



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Washington, DC 20240

Report of DOI Conference Activities and Spending – Fiscal Year 2016

The Department of the Interior (Department or DOI) has implemented effective internal controls over conference spending and activities.

Departmental policies provide a framework of internal controls designed to mitigate risks associated with conference planning, hosting and spending, and 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 2016, DOI complied with the Administration's limitation on agency-sponsored conferences with net expenses in excess of \$500,000, and based on exceptional circumstances, the Secretary granted one waiver in Fiscal Year 2016. The waiver allowed DOI scientists to attend the 2015 American Geophysical Union Fall Meeting, held from December 14-18, 2015.

Reporting of conferences held during Fiscal Year 2016 that exceeded \$100,000 in net costs.

During Fiscal Year 2016, the DOI conducted 12 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: Houma, LA

Date: March 1-3, 2016

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 with new inspectors and supervisory inspector positions.

Total Number of Participants: 161 DOI staff

<p>Bureau or Office: National Park Service (NPS) Conference Title: BioDiscovery Event Conference Expenses: \$ 337,489 Locations: Washington, DC Date: May 18-21, 2016 Explanation: This event was a core component of the NPS <i>A Call to Action</i> plan with a goal of conducting BioDiscovery activities in 100 parks, including five urban parks, which lead to the discovery of species new to science and to the 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. The event also hosts young professionals who gain knowledge and experience from the work and benefit from participation and interaction with scientists and others. Total Number of Participants: 20,000 (404 DOI staff)</p>
<p>Bureau or Office: Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement Conference Title: International Regulators Offshore Safety Conference and Annual Meeting of the International Regulators Forum Conference Expenses: \$ 128,341 Locations: Washington, DC Date: October 1-10, 2015 Explanation: Event participants shared best practices and emerging practices to raise standards of safety and expectations of performance in the offshore oil and gas industry. Total Number of Participants: 300 (20 DOI staff)</p>
<p>Bureau or Office: DOI Interior Business Center Conference Title: Interior Business Center Acquisition Services Directorate Acquisition Workforce Conference Conference Expenses: \$ 142,220 Locations: Arlington, VA Date: October 20-22, 2015 Explanation: The purpose of the workshop was to provide standardized and integrated staff training and development; to facilitate integration and alignment of business practices. Total Number of Participants: 163 DOI staff</p>
<p>Bureau or Office: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Conference Title: Fire Management Workshop Conference Expenses: \$ 214,334 Location: Fredericksburg, VA Date: March 21-25, 2016 Explanation: The purpose of the workshop was to identify significant future programmatic challenges, determine achievable solutions and build framework for addressing issues. Total Number of Participants: 94 DOI staff</p>

<p>Bureau or Office: Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Conference Title: National Indian Forestry & Wildland Fire Management Conference Conference Expenses: \$ 372,587 Location: Albuquerque, NM Date: March 22-24, 2016 Explanation: The purpose of the conference was to bring together key program staff from national, regional, and unit levels to communicate and coordinate national program issues and activities. Total Number of Participants: 479 (292 DOI staff)</p>
<p>Bureau or Office: DOI Office of Restoration and Damage Assessment Conference Title: Department of the Interior Restoration Program National Workshop Conference Expenses: \$ 186,861 Location: Phoenix, AZ Date: May 9-13, 2016 Explanation: The purpose of the workshop was to bring together a broad spectrum of practitioners and managers involved in natural resource damage assessment and restoration issues. Total Number of Participants: 250 (150 DOI staff)</p>
<p>Bureau or Office: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Conference Title: White-Nose Syndrome Workshop Conference Expenses: \$ 179,961 Location: Denver, CO Date: June 6-10, 2016 Explanation: The purpose of the workshop was to advance research and management of white-nose syndrome through communication, facilitated discussion, and collaboration. Total Number of Participants: 180 (71 DOI staff)</p>
<p>Bureau or Office: DOI Office of Solicitor and bureaus and offices Conference Title: Deputy Ethics Counselor / Assistant Ethics Counselor Conference Conference Expenses: \$ 115,830 Location: Washington, DC Date: June 7-9, 2016 Explanation: The conference focused on multi-faceted aspects of building an ethics program. Total Number of Participants: 80 DOI staff</p>

<p>Bureau or Office: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)</p> <p>Conference Title: Committee on Ocean Science and Assessment</p> <p>Conference Expenses: \$ 308,535</p> <p>Location: Washington, DC</p> <p>Date: 3 meetings starting July 2016</p> <p>Explanation: These Standing Committee events provided BOEM with scientifically credible and independent information on issues relevant to BOEM's environmental science and assessment programs.</p> <p>Total Number of Participants: 33 (18 DOI staff)</p>
<p>Bureau or Office: Bureau of Indian Affairs</p> <p>Conference Title: Midwest Regional Partners in Action Conference</p> <p>Conference Expenses: \$ 151,192</p> <p>Location: Sault Ste. Marie, MI</p> <p>Date: July 19-21, 2016</p> <p>Explanation: The Partners In Action Conference is a method utilized to empower Tribal Nations on national initiatives such as new energy frontier and climate change adaption. This conference fostered collaboration with the Tribal Nations to meet the ever evolving needs in Indian Country. This event was an all-inclusive conference that replaced multiple program specific conferences typically held throughout the year.</p> <p>Total Number of Participants: 327 (124 DOI staff)</p>
<p>Bureau or Office: Indian Affairs Bureau of Indian Education (BIE)</p> <p>Conference Title: Students: Our Common Focus in the Bureau of Indian Education</p> <p>Conference Expenses: \$ 262,895</p> <p>Location: Riverside, CA</p> <p>Date: July 20-21, 2016</p> <p>Explanation: The purpose of the meeting was to establish a shared understanding and commitment to BIE's common purpose of a dedication to (1) improve academic and life outcomes for students, educators and schools and (2) increase tribal sovereignty in education.</p> <p>Total Number of Participants: 189 DOI staff</p>

DOI will continue to closely monitor conference activity and will strengthen internal controls related to conference and travel activity. If you have any questions, please contact Patrick McHugh or Douglas Glenn at: 202-208-4701.