Award for Bravery is granted to private citizens for heroic acts or unusual bravery in the face of danger. Recipients have risked their lives to save the life of a Departmental employee or the life of any other person while on property owned by or entrusted to the Department of the Interior. A special certificate and citation signed by the Secretary is presented to each recipient.

## VALOR AWARDS



The Valor Award is presented to Department of the Interior employees who have demonstrated unusual courage involving a high degree of personal risk in the face of danger. The act of heroism is not required to be related to official duties or to have occurred at the official duty station. Recipients receive a citation signed by the Secretary and an engraved gold Valor Award Medal.





---

# CITIZEN'S AWARD FOR BRAVERY

## *Award Recipients*

### **NOMINATED BY THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

*Bill Allen*

*Stefan Beattie*

*Jake Beren*

*Justin Fraser*

*Lynnea Fredrikson*

*Kristie Kayl*

*Trever Kirkpatrick-Bray*

*Karl Welter*

*Victoria Wagner*

# VALOR AWARDS

## *Award Recipients*

### **BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

*Christopher Allen*

*Matthew Gochis*

### **NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

*Reece T. Almendinger*

*Daniel K. Baker*

*Daniel Corn*

*Seth A. DiGiacomo*

*Christopher Erickson*

*Brandon D. Hallock*

*Joseph Hughes*

*Stephen P. Karnatz*

*Christopher T. Mengak*

*Matthew Nemeth*

*Casey J. Osback*

*Francis Preston*

*Michael Shain*

*Zachary Stuenkel\**



# VALOR AWARDS

*(Continued)*

## **U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**

*Jeremy "Bart" Marble*

*Jeremy V. Nguyen*

## **U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY**

*Peter Koestner\**

*Matthew Pachla\**

*(\*Award Previously Presented)*



# VALOR AWARDS

## *Award Recipients*



### **Christopher Allen**

Early in the morning on November 11, 2021, Mr.

Christopher Allen, a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) law enforcement ranger in the Southern Nevada district office, was contacted by the Lake Mead Interagency Communication Center requesting assistance in responding to a reckless driver at the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. On his way there, a second 911 call was broadcast, reporting that the suspect was in the campground, was suicidal, and intended to drive head-on

into traffic. Several minutes later, BLM rangers saw the suspect's vehicle parked at the fee booth and initiated a traffic stop. The suspect then drove into the Red Rock visitor center parking lot. Ranger Allen ordered the closing of the gate at the fee booth, preventing visitors from entering the area. He, along with others from local law enforcement agencies, drove to the parking lot in an attempt to box-in the suspect, who was sitting in his vehicle. The suspect then intentionally rammed Ranger Allen's patrol vehicle and sped off to a nearby parking lot, ramming a second law enforcement vehicle. At this point, Ranger Allen and Nevada Highway Patrol officers discharged their firearms. The suspect received non-life-threatening injuries, and Ranger Allen and other responding officers immediately treated the suspect.



### **Matthew Gochis**

On the night of February 22, 2022, while patrolling public lands in Tooele County, Utah, Mr. Matthew Gochis, a law enforcement ranger for the Salt Lake field office, responded to the county dispatch to assist in an extremely dangerous situation. The county dispatch had received multiple 911 emergency calls reporting a wrong-way driver on Interstate 80, who was intentionally trying to hit other drivers head-on. Ranger Gochis encountered the vehicle as it was driving directly toward him. He then observed

an 18-wheeler swerve to avoid colliding with the wrong-way driver and immediately activated his emergency lights. In response, the driver attempted to maneuver around the patrol vehicle but was prevented from passing when Ranger Gochis blocked him. The suspect's vehicle came to a complete stop when it struck the patrol vehicle, completely blocking one lane of Interstate 80. Despite repeated commands from Ranger Gochis, the suspect refused to exit his vehicle. Ranger Gochis was eventually able to open the suspect's door, remove him from the vehicle, and place him in custody. Despite the intensity of this potentially deadly encounter, Ranger Gochis maintained his composure and professionalism throughout the incident and undoubtedly saved lives that night. The suspect was transferred to the Mountain



West Medical Center for treatment and evaluation. He was then released to the Utah Highway Patrol and charged with suspicion of driving under the influence of alcohol and driving the wrong way on the interstate.

