

JOURNEYS

SPRING/SUMMER 2021



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Office of Policy, Management and Budget
Administrative Services

AVSO BAD CADR IBC OFAS OHA



June 2021

Dear Administrative Services Team,

On June 19, 1865, more than two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed by President Abraham Lincoln and two months after the Confederacy surrendered, enslaved African-Americans in Galveston, Texas, were told by Union soldiers they were free.

Juneteenth has been celebrated by African-Americans since the late 1800s. The celebration continues to resonate in new ways, given the sweeping changes and widespread protests across the U.S. over the last year, and now President Biden has designated June 19th as the first federal holiday since Martin Luther King Jr. Day was created in 1983.

“Our federal holidays are purposely few in number and recognize the most important milestones,” said Rep. Carolyn Maloney of New York. “I cannot think of a more important milestone to commemorate than the end of slavery in the United States.” I certainly agree with Congressperson Maloney and join with millions of others across the country who are deeply moved by this long-awaited moment in history.

In this issue:

- [The Office of Facilities and Administrative Services](#) (OFAS) is designated to lead the Office of the Secretary (OS) safety program, and in my role as Deputy Assistant Secretary, I serve as the Designated Agency Safety and Health Official (DASHO), providing oversight of the management of the OS safety program nationwide. For the remaining months of 2021, our team’s focus will be to integrate and formalize the key elements of an Occupational Safety

and Health Management System (OSHMS) into our daily operations. Read more about this project from OFAS’s **Glenn Pepper** beginning on page 14.



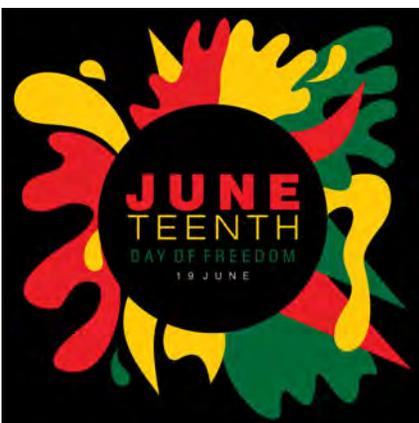
- **IB Kliever** from IBC demonstrates that with a little creativity and a lot of fun, teams can stay connected while teleworking (page 4);
- AVSO’s **Abigail True** talks with **Annie Wright**, NPS, about the fascinating Women Wounded Veterans in Parks Program (page 8);
- RN **Barbara Hayden** shows us our beautiful Main Interior Building’s green update (page 22);
- **Catherine Pierce** of OFAS shares the remarkable story of **Peggy Olwell** from BLM and her trailblazing efforts to conserve heritage seeds (page 18); and
- The amazing Alaskan wildlife photography of AVSO’s **Kaiulani Rees** again graces the cover and back pages of the issue.

I hope you will enjoy these articles and are as uplifted as I was to see the extraordinary work being accomplished by members of our DOI family.

As always, please be safe and well.

Respectfully,

- Jacqueline M. Jones



Calendar of Events

JUNE

LGBTQ+ Pride Month

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer+ (LGBTQ+) Pride Month is currently celebrated each year in the month of June to honor the 1969 Stonewall Uprising in Manhattan. Celebrations include pride parades, picnics, parties, workshops, symposia and concerts, and LGBTQ+ Pride Month events attract millions of participants around the world. Memorials are held during this month for those members of the community who have been lost to hate crimes or HIV/AIDS. [Read more here](#)

Juneteenth

Saturday, June 19, 2021

Juneteenth (a portmanteau of June and nineteenth) is a holiday celebrating the emancipation of those who had been enslaved in the United States. Originating in Galveston, Texas, it is now celebrated annually on the 19th of June throughout the United States, with varying official recognition. It is commemorated on the anniversary date of the June 19, 1865 announcement by Union Army general Gordon Granger, proclaiming freedom from slavery in Texas. [Read more here](#)

JULY

Independence Day (Federal Holiday)

Observed on Monday, July 5, 2021 for most Federal employees

Independence Day (colloquially the Fourth of July or July 4) is a federal holiday in the United States commemorating the signing of the Declaration of Independence of the United States, on July 4, 1776. The Continental Congress declared that the thirteen American colonies were no longer subject (and subordinate) to the monarch of Britain, King George III, and were now united, free, and independent states.

Caribbean-American Heritage Month (Observed by DOI in July)

Caribbean Americans brought vibrant cultures, languages, traditions, and values that strengthen our country and add new chapters to our common story. In recognition of Caribbean Americans' countless gifts and contributions to our Nation, we celebrate [National Caribbean-American Heritage Month](#) and honor remarkable people such as founding father [Alexander Hamilton](#), US Secretary of State [Colin Powell](#) and [Hon. Shirley Chisholm](#), who in 1968 was the first Black woman elected to Congress.

AUGUST

National Wellness Month

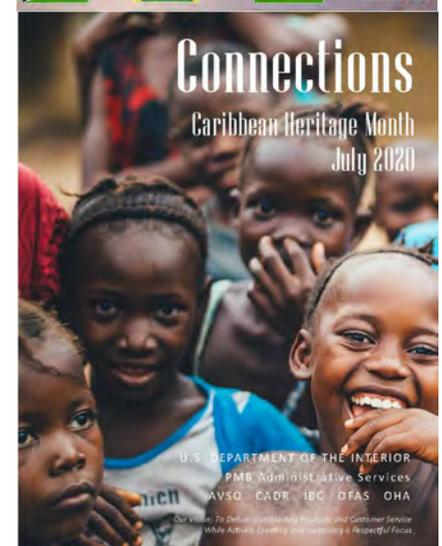
All during August, National Wellness Month focuses on self-care, managing stress and promoting healthy routines. [Read more here](#)

SEPTEMBER

Labor Day (Federal Holiday)

Monday, September 6, 2021

Labor Day is celebrated on the first Monday in September to honor and recognize the American labor movement and the works and contributions of laborers to the development and achievements of the United States.



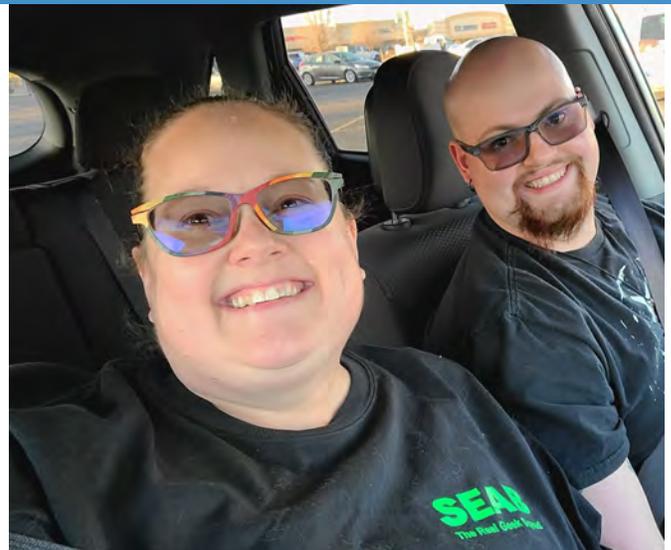
IB Kliewer's T-Shirt Project

[Editor's Note: IB Kliewer, Senior Software Engineer and Lead Application Developer in the Systems Engineering and Administration Branch (SEAB) of IBC's Human Resources Directorate, is an innovative manager who seeks always to engage her team, especially during this last year of remote work. We asked IB about her strategy for staying connected with her team members. Enjoy!]

Congratulations on being recognized for your fun and innovative efforts to engage with your team members! Why did you decide to ramp up ways to connect?

Thank you very much! It is so nice to have the opportunity to share the ways my team tries to keep stress low and morale high. A couple months ago, I realized that not only were we at the one-year mark since we had all moved to 100% telework but also just shy of one year since we had also lost a team member. It further occurred to me that realistically we are likely only halfway through and that we could very well be looking at another year of telework. Many on my team do very well in a remote setting because we are introverts, but not all are. Even introverts can start to suffer negatively from isolation after a long enough period of time. It seemed important to do something fun and engaging to help make sure we keep the close bond we have and to uplift those who may be struggling and just not saying so.

I decided to do something bigger than what we have done before. Many of us have never been very serious people but know that work is not the place to clown around that much. We have been engaging in more playful banter with each other over Teams Meetings to help each other laugh. Before the



lockdown, we would walk to each other's cubes if we needed to discuss something but were just as comfortable, if not more, starting a discussion by email. We have moved more to chat since the lockdown to do the same, which also has helped keep spirits up.

To really boost people's moods, improve morale and make sure we do not lose the special bond we have, I started a simple t-shirt project in hopes it would help get us through the next year. It started as a simple idea to have team t-shirts made that said, "SEAB The Real Geek Squad," so that everyone felt connected. Then I thought it would be nice if everyone took a pic in the shirt (individually, so that we would be safe) so that I could have a poster made. One of my developers sent me a pic with the shirt over his head and his hat on. It embodied the silly mentality that many techies have. After that, we all started taking pics where we would be normal and another being silly that expressed our inner "weird." This ended up bringing joy not only to us but turned out also to be a joy for the families of our team members. **[CONT'D]**

Above: IB and her son, Joe. Below: the SEAB team members in their "weird" t-shirt portraits.



