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*"Rummaging in the government's attic"*

Description of document: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Transition Briefing for the Incoming Biden Administration, 2020

Requested date: 31-January-2021

Release date: 24-January-2022

Posted date: 20-May-2024

Source of document: Freedom of Information Act Request  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
5275 Leesburg Pike, MS: IRTM  
Falls Church, VA 22041  
[Department of Interior FOIA Public Access Link \(PAL\)](#)  
[FOIA.gov](#)

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# United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Washington D.C. 20240



January 24, 2022

Via email

REF: DOI-FWS-2021-001551

This is in response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request dated January 1, 2021 and assigned tracking number DOI-FWS-2021-001551. Please cite this number in any future communications with our office regarding your request.

You requested the following:

*“A digital/electronic copy of the transition briefing document(s) (late 2020) prepared by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) for the incoming Biden Administration.”*

## **Response**

Due to ongoing vacancies in the Headquarters FOIA office, we apologize for this delay in responding to your request. We have enclosed one (1) file consisting of thirty-seven (37) pages. Thirty-four (34) pages are being released in their entirety and three (3) pages are being withheld in part under Exemption 5 and Exemption 6 as described below.

### **Exemption 5**

Exemption 5 allows an agency to withhold “inter-agency or intra-agency memorandums or letters which would not be available by law to a party ... in litigation with the agency.” 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(5). Exemption 5 therefore incorporates the privileges that protect materials from discovery in litigation, including the deliberative process, attorney work-product, attorney-client, and commercial information privileges. We are withholding pages in part under Exemption 5 because they qualify to be withheld because they meet the Exemption 5 threshold of being inter-agency or intra-agency and under the following privileges:

*Attorney-Client Privilege (withholding in part one (1) page the attorney client privilege)*

The attorney-client privilege protects confidential communications between an attorney and his client relating to a legal matter for which the client has sought professional advice and is not limited to the

context of litigation. Moreover, although it fundamentally applies to confidential facts divulged by a client to his/her attorney, this privilege also encompasses any opinions given by an attorney to his/her client based upon, and thus reflecting, those facts, as well as communications between attorneys that reflect confidential client-supplied information.

The information that has been withheld under the attorney-client privilege of Exemption 5 constitutes confidential communications between agency attorneys and agency clients related to legal matters for which the client sought professional legal assistance and services. It also encompasses opinions given by attorneys to their clients based on client-supplied facts. Additionally, the FWS employees who communicated with the attorneys regarding this information were clients of the attorneys at the time the information was generated, and the attorneys were acting in their capacities as lawyers at the time they communicated legal advice. Finally, the Service has held this information confidential and has not waived the attorney-client privilege.

**Exemption 6 – (withholding in part two (2) pages)**

Exemption 6 allows an agency to withhold “personnel and medical files and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.” [5 U.S.C. § 552\(b\)\(6\)](#).

The phrase “similar files” covers any agency records containing information about a particular individual that can be identified as applying to that individual. To determine whether releasing records containing information about a particular individual would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, we are required to balance the privacy interest that would be affected by disclosure against any public interest in the information.

Under the FOIA, the only relevant public interest to consider under the exemption is the extent to which the information sought would shed light on an agency’s performance of its statutory duties or otherwise let citizens know what their government is up to. The burden is on the requester to establish that disclosure would serve the public interest. When the privacy interest at stake and the public interest in disclosure have been determined, the two competing interests must be weighed against one another to determine which is the greater result of disclosure: the harm to personal privacy or the benefit to the public. The purposes for which the request for information is made do not impact this balancing test, as a release of information requested under the FOIA constitutes a release to the general public.

The information that has been withheld under Exemption 6 consists of employee’s personal information, and we have determined that the individuals to whom this information pertains have a substantial privacy interest in withholding it. Additionally, you have not provided information that explains a relevant public interest under the FOIA in the disclosure of this personal information and we have determined that the disclosure of this information would shed little or no light on the performance of the agency’s statutory duties. Because the harm to personal privacy is greater than whatever public interest may be served by disclosure, release of the information would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of the privacy of these individuals, and we are withholding it under Exemption 6.

We reasonably foresee that disclosure would harm an interest protected by one or more of the nine exemptions to the FOIA’s general rule of disclosure.

Cathy Willis, FOIA Officer, is responsible for this partial denial.

Larry Mellinger in the Office of the Solicitor was consulted.

### **Fee Category**

We have classified you as an “other-use” requester. Because the cost of processing your request was less than \$50.00, there is no billable fee for processing this request, as the cost of collection would be greater than the fee collected. See [43 C.F.R. § 2.37\(g\)](#). Therefore, there is no billable fee for the processing of this request.

### **Mediation/Dispute Resolution**

If after contacting us as described below, you need further information or assistance with your request, you may wish to seek dispute resolution services from the Department’s FOIA Public Liaison, Natasha Alcantara by email at [doifoiapublicliaison@sol.doi.gov](mailto:doifoiapublicliaison@sol.doi.gov).

If you need further information or assistance after contacting the Department’s FOIA Public Liaison, you may wish to seek dispute resolution services from the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS). The 2007 FOIA amendments created the OGIS to offer mediation services to resolve disputes between FOIA requesters and Federal agencies as a non-exclusive alternative to litigation. Using OGIS services does not affect your right to pursue litigation. You may contact OGIS in any of the following ways:

Office of Government Information Services  
National Archives and Records Administration  
8601 Adelphi Road - OGIS  
College Park, MD 20740-6001  
E-mail: [ogis@nara.gov](mailto:ogis@nara.gov)  
Web: <https://www.archives.gov/ogis>  
Telephone: 202-741-5770  
Fax: 202-741-5769  
Toll-free: 1-877-684-6448

Please note that using OGIS services does not affect the timing of filing an appeal with the Department’s FOIA & Privacy Act Appeals Officer.

### **Appeal Rights**

You may appeal this final response to the Department’s FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer. If you choose to appeal, the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer must receive your FOIA appeal no later than 90 workdays from the date of this final response. Appeals arriving or delivered after 5 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, will be deemed received on the next workday.

