United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
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Memorandum

To: Assistant Secretaries
Heads of Bureaus and Offices

From: Rhea Suh
Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management and Budget

Subject: Recipient Announcement for the 2009 Department of the Interior Environmental Achievement Awards

I am pleased to announce the recipients of the 2009 Department of the Interior Environmental Achievement Awards.

These Awards recognize departmental employees and partners who have attained exceptional achievements under Executive Order 13423 "*Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management*" and for cleaning up contaminated land. The Award categories are: waste/pollution prevention and recycling, green purchasing, environmental management systems, high performance/sustainable buildings, alternative fuel and fuel conservation in transportation, environmental stewardship, and electronics stewardship. This year, the consideration of greenhouse gas emission reductions was added to the environmental management systems category and the Award judging criteria.

An interdisciplinary panel of judges from the Department's bureaus and offices evaluated nominations to recommend Award recipients and honorable mentions. The panel is chaired by the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance.

The 2009 Interior Environmental Achievement Award recipients are:

Individual

Mr. Ron Thuma, Flint Hills National Wildlife Refuge Recycling Program, Flint Hills National Wildlife Refuge, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Kansas

Teams

National Wildlife Refuge Oil and Gas Team, National Wildlife Refuge System, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Virginia

Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery Complex, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington

Bryce Canyon National Park, National Park Service, Utah

Denali National Park and Preserve Team, National Park Service, Alaska

Zion National Park Green Team, National Park Service, Utah

Mojave National Preserve Team, National Park Service, Arizona

Alaska Science Center, U.S. Geological Survey, Alaska

Great Lakes Science Center Super Energy Savings Performance Contracts (ESPC) Team, U.S. Geological Survey, Virginia

Cooperator

Xanterra South Rim, L.L.C., Grand Canyon National Park, National Park Service, Arizona

Please share recipients' achievements throughout your organizations and encourage others to replicate their successes. Current and past recipients and honorable mentions create a network of professionals that are a resource for working across disciplines and locations to enable departmental sites and facilities nationwide to be strong stewards for the environment.

For more information about the recipients and to see the honorable mentions, visit the Greening Interior Web site at <www.doi.gov/greening>. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Kathleen Chiang, Environmental Awards Coordinator, at 202-208-5939 or <kathleen_chiang@ios.doi.gov>.

Please join me in recognizing these outstanding recipients at the Interior Environmental Achievement Award Presentation Ceremony on December 1, 2009, at 10:30 a.m. in the Main Interior Building Library.

Attachment

Mr. Ron Thuma, Flint Hills National Wildlife Refuge Recycling Program, Flint Hills National Wildlife Refuge, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Kansas

Mr. Thuma was instrumental in developing and maintaining the recycling program for the Flint Hills National Wildlife Refuge. Mr. Thuma continues to work to decrease the amount of solid waste by energizing personnel and making it easy to recycle by providing recycle bins in strategic locations throughout the headquarters officers, common areas, maintenance shops, and other areas. Mr. Thuma ensures that no employee, volunteer, or visitor is ever very far from a recycling opportunity. Through his efforts, 80 percent of Flint Hills NWR's solid waste is recycled.

In addition to recycling paper, cardboard, glass, aluminum, plastic, and dry cell batteries, Mr. Thuma tests and treats antifreeze rather than replacing it, uses re-refined oil purchased through the Defense Logistics Agency closed loop program, and recycles old vehicle batteries and scrap metal. Mr. Thuma also ensures that compact fluorescent light bulbs are used whenever possible, uses only low mercury fluorescent light bulbs, puts perimeter and security lighting on timers or equips them with motion sensors so that they only come on when needed.

Mr. Thuma is actively involved with the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) enrollees and teaches them how to properly separate recyclables and instills in them a sense of environmental responsibility. Through his actions, Mr. Thuma makes these young YCC members understand that they can really make a difference. The YCC enrollees, under Mr. Thuma's guidance, collect litter around the Refuge for recycling and gather the recycle bins from around the Refuge to separate waste for recycling.

Mr. Thuma's work with the youth in the areas of conservation and recycling has resulted in his receiving an award from the Mayor of Emporia, Kansas and the gratitude and respect of his peers, volunteers and visitors.

