Service-wide Barrier Analysis Team Report
For Fiscal Year
2017
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Executive Summary

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) commissioned a servicewide Barrier Analysis Team (BAT) to conduct an in-depth examination of barriers pertaining to recruitment, hiring, and retention of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities at FWS. The work of the BAT builds on previous data analysis of workforce processes conducted by FWS. The BAT gave its members the opportunity to share individual perspectives on the diversity and inclusion climate at FWS. This report examines barriers to workforce diversity with the goal of determining why workforce data anomalies persist despite continued implementation of initiatives to increase diversity. The BAT also explores how these initiatives can be better branded to improve their reception by all FWS employees.

The BAT analyzed information through the lens of their own experiences as FWS employees representing administrative and resource management programs, bringing a perspective to barrier analysis that has not been captured in the past. The BAT looked at this project as a national operation, making this the first truly servicewide barrier analysis with representation from across FWS. The potential barriers and recommendations are based on aggregated results from the sources of data reviewed. The BAT reviewed internal and external sources of information, including: employee exit survey responses, previous annual Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) reports, survey responses and focus group data of FWS Presidential Management Fellows (PMFs), external research of fair hiring practices, questionnaires of recently on-boarded employees, questionnaires of hiring panel members, decision trees of workforce processes, results from the Booz Allen Hamilton’s focus groups of hiring managers and recruiters, and FWS’ Leadership Development Council recommendations.

DEFINITIONS

A **Barrier** is any employment policy, procedure, practice, or condition that effectively limits employment opportunities for individuals of a particular race, ethnic background, gender, or for individuals with disabilities.

A **Trigger** is an observed or measurable trend, disparity, or anomaly that suggests the need for an inquiry into an employment policy, practice, procedure, or condition. Triggers can be found in workforce statistics, complaints data, conversations with EEO and HR staff, anecdotes from employees, employee groups, and managers, results of surveys, focus groups, and exit interviews, or reports by outside organizations, among others.

POTENTIAL BARRIERS

The barrier analysis resulted in these potential barriers which focus on organizational culture and human capital processes:

- **Resistance found in Organizational Culture** – Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) is facing resistance from the existing organizational culture. Misinformation, perceptions and resistance to the perspective of others have not been addressed, and are undermining or limiting the effectiveness of D&I initiatives. D&I initiatives also face resistance due to perceived unintended consequences related to equal employment opportunity mandates.
• **Inconsistent Recruitment and Selection Processes** - Inconsistent recruitment and selection/hiring practices have negatively influenced FWS’s ability to meet its workforce diversity goals and effectively reshape its workforce despite innovative initiatives.

• **Perception of Unfairness in Career Growth Opportunities** – Women and minorities perceive a lack of fairness throughout their employment cycle at FWS. Minority perceptions of career growth opportunities are generally lower than the perceptions of their non-minority peers.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on these potential barriers, the BAT generated a list of recommendations, which all fall under these general areas:

• **Build the Business Case for Diversity** - Gain employee buy-in by linking the urgency of having a diverse and inclusive organization to the success of the FWS mission. Presenting diversity in terms of core values and fairness for everyone can be an effective approach in countering cultural resistance and bias. Specifically challenge supervisors to indicate how decisions improve with the diversity of ideas, benefitting the organization now and into the future.

• **Develop a consistent and fair recruitment approach nationwide, with direct input from Field and Regional practitioners /supervisors** - Develop a consistent and nationwide recruitment approach utilizing standardized national recruiting messages and establish partnerships with external organizations that can engage in building a recruitment pipeline. In the hiring stage, standardize the interview and selection processes.