Your appeal must be made in writing. You may submit your appeal and accompanying materials to the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer by mail, courier service, fax, or email. All communications concerning your appeal should be clearly marked with the words: "FREEDOM OF INFORMATION APPEAL." You must include an explanation of why you believe this response is in error. You must

also include with your appeal copies of all correspondence between you and FWS concerning your FOIA request, including your original FOIA request and this response. Failure to include with your appeal all correspondence between you and FWS will result in the Department's rejection of your appeal, unless the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer determines (in the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer's sole discretion) that good cause exists to accept the defective appeal.

Please include your name and daytime telephone number (or the name and telephone number of an appropriate contact), email address and fax number (if available) in case the FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Officer needs additional information or clarification of your appeal.

DOI FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Office Contact Information

Department of the Interior  
Office of the Solicitor  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
MS-6556 MIB  
Washington, DC 20240  
Attn: FOIA/Privacy Act Appeals Office  
Telephone: (202) 208-5339  
Fax: (202) 208-6677  
Email: [FOIA.Appeals@sol.doi.gov](mailto:FOIA.Appeals@sol.doi.gov)

**Conclusion**

For your information, Congress excluded three discrete categories of law enforcement and national security records from the requirements of FOIA. See [5 U.S.C. 552\(c\)](#). This response is limited to those records that are subject to the requirements of FOIA. This is a standard notification that is given to all our requesters and should not be taken as an indication that excluded records do, or do not, exist.

This is our final response and closes your request DOI-FWS-2021-001551. If you have any questions about our response to your request, you may contact me, by email at [barbara\\_beckett@fws.gov](mailto:barbara_beckett@fws.gov), by phone (703) 358-2239, or by mail at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; ATTN: FOIA Office; 5275 Leesburg Pike; MS: IRTM; Falls Church, VA 22041.

Sincerely,

**BARBARA** Digitally signed by  
**BECKETT** BARBARA BECKETT  
Date: 2022.01.24  
10:21:01 -07'00'

Barbara Beckett  
FWS FOIA Coordinator

**From:** [Guertin, Stephen](#)  
**To:** [Abimbola, Oluwarotimi M](#); [DOI Transition 2020](#); [Arroyo, Bryan](#)  
**Cc:** [Triebisch, George F](#); [Bender, Kathryn L](#)  
**Subject:** RE: FWS org chart for transition briefings  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 17, 2020 6:25:33 AM

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Just sent the HQ one Regional one next email. Steve

**From:** Abimbola, Oluwarotimi M <[oluwarotimi\\_abimbola@ios.doi.gov](mailto:oluwarotimi_abimbola@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 17, 2020 8:24 AM  
**To:** Guertin, Stephen <[Stephen\\_Guertin@fws.gov](mailto:Stephen_Guertin@fws.gov)>; DOI Transition 2020 <[DOI\\_Transition2020@ios.doi.gov](mailto:DOI_Transition2020@ios.doi.gov)>; Arroyo, Bryan <[bryan\\_arroyo@fws.gov](mailto:bryan_arroyo@fws.gov)>  
**Cc:** Triebisch, George F <[george\\_triebisch@ios.doi.gov](mailto:george_triebisch@ios.doi.gov)>; Bender, Kathryn L <[Kathryn\\_L\\_Bender@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Kathryn_L_Bender@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: FWS org chart for transition briefings

Thanks Steve. If we can receive the revised org chart today, that would be great.

--

Rotimi Abimbola  
Chief of Staff  
OCIO, U.S. Department of the Interior  
O: 202-208-2912 | M: 202-875-9520  
[www.doi.gov/ocio](http://www.doi.gov/ocio)

**From:** Guertin, Stephen <[Stephen\\_Guertin@fws.gov](mailto:Stephen_Guertin@fws.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 16, 2020 12:54 PM  
**To:** DOI Transition 2020 <[DOI\\_Transition2020@ios.doi.gov](mailto:DOI_Transition2020@ios.doi.gov)>; Arroyo, Bryan <[bryan\\_arroyo@fws.gov](mailto:bryan_arroyo@fws.gov)>  
**Cc:** Abimbola, Oluwarotimi M <[oluwarotimi\\_abimbola@ios.doi.gov](mailto:oluwarotimi_abimbola@ios.doi.gov)>; Triebisch, George F <[george\\_triebisch@ios.doi.gov](mailto:george_triebisch@ios.doi.gov)>; Bender, Kathryn L <[Kathryn\\_L\\_Bender@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Kathryn_L_Bender@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: FWS org chart for transition briefings

Yes, we will generate org charts w/o names of incumbents or phone numbers.

Thanks. Steve G

**From:** DOI Transition 2020 <[DOI\\_Transition2020@ios.doi.gov](mailto:DOI_Transition2020@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 16, 2020 12:48 PM  
**To:** Guertin, Stephen <[Stephen\\_Guertin@fws.gov](mailto:Stephen_Guertin@fws.gov)>; Arroyo, Bryan <[bryan\\_arroyo@fws.gov](mailto:bryan_arroyo@fws.gov)>  
**Cc:** Abimbola, Oluwarotimi M <[oluwarotimi\\_abimbola@ios.doi.gov](mailto:oluwarotimi_abimbola@ios.doi.gov)>; Triebisch, George F <[george\\_triebisch@ios.doi.gov](mailto:george_triebisch@ios.doi.gov)>; Bender, Kathryn L <[Kathryn\\_L\\_Bender@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Kathryn_L_Bender@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: FWS org chart for transition briefings

Thanks. Could you send us org charts without names or phone numbers for any of the

positions?

Lisa

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**From:** Guertin, Stephen <[Stephen\\_Guertin@fws.gov](mailto:Stephen_Guertin@fws.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 16, 2020 12:43 PM  
**To:** DOI Transition 2020 <[DOI\\_Transition2020@ios.doi.gov](mailto:DOI_Transition2020@ios.doi.gov)>; Arroyo, Bryan <[bryan\\_arroyo@fws.gov](mailto:bryan_arroyo@fws.gov)>  
**Cc:** Abimbola, Oluwarotimi M <[oluwarotimi\\_abimbola@ios.doi.gov](mailto:oluwarotimi_abimbola@ios.doi.gov)>; Triebisch, George F <[george\\_triebisch@ios.doi.gov](mailto:george_triebisch@ios.doi.gov)>; Bender, Kathryn L <[Kathryn\\_L\\_Bender@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Kathryn_L_Bender@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: FWS org chart for transition briefings

You bet; here are the most recent versions we updated about two weeks ago. One overall org chart, and one detailed at the regional level.