Focus on Engagement [Continued]

Seeing what started as a drop in the bucket turn into a huge puddle made me think that sharing our story could help other teams who might be struggling with isolation.

What are some of the challenges to engaging with teleworking team members and how did you overcome them?

When in the office, you do not realize how much you have personal interactions with each other walking to the restroom, from room to room or from building to building. You might see someone and naturally say hello or stop for a quick chat. Then you may not realize how many of those interactions are not business-related but personal. Then there are the truly business related interactions, meetings where everyone is in a room, around a table, or at a white board. You do not realize how beneficial those types of interactions can be.

I found that when the lockdown happened, we unintentionally lost some of our humanity, and this was especially true for the introverts who finally felt like this was our moment to shine. We did not think about how often we had those chance encounters or that perhaps we subconsciously would seek someone out because we knew they would like the interaction. It also did not occur to many of us that some in the office simply do better face-to-face or in those in-person meetings. It became easy for people to go home and forget how to best interact with each other and instead only interact as they wished.

My team took note of this and started small by having a weekly **VUNCH** (virtual lunch) on Fridays. It is a chance to see each other and talk about anything and everything in a relaxed setting simply enjoying each other's company over a meal. Then some of us would reach out to each other one-on-one to ensure we were okay and we would have those feelings of needing to do so by simply paying more attention to each other's mannerisms. Later we would reach out just to ensure someone was doing well and ask if they needed to talk or have **VUNCH**, not prompted by anything other than offering an opportunity for connection. This did lead to people being more open with each other and asking for help when they were struggling. No matter the time crunch, several of us always were able to stop and listen. Some of us have also had to learn to be more open with communicating in ways that our team members find to be most comfortable. If that is by phone or a quick Teams call, we identified the need to just be open and accepting of other team members.

Why is engagement so important, particularly in the current environment?

Many of us, not unique to my team, have the need for additional help on their teams due to workload or perhaps have needs arise suddenly that require us to address something but still perform our regular duties all on an abbreviated time line. Many may be extroverts who very much needed the office interactions. Many may be suffering depression or any number of emotional or medical issues as a result of not leaving their homes and/or interacting with few people. [CONT'D]

Right: a series of selfies when the team swung by to pick up their t-shirts and say hello.



This leads to possible loss of team members, loss of productivity, and lower morale, all of which can lead to inner team tension that can lead to tension in the division. Finding ways to offset the stress of not only the isolation due to the pandemic but also the stresses from our day-to-day jobs helps us provide better service to our customers, and helps to ensure each member of the team feels valued, remains healthy, and keeps their families mentally and physically well. It was easy to take the stress of work home before the lockdown. It is far too easy for that to happen when your office is your home.

My team thinks of each other as our work family, too. That may not be normal for other teams, but I would like to hope that it is true for some. If any of my team are unwell for any reason, I want to help. It has been more apparent with the current environment that we need to pay more attention and try harder to engage with each other to ensure we are all well.

Tackling stress throughout the day through helpful interactions with each other in addition to doing small things to make everyone's day or job run more smoothly is so important.

What advice would you give to other supervisors and managers who endeavor to increase engagement?

Each team is going to have a unique dynamic that is going to be largely influenced by the skills that team requires. It leads to most of those members likely having similar interests or personality traits, or at least enough to find common ways to engage. It's important to find something the group can bond over while doing. Not everyone will completely like whatever the activity is but it is still possible to find something that people do not completely dislike and falls middle of the road for everyone. Asking the members to submit ideas as to what they would like to do may be a smart way to go.

It is important to also not assume there will be just one event to engage in. You need to look for opportunities to constantly engage so that everyone has an opportunity to participate. People may be busy; people may truly not like the activity; some people may feel the activity is too far outside their comfort zone. Being open to many opportunities a year and what the team is saying are good activities for them I think will go along way to those members wanting to engage.

I believe management needs to pay attention to the teams and simply help facilitate/encourage either coordinated engagements or impromptu engagements that may not involve management at all. The single most important thing my supervisor **Mark Stover** did for me when I approached him about the t-shirt idea was support me. He gave me ideas, acted as a sounding board and fully encouraged me to move forward. That level of support for someone who has an idea but may be unsure of themselves can be invaluable.

When all is said and done, we must share with each other what works for us and what does not. It may help another team out there that has run out of ideas. Remember: a spark can cause an explosion!



Jennifer Jones: From AVSO to BLM

“Jen spent six years with AVSO’s Division of Minerals Evaluation and regularly performed geology-based mineral evaluations and analyzed mineral markets to established lease terms or mineral values for future revenues from oil & gas, aggregates, and other leasable minerals on both Federal and Indian lands. Always a team player, Jen volunteered as backup to the Federal Lands Lead, reviewing and assigning realty cases that could have potential for mineral development or production on or adjacent to the subject lands.

“Her interest in growing and changing was highlighted when she was selected to participate in AVSO LEAD, a year-long leadership program that focuses on personal development and leadership skills. She took full advantage of the program and found new and exciting ways to learn. For example, she joined her love of marathon running with learning and began to mentor elementary-age girls in a running program to practice communication, leadership, and mentoring skills.

“Jen is a rock star and we all wish her the best as she pursues new adventures at BLM.”

- Catherine C. Kilgore, Deputy Director, Division of Minerals Evaluation, AVSO



Jennifer Jones now serves as the National Energy and Mineral Program Lead at BLM headquarters.

June is National Ocean Month

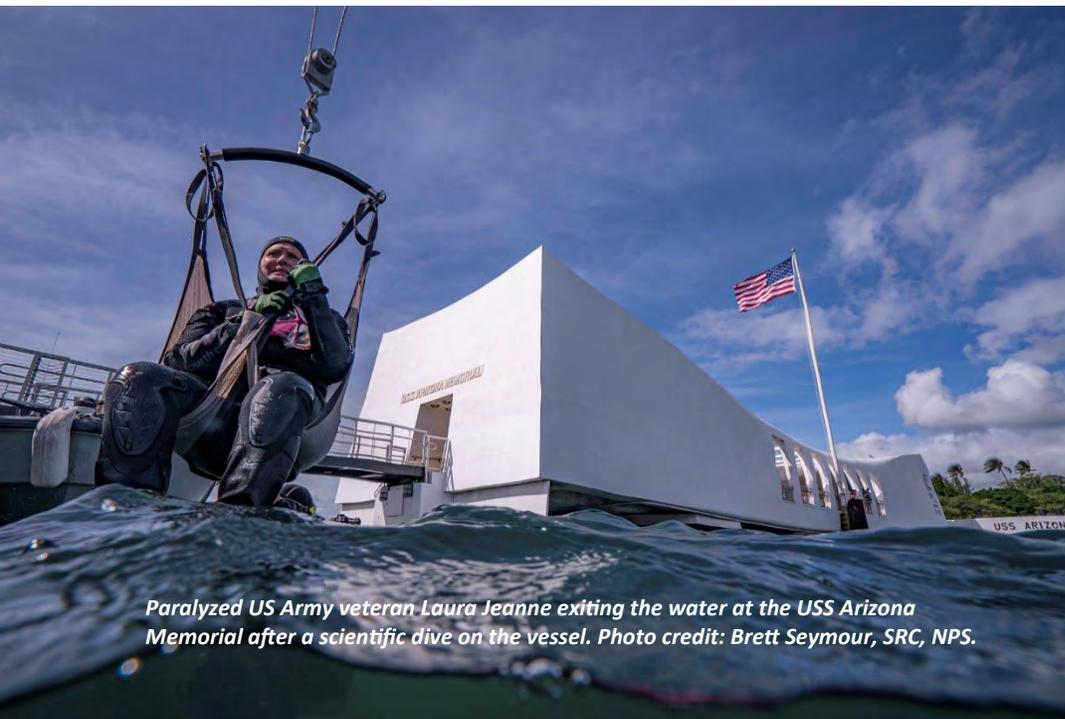
When most people think about the areas managed by the Interior Department, they picture the iconic sun-soaked cliffs of the Grand Canyon and Yosemite, geysers erupting and bison dotting the wide swaths of grassland prairies in Yellowstone National Park, or the lingering fog on the Great Smoky Mountains.

Yet many of the vast areas under Interior’s stewardship are found along our coasts and in deep ocean canyon waters of the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. Interior’s [blue portfolio](#)

includes more than 35,000 miles of coastline and 34 million acres in 88 marine and coastal National Parks, including many of America’s favorite beaches from Cape Cod and Cape Hatteras to the Golden Gate National Recreational Area and beyond to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. We further protect 180 marine and coastal National Wildlife Refuges and 1,100 miles of coastline of the California Coastal National Monument. And the Department plays an important role in ensuring safe and responsible energy development in our coastal areas and offshore waters.



Q&A with the Women Wounded Veterans in Parks Program Submerged Resources Center, National Park Service



Paralyzed US Army veteran Laura Jeanne exiting the water at the USS Arizona Memorial after a scientific dive on the vessel. Photo credit: Brett Seymour, SRC, NPS.

What recent projects have you worked on?