• **Strengthen accountability by using professional development techniques that are available but have not yet achieved their full potential for return on investment** - FWS encourages the use of employee development tools such as training, mentoring, and Individual Development Plans (IDPs); however, the use of these tools is uneven across the organization. Increasing accountability in human capital development is a goal that can both help diversity as well as gain buy-in from critical employee segments because it helps everyone succeed.
## Potential Barriers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resistance found in Organizational Culture</td>
<td>Diversity and Inclusion (D&amp;I) is facing resistance from the existing organizational culture. Misinformation, perceptions and resistance to the perspective of others have not been addressed, and are undermining or limiting the effectiveness of D&amp;I initiatives. D&amp;I initiatives also face resistance due to perceived unintended consequences related to equal employment opportunity mandates.</td>
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### Analysis

#### Booz Allen Hamilton Focus Groups

The BAT reviewed the most frequently-expressed perceptions that emerged from focus groups conducted by Booz Allen Hamilton. The focus groups included Hiring Managers, Recruiters and Human Resource Officers to uncover their attitudes and perceptions on diversity and inclusion that may be interfering with fairness in the recruiting and hiring processes. Booz Allen conducted a total of 22 focus group sessions with 122 FWS personnel representing all eight FWS Regions and Headquarters: 19 sessions with Hiring Managers, two sessions with Recruiters and one session with Human Resource Officers.

The BAT conducted a thematic analysis of focus group data independently from Booz Allen Hamilton and concluded that these perceptions were red flags which could signify the existence of widespread myths and misperceptions in the organizational culture that can negatively impact diversity throughout the employment life cycle. The following are excerpts from the Booz Allen Hamilton report highlighting the areas of concern identified by the BAT:

- **Perception:** “People from low participation groups don’t want to live in rural, remote areas that do not have a lot of resources (e.g., restaurants, culturally relevant products and services). They would also feel isolated and possibly unsafe to be the only person who “looks like them” in the community.” *(29 comments)*  
  **Trigger** – Minorities

- **Perception:** “Some groups (e.g., women, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American) have a cultural tradition or expectation of playing a large role in supporting their families, such as caring for children and helping extended family members. Therefore, the mobility agreement can be a barrier, because people with extensive family responsibilities may consider relocating particularly difficult.” *(19 comments)*  
  **Trigger** – Minorities, Women.

- **Perception:** “The nature of our job is different from other law enforcement. We work by ourselves primarily, and you need an especially strong demeanor in some jobs (e.g., field patrol). This job situation does not appeal to some people.” *(8 comments)*  
  **Trigger** – Women.

- **Perception:** “The physical requirements of some jobs (e.g., field biology positions, law enforcement) may realistically present a barrier to people with disabilities. There are some positions with more administrative duties that would not present as much of a barrier.” *(21 comments)*  
  **Trigger** – Individuals with disabilities.

- **Perception:** “Some people from low participation groups can't see themselves doing this work. They may even be put off by wearing the uniform or interacting with people who are wearing the uniform, possibly related to negative previous experiences with uniformed officers.” *(2 comments)*  
  **Trigger** – Minorities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Inconsistent Recruitment and Selection Processes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Inconsistent recruitment and selection/hiring practices have negatively influenced FWS’s ability to meet its workforce diversity goals and effectively reshape its workforce despite promising initiatives.</td>
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</table>
| Analysis | **National Hiring Initiative Surveys**  
A National Hiring Initiative was launched in 2016 to increase diversity and inclusion in the workforce. FWS centrally advertised and recruited for approximately 60 entry level positions at the GS-05, 07, 09 and 11 grades in the 400 biological series in an effort to reach a large pool of diverse and qualified candidates. The 400 series positions make up a significant portion of our professional workforce, a segment representing little diversity. These positions were open and advertised to internal employees as well as external applicants. Selection panels of 3-5 members were established for each of the four selected occupational series. The panels evaluated the packages of the applicants on the selection certificates and identified applicants to forward to the interview and selection phase of the process. There were 174 new hires across the FWS from this initiative.  

The BAT analyzed two surveys that were conducted by Human Resources following the National Hiring Initiative -- a survey of the new hires and a survey of the selection panel members. Data from the surveys indicate that even in this controlled recruitment project, candidates’ experiences from learning about the FWS opportunities to onboarding, were vastly different and inconsistent, pointing to an ingrained dynamic that calls for a long-term change management plan rather than occasional process changes.  

