



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Washington, DC 20240

Report of DOI Conference Activities and Spending – Fiscal Year 2014

The Department of the Interior (Department, DOI) has a process in place to carefully monitor 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.

The Departmental policy provides a framework of management oversight designed to mitigate risks associated with conference planning, hosting and spending, and ensure compliance with Federal travel regulations. The 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) 2014, DOI supported and provided strict oversight for the Administration's limitation on agency-sponsored conferences with net expenses in excess of \$500,000. Based on exceptional circumstances, the Secretary of the Interior granted one waiver allowing DOI scientists to attend the 2013 American Geophysical Union Fall Meeting, December 9 to 13, 2013.

Reporting of conferences held during FY 2014 that exceeded \$100,000 in net costs.

During FY 2014, DOI conducted seven 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

Conference Title: National Inspectors' Meeting

Conference Expenses: \$ 120,416

Location: Lafayette, LA

Date: December 10 to 12, 2013

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 as many aspects of the inspection program had changed since the last meeting in 2012. In the past year, more than 40 new inspectors have been hired and three new supervisory inspector positions have been created.

Total Number of Participants: 175

<p>Bureau or Office: National Park Service Conference Title: BioDiscovery Event Conference Expenses: \$ 145,847 Locations: Golden Gate National Recreation Area, San Francisco Date: March 27 to March 29, 2014 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 led 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 hosted young professionals that gained knowledge and experience from the work and benefit from participation and interaction with scientists and others. Total Number of Participants: 204</p>
<p>Bureau or Office: U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), National Park Service, and Bureau of Reclamation Conference Title: National Monitoring Conference (NMC) Conference Expenses: \$ 346,693 Locations: Cincinnati, OH Date: April 28 to May 2, 2014 Explanation: The NMC provided an interactive forum that improved the Nation's water quality through partnerships that foster increased understanding and stewardship of our water. Total Number of Participants: 895 total, 171 DOI staff</p>
<p>Bureau or Office: Office of Restoration and Damage Assessment Conference Title: National Restoration Workshop Conference Expenses: \$ 187,326 Locations: Phoenix, AZ Date: April 28 to May 2, 2014 Explanation: Office of Restoration and Damage Assessment biennial workshop brought together a wide spectrum of practitioners and managers involved in natural resource damage assessment and restoration issues. Topics covered focused on working with co-trustees, non-governmental organizations, and local communities to identify and develop innovative approaches to accomplish restoration on a landscape scale and in consideration of a long-term view including the impact of climate change. Total Number of Participants: 225 (150 DOI staff)</p>

<p>Bureau or Office: USGS</p> <p>Conference Title: Regional Water Data Workshop 2014</p> <p>Conference Expenses: \$ 395,226</p> <p>Location: Kansas City, MO</p> <p>Date: September 8 to 11, 2014</p> <p>Explanation: The purpose was to ensure USGS hydrologic technicians across the country were consistently able to have the benefit of state-of-the-art information. Each session reached about 300 hydrologic technicians, provided training, a better understanding of new hydrologic data-collection procedures and equipment, and provided updates on evolving USGS technical policies. A primary focus of the conference was preparation for the roll-out of new time series software, the first such roll-out in over 20 years.</p> <p>Total Number of Participants: 380 (360 DOI staff)</p>
<p>Bureau or Office: FWS and USGS</p> <p>Conference Title: 2014 White-nose Syndrome Annual Workshop</p> <p>Conference Expenses: \$ 106,626</p> <p>Location: Saint Louis, MO</p> <p>Date: September 8 to 12, 2014</p> <p>Explanation: The conference advanced White-nose Syndrome research and management through training, facilitated discussion, interaction, and collaboration among Federal, state, and Tribal agencies, and non-governmental partners.</p> <p>Total Number of Participants: 175 (66 DOI staff)</p>
<p>Bureau or Office: DOI Office of the Solicitor</p> <p>Conference Title: Endangered Species Act (ESA) Training Seminar</p> <p>Conference Expenses: \$ 104,649</p> <p>Location: National Conservation Training Center, in Shepherdstown, WV</p> <p>Date: September 22 to 26, 2014</p> <p>Explanation: The two primary purposes for conducting the ESA Training Seminar were to provide an opportunity for in-person collegial discussion and debate among ESA attorneys and technical experts on contemporary (and often controversial) issues arising under Sections 4, 6, 7, and 10 of the ESA; and, an opportunity for in-person training of attorneys and program personnel who are new to their roles in the implementation or the ESA.</p> <p>Total Number of Participants: 112</p>

The DOI will continue to closely monitor conference activity as well as strengthen our policies and internal controls around our conference and travel activity. If you have any questions, please contact Douglas Glenn, Deputy Chief Financial Officer, or Patrick McHugh, Staff Accountant, in the Office of Financial Management at (202) 208-4701.