(Our schedule "c" senior advisor Billy Dove just left this week to start a new position with the Department so we will email an updated version with that position vacant this afternoon).

Please let us know if you need any further information.

Steve G

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**From:** DOI Transition 2020 <[DOI\\_Transition2020@ios.doi.gov](mailto:DOI_Transition2020@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 16, 2020 12:30 PM  
**To:** Guertin, Stephen <[Stephen\\_Guertin@fws.gov](mailto:Stephen_Guertin@fws.gov)>; Arroyo, Bryan <[bryan\\_arroyo@fws.gov](mailto:bryan_arroyo@fws.gov)>  
**Cc:** Abimbola, Oluwarotimi M <[oluwarotimi\\_abimbola@ios.doi.gov](mailto:oluwarotimi_abimbola@ios.doi.gov)>; Triebisch, George F <[george\\_triebisch@ios.doi.gov](mailto:george_triebisch@ios.doi.gov)>; Bender, Kathryn L <[Kathryn\\_L\\_Bender@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Kathryn_L_Bender@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** FWS org chart for transition briefings

Hi,

We need the FWS org chart for the transition briefing materials. Please send one as soon as possible.

Thanks, and sorry for the short notice. Please let me know if you have any questions relating to the org chart.

Lisa D. Doehl  
Office of the Solicitor  
Div'n of General Law, Torts Practice Branch

(907) 201-7399



**From:** [Helfrich, Devin B](#)  
**To:** [Guertin, Stephen](#); [Huggler, Matthew](#)  
**Subject:** RE: PowerPoint for transition  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 24, 2020 11:03:48 AM

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Hi Steve,

Thanks for the update and on the edits / clarifications now.

Devin

**From:** Guertin, Stephen <Stephen\_Guertin@fws.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 24, 2020 12:56 PM  
**To:** Helfrich, Devin B <devin\_helfrich@fws.gov>; Huggler, Matthew <Matthew\_Huggler@fws.gov>  
**Subject:** PowerPoint for transition

Hi Devin and Matt

The ascertainment of the election was signed last night by GSA, and this gave the transition team the legal authority to engage.

Our DOI team has started to meet with the DOI agency review team already today. We can expect our initial briefing with them probably mid to second half of next week.

Bryan and I have reviewed the PowerPoint and request the following quick edits:

- Updated cover photo
- Slide 5 the 1.5 billion isn't that the excise tax? If so, then it is not permanent appropriations right? It get confusing when we later talk about WSFR and the excise tax.
- "Making the Service Fit For the Future" slide at the end change title to "Ongoing operational issues"
- Slide 16 please add Bryan Arroyo as Deputy Director as well.

Thanks.

Steve and Bryan

**From:** [de la Vega, Scott A](#)  
**To:** [Foster, Maureen D](#); [LaCounte, Darryl](#); [Pula, Nikolao I](#); [Macdonald, Cara Lee](#); [Rae, Kerry L](#); [Nedd, Michael D](#); [Cruikshank, Walter](#); [Palumbo, David M](#); [Mabry, Scott](#); [Gidner, Jerold L](#); [Guertin, Stephen](#); [Greenblatt, Mark L](#); [Benge, Shawn T](#); [Owens, Glenda H](#); [Lodge, Cynthia L](#); [Myers, Richard G](#); [Giaccardo, Genevieve I](#); [Bowers, Clint J](#); [Lawyer, Mark G](#); [Lindow, Emily R](#); [Cordova-Harrison, Elizabeth](#); [Arroyo, Bryan](#); [Michael Hoenig](#); [McDowall, Lena E](#); [Vaida, William E](#); [Bruner, Christina M](#); [Salotti, Christopher](#); [Edmonds, Tanisha M](#); [Eisenman, Theresa M](#); [Cardinale, Richard](#); [Gottry, Heather C](#); [Smith, Marc A](#); [Limon, Raymond A](#); [Flanagan, Denise A](#)  
**Cc:** [Murphy, Timothy E](#); [Irish, Tony C](#); [Doehl, Lisa D](#); [Bender, Kathryn L](#); [Abimbola, Oluwarotimi M](#); [Triebsch, George E](#)  
**Subject:** Acting Officers in Presidential Transition and Biden Agency Review Team Members  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 24, 2020 5:28:18 PM  
**Attachments:** [Department of the Interior Succession Org Charts as of 09162020 \(1\).pdf](#)

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## Acting Officers -

Attached, as discussed at our meeting this morning, please find the organizational charts of Acting Officers Identified for Vacant Non-Career Positions. Please contact me or Tim Murphy in General Law if you have any questions or concerns about the Federal Vacancies Reform Act, the memos designating successors for Presidentially Appointed, Senate Confirmed Positions, or other issues related to succession during the Presidential Transition.

## **Biden/Harris DOI Agency Review Team Members (as of 11/24/20):**

Kevin Washburn (Lead); Bob Anderson (Deputy); Amanda Leiter; Bret Birdsong; Chris Goranson; Elizabeth Klein; Janie Hipp; Kate Kelly; Maggie Thomas; Molly McUsic; Shannon Estenoz; Tanya Trujillo; Clara Pratte; Ali Zaidi.

Please note that these are the only individuals that have been confirmed by GSA to be on the DOI Agency Review Team (ART) at this point and therefore the ONLY individuals we are authorized to speak with regarding the transition. If anyone else attempts to contact you claiming to be part of the Biden ART, please do not communicate with them and inform me immediately.

As discussed earlier, the Core Transition Team (CTT) will be in touch with you over the next few days to schedule the initial meeting between your hallway and the Biden ART. Please refrain from communicating with ART members until the initial meeting. We are attempting to set most of these meetings for next week. After the initial meeting, you may freely communicate with the relevant ART member for your hallway. I remind you that ART members are

