



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Washington, DC 20240

Report of DOI Conference Activities and Spending – Fiscal Year 2013

The Department has implemented internal controls over conference spending and activities in conformance with the President's Campaign to Cut Waste, Executive Order 13589 -- *Promoting Efficient Spending*, and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) memorandum M-12-12 *Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations*, and the *Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013*. These efforts have resulted in effective controls over conference activities and spending.

Departmental policies provide a framework of internal controls designed to mitigate risks associated with conference planning, hosting and spending, and ensure compliance with Federal travel regulations. The current policy incorporates new guidance for submitting reports on large conferences and summary reports on conference spending over \$20,000 to the DOI Office of Inspector General consistent with statutory guidance contained in the *Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013*.

For Fiscal Year 2013, DOI complied with the Administration's limitation on agency-sponsored conferences with net expenses in excess of \$500,000. In compliance with OMB Memorandum 12-12 *Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations*, and based on exceptional circumstances, the Secretary granted one waiver in Fiscal Year 2013.

Reporting of Conferences held during FY 2013 that exceeded \$100,000 in net costs.

During Fiscal Year 2013, the DOI conducted or attended nineteen (19) conferences in which expenses exceeded \$100,000. Below, please find a listing of these nineteen conferences to include costs, date/location of conferences, and other pertinent data.

Bureau or Office: Bureau of Indian Affairs

Conference Title: 22nd Annual Tribal Providers Conference

Conference Expenses: \$ 150,839

Location: Anchorage, AK

Date: November 26 2012 to November 30, 2012

Explanation: Annual meeting with all the tribes and tribal organizations that have either P.L.93-638 contract or P.L. 103-413 compact agreements to provide services on behalf of the Bureau. The conference participants are informed about Federal programs including Contracts & Grants, Natural Resources, Probate & Estate Services, Subsistence, Transportation, Real Estate Services, Human Services, Credit & Finance, Land Titles & Records Office, and Tribal Government.

Total Number of Participants: 1,600 (103 DOI employees)

Bureau or Office: Bureau of Indian Education

Conference Title: School Improvement Grant Technical Assistance and Workshop

Conference Expenses: \$103,078

Location: Bloomington, MN

Date: June 12, 2013 to June 14, 2013

Explanation: The School Improvement Technical Assistance and Workshop focused on building educational capacity to improve student learning with guidance and technical assistance as required by P.L. 107-110, No Child left Behind Act of 2001, section 1119.

Total Number of Participants: 61 (11 BIE staff)

Bureau or Office: Bureau of Indian Affairs

Conference Title: Solar Training Workshop

Conference Expenses: \$136,670

Location: Phoenix, AZ

Date: January 15, 2012 to January 17, 2013

Explanation: This conference provided BIA and DOI staff with a comprehensive technical understanding of the BIA leasing and permitting processes for utility-scale solar energy development on Indian lands. This includes the new BIA wind and solar leasing regulations, leasing terms, financing and environmental review of tribal solar projects. The workshop facilitated interactive discussions while sharing lessons learned from the field. The Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development, Argonne National Laboratory and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory worked together to develop a three day curriculum for this utility-scale solar workshop.

Total Number of Participants: 50

Bureau or Office: Bureau of Indian Education

Conference Title: Professional Development - BIE Principal Leadership Academy

Conference Expenses: \$ 113,080

Location: Albuquerque, NM

Date: November 25, 2012 to December 1, 2012

Explanation: The Principal Leadership Academy (PLA) provided the BIE operated school Principals within the ADD West and ADD East regions the opportunity to become certified Rapid Improvement Leaders. BIE has developed a certification process in collaboration with the Academic Development Institute and Temple University Institute for Schools and Society.

Total Number of Participants: 58

Bureau or Office: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

Conference Title: Characterizing Tribal Cultural Landscapes Workshops

Conference Expenses: \$ 147,977

Locations: Portland, OR, Port Angeles, WA, and Eureka, CA

Date: August and September, 2013

Explanation: Meet with invited Tribal representatives and agency partners to initiate the development of a proactive best-practices tool to work with Native American communities in order to identify areas of tribal significance that need to be considered in the planning process for offshore renewable energy projects. The workshops are critical to the overall completion of the Characterizing Tribal Cultural Landscapes inter-agency agreement, as well as securing support from non-partner tribes. Workshops are part of the BOEM-funded interagency agreement with NOAA's Marine Protected Areas Program and Maritime Heritage Program.