National Wildlife Refuge Oil and Gas Team, National Wildlife Refuge System, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Virginia

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Oil and Gas Team is a consortium of Department bureaus and offices brought together to address the increased need by FWS personnel for guidance and oversight in managing oil and gas activities on National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) lands. The team has designed and is currently conducting a comprehensive mobile national training program to educate refuge managers, solicitors, and regional personnel in the management and oversight of oil and gas operations on NWRS lands. The team's primary goal is to provide FWS personnel with the technical, administrative, and legal information needed to effectively manage oil and gas activities throughout the NWRS lands, for the benefit of trust resources. The team has also drafted an oil and gas handbook for field personnel (currently under review) and is currently in the process of designing a geographic information systems (GIS) module within the FWS's Refuge Lands GIS database to collect and store oil and gas information. The efforts of the Oil and Gas Team have resulted in increased oversight and management of oil and gas activities on refuge lands, improved compliance by oil and gas operators, initiation of localized clean-up of impacted refuges, and have improved habitat on NWRS lands.

Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery Complex, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington

The Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery Complex (LNFHC) is located in the Cascade Mountains of north central Washington State. It consists of three hatcheries located at Leavenworth, Entiat and Winthrop. The Leavenworth Complex has been recognized for raising healthy fish and for providing a wide range of environmental education opportunities and partnerships throughout its many communities. Approximately 150,000 people visit the LNFHC annually. Visitors are exposed to valuable environmental education through tours, special events, community activities, recreation and an innovative public outreach program.

The staff and operations of the LNFHC maintain a valuable sense of environmental stewardship. Interface with local communities is strong. The LNFHC Friends of Northwest Hatcheries provides complex-wide support to environmental education and hatchery operations. Examples of "green" advocacy by the LNFHC include housing an alternative high school on-site, mentoring students in natural resource education, and operation of a large recycling program for cardboard, metal and steel, paper, plastic, antifreeze, oil and fluorescent tubes. All hazardous waste streams have been eliminated in hatchery facilities, and goats and hand pulling have replace pesticides in eliminating invasive weeds.

The LNFHC was one of the pilot facilities for the implementation of the environmental management system (EMS) and has continually reviewed, updated and fully implemented their EMS. The facility has met and continues to add measurable goals, objectives and targets to their environmental management plan (EMP). The entire complex staff is aware of and supports the EMP.

Bryce Canyon National Park, National Park Service, Utah

Xanterra Parks and Resorts at Bryce Canyon Lodge conducted a cost analysis study of landfill waste disposal versus recycling in rural Garfield County where Bryce Canyon National Park is located. Not surprisingly, it was discovered that on average, landfill waste disposal cost was significantly less than recycling. Xanterra and Bryce Canyon National Park determined that it made little sense when considering greenhouse gas emissions and fuel usage to continue to manage recycling in the manner of the past if a better option might be available.

In 2008, Bryce Canyon National Park, after reviewing the Xanterra cost analysis as well as its own costs, began contacting waste haulers to find a recycling partner and increase the efficiency of transporting recyclables to a Multi-Recycling Facility. Using the Yellowstone National Park Headwaters Coalition as a model, a partnership was established between Xanterra, Bryce Canyon National Park, and Garfield County, Utah that is the first of its kind in Southern Utah and sets the stage to open the door for recycling in rural communities throughout the area where virtually no recycling has ever taken place. Recycling collected by both Xanterra and the National Park Service increased dramatically during 2008 as a result of these efforts.

Denali National Park and Preserve Team, National Park Service, Alaska

Denali National Park and Preserve completed the first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum building for the National Park Service and Alaska on June 8, 2008. The Eielson Visitor Center, located 66 miles inside Denali's wilderness, utilizes renewable energy sources for 82 percent of the energy it consumes. The visitor center is a very low profile earth berm building that provides visitors with an unobstructed, intimate view of 20,320 foot high Mt. McKinley - North America's highest peak. Through the interpretive exhibits in and around the building, visitors learn about climate change, LEED, sustainability, and how they can make a difference through changes in their activities and practices that will benefit society and the world.