I started working at SRC in February 2020, right before the pandemic. While teleworking, we wrote reports and journal articles, conducted online trainings, and planned for this year, but before travel shut down, I was lucky enough to go on two projects. One was to the NPS Dive Leadership Academy conducted at the [USC Wrigley Institute](#) for Environmental Studies on Catalina Island in California. There, myself and the other participants learned how to lead NPS dives and instruct and examine other NPS divers.

Abigail True, Writer-Editor, AVSO, and Annie Wright, Archaeologist, Submerged Resources Center

Hi Annie! Thank you for participating in this issue of Journeys. To start, will you tell me a little bit about the Submerged Resources Center?

Hi Abby! The Submerged Resources Center (SRC) is an office of the National Park Service (NPS) based in Lakewood, Colorado. The mission of SRC is to locate, document, interpret, and preserve underwater resources in our national parks. While we work with many kinds of resources, we primarily work on cultural resources, such as archaeological sites. These can include such places as shipwrecks, docks, plane crash sites, and prehistoric submerged habitation sites. But we also work closely with park biologists on ecological resources and projects such as coral reefs, monitoring invasive species, and removing debris from the water. We only have one office, but we work closely with park staff around the country and other national archaeology offices, such as the NPS Southeastern Archaeological Center (SEAC).

After that, I went to the [Pearl Harbor National Memorial](#) to work on a 3D documentation project of the wreck of the USS *Arizona*. We teleworked until our office was vaccinated and it was safe for us and others to travel again. In April of this year, we went to Lake Mead National Recreation Area (NRA) where we worked on continued documentation of two submerged archaeological sites—the Lake Mead Aggregate Plant, used to produce concrete aggregate for the construction of the Hoover Dam, and a B-29 plane crash site in the lake.

In March, you contacted me for the Women’s History Month issue of Connections, our sister publication, to tell me about a unique program that SRC manages—the Women Wounded Veterans in Parks Program. Will you tell me more about that?

Recently, several veteran-support organizations have begun incorporating scuba diving into their programming through partnerships with organizations that conduct underwater archaeology. However, most of these projects in the past have been male-dominated. Not that this is a bad thing, but SRC wanted to find a way to incorporate more women into the projects. Former SRC archaeologist Jessica Keller and SRC chief Dave Conlin spearheaded this effort.

[CONT’D]



In October 2019, Channel Islands National Park in California hosted the first all-women WVIP (Wounded Veterans in Parks) project. Women veterans from the [WAVES](#) program (Wounded American Veterans Experience Scuba), an all-women NPS ship crew, and women scientists from NPS set out for a week of diving and healing off the coast of Anacapa Island in park waters. The all-women project was created in recognition that there is little programming intended specifically for women veterans, and that women veterans may have significantly different experiences and needs after their time in military service. The NPS felt that by creating an all-women project, aspects of past service that were troubling to the veterans but could not be comfortably shared in mixed company might be shared.

Our primary dive group partner for these projects is WAVES. WAVES is a nonprofit organization that was established to provide wounded veterans with service-connected disabilities the chance to experience the freedom and challenge of scuba diving. Their mission recognizes the unique properties of the aquatic environment that are ideal for combat-wounded veterans as they rehabilitate from various injuries received in combat such as amputations, spinal cord injuries, PTSD, traumatic brain injuries, and a host of other injuries received in battle. Scuba diving takes advantage of the conditions of being in water, including weightlessness and limited audio input, allowing combat-wounded veterans to exercise in a therapeutic environment. WAVES provides training in specialized scuba equipment suited to each person based on their physical needs.

We also partner with the [Women Divers' Hall of Fame](#) (WDHOF), which is an international nonprofit professional honor society whose mission is dedicated to recognizing and honoring women divers who have made outstanding contributions to the diving arts, science, medicine, media,

deep sea exploration, underwater archaeology, medicine, equipment technology, diving, conservation, and more. WDHOF provides mentors to come along on diving projects to advise and support participants.

Watch a video of the trip to Channel Islands National Park: <https://vimeo.com/394856986>

I read about some of the past collaborations between WVIP and SRC at places like Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Pearl Harbor National Monument, and Dry Tortugas National Park. Will you share a little about those projects?

In November 2017, WAVES joined SRC team members at Lake Mead NRA for a week of training and diving in Lake Mohave,

The all-women team on the trip to the Channel Islands (2019), including three women veterans from WAVES, NPS staff, and NOAA staff. Photo credit: Mark Hnat, NPS.



downstream from the Hoover Dam. WAVES divers were briefed and trained in underwater archaeological mapping techniques and practiced their newfound skills on submerged sites in the lake. The 2017 Lake Mohave work blossomed into a multiyear project compiling archaeological mapping data at Lake Mead NRA.

Pearl Harbor National Monument, one of the most important military heritage sites in the nation, is another NPS unit that welcomes the WVIP program and veterans with **[CONT'D]**



service-connected injuries. After some discussion, a three- to five-year plan was developed to provide opportunities to veterans with injuries and illnesses to conduct underwater archaeological work at Pearl Harbor. The inaugural WVIP project at Pearl Harbor National Monument took place in March 2018. The primary objective was to design, construct, and deploy an apparatus to collect oil leaking from the USS *Arizona*.

In addition to recurring projects at Lake Mead NRA and Pearl Harbor National Monument, veterans with service-connected injuries also contributed to a July 2019 project at Dry Tortugas National Park in south Florida. Eight veterans from WAVES joined Dry Tortugas and SRC staff for a week of NPS maintenance diving, including buoy repair and replacement, and with the assistance of NPS marine biologists, invasive lionfish removal.

Watch a video of the trip to Dry Tortugas National Park: <https://vimeo.com/387982517>

How are veterans uniquely suited for underwater archaeology projects?

Veteran participants are often adaptable, mission-oriented, active, purpose-driven, and capable individuals. Diving as a form of sightseeing is rewarding, but archaeological project diving also taps into the mission-oriented, purpose-driven aspects of the military experience that many veterans keenly miss after leaving active duty. Participation in underwater archaeology projects also allows veterans to use many of their

professional abilities and experiences, which in turn benefit the overall goals of the projects.

Careful documentation and meticulous record keeping are integral to archaeology. This challenge is often even greater with the many variables involved in working underwater. Communication may be limited to hand signals and writing slates, further impeded in dark, murky water. Scuba diving requires the use of specialized equipment and may risk exposure to extreme temperatures and surroundings. Such challenges limit the number of people properly trained and capable of completing scientific work under these conditions. Veteran participants often thrive in difficult conditions and possess the necessary skills and mindset to properly complete tasks. Coupled with an atmosphere of camaraderie and a mission focus, underwater archaeology projects with veteran participants have been successful on all fronts.

The next all-women NPS service mission is to Biscayne National Park this summer. What type of work will the team be doing?

Yes! Our second Women Veterans Project will be this summer at Biscayne National Park. We will have six women veteran divers from the WAVES program, two diver mentors from the WDHOFF, myself (Archaeologist, NPS SRC), Shelby Moneysmith and Vanessa McDonough (Biologists, Biscayne NP), Susanna Pershern (Photographer/Videographer, NPS SRC), and Jessica Keller (Dive Training Specialist for NOAA, formerly an

Archaeologist with SRC). We will also have an all-female boat crew from Horizons Divers in Key Largo.

We'll be cleaning up all kinds of trash from Biscayne waters—tires, fishing line, bottles, plastic bags, etc. Biscayne's proximity to Miami unfortunately means there is no shortage of debris to clean up. (This isn't to say that the park is full of trash—Biscayne does an excellent job of staying on top of clean up. There is just always more to do!)

For more information on WAVES, WVIP, or SRC please contact Annie Wright at anne_wright@nps.gov.



WAVES divers carefully collecting measurement data at Lake Mead National Recreation Area in April 2019. Photo credit: Susanna Pershern, SRC, NPS.