## **Reece T. Almendinger**

## **Stephen P. Karnatz**

## **Casey J. Osback**

On July 6, 2017, Chief Ranger Casey J. Osback, Ranger Reece T. Almendinger, Ranger Stephen P. Karnatz, along with a sheriff's deputy, responded to a report of a suicidal man at the Sage Creek Campground. The man had a history of violence, an active restraining order in Texas, and a history of attempted suicide. Days before, he had emailed his son stating he was traveling to Badlands National Park to take his own life. Once the officers located the individual in the campground, a pursuit ensued after the man sped away in his vehicle. After 5 miles of pursuit, the man abruptly stopped his car at an overlook on Sage Creek Rim Road. As soon as the officers stopped behind his car, the man placed a .357 revolver to his head and quickly removed his seatbelt. The officers exercised extreme caution as they attempted to open a dialogue with the man. Within roughly 5 minutes, the man drove away, and the pursuit continued to the Pinnacles Overlook. As the man exited his vehicle at Pinnacles, he again placed the revolver to his head. Visitors, who had been as close as 5 feet to the man, hurried their families away, running in all directions. In temperatures exceeding 100 degrees, with no shade, Chief Osback, armed with an AR-15 carbine rifle, took the lead in a diamond formation with the other officers. Approaching the man within 5 feet, the officers acted as a shield to protect visitors and contain the suicidal individual. While the man sat on a park bench with the revolver to his head, Chief Osback, along with the local sheriff, successfully opened communications with the individual as Rangers Almendinger and Karnatz positioned themselves close to a South Dakota Highway Patrol Special Response Team member who had also arrived at the scene, so that they would be ready to assist further, if needed. The teamwork, restraint, and steadfast professionalism demonstrated by Chief Osback, Ranger Almendinger and Ranger Karnatz during this tense, uncertain, and rapidly evolving event contributed to a safe ending for all involved.

## **Daniel K. Baker**

## **Christopher T. Mengak**

On December 24, 2016, Ranger Daniel K. Baker, along with Ranger Christopher T. Mengak and the chief of the volunteer fire department in Interior, South Dakota, responded to an emergency call involving a father and daughter who were stranded in their vehicle at Exit 131, Interstate 90, during a blizzard. The family had placed an urgent call to 911 due to deteriorating conditions inside their vehicle. The passenger's side door had been dislodged due to severe wind and snow, and the snow was entering the vehicle as the family made the 911 call. Rangers Baker and Mengak loaded emergency equipment into a Polaris utility terrain vehicle (UTV) with a track system.



Both rangers then drove into the night with the fire chief, who was assisting by driving a farm tractor with headlights near the rangers' vehicle, 11 miles through the park on Highway 240 to Exit 131. With the help of the headlights from the tractor, the rangers arrived at the rescue location after 3 hours of battling snow, wind, and limited visibility. Upon arrival at the scene, the rangers and fire chief extracted the family, provided emergency care, and quickly loaded them into the Polaris UTV for the return journey to Badlands National Park. After the same 11 miles were retraced, both rangers provided additional emergency care to members of the family—who had sustained severe frostbite on their hands and feet—in Ranger Baker's park-owned residence.