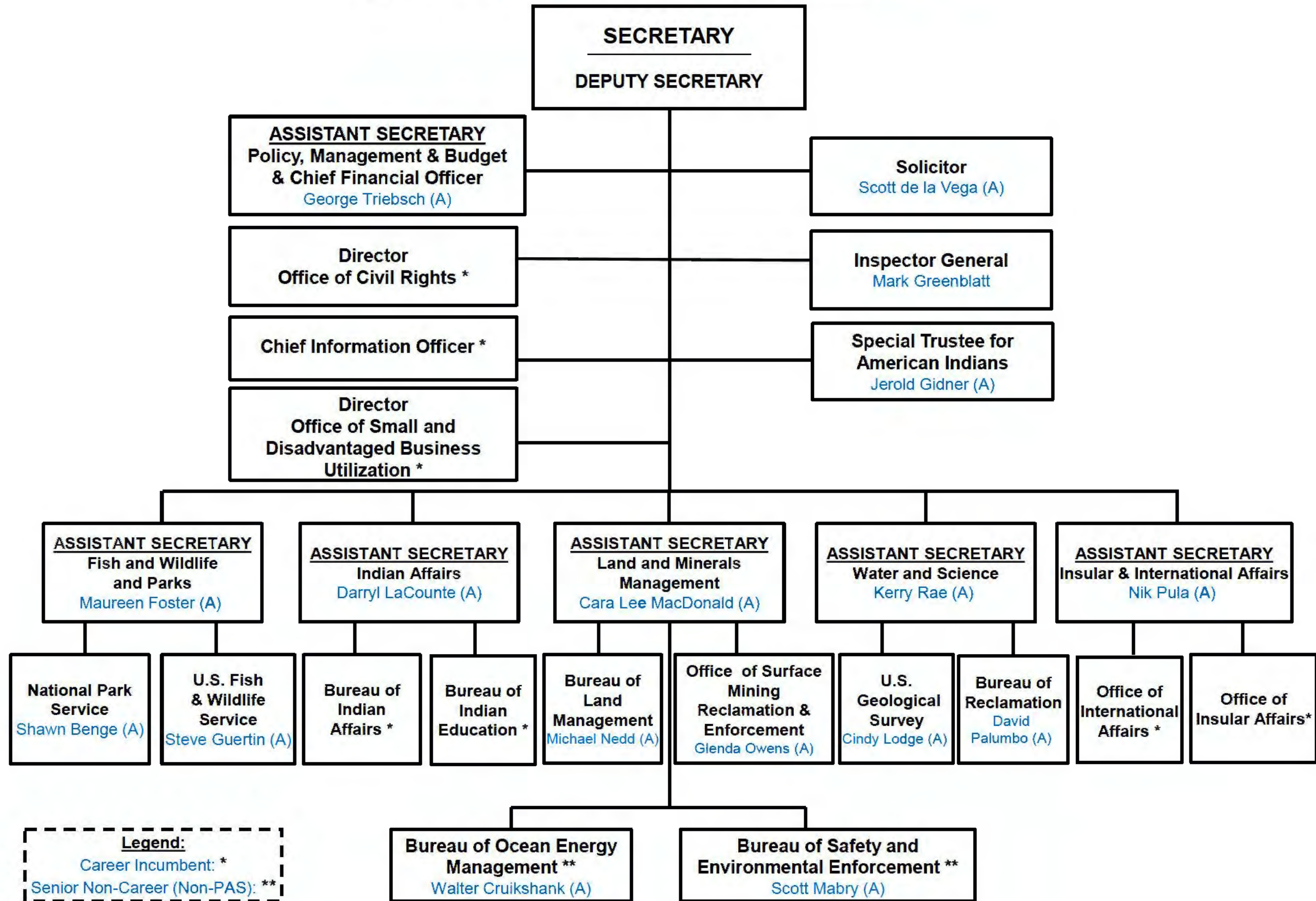
not federal employees, and you may not share or discuss non-public or legally privileged information with them at this point. If you believe that certain information should be shared with them to effectuate a smooth and successful transition and are unsure as to whether the information is non-public, privileged, or in any way classified, please contact me or a member of the CTT for guidance.

Your hard work and diligence in ensuring a successful Presidential transition is not only constitutionally necessary, it is very much appreciated. On behalf of the DOI Core Transition Team, I wish you and your families a safe and happy Thanksgiving!

