DIRECTOR's ORDER NO. 226

Subject: Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility for Transformational and Lasting Change in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Sec. 1 What is the purpose of this Order? Our success in meeting the mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) rests on a foundation of shared values and underlying beliefs that we can be our true selves at work, that dignity and respect are paramount, and that our individual and collective accomplishments have intrinsic worth. The breadth and diversity of our backgrounds, identities, and experiences are our greatest organizational strength. When we are free to thrive as our authentic and best selves without barriers to success in our workplaces, we will achieve the Service’s mission with excellence, innovation, and relevancy far into the future.

We are on a journey together to transform the culture of the Service, fueled by a groundswell of direction and momentum to advance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) across the Federal community. Through the lens of DEIA, which encompasses environmental justice and racial equity, we are positioned to make real and meaningful progress in creating an enduring culture where everyone can succeed.

This Order charts our course and is my call to action to every employee to engage both individually and collectively to establish welcoming workplaces and embed best practices that remove inequities for ourselves and each other, partners, and stakeholders. It is my commitment to lead us toward our destination where everyone feels valued, included, and inspired to perform at their best.

I ask you to join me on the journey to advance DEIA. It is mission-critical to everything we do.

a. To advance DEIA in the Service, we must:
   (1) Make a sustained commitment to affect transformational and lasting change as an employer and organization by identifying and eliminating traditionally ingrained policies and practices that exclude people from our workforce, services, partnership opportunities, and resources;
   (2) Identify, acknowledge, and dismantle existing systems that contribute to inequities and replace them with policies and practices that benefit the entire organization, create equal opportunity, ensure environmental justice, and enable us to fully achieve our mission with our partners and constituents; and
   (3) Establish and sustain a welcoming workplace culture that inspires, values, and empowers every employee to learn, grow, and succeed.

b. This Order:
   (1) Establishes ownership, stewardship, and empowerment for employees at all levels of our organization to fulfill the goals, objectives, and actions under the Service’s Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Plan (DIP); and
   (2) Charges the Service’s chartered DEIA Committee to govern the implementation of the DIP and relevant Executive and Secretarial Orders that advance DEIA to ensure our success in transforming our organizational culture.

Sec. 2 What are the authorities for this Order? Following are the authorities for this Order:


b. Executive Orders (EOs):
   (1) EO 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government.
   (2) EO 13988, Preventing and Combatting Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation.
   (3) EO 14020, Establishment of the White House Gender Policy Council.
   (4) EO 14035, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce.
   (5) EO 14041, White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity Through Historically Black Colleges and Universities.
   (6) EO 14045, White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Hispanics.
   (7) EO 14049, White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Native Americans and Strengthening Tribal Colleges and Universities.
   (8) EO 14050, White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Black Americans.


d. Statutory authorities include, but are not limited to:
   (2) Rehabilitation Act, as amended (29 U.S.C. 791 et seq.).
   (3) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.).
   (4) Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.).
Sec. 3 What terms do you need to know to understand this Order? For the purposes of this Order, we base the following definitions on those in Secretarial Order 3406.

a. **Accessibility:** The design, construction, development, and maintenance of facilities, information and communication technology, programs, and services that ensure that all people, including people with disabilities and those who do not speak English as a second language and with limited English proficiency, can fully and independently use them. Accessibility includes the provision of accommodations and modifications to ensure equal access to employment and participation in activities for people with disabilities, the reduction or elimination of physical and attitudinal barriers to equitable opportunities, a commitment to ensuring that people with disabilities can independently access every outward-facing and internal activity or electronic space, and the pursuit of best practices such as universal design.

b. **Diversity:** The practice of including the many communities, races, ethnicities, backgrounds, gender identities, sexual orientations, abilities, cultures, and beliefs of the American people, including underserved communities.

c. **Environmental justice:** The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

d. **Equity:** The consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment.

e. **Inclusion:** The recognition, appreciation, and use of the talents and skills of employees of all backgrounds. An inclusive workplace promotes respect, belonging, and uniqueness and ensures that all employees feel valued and engaged.