Virtual Resilience Café

By Tahirih Varner, MSCM, Certified Organizational Ombuds Practitioner, CADR

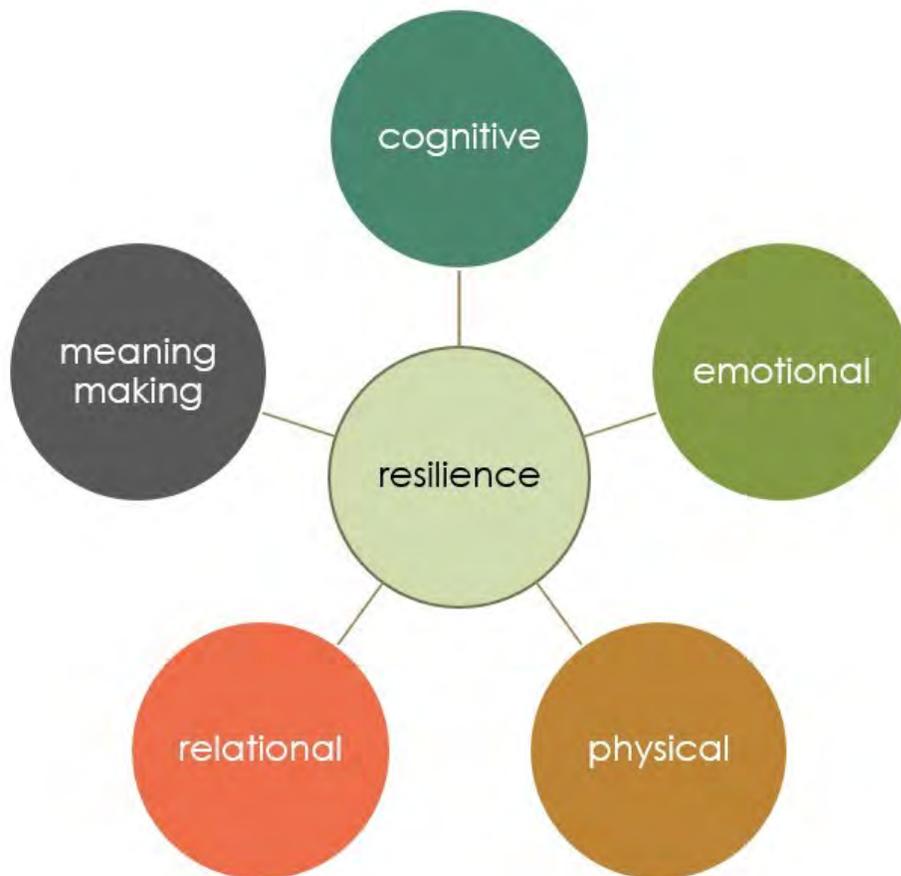
The Virtual Resilience Café (VRC) was started on March 25, 2020, at the beginning of the COVID pandemic by the Office of Collaborative Action and Dispute Resolution (CADR) staff member Saman Hussein. It was a way to enhance our resilience through mindfulness-oriented skill building and to help build community during those particularly uncertain and unprecedented times.

The VRC community has continued to grow. It started as weekly sessions and in August 2020 moved to biweekly sessions. We now meet twice a month to continue to support each other.

The VRC sessions are one hour long. We start and end our sessions with a short (about 5 minutes) mindfulness-oriented meditation, then we transition into a discussion based on the topic of that session. We start our discussions with the **Wheel of Resilience** [pictured, above] covering five areas of resilience – Cognitive, Emotional, Physical, Relational, and Meaning Making. All topics are to help build our resilience as we tackle the challenges in our lives. There is no mandatory participation. Those that join the VRC can participate or choose to just listen. We do not record the sessions to keep the discussions and confidences of the VRC members protected.

Some examples of our discussion topics include:

- Where are you on the spectrum of how much agency you feel you have in your life?



- Psychological safety and accountability – which of these areas best describes you – Comfort Zone, Learning Zone, Apathy Zone, Anxiety Zone? How do you deal with the zone you are in?

Many members have shared how the VRC has become a valuable time when they are able to connect with others and gain the support of a community as they work through the challenges the pandemic has brought them.

Much gratitude is owed Saman for her thoughtfulness, vision, and skill in creating and nurturing this community. Although Saman is leaving DOI after 14 years of service and will be greatly missed, other leaders from within the community have stepped up and will keep the VRC going strong.

We currently have 225 members in the VRC community. We welcome everyone within DOI. If you are interested in joining us, please join the [VRC Team site on Microsoft Teams](#) using group code 5oy6l67. Thank you!

The GIST*

**Government Information, Security and Technology*

By Justin Wade

IT Officer and Senior IT Enterprise Architect
Interior Business Center



Cloud Computing – What is It?

For this discussion we'll be describing cloud computing. As the Office of the Secretary/Departmental Offices Cloud POC, I see a whole lot of cloud projects; this article is written to try to help the non-IT professional gain a greater awareness of cloud at the 10,000-foot level.

When thinking of cloud computing (or just "Cloud"), a meme pops into my mind from years ago that shows a picture of Morpheus from the movie *The Matrix* with the caption "What if I told you *The cloud* is just someone else's computer?" Although there is some truth to it, it's certainly not an all-encompassing definition, and it just makes one giggle a bit.

So, what is cloud computing? If googling the term, quite a few definitions will return in the search. Wikipedia states, "...*Cloud computing is the on-demand availability of computer system resources, especially data storage and computing power, without direct active management by the user. The term is generally used to describe data centers available to many users over the Internet.*" Microsoft says "Simply put, cloud computing is the **delivery of computing services—including servers, storage, databases, networking, software, analytics, and intelligence—over the Internet ("the cloud") to offer faster innovation, flexible resources, and economies of scale.**"

Does that help describe what it really is? Not exactly. Part of the reason why defining Cloud succinctly is challenging is that Cloud can mean quite a few different things. The definitions are often slightly changing, or at least nuanced as well.

So, let's go back to the meme – it's just someone else's computer. At the most basic level, that's mostly true, it is running on a computer. The computers that Cloud runs on aren't that different than the laptops everyone uses, usually with just a bit more computing power. Those computers are in a data center somewhere, a data center just being a building that provides heating, ventilation, air conditioning, power, physical space to set the computer in and a connection to

some sort of networking for the computers to talk to each other. Typically, when a computer is used in this manner, it is labeled as a server. The difference between a laptop/desktop and a server is that the server is setup more for running applications for many people, versus the laptop/desktop which is generally used by one, or at least a small number of users.

Ok, so we have servers in a data center. Is that Cloud? Almost, but not quite. The next part is that it takes multiple servers' setup to work together. They can be in the same data center, or they can be in several different data centers in distributed locations. Having them distributed in multiple locations can provide redundancy in the case of a natural (or other) disaster at one location. The key is that they can fill in instantly for each other if one of them breaks, and often work together. That way the users should never notice that anything happened when something goes wrong or a disaster occurs. This plays into a term called 'uptime.'

Generally, companies provide service level agreements. These are documents describing how often the system can be down in the worst-case scenario using terms of how many "nines" are offered. This is a metric to describe the "uptime." What is meant by describing the number of nines is that companies guarantee that their systems will stay up for %99.999 (or 5 x 9's), or %99.99 (or 4 x 9's) of the time. Five nines equate to roughly 5.25 minutes of downtime per year. This means that for the whole year their systems would only be inaccessible for just over 5 minutes. The key takeaway is each time you add another 9 to the uptime the cost goes up incredibly quickly.

[CONT'D]

So now we have servers running in datacenters, helping each other out to ensure that the servers are available to what the lay person would consider almost always. Is that Cloud? Getting there. There also must be some level of services that are provided by people or automated systems to do the general “care and feeding.” Systems need to be updated (sometimes called patched) on a regular basis, hardware parts break as with anything, and components in the servers are always getting faster, so servers need to be swapped out for newer models on a regular basis.

Now that we have the building blocks, we can speak to what some of the more technical definitions of Cloud are. National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), an agency in the U.S. Department of Commerce, is responsible for defining standards in science and technology used by the government and commercial entities.

NIST’s definition of Cloud is described through five essential characteristics - on demand self-service, broad network access, resource pooling, rapid elasticity, and measured service. Again though, all somewhat daunting terms to the non-IT professional.

On demand self-service – means that you as the user can use as much computing power as you want from the cloud, acquire it whenever you’d like, and you don’t need to have someone else do it for you. This is assuming you know how, but companies strive to make it user friendly. So, if you decided you wanted to run a program in the cloud that needed 5 Processors, 12 gigabytes (GB) of memory (RAM), and 100 GB of disk space, you could go to a website and order exactly that. Then it would be provided to you most times instantly or very quickly to use.

Broad network access – means that you can get to the systems in the Cloud from many places. That most times means over the internet, from wherever you or your user base connects to the internet.

Resource pooling – describes the fact that many servers (and other resources) are working together to run your system. Somewhat akin to the number of nines described above, only more from the perspective of working together to make the system faster or able to handle more things at once.

Rapid elasticity – describes the ability to grow and shrink the amount of resources quickly. Say if your system has one user now, it runs on one server, but suddenly 10,000 users start using it, it can quickly add the appropriate number of other servers, network resources, etc. needed to keep the system going. It can also mean that you as the owner of the system can easily go in and add additional resources yourself as quickly as needed.

Measured service – describes the “pay for what you use” model. You don’t pay for the number of servers or devices that are in use. You pay for the amount of computing power it takes to run your system.

Beyond all that’s described above, there are additional variations or as we will refer to the term “flavors of Cloud” that we’ll speak to in a future edition of the GIST. Flavors of Cloud are much like ice cream; they all have the same idea behind them. Cold, sweet, and to most people delicious, but in Cloud you then have a lot of differences that are useful in various situations that lead to the need for the “flavors” akin to Pralines & Cream and Rocky Road. But we’ll get into that another day...

In the meantime, if this discussion helped you think of questions or if you found this interesting and just want to chat about it, please feel free to reach out.

Justin welcomes your comments and questions. Please reach out to him at [Justin L. Wade@ibc.doi.gov](mailto:Justin.L.Wade@ibc.doi.gov). Thanks!