**Daniel Corn**

**Christopher Erickson**

**Francis Preston**

**Michael Shain**

**Bill Allen** (*Citizen's Award for Bravery*)

**Stephan Beattie** (*Citizen's Award for Bravery*)

**Jake Beren** (*Citizen's Award for Bravery*)

**Justin Fraser** (*Citizen's Award for Bravery*)

**Kristie Kayl** (*Citizen's Award for Bravery*)

**Karl Welter** (*Citizen's Award for Bravery*)

In the early hours of June 4, 2017, an unroped climber was descending on glaciated terrain when he broke through its surface and fell an estimated 60 feet into a crevasse. Due to the force of the fall, the climber and his gear were wedged tightly into the blue ice; he came to rest where the crevasse was only 10 to 12 inches wide. A witness to the fall alerted nearby guides, who selflessly began what was to become a 15-hour, heroic rescue. As the first on scene, National Park Service (NPS) volunteers Mr. Stefan Beattie and Mr. Justin Fraser, and alpine ascent group mountain guides Mr. Bill Allen, Mr. Karl Welter, Ms. Kristie Kayl, and Mr. Jake Beren conducted reconnaissance and initiated the rescue. Following the initial reconnaissance and rescue initiation, NPS Mountaineer Rangers Daniel Corn, Christopher Erickson, Francis Preston, and Michael Shain assumed leadership and managed the rescue operation. They all toiled for approximately 15 hours to extricate the unresponsive climber. The narrow crevasse had room for only one additional person. Each ranger, volunteer and mountain guide was lowered by rope into the dark, confined space for up to 2 hours at a time. The crevasse allowed no room to maneuver, and the rescuers had to choose in advance which direction to orient their feet and heads prior to being lowered. With painstakingly slow progress—due to the limited mobility in the enclosed area—each rescuer steadfastly chipped away at the ice to eventually free the entrapped climber. When Ranger Preston was not working to rescue the climber in the crevasse, he oversaw team communications from above. Above and beyond the physical and mental challenges of the situation, each rescuer knowingly took on a



high level of personal risk. The rescue environment presented a “low likelihood-high consequence” risk profile due to the potential for glacier movement or ice instability down in the crevasse. Additional personal risks included the full reliance upon the integrity of the ropes and harnesses that suspended them; the skills and attention of the rescuers managing the rigging and equipment on the glacier surface; and the reliability of clear communication with the team above. Had it not been for the courage and perseverance of these rangers, volunteers and mountain guides, the fallen climber would not have survived.

## **Seth A. DiGiacomo**

### **Victoria Wagner** (*Citizen’s Award for Bravery*)

On the morning of May 30, 2021, National Park Service Ranger Seth A. DiGiacomo and Eastham Police Officer Victoria Wagner were called to Nauset Light Beach for a possible drowning in progress. They arrived on the scene to see an individual bobbing helplessly in the water while clinging to a boogie board as waves crashed around him, engulfing him periodically. The two officers did not hesitate to remove their duty gear and enter the treacherous surf to rescue the man in distress. They made contact with the helpless individual in the frigid, chest-deep water, wrapped their arms around him, and dragged him through the crashing surf to the shore. Had it not been for the efforts of Ranger DiGiacomo and Officer Wagner, the man in the surf would not have made it to shore, as he did not even have the energy to grab the water-rescue throw bag that was placed near him. Coupled with the excessively high waves and volatility of the surf that day, the situation was dire. Ranger DiGiacomo’s and Officer Wagner’s courageous efforts directly contributed to saving a man’s life.



## **Brandon D. Hallock**

In the early afternoon of February 18, 2019, while at the Old Stevens Creek Day Use Area within Curecanti National Recreation Area, Ranger Brandon D. Hallock located a vehicle that was reported to have a suicidal individual inside. He approached the vehicle, calling out the occupant’s name. Due to the position of the individual in the driver’s seat, he initially believed the person to be deceased. However, upon closer examination, Ranger Hallock saw that the individual was alive, with a cocked revolver in his lap. While he spoke with the individual and endeavored to change his mind about committing suicide, the individual grabbed the gun and raised it to his head. Ranger Hallock drew his weapon and quickly retreated to be out of the line of fire. He continued to talk with the individual to convince him that life was worth living, with the goal of coaxing him out of the vehicle without the revolver. As a result of Ranger Hallock’s effective negotiation, the individual eventually exited the vehicle. Ranger Hallock was able to secure the individual and awaited assistance from the Gunnison Police Department and Gunnison County Sheriff’s Office.



