



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Washington, DC 20240

Report of DOI Conference Activities and Spending – Fiscal Year 2015

The Department of the Interior (Department or DOI) 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 Appropriations Act, 2014, P.L. 113-76*. 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 to 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 Appropriations Act, 2014*.

For Fiscal Year (FY) 2015, DOI complied with the Administration's limitation on agency-sponsored conferences with net expenses in excess of \$500,000. In compliance with OMB Memorandum M-12-12, *Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations*, and based on exceptional circumstances, DOI Secretary Sally Jewell granted one waiver in FY 2015. The waiver allowed DOI scientists to attend the 2014 American Geophysical Union Fall meeting, held December 9-13, 2014.

Reporting of conferences held during FY 2015 that exceeded \$100,000 in net costs.

During FY 2015, DOI conducted nine conferences in which expenses exceeded \$100,000. Below, please find a listing of these conferences to include costs, date, location of conferences, and other pertinent data.

Bureau or Office: Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE)

Conference Title: National Inspectors' Meeting

Conference Expenses: \$ 155,815

Location: New Orleans, LA

Date: January 27 - 29, 2015

Explanation: The purpose of the meeting was to assemble all BSEE inspectors for a three-day policy and training workshop. The meeting was an important and timely workshop for the inspection program and new inspectors and supervisory inspector positions.

Total Number of Participants: 158 DOI staff

<p>Bureau or Office: National Park Service (NPS) Conference Title: BioDiscovery Event Conference Expenses: \$ 167,615 Locations: Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, HI Date: May 14 - 16, 2015 Explanation: This event was a core component of the NPS plan, <i>A Call to Action</i>, with the goal of conducting BioDiscovery activities in 100 parks, including five urban parks, which lead to the discovery of species new to science and 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. This event also hosted young professionals who gain knowledge and experience from the work and benefit from participation and interaction with scientists and others. Total Number of Participants: 2,600 (155 DOI staff)</p>
<p>Bureau or Office: Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Conference Title: Department of the Interior Sage Grouse and Rangeland Wildfire Conference Conference Expenses: \$ 196,651 Locations: Boise, ID Date: November 5 - 7, 2014 Explanation: Scientists and other subject matter experts presented the latest research on the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem and management of sage-grouse habitat while dealing with rangeland wildfire. Total Number of Participants: 350 (199 DOI staff)</p>
<p>Bureau or Office: Office of Civil Rights Conference Title: Civil Rights Technical Training Conference Conference Expenses: \$ 213,100 Locations: National Conservation Training Center (NCTC), Shepherdstown, WV Date: January 6 - 8, 2015 Explanation: The symposium enhanced the Department's civil rights practitioners' capabilities and improved knowledge, work processes, and job junctions. This training promoted the development of skills required to address the needs of the affirmative employment and public civil rights programs. Total Number of Participants: 225 (150 DOI staff)</p>

<p>Bureau or Office: U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Conference Title: National Water-Quality Workshop Conference Expenses: \$ 255,463 Location: NCTC, Shepherdstown, WV Date: October 6 - 10, 2015 Explanation: This workshop enhanced national consistency and reliability of USGS water-quality data by ensuring Water Science Center personnel maintain skillsets commensurate with the latest advances in technology and methods. The workshop was critical to ensure Water Science Center water-quality science activities met bureau and Water Mission Area goals and complied with bureau and mission area policies and procedures. Total Number of Participants: 200 DOI staff</p>
<p>Bureau or Office: Bureau of Indian Affairs Conference Title: Bureau of Indian Affairs Line Officers Meeting Conference Expenses: \$ 395,471 Location: Minneapolis (Prior Lake), MN Date: August 31 - September 3, 2015 Explanation: This conference provided valuable information and updates on Indian Affairs policies, procedures, and processes affecting the organization and tribes. Total Number of Participants: 182 DOI staff</p>
<p>Bureau or Office: USGS, BLM, NPS, Bureau of Reclamation Conference Title: Third Joint Federal Interagency Sedimentation and Hydrology Conference (SEDHYD 2015) Conference Expenses: \$ 271,599 Location: Reno, NV Date: April 19 - 23, 2015 Explanation: This conference discussed accomplishments and progress in research; technical developments in the physical, chemical, and biological aspects of sedimentation; and the development and use of models addressing surface water quality and quantity issues. Total Number of Participants: 615 (164 DOI staff)</p>
<p>Bureau or Office: Office of Special Trustee for American Indians Conference Title: Records Management Mini-Conferences Conference Expenses: \$ 285,870 Location: Various (12 meetings over seven months) Date: March through August, 2015 Explanation: These mini-conferences educated and trained Federal and tribal personnel on their records management responsibilities and provided guidance on records management policies and procedures. Total Number of Participants: 1,197 Federal and tribal personnel</p>

Bureau or Office: Office of the Solicitor (SOL) and Indian Affairs

Conference Title: Federal Indian Law Conference Training

Conference Expenses: \$ 133,000

Location: Washington, DC

Date: August 4 - 6, 2015

Explanation: This conference provided SOL attorneys training on Indian law and continuing legal education credits as well as preserved institutional knowledge and facilitated cooperation and collaboration across legal divisions.

Total Number of Participants: 163 DOI staff

The DOI will continue to closely monitor conference activity, assuming implementation of strong policies and internal controls related to our conference and travel activity. If you have any questions, please contact Patrick McHugh or Douglas Glenn at (202) 208-4701.