Implementing the Office of the Secretary's Safety Management System: A Nationwide Initiative

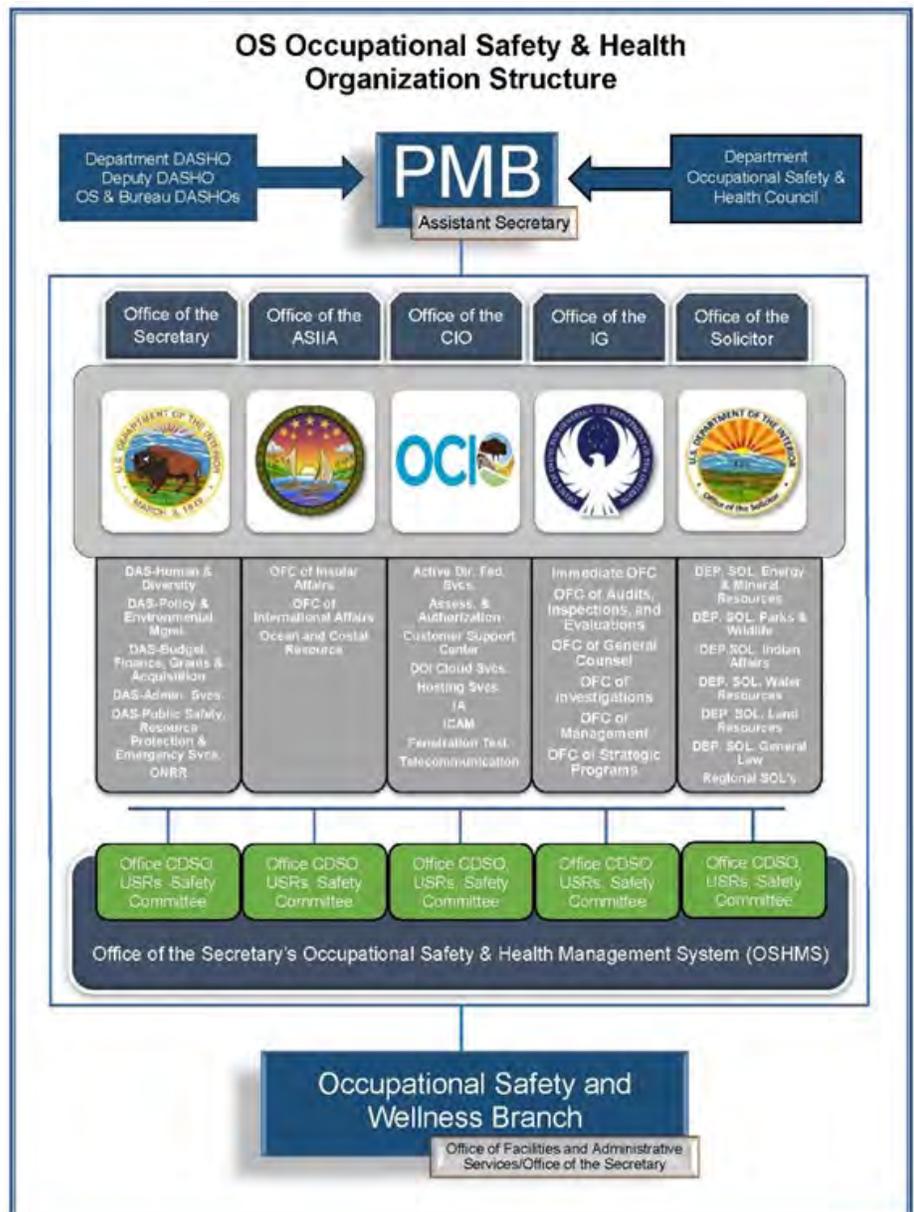
By Glenn Pepper
Manager, Occupational Safety and Health,
Office of Facilities and Administrative Services

An organization's culture has the single most significant impact on behavior relating to risk management, hazard reporting, and incident reduction. Just saying, "Safety is a priority," but consistently overlooking its importance when developing your strategic plan or performing operational tasks can appear to be the norm. As we began our journey in implementing Office of the Secretary's (OS) Safety Management System (SMS) initiative, there were some basic questions we needed to ask our leadership and employees nationwide.

To be a highly reliable organization with a valued safety culture, we needed to know where we are and provide the pathway to where we need to go. So we started by asking, ***"What level of employee acceptance and involvement is in OS's safety culture?"*** Acceptance should occur at all levels of the office or organization. We wanted to know if safety was valued and included in all aspects of your operations or was it an afterthought. The need for a safety representation is often overlooked in the office or organization's strategic plan process, both long term and short term. The safety representative should be involved before, during, and after a project.

Additionally, we would ask, ***"Is safety and health just a slogan in your office, posted or thrown around to appease the safety office manager or director?"*** When you observe your office or organization, you should see all levels of employees involved in safety and holding each other accountable. An organization functioning at a high level of excellence consistently identifies its weaknesses, assesses

how to improve, and uses the SMS to manage or eliminate potential risk (i.e., institute control measures). OS offices first need to evaluate their processes and programs to work towards achieving this high-functioning level. They need to know the answer to this question: ***"Is it leadership or the employees who are responsible for their health and well-being within OS, or is it the safety office's responsibility to develop the safety culture?"*** Another fundamental question to know the answer to is: ***"Do you know if your office or organization has safety programs in place that align with your strategic plan or mission goals?"*** [CONT'D]



These are questions that not only should be asked of our leadership, but of each one of the employees that dutifully come to work for the OS daily. This article intends to introduce you to the OS's occupational SMS and its principles and provide you with the knowledge to answer these questions.

Office of the Secretary Occupational Safety and Health Management System (OSHMS)

First, let's define OSHMS and the four principles that will guide us from development to implementation and sustainment. OSHMS is a principled-based systematic process that is a proactive and comprehensive approach to managing safety policies, objectives, and programs. Safety is set from the top, but employees take ownership of their safety and well-being and integrate this philosophy within their culture and operations.

What does this mean? Leadership sets the tone, policies, direction, and strategic plan of the office or organization. Leaders also hold those below them accountable for accomplishing the objectives of the mission in a safe manner. They also give value to safety from the top down. The tone of the culture is established, first by leadership and then throughout the office or organization. The employees ensure they maintain a safe mindset each day while working to accomplish their tasks. In other words, they own and place their safety in high regard and, in turn, hold their coworkers accountable in the same manner. **Michael (Mick) Rusten**, Director of the OFAS, states, "As OFAS has operations, maintenance, and customer-centric focused functions, safety is paramount and has to be integral to the daily operations." Rusten continues, "Whether it be a safety plan requirement for contracts, signage, or compliance programs and checks, safety must be embedded into our daily routines."

The safety officer or safety professional is a resource, subject matter expert, provides guidance, and coaches leaders and employees in building a culture of safety. Rusten, on accountability, states, "As a leader, it is imperative to ensure safety is communicated as a management priority and that measures are put in place to not only identify issues, but to sustain the appropriate monitoring, oversight, and importance of an ongoing safety program. Ensuring safety is included in performance plans and that metrics and routines are implemented, all promote individual ownership of the safety program, with a level of accountability."

Over the years, you may have experienced many "principles or pillars of safety." The OS takes a keep-it-simple approach that any number of other "principles" or "pillars" can easily be categorized. Here are the OS OSHMS principles and a brief explanation of each:

Management Commitment and Leadership: Leadership is involved by setting policy, providing resources, committing to funding the safety management system and safety training, appointing Collateral Duty Safety Offices (CDSOs) and Unit Safety Reps (USR), ensuring employees have the time to conduct safety duties, tasks, and leading by example.

Worksite Analysis, Hazard Prevention, and Control Measures: This principle involves identifying hazards and risks in the workplace and controlling through engineering, administrative, and personal protection equipment. We promote continuous improvement and prevent identified hazards and risks through self-assessments, inspections, and audits.

Employee Involvement: Employees are involved in all aspects of their safety programs from planning, developing, implementing and maintaining it. They are involved in safety committees, providing safety briefs, participating in self-assessments, and volunteering (and being appointed) as a CDSO for their office.

Safety Training: Training specific to the safety and well-being of employees relating to the duties they perform. Targeted training may be different according to the Office's missions and objectives. Employees appointed to a specific occupational safety and health role (e.g., CDSO, USR, Safety Committee Member, etc.) will have additional safety and health training to assist leadership in the development, implementation and sustainability of OS's OSHMS.

Value over Priority

To be effective and successful with safety implementation and sustainability is not about having the best or most slogans hung from the walls or included in your email signature. Saying or plastering "Safety First" or "Safety is Priority One!" everywhere does not mean your organization values safety or that it's even included in your strategic or operational plans. Don't make the mistake that slogans or marketing phrases replace robust and effective leadership. **[CONT'D]**

This way of marketing safety is from an era when the safety office or safety professional was responsible for all the employees' well-being – safety was “owned” by that office or staff, not the organization or its employees. In the SMS, everyone is responsible for their safety. Safety is valued, not sloganized. The safety professionals are consultants to the leadership and employees of the organization. The employees and leadership integrate safety and health in all aspects of their operations, maintenance, administrative tasks, objectives, and goals.

Leadership Commitment and Employee Involvement

As OS continues its management system implementation initiative, educating employees on the four principles introduced earlier is crucial in the success of OS's implementation and sustainability. If you recall, the first principle is to commit to OS's OSHMS's implementation through its programs and duties. The other part of this principle is also leading offices nationwide in its sustainability and continuous improvement. Leadership is the driving force in implementing and managing the OS OSHMS – motivation and accountability are driven from the top down. For OS, **Jacqueline M. Jones**, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administrative Services (DAS-AS), defines her leadership role and commitment like this, “Leadership buy-in and support are the crux of ensuring a successful safety program and effective information sharing goes a long way.”