**Presidential Management Fellows (PMFs) Focus Group**  
The BAT looked at human capital data from multiple sources, including focus group data from Presidential Management Fellows (PMFs) who shared information about their experiences at FWS. These experiences may be a microcosm of general organizational trends. PMFs indicated that they perceived no standardized process for recruitment. For the most part, FWS did not make contact with their PMFs before the OPM recruitment program, indicating a lack of targeted recruitment. The applicants learned about the PMF program through word of mouth (42%); through their university (33%), through their own research (17%), or from USA Jobs (8%). PMFs recommend that internal communications with regional managers and supervisors be improved to increase awareness of the benefits of the program and its non-competitive hiring authority. PMFs also raised concerns about career development, suggesting the use of position management techniques to identify positions that are well suited for PMF candidates and provide growth and promotion potential.  

**Booz Allen Hamilton Focus Groups**  
The BAT independently looked at the thematic analysis of Booz Allen Hamilton focus group data and concluded that the following perceptions further point to inconsistencies in the FWS recruitment and selection processes:  
- Perception: “FWS needs to develop productive relationships with professional societies and relevant degree programs within targeted universities and other organizations (e.g., veterans' groups), specifically where the low participation groups are well represented. Utilization of college career fairs, jobs boards and hiring managers’ professional networks can be effective in reaching potential applicants, particularly when working one-on-one to build...
relationships.” (139 comments)

- Perception: “Recruiting efforts to date have not generated a notable increase in the diversity of applicants, and it is particularly difficult to make progress when a region itself is not very diverse; on the other hand, targeting areas where there is a lot of diversity has been effective in attracting more applicants from low participation groups. Sometimes national recruiting has an advantage, in other times regional/local recruiting works better.” (82 comments)

- Perception: “Although the FWS has engaged in proactive planning (e.g., proactive outreach using ODI guide for managers; online recruiting for a national hiring initiative), it has not used a workforce plan or recruiting schedule, nor has it standardized efforts across regions and headquarters. Therefore, FWS is missing opportunities to reach low participation groups.” (107 comments)

- Perception: “Potential applicants are not familiar with FWS and its professional opportunities; FWS needs to reach out to students from a young age to increase awareness and interest in its careers. It is important to implement this early outreach effectively so that FWS can build up a strong diverse applicant pool with the qualifications it is looking for.” (104 comments)
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<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
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<tr>
<td>Perception of Unfairness in Career Growth Opportunities</td>
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**Description**

Women and minorities perceive a lack of fairness throughout their employment cycle at FWS. Minority perceptions of career growth opportunities are generally lower than the perceptions of their non-minority peers.

**Analysis**

**Exit Survey Analysis**

The BAT analyzed FWS Exit Surveys and found that some of the challenges presented by the overall trends found in survey responses were accentuated when responses from minorities were analyzed in isolation. The BAT analyzed minority response trends in the first set of data (December 2016-March 2017) and found several areas of concern, including: minority respondents rated their supervisor less favorably to being receptive on hearing ideas and suggestions than non-minority respondents did; minority respondents also rated mentorship from co-workers, distribution of workloads, and accessibility to up-to-date training tools, equipment, and materials less favorably than non-minority respondents did.

**Booz Allen Hamilton Focus Groups**

The BAT independently looked at the thematic analysis of Booz Allen Hamilton focus group data and concluded that the following perceptions by hiring managers and recruiters indicate that they are aware of the lack of fairness in career growth opportunities at FWS.

- Perception: “We need to build managers' skills to manage bias, make good hiring decisions and build an inclusive work environment (e.g., cultivate a less traditional and a more forward-looking approach; provide training on cultural agility and other inclusive management strategies), and hold them accountable for carrying these things out on the job.” (21 comments)

- Perception: “Supervisors are an important part of retention and engagement, but many don't see it as part of the hiring process. The service needs to build and train good managers, rather than assuming a good scientist will be a good manager and holding them to blanket edicts” (11 comments)

- Perception: “Hold leaders and managers accountable for placing employees in appropriate work situations and giving them the support they need to succeed.”
### Recommendations