Total Number of Participants: 78 (7 BOEM staff)

Bureau or Office: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

Conference Title: Offshore Wind Energy Development Site Assessment and Characterization: Evaluation of the Current Status and European Experience

Conference Expenses: \$ 264,449

Location: Herndon, VA

Date: February 26, 2013 to February 28, 2013

Explanation: The workshop brought together European scientific and regulatory experts to discuss scientific information collection in support of siting of offshore wind facilities. The workshop provided the opportunity for Federal and State agencies with leasing and permitting responsibilities to hear directly from European experts with direct experience in offshore wind development. The technical focus of the workshop was on birds, seafloor habitats, and archaeology.

Total Number of Participants: 100 (20 BOEM staff)

Bureau or Office: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

Conference Title: Quieting Technologies for Reducing Noise during Seismic Surveying and Pile Driving

Conference Expenses: \$ 207,808

Location: Silver Spring, MD

Date: February 25, 2013 to February 27, 2013

Explanation: The BOEM organized workshop brought together government, industry, nongovernmental, and academic experts from the United States and several countries to examine quieting technologies to reduce the impacts of noise generated during offshore exploratory seismic surveys, pile driving and the vessels associated with these activities. This provided BOEM and other regulatory agencies with information needed to determine the usefulness and appropriateness of these alternative and quieting technologies for mitigation and monitoring to lower the overall sound introduced into the water.

Total Number of Participants: 58

Bureau or Office: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

Conference Title: Oregon Renewable Energy Science Conference

Conference Expenses: \$ 163,295

Location: Corvallis, OR

Date: November 28, 2013 to November 29, 2012

Explanation: The conference aided scientists and regulatory staff in the State of Oregon to evaluate future renewable energy projects. The conference ensured that a solid technical foundation is in place in order to evaluate renewable energy projects off Oregon's coast.

Total Number of Participants: 150 (14 BOEM staff)

Bureau or Office: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Geological Survey

Conference Title: Ecology and Conservation of North American Waterfowl - North American Duck Symposium

Conference Expenses: \$ 210,504

Location: Memphis, TN

Date: January 27, 2013 to January 31, 2013

Explanation: The conference is held every three years to serve as a forum for biologists, managers, researchers, students, and other interest individuals to discuss the state of waterfowl research and management worldwide. This all-waterfowl symposium is the first to be held since 1987. It allows scientists and managers from all over North America to share and knowledge and information about waterfowl and their habitats.

Total Number of Participants: 111

Bureau or Office: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Conference Title: 6th National Conference on Coastal and Estuaries Habitat Restoration

Conference Expenses: \$ 104,359

Location: Tampa, FL

Date: October 20, 2012 to October 25, 2012

Explanation: The conference is held every other year and is the most comprehensive event of its kind covering the contemporary science, policy and management issues of coastal ecosystem conservation and management. More than 1,000 professionals from academia, government, and the private sector attend. This event is unique in bringing such a large, diverse group of professional disciplines together to explore advances in coastal ecosystem science and technology; planning, management and policy; and socioeconomic implications.

Total Number of Participants: 1,000 (49 DOI employees)

Bureau or Office: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Geological Survey
Conference Title: Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC)
Conference Expenses: \$ 135,426
Location: Long Beach, CA
Date: November 11, 2012 to November 15, 2012
Explanation: Primary scientific meeting for FWS toxicologist and environmental contaminant staff and USGS scientists who present scientific data in oral or poster sessions, organize and moderate sessions, or attend to advance their scientific knowledge through short courses and contacts. It is the most comprehensive scientific meeting on environmental contaminants in the country with over 2,000 international professionals from all sectors.
Total Number of Participants: 2,000 (74 DOI employees)

Bureau or Office: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Geological Survey
Conference Title: American Fisheries Society 143rd Annual Meeting
Conference Expenses: \$ 122,003
Location: Little Rock, AR
Date: September 8, 2013 to September 12, 2013
Explanation: The purpose of the conference is to improve the conservation and sustainability of fishery resources and aquatic ecosystems by advancing fisheries and aquatic science and promoting the development of fisheries professionals. DOI representatives are involved directly with work on fisheries or interact with personnel regarding these issues. Sessions focused on issues being confronted by DOI staff on an ongoing basis.
Total Number of Participants: 82