When asked about management commitment in her role as not only the DAS-AS, but also as the OS Designated Agency Safety and Health Officer (DASHO), Jones stated, “As the DAS for Administrative Services and the OS DASHO, I take my position very seriously to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of my fellow DOI colleagues.” On the subject of the implementation and sustainability of OS's OSHMS, she further added, “It is important to have a catalog of safety management policies and procedures as well as safety

compliance edicts to share with the Department to reduce or minimize the accidents and illnesses of employees.”

Building a culture that once believed it's the safety professional's responsibility for the employees' welfare will be difficult, at best, but holding on to the belief of their leadership having the sole burden of workplace protection will not advocate for accountability or self-improvement. Rusten takes

this approach as the Director of OFAS. He says, “The implementation of a comprehensive OS safety program is firmly documented in OFAS leadership's performance plans and enabled by the OFAS Goals and Priorities.” Employee ownership involves you participating in safety committees, providing training to the office or organization, and volunteering to be either a Collateral Duty Safety Officer (CDSO) or a Unit Safety Representative (USR). Understanding OS's second principle provides other ways

to identify risks or hazards in the workplace through worksite analyses (self-assessments) and, more importantly, notifying leadership to work together on implementing control measures. **Stephen D'Antoni**, Branch Chief for the Occupation Safety and Wellness Branch, OFAS, makes a good point: “If you get a manager doing a safety walkthrough, the next day they are more likely to have their employee's safety on their mind.” This simple action by leadership involves all the principles. Employees notice that the manager is committed to excellence by leading the way, identifying workplace hazards, showing leadership involvement at the highest level, and providing training through a kinesthetic or tactile approach (learn by doing).

Since we briefly talked about safety training, the fourth principle defines the requirement that safety training should be specific to its employees' duties. This focused effort involves all employees from the top down. **[CONT'D]**



The OS safety and health manager assists offices nationwide with the development, implementation, and sustainment of the OSHMS and its programs. Rusten adds, “I think it is important that employees are educated to understand what the safety program is and what their responsibilities are, and most importantly, what the benefits are of supporting and executing a real-time and ongoing safety program.” It would not be possible for OS to be a highly reliable cross-functional organization without its employees’ knowledge of performing their mission safely – individually and as a whole. D’Antoni adds, “When you educate employees in the process, they are more likely to take ownership of the program.”

A well-educated employee (and their leadership) understands how to identify workplace hazards, the importance of holding each other accountable in the corrective action process, and the benefits of integrating safety in all aspects of the office and organization. In doing so, OS’s safety culture is built on a solid foundation based on these four principles and at all levels of the office or organization, which, in turn, ensures buy-in or, dare it to be said – ownership!

Identifying Answers to Questions Raised

Good news! The OS OSHMS implementation initiative that began in 2018 is underway. The Occupational Safety and Wellness Branch (OSWB) within OFAS leads OS offices nationwide with successfully implementing, managing, and system sustainability of their safety programs. OSWB will:

- Hold Director’s meetings with senior leaders
- Conduct site visits to build trust, consistency, and relationships
- Assist leadership with building teams to function within a highly reliable organization
- Communicate the need for employees to serve as a CDSO or USR for their office
- Provide the opportunity for the CDSO and USR to complete all required safety and health training as per DM 485
- Guide the CDSO and USR in ways to assist office leaders and employees in managing the OSHMS for their office and locations
- Perform system-program reviews; and
- Educate on how to integrate the safety principles into the office culture to ensure continuity among all stakeholders.

As the OS OSHMS initiative continues, tough questions may be asked, not to stump anyone, but to provide an educational opportunity in a realm that many employees or leaders that may not have heard of the SMS before. Just as OS uses highly reliable techniques that continually focus on potential failures within our system, it uses the SMS as its systematic approach to manage and lead our safety culture development and sustainability. You can get involved with the OS’s implementation initiative through many different opportunities consisting of:

- Taking a proactive approach to the implementation initiative
- Volunteering to be a CDSO or USR
- Participating in your office or organization’s safety committee
- Assist with the development and review process of your office’s safety program
- Participating in site visits and conducting safety, health, and environmental self-assessments
- Leading team meetings related to safety
- Be accountable to each other, and
- Integrate the safety principles discussed here into your strategic planning.

Next Steps

What are the next steps? As you can see, there is a lot of work left to do, and to be successful, all of us will have to take ownership, work with leadership to build our safety culture, and be accountable to one another. Remember, your safety office does not have the sole responsibility of this monumental task – we all must do our part. OS will need to continue to focus efforts on self-improvement and ownership. This effort is strengthened by all employees and leaders getting involved. With the “All hands-on deck” slogan, OS offices nationwide are on track with the implementation target of October 2023. By this date, we will be well-positioned into our nationwide strategic safety plan’s management sustainability cycle.

I look forward to working with all of you in implementing the OS’s OSHMS and being part of world-class leadership at all levels of the organization to continue to achieve excellence. See you out there!

For more information or to ask Mr. Pepper a question, please contact him at Waymon_pepper@ios.doi.gov. Thank you!

Meet Earth Day Trailblazer Peggy Olwell, BLM

**By Catherine Pierce,
Environmental Program Manager,
Office of Facilities and
Administrative Services**

Peggy Olwell, BLM Plant Conservation and Restoration Program National Lead, was selected as the winner of the Trailblazer category in the 2020 Natural Resource Conservation Achievement Awards. This award recognizes Peggy's contribution to establishing the [BLM Plant Conservation and Restoration Program](#) (PCRP), in particular two of its initiatives, the [Seeds of Success Program](#) and [Native Plant Materials Development Program](#), and the impact Peggy and these programs have made on the BLM, the Department of Interior, and with international partners.

Since 2000, Peggy has been at the forefront of a national charge to develop native plants for rehabilitation after devastating natural disasters and habitat restoration for wildlife and plant

communities. Under her leadership, the PCRP has increased BLM/DOI agency access to genetically appropriate native seed and developed foundational science for land managers on how to effectively use native seed to restore ecosystems. She has collaborated across BLM programs to build the BLM Seed Warehouse System as well as procurement tools that can help all DOI agencies. Additionally, she has a strong track record of training the next generation of professionals working in the native plant realm.

Peggy's oversight has strengthened BLM and DOI's scientific knowledge to improve land management including leading the development of the National Seed Strategy for Rehabilitation and Restoration. The Trailblazer award celebrates Peggy's passion, leadership, and dedication to native plants and building partnerships to further the conservation and restoration of these ecosystems. Congratulations, Peggy!

Photos of Peggy Olwell courtesy BLM



Right: Inmates at the South Boise Women's Correctional Center show some of the Wyoming big sagebrush seedlings they grew through the Sagebrush in Prisons Project, a public-private partnership spearheaded by Peggy Olwell in which incarcerated adults grow sagebrush for restoration projects on BLM lands. Since 2014, the Sagebrush in Prisons Project has worked with 18 prisons in 8 western states and grown nearly 2 million sagebrush seedlings for BLM restoration projects.





Seeds of Success

[Seeds of Success](#) (SOS) is the country's national native seed collection program. Established by Peggy Olwell and collaborators in 2001, SOS has made over 26,000 native seed collections, representing approximately 6,000 unique plant taxa from 93 ecoregions across 43 states. *Left: a volunteer collects seeds for propagation. Photo credit: Gary Tarleton, BLM.*

Native Seed and Grassland Restoration Program

The [Native Seed and Grassland Restoration Program](#) is a partnership between BLM, the Fort Belknap Indian Community, and the Society for Ecological Restoration. It was fostered by Peggy Olwell and combines Seeds of Success

protocols with Traditional Ecological Knowledge for seed collection and restoration. *Upper right: collecting seeds on Fort Belknap Reservation in Montana. Photo credit: Dr. Cristina Eisenberg, Society for Ecological Restoration.*