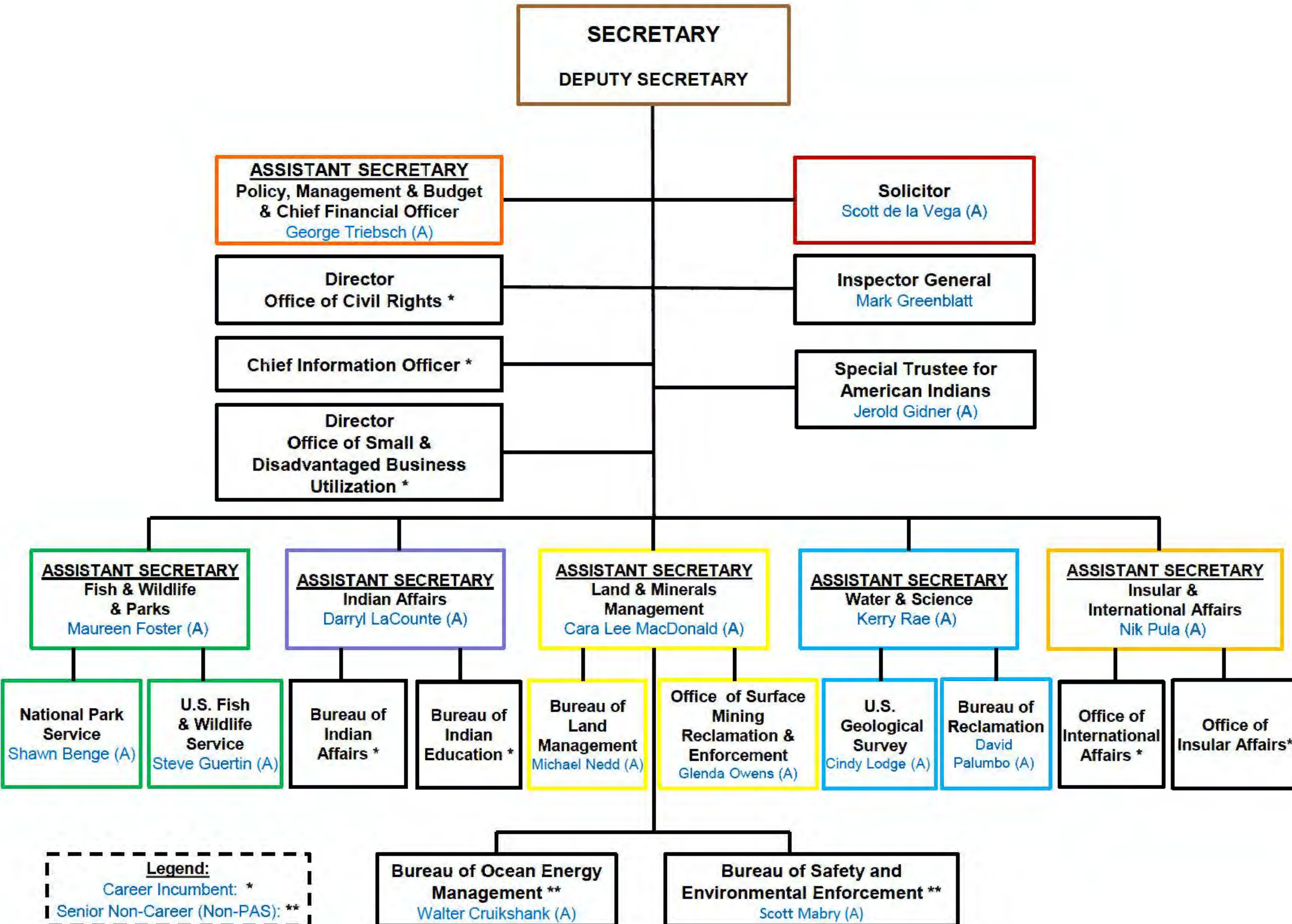
Scott

Scott A. de la Vega  
Associate Solicitor for General Law/DOI Transition Director  
Office of the Solicitor  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
(O) (202) 208-3038  
(C) (202) 740-0359  
scott.delavega@sol.doi.gov

# U.S. Department of the Interior



# U.S. Department of the Interior



**Legend:**  
 Career Incumbent: \*  
 Senior Non-Career (Non-PAS): \*\*

**Non-Career Senior Executive Service**

**Secretary's Immediate Office**  
 Chief of Staff  
 Deputy Chief of Staff  
 Counselor to the Secretary (3)  
 Senior Counselor to the Secretary (3)  
 Senior Advisor to the Secretary (5)  
 White House Liaison  
 Communications Director  
 Director, Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs  
 Director, Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs  
 Director, Office of Scheduling and Advance and Operations

**Office of the Deputy Secretary**  
 Associate Deputy Secretary (2)  
 Assistant Deputy Secretary

**Assistant Secretary – Policy, Management & Budget**  
 Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary  
 Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy

**Solicitor**  
 Principal Deputy Solicitor  
 Deputy Solicitor for Energy and Mineral Resources  
 Deputy Solicitor for General Law  
 Deputy Solicitor for Indian Affairs  
 Deputy Solicitor for Land Resources  
 Deputy Solicitor for Parks and Wildlife  
 Deputy Solicitor for Water Resources  
 Counselor to the Solicitor

**Assistant Secretary – Fish & Wildlife & Parks**  
 Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary  
 Deputy Assistant Secretary (3)

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**  
 Principal Deputy Director

**National Park Service**  
 Deputy Director - Congressional & External Relations

**Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs**  
 Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary  
 Deputy Assistant Secretary Policy & Economic Development

**Assistant Secretary - Land & Minerals Management**  
 Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary  
 Deputy Assistant Secretary (2)

**Bureau of Land Management**  
 Deputy Director, Programs and Policy  
 Senior Advisor

**Office of Surface Mining Reclamation & Enforcement**  
 Principal Deputy Director

**Assistant Secretary - Water & Science**  
 Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary  
 Deputy Assistant Secretary (2)

**Bureau of Reclamation**  
 Deputy Commissioner

**U.S. Geological Survey**  
 Senior Advisor to the Director

**Assistant Secretary - Insular & International Affairs**  
 Deputy Assistant Secretary

**From:** [Bartelt, Karla](#)  
**To:** [Guertin, Stephen](#)  
**Subject:** Transition Opportunities  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 25, 2020 4:58:22 AM

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Hello Steve,

Happy Thanksgiving! I wanted to take a moment and express my sincere gratitude for your leadership and guidance. Our regularly scheduled monthly briefings began 4-years ago during the previous administration change. The detail to the Director's office challenged me to exceed my own expectations, and that wouldn't have been possible without your involvement and direction.

With that being said, Janine Velasco contacted me last Friday and mentioned that you would be leading the formal transition process. I would like to respectfully request your consideration when you are formulating this team or discuss the possibility of another detail. I want to do something impactful, that effects change.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this further.

Respectfully,  
Karla

---

Karla Bartelt  
National Conference Coordinator, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
**[J|A|O - CONFERENCE & EVENT MANAGEMENT](#)**  
[karla\\_bartelt@fws.gov](mailto:karla_bartelt@fws.gov) | [fws\\_conference\\_mgmt@fws.gov](mailto:fws_conference_mgmt@fws.gov) | 612-718-6817

*To deliver innovative administrative services that advance the mission of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.*

**From:** [de la Vega, Scott A](#)  
**To:** [Triebsch, George E](#); [Abimbola, Oluwarotimi M](#); [Foster, Maureen D](#); [LaCounte, Darryl](#); [Macdonald, Cara Lee](#); [Rae, Kerry L](#); [Benge, Shawn T](#); [Guertin, Stephen](#); [Nedd, Michael D](#); [Owens, Glenda H](#); [Lodge, Cynthia L](#); [Palumbo, David M](#); [Cruickshank, Walter](#); [Mabry, Scott](#); [McDowall, Lena E](#); [Lawyer, Mark G](#); [Cruickshank, Walter](#); [Lindow, Emily R](#); [Cordova-Harrison, Elizabeth](#); [Arroyo, Bryan](#); [Myers, Richard G](#); [Giaccardo, Genevieve I](#); [Bowers, Clint J](#); [Gidner, Jerold L](#); [Vaida, William E](#); [Smith, Marc A](#)  
**Subject:** Briefings w/Biden-Harris Agency Review Team  
**Date:** Friday, November 27, 2020 3:16:59 PM

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The Biden-Harris Agency Review Team has tight deadlines, so we need to adjust the approach to briefing them since we have fewer weeks than initially planned. I understand this briefing tempo is quicker than you may desire but your cooperation is very much appreciated.