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<td><strong>Overview:</strong></td>
<td>Gain employee buy-in by linking the urgency of having a diverse and inclusive workforce to the success of the FWS mission. Presenting diversity in terms of core values and fairness for everyone can be an effective approach in countering cultural resistance and bias. Specifically challenge supervisors to indicate how decisions improve with the diversity of ideas, benefitting the organization now and into the future.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Corresponding Barrier:</strong></td>
<td>Resistance found in Organizational Culture.</td>
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<td><strong>Activities:</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.1 Launch a communication strategy that creates a sense of urgency and addresses workforce perceptions that create barriers.</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Each office should make D&amp;I a priority.</td>
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<td>• Use strategic communication to build the case for diversity -- lower cultural resistance, debunk myths, and correct misinformed notions that prevail in the organization.</td>
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<td>• Clearly and directly address flawed perceptions about diverse groups and about D&amp;I initiatives that may result in barriers.</td>
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<td>• Integrate D&amp;I with a business model for FWS relevancy and long-term success.</td>
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<td>• Gain buy-in, support, and ownership of D&amp;I by answering the question, “What’s in it for me and FWS?”</td>
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<td>• Use language in D&amp;I efforts that highlight mission-accomplishment and the benefit to all employees (e.g., fairness, engagement, efficiency, excellence, workforce management).</td>
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<td>• Consider using storytelling to emphasize that an inclusive work culture benefits everyone.</td>
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**1.2 Establish a consistent D&I approach.**

• Develop a single national D&I strategy with specific initiatives. Currently, there are multiple diversity initiatives and actions which compete for resources and lack clear, measured or optimal results.

**1.3 Institute metrics for training.**

• D&I training is provided, but there are no metrics to verify that what is learned is being reinforced and applied on the job and in recruitment, hiring, and retention efforts. Specific training efforts need to measure specific behavior changes in workforce processes.

**1.4 Strengthen Accountability.**

• Accountability needs to be addressed in both organizational and personal plans and evaluations.

• Recommend that FWS Directorate EPAPS outline specific expectations, actions, and progress towards achieving recommendations in this report to remove Diversity Barriers. Develop Regional and Programmatic dashboards.
to demonstrate progress outlined in this report.

- The individual Supervisory Performance Appraisal Plan (EPAP) includes “Strengthening diversity & inclusion” in Critical Element 1. However, at the Fully Successful level, the EPAP does not require demonstration of specific positive achievements in meeting D&I obligations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Alignment:</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FWS Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Plan (DIIP)</strong> Objective 1: Building Diversity as a Core Value.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP)</strong> Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 - Agency Objective (Inclusion): Involve employees as participants and responsible agents of diversity, mutual respect, and inclusion.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Booz Allen Hamilton Campaign 1</strong>: Establish an “Everyone Culture” in which an inclusive workforce inspires excellence in fish and wildlife management and enables FWS to deliver the best science. <strong>Campaign 2</strong>: Launch internal communication to facilitate adoption of new FWS core values and vision and to support implementation of FWS transformational initiatives.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Executive Diversity Committee (EDC)</strong> Priority: Supervisory Employee Performance Appraisal Plan (EPAP).</td>
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**Recommendation:**

2. Develop a consistent and fair recruitment approach nationwide, with direct input from Field and Regional practitioners / supervisors.

**Overview:**

Develop a consistent and nationwide recruitment approach utilizing standardized national recruiting messages and establish partnerships with external organizations that can engage in building a recruitment pipeline. In the hiring stage, standardize the interview and selection processes.

Implement a national strategy with active participation at the local level, where recruitment, hiring, and retention are reconciled. Recognize the importance of strengthening the inter-relationship between these components at the local level and between prospective employee and supervisor/management.

**Corresponding Barrier:**

Inconsistent Recruitment and Selection Processes.

**Activities:**

2.1 Begin retention efforts during the hiring process.

- Establish a welcoming and supportive organizational culture in the planning stages of the hiring process.
- Ensure that applicants understand the hiring processes, especially the selection process.
- Provide applicants/selectees with information on mentoring, career...
development and advancement opportunities.

- Openly acknowledge to applicants the challenges in feeling comfortable in their new position, and provide assurance that they will be supported.
- Give applicants the opportunity to communicate with their prospective supervisor or someone from the office they will be working in before they accept the offer.
- Be upfront and clear with applicants and selectees about the relocation process, relocation support, and options. Consider providing prospective selectees with help on upfront costs of a move. Identify and communicate available incentives that would assist in the transition.
- Communicate potential career paths and clear expectations to assist the employee in developing and demonstrating knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to achieve career goals.