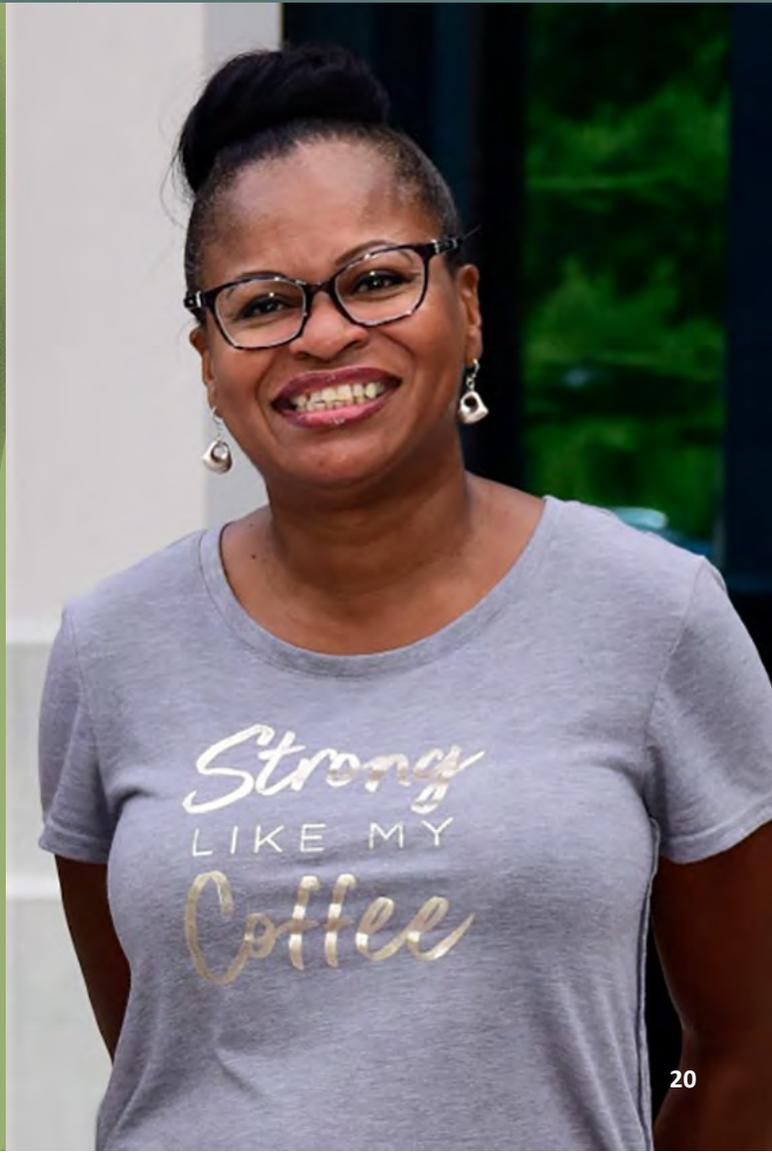
Sagebrush in Prisons Project

[Sagebrush in Prisons Project](#) is a public-private partnership spearheaded by Peggy Olwell in which incarcerated adults grow sagebrush seedlings for restoration projects on BLM lands. Since 2014, the Sagebrush in Prisons Project has worked with 18 prisons in 8 western states and grown nearly 2 million sagebrush seedlings for BLM restoration projects. *Lower right: an adult in custody in the South Boise Women's Correctional Center sows Wyoming big sagebrush. Photo BLM.*



<https://fedsfeedfamilies.ocio.usda.gov/>

Feds Feed Families is a government-wide campaign which encourages federal employees to give to food banks and pantries. This year's campaign ends August 31. Get involved today!



Shout-Out to Shelli Kallie

“**Shelli Kallie**, Army veteran (1986–2010), mother of two, and Administrative Officer for the AVSO Portland office stepped into the role of AVSO Acting Property Manager on December 2, 2019, initially intended as a 60-day detail. Shelli is currently still acting in this role in an unofficial capacity. Throughout this time, she has gone above and beyond in her efforts to work with AVSO’s team of Custodial Property Officers (CPOs) to create agency policies and guidelines. In recent weeks and months, she has been ensuring that the CPOs are preparing for the 100% Property Inventory that is due mid-May as well as working diligently on the AVSO Laptop Refresh for FY 2021. Shelli has proven to be AVSO’s property super star!”

– **Mary Beth Abbott, Division of Minerals Evaluations, AVSO**

“Thanks to Shelli’s tenacity since taking on the property management detail, the Property Management Program has been elevated to a place where it has never been. Her incredible ability to connect and coordinate with property specialists in the AVSO as well as IT specialists in the Office of the Chief Information Officer has been simply impressive! Since coming on to this detail in December 2019, Shelli has continuously displayed an energy that caused great things to happen in the AVSO property program. We are lucky to have such an amazing person on our staff!”

– **Mel Capers, Deputy Director, Business Services, AVSO**

“When I think of Shelli, I’m immediately reminded of her assertive, positive energy. I remember when I first met her in 2015 during records training in Lakewood. I was still pretty new to the organization. Shelli was warm, welcoming, kind—and just *fun* to be around. She’s professional, approachable, and has a good heart and a level head. I aspire to be like Shelli both at work and as a parent. Shelli is the proud mother of



Shelli and her soccer star daughters Anna and Kiki.

two daughters, Anna and Kiki. Both girls grew up dedicated to playing soccer and became very talented players. Shelli could not have been more encouraging or supportive along the way from driving her girls long distances for practice several times a week to becoming a soccer coach herself and coaching her daughters’ team when the need arose. Anna and Kiki went on to earn college scholarships for soccer, and I know Shelli is overjoyed and proud of their accomplishments. I like to listen to her talk about her daughters; you can hear the love in her voice and see it in her face by the way she lights up. Shelli is genuine and has unique strength of character, traits that add tremendously to any team!”

–**Abigail True, Writer/Editor, AVSO**

An 85-Year-Old Beauty Saves the Planet and Millions of Dollars

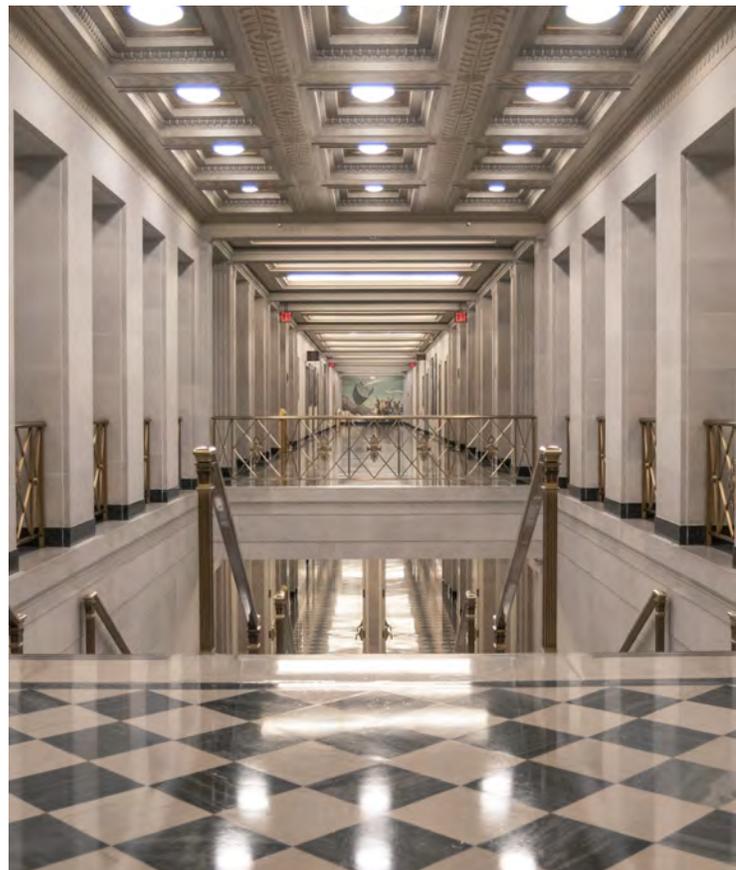


**By Barbara Hayden, RN
Occupational Health Nurse
Safety, Health, and Environmental Branch, OFAS**

It's not a generous actress saving the planet and millions of dollars: it is our 85-year-old [Main Interior Building](#) (MIB) in Washington, D.C. Officially named the Stewart Lee Udall Department of the Interior Building, the MIB was a modern wonder when completed in 1936. By 2001, however, the heating, cooling, electrical, and water usage systems were expensive and polluting.

A sixteen-year modernization project and subsequent Energy Savings Performance Contract transformed this landmark building into a model of sustainability. Sustainability is defined as supporting long-term ecological balance by not depleting natural resources and not harming the environment. Sustainability also saves money: an analysis in 2019 estimated the savings enjoyed by the MIB that year as \$1.8 million in utilities and thousands of dollars in operating expenses.

Our building engineers enjoy explaining how better machines, smarter timing, better lighting, and new windows accomplished this. They also delight in telling how a long-standing nuisance was turned into a benefit. *Above: Green roof on the MIB. Right: Interior's interior.*



Main Interior Building (continued)



Our building engineers enjoy explaining how better machines, smarter timing, better lighting, and new windows accomplished this. They also delight in telling how a long-standing nuisance was turned into a benefit.

The building's superhero is the heat and power plant. The plant generates energy as it uses it and powers another machine with its by-product, heat. Systems for climate control in the building that once ran constantly now run only when needed because sensitive monitors detect when occupants are present. Ditto for the office lights. All lighting is LED, which uses less electricity and lasts four times longer. New windows keep out cold and heat.

What was the long-standing nuisance that was turned into a benefit? Water! Some of the ground water that would otherwise have to be pumped out to keep the basement dry is now captured, filtered, and used to feed cooling towers, reducing the amount of water purchased by millions of gallons annually. Rainwater that once streamed from the roof into DC's sewer system is now filtered by a green roof which absorbs CO2 and downtown heat.

When you return to this lovely building post-pandemic, rejoice that it was reused, not torn down, and reengineered to save the planet and money for the U.S. taxpayer.

Pictured, upper left: the 18th and C Streets NW façade of the MIB circa 1936. Left: the Capstone C800 heat and power plant. Below: view of the Washington Monument from the green roof on the MIB. All pictures DOI



[Calculate your carbon footprint here](#)



From Worry to Resilience: Five Good Habits

By Tonia Green, J.D.