- **Introductory Briefings and One-on-One Briefings.** There will be two types of briefings, Introductory Briefings where each Bureau/Office under an AS will be in a single one-hour meeting together. (b)(5) AC(b)(5) AC(b)(5) AC(b)(5) AC(b)(5) AC  
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- **Introductory Briefings will last one (1) hour.** Each Bureau/Office should plan on conducting a brief 10-to-20-minute presentation about the top critical issues and significant organizational/ operational changes in recent years. (b)(5) AC  
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(b)(5) AC ***Remember: No political appointees should be in any transition meetings.*** If any political have any questions about this, please have them contact me directly or they can speak with Chief of Staff Todd Willens.
- **Introductory Briefings will be on Tuesday, December 1st.**
  - OCIO - Biden Team Lead is Chris Goranson. (8:00 AM)
  - ASIA - (BIA, BIE, and BTFA) - Biden team lead is Janie Hipp. (9:00 AM)
  - ASWS - (USGS and BOR) - Biden team lead is Tanya Trujillo. (10:00 AM)
  - ASFWP - (NPS and FWS) - Biden team lead is Shannon Estenoz. (11:00 AM)
  - SOL - Biden Team lead is Bob Anderson. (12:00 PM)
  - ASLM - (BLM, OSMRE, BOEM, and BSEE) - Biden team leads are Amanda Leiter, Bret Birdsong, and Liz Klein. (2:00 PM)
  - ASPMB - Biden team is Kevin Washburn (Bob Anderson, Maggie Thomas, Kate Kelly, and Liz Klein may attend if their schedules permit). (4:00 PM)
- **Transition Team Leadership Participation in Introductory Briefings.** Kevin Washburn, Bob Anderson, Maggie Thomas, or I will be optional attendees at these briefings and may join them as schedules permit, however, please do not delay the start of any

meetings to wait for any of us.

- **One-on-One Briefings will be conducted on Wednesday December 2nd thru Friday, December 4th.**
  - Upon completion of the Introductory Briefings on Tuesday, the Biden Review team member(s) will let you or a member of your team know that they would like one-on-one briefings to dive deeper into specific matters. ***These meetings should be set up directly between the DOI employee and the Biden Review Team member,*** there is no need to coordinate these one-on-one meetings with the Core Transition Team (CTT). However, if there are any logistical issues or scheduling problems, please promptly inform me or a member of the CTT so that we can assist.
  - **IMPORTANT NOTE: Unless the One-on-One briefing will be conducted by telephone, the DOI employee who will be meeting One-on-One with the Biden Review Team member must schedule the meeting in MS Teams and invite the Review Team member.** Since not all review team members will have the "ptt.gov" email addresses fully functioning by the end of next week, let's continue to communicate with them using their "jbrpt.org" emails. GSA does not object to this. We expect and hope that they will all be on the "ptt.gov" by the following week.

I will be sending out the MS Teams invitations for the above listed times this evening. Please understand these times are based on the availability of the Biden Review Team members and it may not be possible to change them in the absence of compelling circumstances. If you cannot make the meeting, please be sure to forward the invite to someone on your team who can step in for you and is a senior career leader.

Next week is an ambitious and important week for this transition and our goal is to have things run as smoothly as possible, so please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns this weekend or at any time.

Scott

Scott A. de la Vega  
Associate Solicitor for General Law/DOI Transition Director  
Office of the Solicitor  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
(O) (202) 208-3038  
(C) (202) 740-0359  
scott.delavega@sol.doi.gov





**From:** [Guertin, Stephen](#)  
**To:** [Arroyo, Bryan](#)  
**Subject:** RE: PPT for transition  
**Date:** Monday, November 30, 2020 6:15:36 AM

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Hi Bryan

Hope you were able to unwind a few days!

Yes, I alerted Devin and Matt over the weekend that we needed the updated PowerPoint back today.

Will also stress to the Service transition planning team today that there are established procedures to respond to all questions / inquiries going forward so we have a unified Service posture. No free-lancing.

(b)(6) PII(b)(6) PII(b)(6) PII(b)(6) PII

Steve

**From:** Arroyo, Bryan <bryan\_arroyo@fws.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 30, 2020 8:05 AM  
**To:** Guertin, Stephen <Stephen\_Guertin@fws.gov>  
**Subject:** PPT for transition

Good morning Steve:

Hope you had a nice weekend. Have you seen the updated ppt? We have an 11am tomorrow with the transition team. (b)(6) PII(b)(6) PII(b)(6) PII(b)(6) PII will be back for the 11am meeting. Love to see it at least tonight so I am not completely cold tomorrow. (b)(6) PII

(b)(6) PII(b)(6) PII

Thanks,  
Bryan

**From:** [Ford, Jerome](#)  
**To:** [Guertin, Stephen](#); [Frazer, Gary D](#); [Sanchez, Shaun](#); [Hoskins, David W](#); [Rocque, Deborah](#); [Seidman, Anna M](#); [Rauch, Paul](#); [Grace, Edward](#); [Velasco, Janine M](#); [Gibson, Paul R](#); [Huggler, Matthew](#)  
**Subject:** Re: close hold updates  
**Date:** Monday, November 30, 2020 6:19:55 AM

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Steve,

Thanks for sharing this information.

I hope that everyone had a festive and healthy Thanksgiving.

Jerome

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**From:** Guertin, Stephen <Stephen\_Guertin@fws.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 30, 2020 8:12 AM  
**To:** Frazer, Gary D <gary\_frazer@fws.gov>; Sanchez, Shaun <shaun\_sanchez@fws.gov>; Ford, Jerome <jerome\_ford@fws.gov>; Hoskins, David W <david\_hoskins@fws.gov>; Rocque, Deborah <deborah\_rocque@fws.gov>; Seidman, Anna M <anna\_seidman@fws.gov>; Rauch, Paul <Paul\_Rauch@fws.gov>; Grace, Edward <Edward\_Grace@fws.gov>; Velasco, Janine M <janine\_velasco@fws.gov>; Gibson, Paul R <paul\_gibson@fws.gov>; Huggler, Matthew <Matthew\_Huggler@fws.gov>  
**Subject:** close hold updates

### Transition Planning

When the GSA ascertained the results of the election last week, it provided the legal authority for the transition planning effort to get underway.

Myself and Bryan joined a “teams” call last Wednesday afternoon for a meet and greet with the Agency Review Team. Key messages:

- Only one administration at a time – the ART is not a “shadow government.” They are fully aware we have ongoing assignments and fully expect that as public service that is our primary mission.
- Incoming administration looks forward to partnering with us and working with us.
- ART does not make policy or personnel decisions – they are here to evaluate and make recommendations.
- Goal is to provide these updates to the eventual leadership team.