Sec. 4 What is the strategic plan for DEIA in the Service, and what are its strategic objectives? The Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-2024 DIIP is the Service’s strategy to guide us in making progress to establish a diverse and inclusive work environment where employees are inspired to excel. It sets forth three strategic objectives that are a call to action that we believe will drive and advance DEIA at all levels within the organization. Meaningful change takes time, and the DIIP will continue to evolve to reflect strategic direction in the future.

a. **Engagement:** We will engage employees with a consistent and meaningful message that prioritizes inclusion, and we will adopt promising practices and take actions that lead to a welcoming workplace for all.

b. **Barrier analysis and removal:** We will continuously analyze barriers to DEIA, engage in barrier identification and elimination, and monitor the metrics that show how the Service is making progress to advance DEIA across the organization and in the services it delivers.

c. **Recruitment and hiring:** We will connect with the values of a diverse public and enhance support for conservation by recruiting and hiring in a way that focuses on excellence and is supported by diverse applicant pools. We will focus on targeted recruitment to reach groups of prospective applicants who are underrepresented in the Service or who historically have been excluded from conservation jobs.

d. **Service Directorate (Directorate):** Leaders at the highest level of our organization must act with integrity, exemplify treating others with dignity and respect, and fully embrace the commitment to organizational transformation to advance DEIA and ensure a culture of belonging. Directorate members are expected to lead DEIA efforts in their respective Service Regions and programs, and they must ensure that employees in their Regions and programs are empowered to participate in and lead DEIA activities.

e. **DEIA Committee:** The DEIA Committee serves as the Service’s designated body to provide leadership, influence, and oversight in the implementation of DEIA initiatives, Executive and Secretarial Orders related to DEIA, and DIIP work plans. The DEIA Committee is charged with unifying and administering actions across the Service, including developing an annual work plan with measurable actions that builds on past progress to meet the goals and objectives in the DIIP. Each annual work plan must include an investment in management best practices (i.e., mentoring, training, development) and establish measurable actions and accountability to accomplish the DIIP’s objectives.

f. **Office of Diversity and Inclusive Workforce Management (ODIWM):** ODIWM partners with the Service Directorate, the DEIA Committee, managers and supervisors, and all employees to provide strategic guidance, develop policy, and formulate recommendations to promote and maintain a diverse and inclusive workforce.

Sec. 6 How does the Service implement the DIIP? Cultural change takes time and the DIIP is intended to guide and continue the momentum of forward-moving progress. Annual DIIP work plans prioritize actions, establish objectives, and set measurable achievements to advance DEIA on a continuum. Employees throughout the organization are empowered and expected to participate in the implementation of the DIIP and should see opportunities to contribute to DIIP actions such as:

a. Finalizing and adopting a set of enduring core organizational values to guide our behaviors and decision making across the Service;

b. Encouraging, empowering, and providing support for employee-led initiatives, including employee resource groups, communities of
practice, and other groups that make our workplaces welcoming and safe for everyone;

c. Increasing awareness and application of special hiring authorities coupled with targeted recruitment strategies to reach, recruit, and
hire people from diverse backgrounds who can help us find effective solutions and connect with a rapidly changing nation;

d. Identifying barriers to inclusion and belonging and dismantling systems and practices that have historically resulted in inequity;

e. Establishing a framework to create a culture of mentorship to enhance our ability to attract, hire, and retain talent; create an inclusive
and diverse workforce; and support employees’ growth and development;

f. Building employee knowledge through focused training and experiential opportunities on diversity, equal employment opportunity, and
promising practices for DEIA;

g. Leveraging the capacity of Regional Employee Engagement and Leadership Development coordinators to integrate and enhance
opportunities and foster DEIA across the Service’s Regions and programs;