2.2 Link improved workforce planning to recruitment decisions.

- Challenge the way hiring managers determine current and future workforce needs in order to achieve organizational and national relevance. Specifically, evaluate gaps in human dimensions capability and the need for associated planning and implementation to address those gaps. The intent is to ensure a better understanding of what is relevant to the American public, and provide for planning and communication needed to address any shortfalls.
- Ensure job series and position descriptions only address the essential tasks and skills for the position. Review and identify true minimum requirements and qualifications. If a biological background is not required to accomplish the essential tasks of a position, the job series should be reclassified from the 400 series to a more generic series.
- Job series/position descriptions should not be selected/written with specific candidates in mind.

2.3 Roll out standardized national recruitment messages.

2.4 Establish partnerships and maintain relationships with external organizations to build a targeted recruitment pipeline.

- Increase targeted recruitment activities with the Department of Defense and veteran advocacy organizations.
- Increase targeted recruitment at diverse colleges and universities, professional organizations, and national conferences that all focus on diversity and inclusion.
- Fill some vacancies at same-day hiring events with diverse organizations. (e.g., Minority Serving Institutions, national conferences that target diverse candidates, and professional organizations that target diverse candidates.)

2.5 Standardize interview and selection processes with direct Field and
Regional input and participation.

Interviewing and selection guidelines should outline best practices, including:

- Communicate to candidates who will be at the interview and the approximate duration.
- Develop behavioral interview questions that focus on specific core competencies.
- Address the essential tasks and skills for the position and comply with human rights legislation and Merit Systems Principles.
- Train interviewers including a discussion on hidden bias.
- Be conscious of the “like hiring like” effect.
- Prepare interviewers – provide resumes, share all materials (e.g., announcement, Position Description, selection criteria).
- Use the same set of questions for each applicant.
- Assign questions each interviewer will ask.
- Use same interview format and setting for every candidate, ensure interview appointments are the same length, and the same staff are present at each interview.
- Conduct mock interviews and discuss differences in rating same applicants.
- Include as interviewers other staff members, managers in other departments, “customers”, someone holding a similar position; and ensure interviewers are demographically diverse.
- Make sure interviewers are prepared to answer basic questions.
- Develop uniform note-taking formats related to standardized questions and distribute to panel members in advance of interviews; may take the form of a rating matrix. One for each applicant.
- Introduce interviewers and their roles. Have interviewers take appropriate, job-related notes during the interview (do not consider or notate factors unrelated to the job criteria).
- Record notes and scores on interview sheets as appropriate including the date, time, place, and length of the interview.
- Allow applicants time to ask questions and listen.
- Create a process that includes both people evaluating applications alone and people discussing their judgments together.
- Do not overemphasize technical competencies at the expense of “softer” skills.
- Develop a reference questionnaire with standard questions. Current or past supervisors can specify the quality and quantity of work, reliability, potential problem areas and job behaviors.
- Resolve differences of opinion regarding a candidate’s qualifications through discussion, rather than resorting to artificial means (e.g., averaging committee’s numerical ratings).
- Maintain all documentation related to selection including a brief record of the process and the interview notes.
- Do not fill entry-level positions with overqualified candidates.
2.6 Improve Selection Panels

- Establish panels that are diverse.
- Provide training to selection panel members on the diversity and inclusion initiatives as well as on implicit bias.
- Interview a greater number of candidates on the certificates to increase the numbers of diverse candidates that are considered.
- Provide selection panel members training on interview questions that eliminate bias ("Halo Effect", “Like Me” questions, open-ended questions).

**Strategic Alignment:**

- **FWS Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Plan (DIIP) Objective 3. Conduct Targeted Recruitment.**
- **Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP) Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 - Strategic Activity (Diversity) Establish a centralized hiring procedure with a national approach to targeted recruitment for over sixty entry-level 400 series jobs.**
- **Booz Allen Hamilton Campaign 4: Use values-based messages and expanded recruiting sources to attract targeted candidates for Law Enforcement, Park Ranger/Visitor Services and Biology positions.**
- **EEOC Management Directive 715 (MD-715) Activities: Develop centralized hiring panels using structured interviews and assign an executive coach to each panel; Determine the overall workforce planning needs of the FWS and develop a systematic approach to execute the initiatives that are designed to increase minority participation; Establish partnerships with the 20 universities that were selected for FWS’ national strategy.**
- **Executive Diversity Committee (EDC) Priorities: After Action Review (AAR)/National Hiring Program, Work Force Planning (Hiring and Market Timing), Recruitment – Partnerships.**