The individual was then transported to the Gunnison Valley Hospital for a mental health medical evaluation. This incident easily could have resulted in an officer-involved shooting or a suicide.

## **Joseph Hughes**

### **Matthew Nemeth**

#### **Lynnea Fredrikson** (*Citizen's Award for Bravery*)

#### **Trever Kirkpatrick-Bray** (*Citizen's Award for Bravery*)

Chief Ranger Joseph Hughes led the crew of the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore patrol boat Arrowhead, which included U.S. Park Ranger Matthew Nemeth, Michigan State Trooper Trever Kirkpatrick-Bray and Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore search and rescue volunteer Ms. Lynnea Fredrikson, when they responded to a 911 call on the evening of September 16, 2021. The Arrowhead crew deployed during a gale force wind warning and hazardous wave conditions. These conditions are normally outside the operating parameters of the park's patrol boat and crew. However, higher levels of risk were accepted for the deployment because of the time sensitivity of the situation, the multiple victims in the water, and the availability of U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) resources. The first victim was located by a helicopter crew and recovered by a USCG patrol boat in the early evening of September 16, 2021. The Arrowhead crew continued to search for another person along the cliff line through the night and returned to port at the same time the USCG helicopter had to leave the station to refuel. After minimal crew rest, the Arrowhead crew rejoined the effort the following day and continued searching the area in similarly challenging weather and wave conditions. A USCG C 130 crew located the second victim about 6 miles offshore in the late afternoon. The high level of operational risk during this search and recovery effort was undeniable. The USCG incident log even noted the operational risk management rating for this effort was "medium/high with no mitigation possible." The operational conditions stretched the limits of the Arrowhead crew, but they persevered without hesitation or complaint. While two fatalities were the unfortunate outcome, this incident demonstrated the leadership, training, readiness, and courage of the Arrowhead crew.



### **Zachary Stuenkel**

On June 29, 2020, a thunderstorm developed around Wahweap Bay, in Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. As a result of a vessel that capsized in the storm, and a boater had gone missing, Ranger Zachary Stuenkel was called to the emergency by the Glen Canyon Communication Center and responded in a National Park Service patrol vessel. Ranger Stuenkel observed swells approximately 3-foot high and wind gusts between 20 and 30 miles per hour. When rangers arrived on scene, they observed one fully capsized vessel with about two thirds of the hull below the surface of the water. As one woman remained unaccounted for, the rangers surmised that



there was a trapped boater with few rescue options in the capsized and sinking vessel. Without hesitation, Ranger Stuenkel removed his duty gear, donned swim goggles, and entered the water. He determined that she was, in fact, trapped in the cabin and unable to free herself. Ranger Stuenkel swam back under the starboard side gunnel and returned to the surface, where he yelled to her through the hull asking her to stick her leg out of the cabin compartment. He saw her foot extending from the compartment and was able to grab her ankle and pull her free. Once she was clear of the cabin compartment, Ranger Stuenkel realized that she was wearing a personal flotation device (PFD). Ranger Stuenkel used his strength to work against the buoyancy of the PFD. He grabbed her by the PFD and managed to drag her from under the capsized vessel to the safety of the patrol vessel. The woman was treated for near drowning and hypothermia, medically cleared, and returned to her family—shaken, but alive.



### Jeremy “Bart” Marble

On May 6, 2022, Federal Wildlife Officer (FWO) Jeremy “Bart” Marble was traveling along Highway 12 in rural Mississippi, en route to Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge, to assist with the refuge’s physical security assessment. At about 5 a.m., FWO Marble saw the faint glow from a single headlight and discovered a semitruck overturned in a steep ditch. FWO Marble immediately stopped to assess the situation. As he peered through the windshield of the semitruck, he noticed a man inside.