This project demonstrated that the National Park Service can build a highly sustainable building in the extreme sub-arctic and remote environment of Alaska. The new visitor center uses less energy than the previous visitor center, even though it is more than twice as big. The exterior finishes require no maintenance and the natural vegetation used for landscaping around the building does not need to be watered. The building is much "healthier" for the occupants because of the low VOC materials used throughout. Projections are that the building life cycle costs will be less than the building it replaced.

Zion National Park Green Team, National Park Service, Utah

Zion National Park, in southwest Utah, encompasses some of the most scenic canyon country in the United States. The park is characterized by high plateaus; a maze of narrow, deep, sandstone canyons; and soaring red cliffs. Receiving over 3 million visitors a year, it is the fifth most visited national park in the country. Most of these visitors come between May and September, which is the hottest part of the year in this desert park. Park visitors are encouraged to carry and drink enough water to prevent heat-related illness. All visitors are targeted to "drink water." Most people today are accustomed to buying bottled water, and they are the ones targeted for behavior change through this project.

As a Climate Friendly Park with an active EMS, Zion is taking many steps to become more sustainable as well as encourage visitors to "Go Green." To lead their sustainability efforts, they have created a Green Team. One key activity as identified in their EMS was to install water bottle filling stations, encourage visitors to use reusable water bottles, and eliminate the sale of bottled water within Zion National Park. This will result in the reduction of waste produced by disposable water bottles, provide visitors with the opportunity to drink Zion spring water instead of water imported from somewhere else, and provide long-term potential for reduced production of bottled water if enough individuals change to reusing bottles versus buying bottled water. These all fit into the Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle mantra emphasized throughout the country.

In 2008, members of the Green Team saw their efforts come to fruition with the installation of water bottle filling stations and elimination of bottled water being sold in the park. Prior to the implementation, the team laid out a strategy to design sustainable, attractive, easy to use water filling stations that would be located in convenient places and provide water bottles that were inexpensive and desirable to purchase in place of bottled water. This required the support from

both Xanterra, Inc., and Zion Natural History Association, which made a profit from selling bottled water. They fully bought into this effort and now provide a wide price range of reusable bottles, with attractive graphics and bisphenol A - free options. There are water bottles available that do not cost much more than a bottle of water.

The Green Team's efforts resulted in a cost effective exhibit with a sustainable design. All of the research and layout were completed in-house by the Green Team with additional support from the NPS Harpers Ferry Interpretive Design Center for the interpretive layout. The porcelain panels and brass paddles and spigots with automatic shut-off will be able to withstand the high amount of use. Due to the high water quality coming from the springs within the park, minimal treatment is required to meet or exceed EPA standards. In other words, additional treatments such as reverse osmosis are not necessary and eliminate the need for electricity. The stations are located not only in high visitor use areas, but also where plumbing is easily accessible, so no additional trenching for water lines is necessary. In addition, each station is integrated into the design of the buildings and outside to provide 24-hour access.

Mojave National Preserve Team, National Park Service, Arizona

The Mojave National Preserve (Mojave NP) diverted and reused fourteen thousand (14,000) tons of asphalt cuttings from a landfill to pave 4.1 miles of Zzyzx Road during July and August 2008. There was no cost for asphalt cuttings nor for the delivery of cuttings, which resulted in substantial savings to the National Park Service. The 14,000 tons of asphalt cuttings were recycled from a paving project on a 17-mile section of Interstate 15 (I-15) near Zzyzx Road. Mojave NP's use of the cuttings eliminated the need to transport them to a distant landfill and avoided the production of green house gases during transportation to the landfill. The paving project improved the road surface from poor to excellent and reduced the generation of dust and particulate matter that affect visitors and wildlife.

This project found appropriate solutions to unique challenges. Due to the extreme desert heat, the asphalt cuttings had to be used within a short period of time after delivery in order to prevent the cuttings from consolidating into large mounds of asphalt. All work on the road was performed at night in order to minimize inconvenience to partners of the park and the public. Lastly, a short section of the road was left unpaved to protect a local herd of the Desert Bighorn Sheep. This section contains natural springs used by the sheep, which also use the section of road as a migration corridor.