Bureau or Office: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Parks Service and U.S. Geological Survey
Conference Title: The Wildlife Society Annual Conference
Conference Expenses: \$ 176,689
Location: Portland, OR
Date: October 13, 2012 to October 18, 2012
Explanation: The purpose of the conference is to improve the conservation of fish, wildlife, and their habitats through the exchange of information and professional development of wildlife professionals. DOI representatives are directly involved in this work and interact with other professionals on these issues. Conference sessions focus on issues confronted on an ongoing basis.
Total Number of Participants: 134

Bureau or Office: National Parks Service

Conference Title: National Association of Interpretation (NAI) 2012 Workshop

Conference Expenses: \$ 170,853

Location: Hampton Roads, VA

Date: November 13, 2012 to November 18, 2012

Explanation: The National Workshop is an annual opportunity for practitioners in the field of interpretation to gather, present, and share best practices, learn about new research, and participate in professional development opportunities. Through participation in over 100 concurrent sessions, NPS staff were able to share successes and strategies, discover new partnership opportunities, and gain new skills in management trends and practices, interpretive techniques and tools, and practical solutions to agency issues.

Total Number of Participants: 94

Bureau or Office: National Parks Service

Conference Title: 2013 BioDiscovery Event

Conference Expenses: \$ 425,286

Location: Jean Lafitte National Historical Park, LA

Date: May 16, 2013 to May 18, 2013

Explanation: This event is a core component of the NPS *Call to Action* plan with a goal of conducting BioDiscovery activities in 100 parks, including five urban parks, which lead to the discovery of species new to science and to the parks. A BioDiscovery event often referred to as a "BioBlitz", is a 24-hour event in which teams of federal, state and National Geographic Society scientists, volunteers, and community members, join forces to discover, identify, and learn about as many local plant and animal species as possible within a park unit. The event also hosts young professionals that gain knowledge and experience from the work and benefit from participation and interaction with scientists and others.

Total Number of Participants: 3,000 park visitors (35 NPS staff)

Bureau or Office: U.S. Geological Survey

Conference Title: Northeast Climate Science Center (NECSC) Stakeholders Engagement Meeting

Conference Expenses: \$ 114,501

Location: Amherst, MA

Date: January 9, 2013 to January 10, 2013

Explanation: The purpose of the meeting is to obtain input from key partners of the NECSC on crucial science priorities. Representatives of Government and non-governmental partner institutions were expected to attend this important 2-day meeting.

Total Number of Participants: 85 (25 staff)

<p>Bureau or Office: U.S. Geological Survey</p> <p>Conference Title: Northeast Climate Science Center (NECSC) Stakeholders Engagement Meeting</p> <p>Conference Expenses: \$ 105,228</p> <p>Location: Minneapolis, MN</p> <p>Date: January 4, 2013 to January 5, 2013</p> <p>Explanation: The purpose of the meeting is to obtain input from key partners of the NECSC on crucial science priorities. Representatives of Government and non-governmental partner institutions were expected to attend this important 2-day meeting.</p> <p>Total Number of Participants: 63 (30 staff)</p>
<p>Bureau or Office: U.S. Geological Survey</p> <p>Conference Title: Geological Society of America Annual Meeting</p> <p>Conference Expenses: \$ 273,594</p> <p>Location: Charlotte, NC</p> <p>Date: November 4, 2012 to November 7, 2012</p> <p>Explanation: The Geological Society of America Annual Meeting gathers solid Earth scientists at all levels of expertise and from all sectors: academic, Federal and State government and the private sector. The conference covers the breadth of the Earth sciences and attracts top researchers.</p> <p>Total Number of Participants: 212</p>
<p>Bureau or Office: U.S. Geological Survey</p> <p>Conference Title: Annual Fall Meeting of the American Geophysical Union</p> <p>Conference Expenses: \$ 637,000 – waiver granted</p> <p>Location: San Francisco, CA</p> <p>Date: December 3, 2012 to December 7, 2012</p> <p>Explanation: Attendance at AGU's meeting is critical to the USGS mission because this is a leading geophysical science meeting and is one of the primary ways USGS scientists interact with scientists from other Federal and State agencies, academia, and international organizations. It is a critical avenue by which USGS scientists disseminate information on cutting-edge discoveries.</p> <p>Total Number of Participants: 520</p>

DOI will continue to closely monitor conference activity as well as strengthen our policies and internal controls around our conference and travel activity. If you have any questions, please contact Patrick McHugh or Eric Eisenstein at: 202-208-4701.