While FWO Marble waded through waist-deep vegetation and water to get to the truck at the bottom of the ditch, he instructed a citizen to call 911. FWO Marble discovered that the driver was trapped in the truck, which had diesel fuel continuously pouring out of its tanks, creating a hazard of potential ignition. FWO Marble retrieved a collapsible ladder from his patrol vehicle, waded back through the dense vegetation and water, and used the ladder to climb on top of the semitruck. He held onto the side mirror of the truck and lowered the ladder inside the cab, which allowed the driver to pull himself up to the point where FWO Marble could grab the driver by his belt and pull him out of the truck. FWO Marble helped the driver out of the overturned truck, up the steep embankment, and to his patrol vehicle, where he assessed the injuries, rendered first aid, and provided water. FWO Marble stayed with the driver until local emergency responders arrived on the scene. It was later determined that the driver’s vehicle slid down the embankment because it was too close to the edge of the narrow shoulder, which had given way due to recent rainfall. Without the quick response and bravery shown by FWO Marble, the driver could have lost his life to fire or injury.



## **Jeremy V. Nguyen**

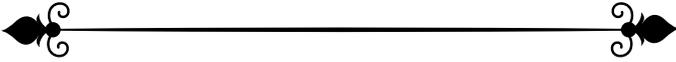
At approximately 11 a.m., on Thursday, April 21, 2022, while on duty in Arkansas, Senior Federal Wildlife Officer (SFWO) Jeremy V. Nguyen responded to a request for assistance concerning an individual who was trapped in a vehicle that was submerged in the Cache River. Upon receiving the request for assistance, SFWO Nguyen immediately responded to the scene with a boat and arrived moments later to discover a very dangerous situation. SFWO Nguyen learned that a young man traveling on Highway 38, near the boundary of the Cache River National Wildlife Refuge, had lost control of his vehicle, which subsequently left the roadway and was now submerged in the river with the young man trapped inside. Without hesitation, SFWO Nguyen and numerous other first responders at the scene were able to form a plan and take action. With SFWO Nguyen's assistance, the trapped individual was rescued from the vehicle. The young man was transported to a local medical center with only minor injuries. Without the quick response and bravery shown by SFWO Nguyen, the young man most likely would have drowned.

## **Peter Koestner Matthew Pachla**

On the morning of Wednesday, February 3, 2021, freezing rain created treacherous driving conditions in the Oregon Coast Range. Peter E. Koestner and Matthew S. Pachla, hydrologic technicians with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), were traveling to service a surface water gage when they witnessed a horrific crash between a logging truck and a pickup truck on Route 6, just west of Glenwood, Oregon. The pickup truck caught fire with the unconscious driver inside. Mr. Koestner and Mr. Pachla acted as first responders, deploying fire extinguishers and removing the injured driver from the pickup truck before the fire got out of control. Despite their efforts, the driver of the pickup died at the scene. Mr. Koestner and Mr. Pachla performed this selfless and admirable action during the COVID-19 pandemic, which elevated the risks they faced. During the rescue attempt, they were also exposed to blood-borne pathogens. Their continued adherence to USGS health protocols kept them safe. While they are humble about their role in this traumatic experience, Mr. Koestner's and Mr. Pachla's selfless actions in providing assistance to a seriously injured motorist deserve recognition.

---

# MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARDS



The Meritorious Service Award is the second highest honorary recognition granted to employees in the Department of the Interior. It is presented for an important contribution to science or management, a notable career, superior service in administration or in the execution of duties, or initiative in devising new and improved work methods, and procedures. A special certificate and citation signed by the Secretary, as well as an engraved silver Meritorious Service Medal and silver lapel pin are presented to recipients by their Bureau or Office head. These are the recipients who have been honored since the last Departmental Honor Awards Convocation on September 23, 2021.