We are scheduled for a joint FWS / NPS introduction with them tomorrow. We expect requests for additional briefings to tier off of that one and will let you know what is

requested. We are also scheduled to provide an overview to our already established Service transition planning team this afternoon. Reminder we have established formal channels to be responsive to these requests so we have a unified Service posture.

Will set up a “teams” call for the ADs after we get our initial guidance from the ART tomorrow and share everything we have heard, as well as the likely schedule coming up.

#### Directorate Meeting

Has been rescheduled to 1/12/21.



**From:** [Nedd, Michael D](#)  
**To:** [Bloodsworth, Brian](#)  
**Cc:** [Spano, Rosemarie L](#); [Eggers, Barbara L](#); [Guertin, Stephen](#); [Freihage, Jason E](#); [Benge, Shawn T](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Transition Team Meetings / GAOA  
**Date:** Monday, November 30, 2020 7:44:10 AM

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NP and will do Brian...

*Take care and have a wonderful day! : )*

*Michael D. Nedd*  
*970-256-4900 Office*  
*202-236-2867 Cell*  
[\*mnedd@blm.gov\*](mailto:mnedd@blm.gov)

*A thought to consider "Do all the good you can, in all the ways you can, for all the people you can, while you can!"*

*"Working together we're stronger - BLM Strong" - and our Core Values are "To serve with honesty, integrity, accountability, respect, courage, and commitment to make a difference."*

**From:** Bloodsworth, Brian <brian\_bloodsworth@fws.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 30, 2020 9:38 AM  
**To:** Guertin, Stephen <Stephen\_Guertin@fws.gov>; Benge, Shawn T <Shawn\_Benge@nps.gov>; Freihage, Jason E <Jason.Freihage@bia.gov>; Nedd, Michael D <mnedd@blm.gov>  
**Cc:** Wilson, Judith <Judith.Wilson@bia.gov>; Spano, Rosemarie L <rspano@blm.gov>; Sanchez, Shaun <shaun\_sanchez@fws.gov>; Miller, Robert L <robert\_miller@fws.gov>; Caldwell, Michael A <Mike\_Caldwell@nps.gov>; Barron, Bethany A <Bethany\_Barron@nps.gov>; Velasco, Janine M <janine\_velasco@fws.gov>; Eggers, Barbara L <beggars@blm.gov>; McDowall, Lena E <Lena\_McDowall@nps.gov>; Bowron, Jessica <Jessica\_Bowron@nps.gov>; Spadafore, Martha <martha\_spadafore@fws.gov>  
**Subject:** Transition Team Meetings / GAOA

Good morning everyone. I hope you all had an enjoyable and relaxing Thanksgiving break. Knowing that meetings with the incoming transition team are starting this week, I would appreciate you keeping me apprised of any relevant questions/concerns that come up specific to GAOA. I promise to do the same. (b)(6) PII(b)(6) PII(b)(6) PII(b)(6) PII(b)(6) PII  
(b)(6) PII(b)(6) PII(b)(6) PII(b)(6) PII(b)(6) PII

Thank you!

Brian Bloodsworth

On Detail to the Secretary's Office

[brian\\_bloodsworth@fws.gov](mailto:brian_bloodsworth@fws.gov) | Office: (703) 358-2116 | Mobile: (703) 328-0447

**From:** [Helfrich, Devin B](#)  
**To:** [Guertin, Stephen](#)  
**Cc:** [Huggler, Matthew](#)  
**Subject:** RE: update / PowerPoint  
**Date:** Monday, November 30, 2020 7:57:15 AM  
**Attachments:** [FWS Transition Overview 2020 v2.pptx](#)

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Hi Steve,

I have addressed all of your change requests and John added a COVID slide with this (now v slightly modified) text:

### **COVID Sustained Response**

- The COVID-19 Sustained Response Team (SRT) works under the delegated authority of the Service's Director.
- The SRT provides guidance to make informed decisions that protect human life and ensure safe operations.
- The SRT serves as a centralized hub for collecting and developing all matters related to the Service's COVID-19 response.
- The SRT ensures effective and timely risk communications planning and materials for employees, volunteers, and visitors in and around Service lands and facilities.

See if this all looks good now and let us know if you need anything else. We will be on standby.

Devin

**From:** Helfrich, Devin B  
**Sent:** Monday, November 30, 2020 8:33 AM  
**To:** Guertin, Stephen <[Stephen\\_Guertin@fws.gov](mailto:Stephen_Guertin@fws.gov)>  
**Cc:** Huggler, Matthew <[Matthew\\_Huggler@fws.gov](mailto:Matthew_Huggler@fws.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: update / PowerPoint

Yes, absolutely. Will get it back to you soon today.

Devin

**From:** Guertin, Stephen <[Stephen\\_Guertin@fws.gov](mailto:Stephen_Guertin@fws.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 30, 2020 7:50 AM  
**To:** Helfrich, Devin B <[devin\\_helfrich@fws.gov](mailto:devin_helfrich@fws.gov)>  
**Cc:** Huggler, Matthew <[Matthew\\_Huggler@fws.gov](mailto:Matthew_Huggler@fws.gov)>  
**Subject:** update / PowerPoint

Good morning Devin

Hope you had a good Thanksgiving.



Once the GSA ascertained the results of the election, things started to move forward with transition planning last week.

Myself and Bryan and the rest of the DOI transition planning team joined a “teams” call on Wednesday afternoon last week to meet the DOI agency review team. Since they essentially lost over a month, they are going to quickly move into overdrive.

Our kick off meeting to provide the Service overview is scheduled for tomorrow. This will be a joint overview with NPS. So, can you wrap up the PowerPoint and email it back today? Thanks for your help.

Steve



# U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

## Transition Team



December 2020

[www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov)





U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Our Mission

*“Working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.”*





U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Our Focus

- Working with landowners and partners to promote **voluntary conservation** on **public** and **private lands**.
- Finding **shared solutions** that benefit wildlife and **keep working families on the land** they've stewarded for generations.
- Preserving and **expanding outdoor opportunities** for **sportsmen**, and **other wildlife-dependent recreationists**.
- Creating opportunities for America's **increasingly urbanized population** to experience nature.





