

Department of the Interior
Environmental Achievement Award Winners
Fiscal Year 2021

The Department's Environmental Achievement Awards recognize employees and partners who have made exceptional contributions through projects in eight categories aimed at fostering the protection and preservation of cultural and environmental resources. Among the winners of these annual Honor Awards are 13 individuals and teams from the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the National Park Service.

Award recipients and their descriptions are below:

CULTURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION

Guidelines on Flood Adaptation for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings

Cultural Resources Flood Adaptation Team

U.S. National Park Service

In June 2021, the National Park Service issued the Guidelines on Flood Adaptation for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (Guidelines) to assist Federal agencies, State, Tribal, and local governments, local historic preservation commissions, historic property owners, and the general public on how to adapt historic buildings to be more resilient to flooding risk in a manner that preserves their historic character. Flooding risk has long been a major challenge for the protection of cultural resources. Due to climate change, flooding events are occurring at increased frequency and magnitude, with some historic properties that have never flooded before now exposed to this risk and those that flooded infrequently experiencing more instances of flooding and/or of water reaching higher levels than ever before. The Guidelines, several years in development, are the first-of-their-kind and are intended to help guide projects to increase the capacity of historic buildings to withstand and recover from a flooding event while meeting The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and preserving the property's historic features, spaces, materials, site, and setting.

The Old Slater Mill National Historic Landmark District Revitalization Initiative - the journey of how an American cultural treasure will be preserved, and the passion, perseverance, and partnerships it took to get there.

The Blackstone River Valley Old Slater Mill Revitalization Team

U.S. National Park Service

The Team successfully incorporated the Old Slater Mill National Historic Landmark District (the District) into the Park boundary of the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park. The Slater Mill, established in 1793, is America's first successful water-powered cotton spinning mill and is thought to be America's earliest factory. The acquisition integrated precedent-setting

legal, political, financial, cultural, and natural resource strategies to advance national and local objectives. For future acquisitions, particularly those in urban park settings where historical environmental contamination may exist, this initiative established a framework able to be replicated across the country. Today, the NPS's presence at the park is a positive influence in this underserved area - creating opportunities for conservation, historic preservation, economic redevelopment, tourism, education, and recreation.

Statewide Programmatic Agreements for Cultural Compliance

Dr. Zachary Nelson

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Dr. Zachary Nelson protects cultural resources and the Bureau's project timelines by developing statewide programmatic agreements that streamline reporting requirements, demonstrate trust relationships with State partners, protect cultural resources from harm, and provide path-setting frameworks for mitigation. This progress has been demonstrated since 2017 through FY21 and is expected to continue. Dr. Nelson has been instrumental in negotiating agreements for Utah and Wyoming and is negotiating a similar agreement for Colorado. For example, the Utah agreement annually results in about \$96,000 of savings and moves projects forward quicker without compromising cultural resource protections.

Rails East to Ogden: Utah's Transcontinental Railroad Story, BLM-Utah Cultural Resource Series No. 29

BLM Salt Lake City Field Office Team

U.S. Bureau of Land Management

A team of archaeologists volunteered their time, talents, and resources to complete a comprehensive study of the Transcontinental Railroad on BLM-administered land in Utah. This study was printed by the BLM-Utah as part of its Cultural Resource Series. This publication represents the most comprehensive study of any historic resource on BLM administered lands in Utah. It is the culmination of 3 years of on-the-ground and in-the library research. It contains over 300+ pages, 115 figures, and 23 tables. The estimated value volunteer time for this research project is in the 100's of thousands of dollars. The BLM-Utah is extremely grateful for the volunteers who supported BLM's Cultural-Heritage Program by completing this monumental task.

Historic Watson Cabin Stabilization Completed on Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument

Historic Watson Cabin Stabilization Team

U.S. Bureau of Land Management

A dedicated crew of BLM Paria River District staff and SUWA (Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance) volunteers came together over 3 days to put the finishing touches on and complete a decade-long historic structure stabilization project. Situated in spectacular Hackberry Canyon within Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (GSENM), a once dilapidated log cabin now stands strong, a testament to the pioneering spirit upon which it was built. As a federal land management agency, GSENM is responsible for the protection and documentation of cultural

resources, which includes archaeological sites and historic structures. On GSENM, prehistoric sites vastly outnumber our historic sites, and therefore tend to get the lion's share of our time and effort. However, GSENM also contains very interesting historic sites, including an impressive series of cowboy and livestock trails, civilian conservation corps-era corrals, abandoned town sites, and mines. The GSENM does not, however, have very many intact early pioneer structures. Watson Cabin is unique in that it is the oldest standing structure on the Monument - many other historic-period structures have fallen to the elements or were scavenged for materials as were abandoned or fell into disrepair. As a National Monument, GSENM is charged with protecting, preserving, and studying what are considered National treasures for future generations. As a result of this stabilization project, hiking or horseback-riding visitors to Watson Cabin can continue to learn about and appreciate the historic-period pioneer history of the area, long into the future.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