---

# MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARDS

## *Award Recipients*

### **BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

<i>Christopher M. Barth</i>	<i>Christy Favorite</i>
<i>Richard A Fields</i>	<i>Kurt Huhta</i>
<i>Craig L. Kintop</i>	<i>Dr. Richard D. Lee</i>
<i>Ruth A. Miller</i>	<i>Eric A. Morgan</i>
<i>Kenneth Morin</i>	<i>Jon K. Raby</i>
<i>Kent E. Walter</i>	<i>Daniel Webb</i>

### **BUREAU OF RECLAMATION**

*Mathew Maucieri*

### **BUREAU OF SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT**

*Alton Bates*

### **INTERIOR BUSINESS CENTER**

*Melody Jameson*

### **NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

<i>Stan Austin</i>	<i>Debora Cooper</i>
<i>Melissa Rice Kuckro</i>	<i>Anna H. Tamura</i>
<i>R. David Vela</i>	



---

# MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARDS

*(Continued)*

## **OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

*Timothy Radtke*

## **OFFICE OF THE SOLICITOR**

*Mary Anne Kenworthy*

## **U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**

<i>Roy C. Averill-Murray</i>	<i>William B. Brooks</i>
<i>Kenneth F. Dinan</i>	<i>Ora W. Dixon</i>
<i>Christine E. Eustis</i>	<i>Maureen Foster</i>
<i>Karen M. Frizzell</i>	<i>Katherine A. Garrity</i>
<i>Judith A. Gordon</i>	<i>Roxanna L. Hinzman</i>
<i>Heather L. Johnson</i>	<i>Kevin M. Kilbride</i>
<i>Gwendolyn J. Kolb</i>	<i>Carlos R. Martinez</i>
<i>Paul M. Meyers</i>	<i>Michael M. Morse</i>
<i>Fabian Filberto Romero</i>	<i>Ann Louise Schneider</i>

## **U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY**

<i>Michael J. Adams</i>	<i>Victoria Avery</i>
<i>Paul A. Bedrosian</i>	<i>Kyle Blasch</i>
<i>Edward C. Brown</i>	<i>Sandra Bruner</i>
<i>Cara Campbell</i>	<i>Jeffrey A. Coe</i>



---

# MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARDS

*(Continued)*

*Dale Cox*

*Michael F. Diggles*

*Edward J. Doheny*

*Kevin Gergely*

*Jonathan Godt*

*Katherine Kendrick*

*Dr. Mark N. Landers*

*Andrew B. Lockhart*

*Margaret Mangan*

*Kevin C. McKinney*

*Burke J. Minsley*

*Carolyn A. Morrow*

*Joyce A. Ober*

*James Paces*

*Marie Peppler*

*David J. Schneider*

*Paul F. Steblein*

*Mark R. Vigil*

*Carole DeHerrera*

*Richard Dinicola*

*Cynthia W. Duffield*

*Georganne Gillespie*

*Daniel J. Hippe*

*Brian D. Kilgore*

*Kuo Wan Lin*

*Catherine Macrall*

*Jeffrey N. Marso*

*Troy Miller*

*Scott Morlock (Posthumous)*

*Joey D. Mouton*

*Delwyn Oki*

*John F. Paskievitch*

*Mark D. Petersen*

*Janet L. Slate*

*Donald Sweetkind*



---

# THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER LYRICS

---

*By Francis Scott Key 1814*

*Oh, say can you see by the dawn's early light*

*What so proudly we hailed at the  
twilight's last gleaming?*

*Whose broad stripes and bright stars  
through the perilous fight,*

*O'er the ramparts we watched were  
so gallantly streaming?*

*And the rocket's red glare, the bombs  
bursting in air,*

*Gave proof through the night that  
our flag was still there.*

*Oh, say does that Star-Spangled Banner  
yet wave*

*O'er the land of the free and  
the home of the brave*





**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**  
**1849 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20240**  
**[www.doi.gov](http://www.doi.gov)**

Program Designer: Isis Rodríguez  
Photograph Cover: Acadia National Park by Joy Buhler