U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Rising to the Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

The Fish and Wildlife Service is **uniquely positioned**  
to ensure that **healthy, diverse populations**  
of fish, wildlife and plants **endure for future**  
**generations.**





U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# The Fish and Wildlife Service Today

- We administer or co-administer **over 830 million acres** of lands and waters – more than any other agency or organization in the world.
- Over **700 facilities** nationwide.
- FY 2020 enacted budget was **\$1.7 billion** in discretionary authority and **\$1.3 billion** in mandatory spending.





U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Our Authorities

We are responsible for administering and enforcing **more than 120 Federal laws**, including the:

- Endangered Species Act
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act
- Marine Mammal Protection Act
- North American Wetlands Conservation Act
- Lacey Act





U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# By the Numbers

## Our work spans the globe, including:

- **568** National Wildlife Refuges
- **20** Million Acres of Wilderness
- **70** National Fish Hatcheries
- **80** ES Field Offices
- **7** National Monuments
- **12** Law Enforcement Agents at U.S. Stations worldwide
- Projects funded in nearly **75** countries



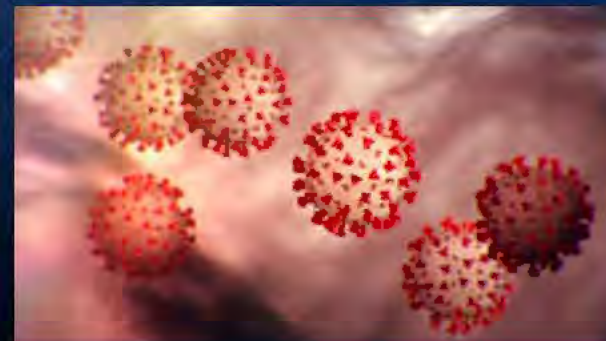




U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# COVID Sustained Response

- The COVID-19 Sustained Response Team (SRT) works under the **delegated authority** of the Service's Director.
- The SRT provides guidance to make informed decisions that **protect human life** and ensure **safe operations**.
- The SRT serves as a **centralized hub** for collecting and developing all matters related to the Service's COVID-19 response.
- The SRT ensures effective and timely **risk communications** planning and materials for employees, volunteers, and visitors in and around Service lands and facilities.





# National Wildlife Refuge System

- ~60 Million annual visitors
- Major rural economic driver
- ~200 Friends Groups

568 National Wildlife Refuges provide key habitat for:

- 220+ mammal species
- 700+ bird species
- 1,000+ fish species
- 380+ Threatened or Endangered species





U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Migratory Bird Program

## Sustaining healthy migratory bird populations through:

- Working with partners across North America to maintain healthy **migratory game bird populations**.
- Protecting and conserving **non-game migratory bird populations** across their range in North and South America.
- Administering **grant programs** that support **partnership-driven** bird habitat conservation projects.
- **Working with landowners** to avoid and reduce development impacts to birds.
- Supporting a **nationwide network** of bird conservation Joint Ventures.





U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Ecological Services Program

**We work to protect and recover over 2,300 ESA-listed species (U.S. and foreign), including:**

- ~1,300 **Endangered** animals and plants in the United States;
- ~400 **Threatened** animals and plants in the United States; and
- ~700 Endangered and threatened **foreign** animal and plant species.



## **We work by:**

- Providing consultation to other Federal Agencies;
- Providing grants, tools and technical assistance to landowners;
- Implementing listing and recovery actions; and
- Issuing permits and providing predictability for stakeholders.



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Fish & Aquatic Conservation

We're focused on **science-based conservation & restoration of native fish & aquatic species.**

- Operate a national network of facilities, including **70** National Fish Hatcheries, **7** Fish Technology Centers, Health Centers, and **51** Fisheries Offices.

Fish

## We work to:

- Conserve threatened and endangered aquatic species;
- Mitigate effects of federal water projects;
- Support recreational fisheries;
- Control invasive species; and
- Protect and restore aquatic habitats.



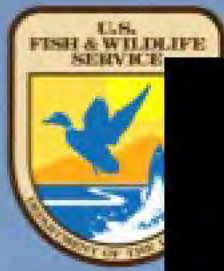


U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# International Affairs Program

- Our species, wildlife trafficking, and regionally-focused Africa, Eurasia, and Western Hemisphere **grant programs** fund on-the-ground conservation projects in nearly **75 countries**.
- We implement the **CITES** international agreement for the U.S., which advances sustainable, legal wildlife trade.
- We issue **20,000+ permits** annually under CITES, ESA, & MMPA.
- We work with partners across the globe, **providing training and funding** to conserve **elephants, rhinos, tigers** and other imperiled species and their habitat.





# Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration

- Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs provide **vital funding for conservation at the state and local level**, including habitat restoration, research, and recreation:
  - Over **\$1 billion annually in dedicated funding** from excise taxes on hunting and fishing equipment.
- WSFR Grant Programs also fund infrastructure for **recreational boating and fishing**.
- We administer State and Tribal Wildlife Grants to **support States' priority conservation efforts**.





U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Office of Law Enforcement

- OLE works domestically and internationally to enforce **wildlife laws** that **protect vulnerable species**.
- Major focus on **wildlife trafficking** and **organized crime**.
  - **209 special agents** + **12 global attachés** conduct investigations and train foreign wildlife law enforcement officers.
  - **122 inspectors** + **5 K-9 teams** at **40 U.S. ports** inspect shipments to ensure compliance with wildlife laws.
- **Forensics Lab** - analyzes evidence from wildlife crimes.
- **Wildlife and Eagle Repositories** – handles seized or dead wildlife.







U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Ongoing Operational Issues

We are moving forward on multiple fronts to **increase our capacity to meet today's conservation challenges:**

- **ESA** – develop **new tools and policy** to spur **voluntary conservation** and **provide regulatory certainty**.
- **MBTA Incidental Take** – Implement a framework to **provide regulatory predictability** and **foster bird conservation** actions.
- **Wildlife Trafficking** – Continue to co-chair Task Force and implement National Strategy to **combat wildlife trafficking**.
- **GAOA** – Implement key **LCWF** investments for conservation and public access and reduce the **deferred maintenance** backlog.
- **ACE Act** – Stand-up **Chronic Wasting Disease** Task Force.



**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**

**Conserving the Nature of America**

**Thank You, and Welcome!**

**Stephen Guertin, Deputy Director  
Bryan Arroyo, Deputy Director  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
December 2020**