**Recommendation:**

3. **Strengthen accountability by using professional development techniques that are available but have not yet achieved their full potential for return on investment.**

**Overview:** FWS encourages the use of employee development tools such as training, mentoring, and Individual Development Plans (IDPs). However, the use of these tools is uneven across the organization. Increasing accountability in human capital development has the potential for increasing engagement and the perception of fairness across all employee segments.
**Corresponding Barrier:** Perception of Unfairness in Career Growth Opportunities

**Activities:**

3.1 **Hold supervisors accountable for the professional development of their employees.**
- Develop performance measures for each supervisor to align with this objective.
- (See Recommendation Activity 1.4)

3.2 **Strengthen individual career ownership by shoring up coaching and mentoring, which can help employees recognize that they have an important role to play in identifying and achieving their career goals.**
- Provide mentoring, supervision and coaching to educate employees and guide them in successfully achieving objectives.
- Mentoring programs should support relationship building, and have established expectations, a feedback process, adequate documentation and measurable outcomes.

3.3 **Initiate campaign to ensure employees have current Individual Development Plans (IDPs) that support their career development.**

3.4 **Develop a clear and smooth onboarding process.**
- Allow adequate time for offer acceptance and reporting to duty.
- Ensure communications and support from HR and the new office are clear and the incoming employee feels welcomed and informed. Offer encouragement and support during the transition.

3.5 **Identify key staff to offer support for the new hire. Courtesy and politeness are not the same as openness and welcoming.**

3.6 **Provide career paths.**
- Special hiring programs and authorities (e.g., Schedule A) bring people in, but do not offer a reliable career path. Likewise, administrative and professional personnel have expressed concern over lack of a career path. These categories are the most diverse in the FWS, and career paths are critical to their retention.
- (See Recommendation Activity 2.2, 2nd bullet)

**Strategic Alignment:**

- *FWS Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Plan (DIIP) Objective 4: Maintain a Highly Skilled and Diverse Workforce through Talent Management*
- *Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP) Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 - Agency Objective (Inclusion): Agency Objective (Sustainability) Measure the effectiveness of current mentoring programs and identify opportunities for improvement.*
- *Booz Allen Hamilton Campaign 3: Institute a Professionals Inspiring Excellence program to improve human capital performance and accountability at FWS through a shared responsibility for D&I.*
Appendices

Appendix A – Barrier Analysis Team (BAT) Overview

BARRIER ANALYSIS TEAM (BAT)
The BAT’s goal is to engage in sustained and systematic inquiry into triggers identified by FWS. These triggers relate to workplace policies, procedures, and practices that are barriers to diversity and inclusion in the workplace. The BAT participated in the decision-tree making process that is part of Barrier Analysis and gathered information from Regions and Programs to analyze each trigger. The BAT formulated recommendations to address potential barriers.

TEAM STRUCTURE
The BAT brought together 24 employees across different regions, programs, occupations, and leadership levels. The BAT was chaired by the Assistant Regional Director, Ecological Services, Region 4 and Vice-Chaired by the Special Assistant to the Regional Director, Region 2. Four sub-teams were created to mirror the four steps of the barrier analysis process. The sub-teams analyzed information through the lens of their own experiences as FWS employees keeping a national approach to the analysis.

Figure 1. BAT Structure.

SCOPE
The BAT looked at the Employee Life Cycle and prioritized the stages of Recruitment, Hiring, Retention, and Separations for analysis during Fiscal Year 2017.

Figure 2. BAT Strategic Scope for FY 17.

METHODOLOGY
Decision trees are a methodology based on the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s (EEOC) Management Directive 715 (MD-715) instructions to ask questions until no more questions can be asked. The MD-715 requires the agency to review its policies, procedures, practices, or conditions at
various stages of the employment cycle that might limit or tend to limit employment opportunities for members of a particular group to determine what, if any, of these policies, practices, or conditions are resulting in the noted demographic anomalies.