Worry and anxiety are a natural human response in difficult and uncertain times, and even helpful to an extent—it's our little inner warrior out to protect us and help us survive! Panic and denial, however, are not helpful behaviors, and are actually contagious. At the same time, resilience, courage and compassion are also natural human responses. These are also contagious.

When we are scared or difficulties arise, a very primitive part of our brain gets activated: the amygdala. When the amygdala hijacks the brain, we go into flight, fight or freeze. We are in survival mode. This also means our body is flooded with chemicals like cortisol and adrenaline in a nanosecond. Our body literally shuts down unnecessary functions like digestion, our heart beats faster, blood rushes to our extremities so we can run or fight, and most importantly, our higher functioning brain, the prefrontal cortex, goes off line. This is the part of the brain responsible for planning and logic, for creativity, for courage and compassion. We really want to keep the thinking brain online in times like these! We can build habits to develop more calm, courage and kindness in our lives by focusing where we put our attention.

As we continue to adapt to the new normal, the brain has to work with new information to build habits. By setting up good mental habits now we can help keep our thinking brain online and nourish calm, compassion and kindness. The following is adapted from *Five Good Mental Habits to Build Now* by Dr. Jud Brewer:

1. Nip it in the bud. When you notice a trigger to anxiety or panic arise, nip it in the bud. Name it, feel it in your body (i.e. heat, rapid heartbeat, butterflies, etc.) and take three easy breaths. You can also ground yourself in your feet for thirty seconds. Count the full thirty and feel the grounding sensation

of your feet. Also, don't spread anxiety by calling someone when you are freaked out. Breathe and ground instead.

2. Make connection.

If you are feeling calm, connect with someone via a simple phone call or even text, or maybe a Zoom or Teams call. Make connection the new infection.

3. Don't get addicted to checking your phone. Set a limit you can remember and stick with. Don't check it right before bed or first thing in the morning.

4. Take it one day at a time, or even one hour at a time. We are navigating through uncertain times. We don't have enough information to plan for a month in advance so why not just plan for today?

5. Nourish yourself with kindness, not ice cream.

By setting up good mental habits they will stick with you in the new normal. Set up mindful habits to stay calm, be kind and work with others. Make connection the new infection.

Tonia teaches a mindfulness-based [Emotional Intelligence class through DOI Talent](#), the first week of every month through September 2021. Join Tonia for some experiential practice in building mindfulness and emotional intelligence skills.

Tonia Green, J.D., is a Mindfulness and Compassionate Leadership trainer and attorney within OHA. She is also a mediator and a coach. Tonia welcomes your questions and comments. She may be reached at Tonia.Green@bia.gov.



Balance

By Teresa Stella

We are all striving for balance, that sweet spot you know so well, like when you first learn to ride a bicycle: you wobble, you weave, you fall, you get up and try again and again until you find the perfect alignment of body, of bicycle, of mind, of spirit. Once you click into that perfect alignment, all fears release, all thoughts of trying to balance disappear because you just are in balance. And then you soar down the road, free to go wherever you want to go on that beautiful bicycle knowing no fear, only freedom.

In the federal arena, we are striving to find that same balance within Indian Country, within this beautiful country known as the United States where all things are possible. In the present moment, though, how can we create balance when both the historical and current events tip the scales so dramatically out of balance that it seems we will never find the sweet spot? We try. Again and again, we try.

Every true, kind, and respectful gesture taken toward healing

the past may only be a small drop in a bucket of water, but each drop is a drop toward balance. In and of itself, that droplet may seem insignificant and the obstacles insurmountable but, over time, those droplets fill the bucket, and then they fill a pond, a lake, an ocean, until one day, the scales move, and we know it is good.

As spring transforms into summer, we reflect on the lessons of the winter and we warm up. We melt into the droplet of water that nourishes harmony, restores balance, and encourages new growth.

About the author:

Teresa Stella has been living and working in Indian Country since 2004 and in federal service as a public servant since 2007. She holds an undergraduate degree in Interdisciplinary Studies (emphasizing American Indian Studies, Environment and Ecology, and Media Production) and a J.D. with an emphasis in Federal Indian Law and Environmental Law.

Colorado wildflower series: Western Clematis by Daniel J. Boits, Jr.





PLAN LIKE A PARK RANGER

1 HAVE A PLAN... AND A BACKUP PLAN

For us, a park visit begins at home with a stop at [NPS.gov](https://www.nps.gov). Park websites have ideas about where to go, what to see, and what to do, and most important, what we need to include in our planning. Flexibility and a backup plan are key, too, in case of changing weather conditions, road closures, etc.

2 PACK YOUR PATIENCE

During our visit, we try to enjoy the ride and allow for extra time to get from one place to another. This season, parks are already bustling. Like lots of places this year, we may not yet have the ability to offer the same level of service available as we emerge from the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. And keep in mind that people who are not fully vaccinated must wear masks inside park buildings and in crowded outdoor areas.

3 TRAVEL OFF THE BEATEN PATH

There are more than 400 national parks across the country. We love exploring the lesser-known ones. They can be a great option for travelers looking for all the beauty of nature, hiking trails, and rich history, with fewer crowds and lines.

4 RESERVATIONS MAY BE NEEDED

We love reservations. Many campgrounds and lodges in well-known parks and in nearby communities are already fully booked. Making sure you have a reservation guarantees you won't arrive at a park only to find out that you need an entrance reservation, there's no place to sleep, or a popular trail is closed.

5 ASK A RANGER

Have a question? Ask a ranger. (Yep, we ask other rangers about visiting their parks.) Rangers are here to help. We can answer questions, share park stories (we're always happy to point you to the nearest restroom), and we can let you know what activities are available and sites not to miss.

6 EXPLORE THE NEW NPS APP

We nerded out over our own app—it's very cool. You can even access it offline if you plan ahead! The new NPS App offers tools to explore more than 400 national parks...interactive maps, tours, accessibility information, and more. And we're adding new content all the time!

7 KEEP SAFETY IN THE PICTURE

We love to take photos. (Have you seen our Instagram?) But we like surviving the process, too—so we're careful to take them where it is safe. Some popular trails and views may be especially crowded this year, so an unobstructed photo might require a bit of a wait.

8 DON'T PET THE FLUFFY COWS

Bison can weigh up to 2,000 lbs and run up to 35 mph—and they can really hurt you. We can't run that fast and are pretty sure you can't either. Keep your distance from wild animals, never feed the wildlife, and when taking pictures, use your zoom and give them room.

9 LEAVE ONLY FOOTPRINTS

We know that each of us—rangers, volunteers, visitors, everyone—plays a vital role in protecting YOUR national parks. Whether it's carrying out what we brought in (including our poop), well, you know), leaving the spots we visit as we found them, or staying on the trail, we're careful to respect these incredible places.

10 RUFFING IT?

This one's for the dogs. Many parks allow pets on leashes and in campgrounds, some even have kennels. But sometimes these furry friends are best left at home. Discover what you can (and can't) do with your pet and follow the B.A.R.K. principles.



#PLANLIKEAPARKRANGER



National Parks and Mental Wellness

Green exercise is the term for play, movement, and exercise in a green space--a space with rocks, trees, sand, mud, dirt, grass, plants, and sky. National Parks, even those within cities and urban landscapes, can provide green spaces for visitors to enjoy the benefits of nature.

Part of a healthy mind is having good attention. Spending just 20 minutes outside can improve concentration and impulse control, helping you focus and thwart off distractions like you thwart off mosquitoes in summer (which you may encounter on your adventures, so bring your bug spray!).

Learning in natural environments, like taking a guided tour or participating in a ranger-led education program, can enhance your creativity, critical thinking, and problem solving skills so that planning your next National Park adventure becomes a creative endeavor that boosts your mental performance.

Learning in nature can also support reduced stress, reduced anger and aggressive behaviors, and improve relationship skills. Time in nature not only encourages treating the parks and earth with care but also builds stronger emotional connections to people and nature. If you want to become a nature-lover or pass it onto your kids, the National Parks are a great way for them to get involved and build lifelong memories and skills that they can keep forever.

Just in time for Great Outdoors Month in June, rangers share their insider tips for visiting National Parks. NPS is expecting an especially busy summer season and want everyone to have a great experience. A little advance trip planning can ensure that your only surprises are happy ones. [Check out NPS's top 10 lists to get the most out of your summer vacation.](#) #PlanLikeAParkRanger



Kaiulani Rees—Wildlife Photographer



Brilliant wildlife photographer **Kaiulani Rees**, who serves as Administrative Officer for AVSO's Alaska Region, shared these amazing pictures (and our cover image) from near Anchorage proving that spring has definitely sprung! These moose calves [left] and a loving Dall sheep mom and lamb [above] are exploring their world, stopping for a snack here and there.

Journeys

Spring/Summer 2021

Journeys newsletter is a quarterly publication of the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Administrative Services. Your input is essential to making this a valuable resource for all employees. Please feel free to share your ideas, suggestions and articles/pictures with editor Steve Carlisle by emailing Stephen_Carlisle@ibc.doi.gov. Thank you!



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