National Bison Range Restoration, National Bison Range, Montana

Amy Coffman

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The transition of the National Bison Range (Bison Range) from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) is an historic event. The leadership and coordination of Amy Coffman, Refuge Manager of the Bison Range, have been vital to the transfer. On December 27, 2020, the President signed into law the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, restoring the Bison Range to the CSKT. With the passing of the legislation, Ms. Coffman's stellar leadership, passion, and skills have been instrumental in leading the FWS Bison Range staff through this change, while continuing to build and maintain vital tribal relationships and ensuring a positive outcome for the wildlife and habitat at the Bison Range.

ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION AND RESTORATION

Restoration of Yoknapatawpha Darter in Smith Creek, Tupelo, Mississippi

Private John Allen National Fish Hatchery Team

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Historic records indicate the presence of Yoknapatawpha darter, formerly known as Yazoo darter, in Smith Creek back in the 1980's, but the species has not been seen there since that time. The Private John Allen National Fish Hatchery, Tupelo, MS, undertook species recovery with a goal of establishing a self-sustaining and self-reproducing population of Yazoo darter in Smith Creek. The Team began with efforts to increase passage in Smith Creek and establish habitat that would promote survival. Successful propagation of the species on station produced progeny that were introduced to the improved habitat, and in FY21 the first two natural spawning events occurred in Smith Creek since the 1980's! This success is due to the habitat issues being

addressed, followed by hatchery offspring being reintroduced, which all led to the restoration of the Yoknapatawpha darter in Smith Creek.

San Joaquin River Restoration

San Joaquin River Restoration Program

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Sacramento, California

The San Joaquin River Restoration Program (Program) includes five Implementing Agencies: Bureau of Reclamation; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; NOAA Fisheries; California Department of Water Resources; and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Together, these agencies have been charged since 2010 with restoring the San Joaquin River Restoration Area: 152 miles of the upper river from Friant Dam down to the confluence with the Merced River. Since that time, the Program has worked tirelessly to repopulate the river with Threatened spring-run Chinook salmon which have been extirpated from the river since the 1950s following construction of Friant Dam. All of that effort has paid off, and for the last five successive years, through both very wet and extremely dry years, spring-run Chinook have returned to the river to spawn. The effort has been a collective one, with the agencies involved working together to achieve what was once considered an insurmountable goal.

Creating Resilient Landscapes in the Medford District through Collaboration

Rogue Forest Partners, Southwest Oregon

U.S. Bureau of Land Management

Rogue Forest Partners is a group of four non-profits and six agencies strategically implementing ecological thinning and prescribed fire across public and private lands in the Rogue River basin to restore forest species composition, reduce tree density and surface and ladder fuels. This work is creating a resilient landscape that can survive climate change, drought, insect and disease infestations and wildfire in an effort to sustain forest biodiversity and ecosystem services. Disrupted fire regimes, historical clear-cut timber harvest, land conversion, and recent severe wildfires have reduced old forest habitats, needed by northern spotted owls and other species. In two years of implementation, Rogue Forest Partners restored 4,350 legacy trees, treated 1,426 acres of mixed conifer/hardwood forest and woodlands to restore open habitat, protected 6,110 acres of dry forest habitat with under burning and treated 765 acres to restore complex habitat. This work has economic benefits of 8.354 full-time equivalent positions hired as restoration workforce and generated 5.95 million board feet of byproduct timber produced. The Rogue Forest Partners are: Bureau of Land Management Medford District, Rogue River Siskiyou National Forest, Oregon Department of Forestry, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon State University, Klamath Bird Observatory, The Nature Conservancy, Lomakatsi Restoration Project, Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative.

CLIMATE CHAMPION

Food Waste Prevention Program, Grand Canyon National Park

Delaware North at Grand Canyon Partnership

U.S. National Park Service

As an Authorized Concessioner operating at Grand Canyon National Park, Delaware North is being awarded for their efforts in creating a Food Waste Prevention Program at Grand Canyon National Park. Their actions to protect the climate by preventing food waste from entering landfills, have resulted in the successful diversion of over 1,800 pounds of food waste through partnerships with the Grand Canyon community food pantry, assisting local families and employees. Implementing these diversion and efficient prevention methods were critical to eliminating more than 977 pounds of CO₂e from affecting our planet.