**Barrier Analysis – A Four Step Process**

The BAT used the following framework to structure subteams and analysis:

**Step One:** **Identify** Possible Barriers Using a Variety of Sources:
- Take, review and refine compulsory data.
- Take additional snapshots where needed.
- Review other information sources.
- Analyze ALL employment processes.

**Step Two:** **Investigate** to Pinpoint Actual Barriers and Causes:
- With workforce data, determine appropriate benchmarks, compare rates, and note net changes.
- Heed triggers from other sources.
- Pinpoint barriers and determine causes.

**Step Three:** **Barrier Elimination**
- Devise a plan to address barrier causes.
- Determine whether barriers are job-related and consistent with business necessity. If not, plan to eliminate those barriers.
- Consider modifications even where barriers are job-related and consistent with business necessity.
- Report plan and progress to the EEOC annually.

**Step Four:** **Assess** Success of Plan
- Track Progress; should be measurable.
- Hold agency officials accountable.
- Periodic re-assessments should be done to determine if plan needs adjusting.

**DATA ANALYZED**

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<td>Questionnaire of Hiring Panel members</td>
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<td>Recommendation 22: Building a Diverse and Inclusive Workforce in our National Wildlife Refuge System</td>
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Appendix B - Exit Survey Snapshots

The Organization's Management is Receptive to Hearing New Ideas and Suggestions for Improvement

How Would You Rate Your Work Environment
The Mission Drives Policies and Procedures

How Would You Rate Your Initial Training or Orientation to the Service
Appendix C – National Hiring Initiative Survey Snapshots

How did you learn about this career opportunity?

- 55% Job posting on USAJOBS
- 21% Referral
- 15% Word of mouth
- 9% Other

Did you receive an offer for your top location preference?

- 84% Yes
- 16% No

Please rate the timeliness of our job offer process

- 59% Exceeded my expectations
- 25% About what I expected
- 16% Worse than I expected

Did you acquire your Government ID and DOI computer account access within 5 business days of your start date?

- 44% Yes, I acquired both
- 40% Acquired only ID (PIV) card
- 13% Acquired only DOI computer access
- 4% Did not acquire either ID (PIV) card and DOI account access within 5 business days
Appendix D – Key Excerpts from Recommendation 22 as indicated by BAT team

This recommendation out of much thought, process and preparation and was meant to serve as the basis for FWS diversity initiatives going forward. Specific to the task of the Barrier Analysis Team, Recommendation 22 provides detailed sections on recruitment and hiring including detailed recommendations on how to ensure fairness is integrated into recruitment and hiring. This team recommends that we use the work already completed in Rec 22 to move forward.

Recommendation 22: Building a Diverse and Inclusive Workforce in our National Wildlife Refuge System

Background on Recommendation 22: A cross-program team, led by the National Wildlife Refuge System Program staff, developed recommendations to implement recruitment, succession, and retention strategies that will help to ensure the National Wildlife Refuge System is inclusive and reflects the diversity of America. The Leadership Development Council (LDC) of the National Wildlife Refuge System formulated recommendations for making our workforce match the diversity in the civilian labor workforce. The LDC endorsed “deliberately developing a diverse, inclusive, competent, and caring workforce that will commit to conservation, embrace the responsibility of public service, and succeed in realizing this in effective, efficient, and innovative ways.”