Alaska Science Center, U.S. Geological Survey, Alaska

The Alaska Science Center (ASC) partnered with private and public institutions to form Anchorage's first "Green District," pledging to share best practices and create a more sustainable city. The participating institutions are all located in the U-Med District in Anchorage, Alaska, which includes two universities, three hospitals, two schools, a career training center, and USGS science facilities. The participants share a commitment to lead the way for sustainability in the areas of recycling and waste reduction, transportation, energy efficiency, and toxics reduction. While the ASC had independently implemented an EMS and addressed issues such as recycling

and energy efficiency, as a group the Green District institutions have established task forces in each focus area, sharing knowledge and exploring district-wide strategies for sustainability. Partners include the University of Alaska Anchorage, Alaska Pacific University, Providence Medical Center, Anchorage School District, Southcentral Foundation, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, and Alaska Psychiatric Institute.

The ASC team received a Green Star Award from the non-profit Green Star, Inc. an organization promoting environmental responsibility. The stringent multi-tiered standards that must be implemented in order to achieve this award include waste reduction, conservation, green purchasing, education and outreach.

The Alaska Science Center's public Environmental Management Plan was initiated and endorsed by senior ASC management. The policy sets forth the environmental commitments of the facility, which cover all aspects and activities within the defined EMS boundary, as required by the International Standard Organization 14001 standard.

Great Lakes Science Center Super Energy Savings Performance Contracts (ESPC), U.S. Geological Survey, Virginia

The team, consisting of Ms. Pamela Dei, U.S. Geological Survey Mechanical Engineer of the Eastern Region Branch of Management Services and Charlie Wootke, Great Lakes Science Center (GLSC) Facility Manager, implemented the first Energy Savings Performance Contract within the U.S. Geological Survey. The duo's patience and perseverance for more than a year yielded great results with the implementation of $1.5 million worth of energy and water saving projects at the GLSC in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The GLSC will reduce annual energy consumption by 60 percent or 132 million British thermal units per thousand square feet, and energy costs by 54 percent or $75,500. Annual water consumption and cost will be reduced by 37 percent which is equivalent to 608 thousand gallons or $13,500 in savings.

The GLSC suffered from old, inefficient lighting and equipment that could not maintain proper indoor comfort and air quality. An innovative geothermal heat pump hybrid system with direct digital controls was installed along with new energy efficient lighting to achieve astounding energy and water savings, provide comfortable working conditions, maintain proper indoor air quality and significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Xanterra South Rim, L.L.C., Grand Canyon National Park, National Park Service, Arizona

Xanterra South Rim, L.L.C. operates the remote Phantom Ranch operation at Grand Canyon National Park. After an eleven-mile hike, five-hour mule ride, or several day river raft ride, you will arrive at one of the most remote hospitality locations in the country.

The full-time staff of seventeen runs the accommodations at Phantom Ranch, which houses up to 94 guests per night, and sees roughly 28,000 overnight visitors and upwards of 75,000 day visitors

each year. This staff is not only responsible for the maintenance and continued tracking of the environmental programs, but they also serve as the main source of environmental education to our guests.

At Phantom Ranch, 20,000 pounds of kitchen waste is composted annually. The compost is then used for trail fill and repair. The 20,000 pounds represent a reduction in solid waste that would otherwise need to be carried out by mule and then sent to the landfill.

Phantom Ranch has an extensive water conservation program in place. Additionally, all of the detergents and chemicals used at Phantom Ranch have been deemed environmental-friendly with most having achieved green seal certification.

Phantom Ranch is often described as a tranquil oasis due to the many lush trees planted over 100 years ago. As an act of environmental stewardship to perpetuate the oasis for the future, the Phantom Ranch staff planted 17 ash trees in 2008. All of these saplings were germinated from seeds harvested from trees already growing at the Ranch. To ensure the success of these new trees, Phantom Ranch installed a gravity fed (zero emissions) irrigation system.

Phantom Ranch is celebrating its 8th year as a participant in the "Adopt-A-River Mile" program. The employees at Phantom Ranch instituted the Grand Canyon's first and perhaps only river clean-up adoption program. The employees adopted river mile 89 and voluntarily clear it of trash that flows from upstream. They collect hundreds of pounds of trash from the river each year. This is in addition to the litter they remove from the trails on their 11 mile commute to work.