Completion of the Technical Review of, and Decision for, the Vineyard Wind 1 Offshore Wind Project: The First Large-Scale Commercial Offshore Wind Project in U.S. Waters

Vineyard Wind 1 Project Review Team

U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) led an interdisciplinary team in the review of the 800-megawatt Vineyard Wind 1 energy project that will contribute to the Administration's goal of deploying 30 gigawatts of offshore wind energy by 2030. In July 2021, BOEM approved the Vineyard Wind 1 project plan to construct 62 wind turbines approximately 35 miles from mainland Massachusetts and 15 miles south of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. The Vineyard Wind 1 project is the first of many that will contribute toward meeting the goal of this Administration. The Vineyard Wind 1 project, which started onshore construction in November of 2021, will involve the construction, operation, maintenance, and eventual decommissioning of an up to 800 MW wind energy facility on the U.S. OCS. The project will be located approximately 12 nautical miles offshore Martha's Vineyard and 12 nautical miles offshore Nantucket in the northern portion of Vineyard Wind's lease area. It will create 3,600 jobs hours and provide enough power for 400,000 homes and businesses. Vineyard Wind 1 will be the first commercial-scale offshore wind project on the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). The Vineyard Wind 1 project exemplifies the ability of agencies and offices to work through complex environmental and technical review processes to get a first of its kind project in place in the emerging offshore renewable energy industry on the federal OCS. Given the unprecedented nature of the project, BOEM produced the Vineyard Wind 1 Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS), which expanded the cumulative activities scenario of the project far beyond what was previously considered to include the impacts of all named wind projects and state demand that could be met with existing leases on the Atlantic OCS. The SEIS also considered previously unavailable fishing data, a new transit lane alternative, and changes to the project.

RALPH REGULA CONSERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP CHAMPION

Table Rocks Land Acquisition

Jeanne Klein

U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Medford, Oregon.

The two iconic, horseshoe-shaped mesas known as the Table Rocks, have been a culturally, religiously, historically, and ecologically significant feature for thousands of years in the Rogue Valley. For the past thirty years, the BLM has managed portions of the Table Rocks cooperatively with other partners. The mixed land ownership of this feature, however, limits the extent to which the area can be preserved, protected, and accessed by the public. Over the past decade, Jeanne Klein has worked tirelessly to advocate, build support, and make progress toward more continuous ownership that would better provide protection and public access into the future. Despite numerous challenges, these efforts have paid off, resulting in over 1,000 acres of land acquired by purchase or donation, with additional donations pending, plus awards from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to facilitate the purchase of approximately 2,800 additional acres in FY21 from willing landowners. These acquisitions have had broad based support from local and state government, NGO's, tribes, and others, ensuring this landscape is protected for generations while also connecting the area to adjacent local- and state-owned properties to provide richer recreational opportunities for the public.

South Carolina National Heritage Corridor - Partnering to Build Community Resiliency

South Carolina National Heritage Corridor Partners

U.S. National Park Service

South Carolina 7 Expedition, or SC7, a partnership between the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor (a National Heritage Area and part of National Park System) and multiple organizations, promotes an appreciation of the outdoors, stewardship of resources, and active protection of the planet. The SC7's mission is to raise awareness of floodwater prevention and resiliency across South Carolina as well as engage leaders and citizens in the protection and enjoyment of South Carolina's natural resources. The signature event of SC7 is an annual 30-day expedition across South Carolina, featuring seven (7) natural wonders, recreation trails, and historic locations. Along the SC7 route, the expedition team holds events to share with local communities and globally with social media. Since 2019 two expeditions were coordinated and a third is planned in 2022. In FY21 the SC7 program documentary "Higher Ground" was viewed by 1000 people in three showings, and 600 people in showings at Coastal Carolina University, Universidad de Chile, and University of South Carolina's School of Hospitality and Tourism.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Rogue River Ranch Museum Renovation, Julie Arwood, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Medford District Grants Pass Field Office. *Cultural Resources Protection*

Huron National Wildlife Refuge Cultural Resources Management Plan, Huron National Wildlife Refuge Team, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Michigan. *Cultural Resources Protection*

Energy Savings Performance Contracting at the Main Interior Building, Energy Savings Performance Team, Office of Facilities and Administrative Services, Washington DC. *Environmental Conservation Stewardship*