Key findings:
• Fairness comes into play during both recruitment and hiring phases.
  o Within our current recruiting and hiring process there are a number of opportunities to reduce or eliminate bias and inconsistencies.
  o These biases and inconsistencies can be implicit, explicit, individual-based, or systematic. Regardless of our level of education or desire to be colorblind, neurological research shows that implicit bias informs our cognition and behavior.
  o Although the following recommendations will not fully address the potential for bias, their implementation will minimize opportunity for such bias and inconsistency.
• To ensure fairness in recruiting:
  o Consult with Diversity and Civil Rights when conducting outreach and recruitment.
  o Certificate lists of eligible candidates should reflect recruitment efforts.
    ▪ Project leaders and selecting officials have been tasked with reaching out to a broader audience for recruiting and hiring. However, one challenge our agency continues to face is not having an applicant pool that is robust and inclusive of people from groups that are underrepresented in the Service. Are we reaching out to the right audiences? Are we leaving out specific recruitment techniques?
    ▪ We propose that the Service provide additional support and guidance to selecting officials who undertake targeted recruitment activities in order to achieve a broader certificate list of eligible applicants.
  o Positive education requirements within job series.
    ▪ Creating a diverse workforce to meet the Service’s diverse needs compels us to use factors other than – or in addition to – educational requirements when recruiting or conducting outreach.
• To ensure fairness in hiring:
  o Reduce unconscious bias in our hiring practices.
- Our current hiring practices could let in inherent or unconscious biases that result in a “like hiring like” effect. Our hiring practices often focus on the technical competencies that we perceive will allow someone to “hit the ground running”.
- Our hiring process often overemphasizes technical competencies as opposed to “softer” skills.
- Existing interview questions and techniques may not result in the most comprehensive assessment of candidates.
- We often come across incredible candidates through our volunteer corps, internships, and youth positions. This is a great way to establish a relationship with an individual and see how he or she might perform as an employee.
- However, the process of selecting volunteers for employment often limits our pool of desired candidates because individuals with lower economic means or status are often limited in their ability to volunteer.
  - Address the need for consistency between regions in application of HR processes.
    - Employees have shared instances where they are considered qualified for a position in one region, but unqualified in another; supervisors who have filled similarly graded positions in one office are told they can't do that at another; and position descriptions used by one region are considered deficient in another.
    - Because few of us really understand the qualification and classification processes, they may appear arbitrary or without clear explanation. This leads to frustration and often distrust.
  - Standard position descriptions (SPDs) for core occupational series.
    - Position descriptions (PDs) may contain elements that present unreasonable or artificial competencies not critical to selection of the best candidate (e.g., GS-7 position needing to have watercraft-handling experience on day one when that is a minimal part of the duties or can be learned).
    - In contrast, at least 80 percent of the duties described in an SPD are performed at least 80 percent of the time.
    - It is recommended to contact your local HR office for guidance on developing SPDs.
  - Emphasize soft skills.
    - Recruitment and selection practices often overemphasize hard skills over soft skills when evaluating and selecting candidates for positions.
    - An increased emphasis on soft skills in addition to hard skills may result in a more inclusive pool of candidates who would be successful in our positions.
Appendix E – Team Members

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leopoldo &quot;Leo&quot; Miranda</td>
<td>Assistant Regional Director - Ecological Services</td>
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<td>(Chair)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Oms</td>
<td>Deputy Ecological Services Assistant Regional Director</td>
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<td>(Vice-Chair)</td>
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<td>Cecilia Todd</td>
<td>Budget Officer</td>
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<td>(Subteam Lead)</td>
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<td>Dana Perez</td>
<td>Zone EEO Manager</td>
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<td>(Subteam Lead)</td>
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<td>Brian Lawler</td>
<td>Workforce Recruiter</td>
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<td>William Johnson</td>
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<td>Bryan Lee</td>
<td>Workforce Recruiter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aaron Valenta</td>
<td>Chief, Division of Restoration and Recovery</td>
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<td>Debra Bills</td>
<td>Field Supervisor</td>
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<td>Jenny F. de la Hoz</td>
<td>Urban Community Specialist/Urban Park Ranger</td>
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<td>Amanda Wise</td>
<td>Diversity Outreach and Employment Specialist</td>
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<td>Keenan Adams</td>
<td>Chief, Division of Biological Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Terry Whittaker</td>
<td>Workforce Recruiter</td>
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<td>Tonyua Robinson</td>
<td>Chief, Division of Diversity and Civil Rights</td>
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<td>Pam Garrettson</td>
<td>Wildlife Biologist</td>
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<td>Denise Thompson</td>
<td>Program Analyst</td>
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<td>Rhonda Turner</td>
<td>Administrative Officer</td>
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<td>Marlene Gun Shows</td>
<td>Program Analyst</td>
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<td>Carol Greeley</td>
<td>Supervisory Budget Analyst</td>
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<td>Georgia Basso</td>
<td>Wildlife biologist</td>
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<td>Celecia Lee</td>
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<td>Doug Hobbs</td>
<td>Chief, Division of Partners and Intergovernmental Affairs</td>
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<td>Holly Robinson</td>
<td>Chief, Central Business Operations</td>
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