h. Developing and implementing a framework to guide strategic communication on DEIA at all levels of the Service to ensure consistent
messaging to encourage employee engagement;

i. Sharing workforce data to ensure transparent communication with employees and external audiences and stakeholders;

j. Identifying new policies and revisions to existing policies or practices that are needed, and making recommendations on how the
Service can prioritize DEIA in policymaking and budget processes and decisions in accordance with relevant Executive Orders;

k. Reviewing and determining through the DEIA Committee on which recommendations from the RE+JEDIA Pillar Team the Service will
act;

l. Ensuring decision-making processes include input from employees at all levels of the Service and are informed by stakeholder
engagement and consultation processes, as appropriate; and

m. Setting priorities and discussing the implications of strategies and initiatives, including funding, human capital, information
management and technology, and other issues to ensure the cohesive and consistent implementation of the DIIP, the Department of the
Interior’s Equity and DEIA strategic plans, and related Executive Orders.

Sec. 7 How does the Service meet its conservation mission through DEIA? Establishing business practices and a work environment
that fully support DEIA will enable us to fulfill our conservation mission. We must ensure that visitors, prospective employees, communities,
conservation partners, and every member of the public we serve experience consistent, fair, just, and impartial treatment and equal
opportunities for participation, access, funding, and employment. Employees must support DEIA as an essential part of fulfilling the mission by:

a. Continuing to build the Urban Wildlife Conservation Program to forge strong, meaningful relationships with diverse communities and,
through the program’s Implementation Plan and Standards of Excellence, defining how we work with new and ethnically diverse
audiences to ensure conservation experiences that are intentional, inclusive, collaborative, and community focused.

b. Investing in building effective relationships with underserved communities to ensure that everyone has equal access and feels
welcome on public lands and facilities we manage and in spaces and places where we are working with others to conserve fish, wildlife,
and their habitats. These communities include Black, Hispanic, Native American and Indigenous peoples, Asian American and Pacific
Islanders, and other people of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning (LGBTQ+)
people; people with disabilities; people who live in rural areas; people otherwise adversely affected by persistent inequity; and all
members of the public regardless of income level, ethnicity, religion, gender, ability, or other characteristics.

c. Ensuring access for everyone to public lands, waters, and facilities we manage and to programming we offer by working to:

(1) Expand and improve access for people with disabilities by retrofitting facilities, trails, bridges, ramps, and other structures;

(2) Ensure accessibility standards are met for programs that receive Federal funding through the Service.

(3) Assess and deliver programs and materials to better meet the needs and experiences of individuals and groups with varied
sensory abilities or who may be neurodiverse, or both;

(4) Assess and deliver programs and materials to better meet the needs and experiences of non-English speaking individuals and
groups; and

(5) Identify and address gaps and barriers in transportation.

d. Pursuing new opportunities to engage in partnerships with students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges
and Universities, and Hispanic Serving and other Minority Serving Institutions to promote conservation careers.

e. Partnering across the public-private sector through the Diversity Joint Venture to connect with women, minorities, and others to
increase engagement and participation in conservation careers.

f. Changing the way we do business to ensure that the Service, through its procurement and financial assistance processes, reaches a
broad and diverse group of collaborators and partners. This includes using tools and resources that mitigate barriers for those that are
foreign language speakers, lack formal education or technological competencies, or are economically disadvantaged.

Sec. 8 Does this Order create any legal right or benefit? No. This Order and any resulting report or recommendations are not intended
to, and do not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party against the United States, its
Departments, Agencies, instrumentalities or entities, its officers or employees, or any other person. To the extent there is any inconsistency
between the provisions of this Order and any Federal laws or regulations, the laws or regulations will control.

Sec. 9 When is this Order effective? This Order is effective immediately. It remains in effect until we incorporate it into the Fish and
Wildlife Service Manual or until we amend, extend, supersede, or revoke it, whichever comes first. If we do not amend, extend, supersede, or
revoke it, the provisions of this Order will terminate 18 months from its signature date.