

Director's Message to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Employees - 1/30/2008

Scientific Code of Professional Conduct

When I came onboard as Director, I emphasized that science is the underlying foundation for all of our work, priorities and decisions, and provided to everyone my thoughts on how the Service uses science to achieve its mission. To help define what we want to be known for, the Service Directorate identified a set of conservation principles, which were sent out to everyone in the Service for comment. Seven Conservation Principles were finalized in 2007; three of these—Science, Service, and Professionalism—form the foundation of our work and shape our relationships with each other, our partners and the public we serve.

I am pleased to sign the Scientific Code of Professional Conduct for the Service, which was developed by the Service's Science Committee. This code constitutes a series of guidelines applicable to scientists, managers and executives within our organization—including the Director. It applies to scientific conduct, but also extends to the translation and application of science used to inform resource management decisions. The Service code is modeled upon other codes from professional organizations like The Wildlife Society and American Fisheries Society and these organizations have praised our effort as an important ingredient of organizational integrity.

As you read this document, first and foremost, I want you to know that I have the highest confidence in your scientific integrity and abilities. I am reminded of the dedication and professionalism you display every day, and this code should be viewed as reflection and reinforcement of your day-to-day actions. While it addresses misconduct, the policy focuses to a greater degree on continued scientific excellence, provides clear expectations for employees, and creates an environment where such expectations will be met. The code complements the Service's commitment to professional development and workforce planning, and reminds managers that supporting employees in publishing scientific work, reviewing the work of others, and being members and leaders of scientific societies is a central ingredient in organizational strength and integrity, and so, in achieving our mission.

The code establishes uniform policies for all Service employees to follow as they conduct and manage scientific activities, with the utmost regard for maintaining and enhancing the Service's reputation for professionalism, integrity and objectivity. It is a blueprint designed to help us:

- improve the overall operation and management of the Service;
- establish a level of quality assurance;
- advocate the use of rigorous scientific standards;
- enhance credibility amongst our partners and the public; and,
- strive to achieve the highest level of reliability and objectivity when conducting and reporting on scientific activities.

The code provides clear guidance that will support employees and managers in their pursuit of sound science and help the Service maintain open and robust ties with the greater scientific community. I believe it reflects our traditional commitment to individual and organizational integrity, but it also reinforces the high standard for public service to which we all aspire.

Please take the time to read the code and keep it in mind as you work to conserve and protect our nation's fish and wildlife resources for future generations. Thank you for your continued dedication to the mission of the Fish and Wildlife Service.