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### Aspiring Leader Attendees' Feedback



By William Phillips  
Human Resources Specialists  
Upper Colorado Region

We asked for feedback from the participants of the Aspiring Leaders training that took place from March 3<sup>rd</sup> through the 7<sup>th</sup>, inquiring as to their impressions from the first half of this two-week program. They were warned ahead of time that we would be sharing their ideas with the Region, in this article to the UC Today.

We are happy to present this synopsis of responses that we received and hope that it encourages future interest for potential enrollees in the program. Enjoy!



*The Aspiring Leaders training course has helped me refocus on the direction I'd like to take my career. Hearing how many people may be retiring in the next 3-5 years really showed me there may be leadership opportunities available in the near future. It was also refreshing to hear Dick say he feels Reclamation is going to be left in good hands from observing our class and previous classes.*

*The topics of the course are interesting and needed. They focus on important aspects of what it is to be a leader/supervisor. I think it's important to understand what makes people tick so you learn how to motivate them and learn and understand their strengths. So far the tools we've used have focused on that and we've heard good ideas and different perspectives from current supervisors. I'm looking forward to meeting up with all our classmates and hearing their book reports.*

Tim Wagoner

*A landmark transition from the previous generation to the next sets the stage for dramatic changes in Reclamation. Our current leadership – those who will be leaving Reclamation soon – have the foresight to realize those changes are as much human related as they are related to changing technology and processes. The Aspiring Leaders program seems to acknowledge that simply handing down old knowledge and old ways of doing things is not enough to prepare Reclamation for the road ahead. It embraces those changes and challenges as opportunities for greatness.*

*It focuses on developing leadership skills that will allow the vast knowledgebase and lessons learned from the previous generations to be handed down and adapt to new leadership styles that are necessary for Reclamation to remain an effective, efficient component of Federal government. Our first session focused on identifying the strengths of our teams and ourselves, and leveraging those strengths in a rapidly changing environment. Between sessions we are putting those lessons into practice to develop a team project and to refine our individual development strategies.*

*I am confident the second session will reveal in its presentations an extremely competent group of current and future leaders who aspire to greatness both in themselves and in Reclamation as a whole. Instead of being the conclusion to yet another leadership course, the end of the second session will mark the beginning of Reclamation's successful transition from its effectiveness as a bureaucracy in the past to its newfound effectiveness as an adaptable, efficient matrix of leaders for the future.*

Robert J. Stump

*I enjoyed the wisdom from both Dick and Duncan and how they used their life experiences to enhance the course. It is refreshing to know that these great trainers and leaders made some mistakes as they were progressing to be leaders.*

*The highlight of the course for me is that, "leaders are made and not born". We all could be leaders with the right training, aspiration and exposure. The knowledge and wisdom in the various books chosen for us are valuable. As Dick said, it is a good way for us to start our leadership library collection.*



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Samson B. Agbebi

*What i found most helpful in the class is how to set my goals and how to achieve them. I also learned a lot about myself with the surveys we took in the class. The surveys were also helpful to show you other people's strengths and weaknesses, so you can use them in ways to make a project a success by understanding who is on your team.*

Rick Cottrell

*To me, the Aspiring Leader Program is a paradigm shift for the Bureau of Reclamation from "traditional" routes into management positions. In the past, managers were hired, with the hope that they had some leadership qualities. The Bureau of Reclamation is both thinking and acting outside of the box. Courses such as this are a great way to create and nurture leadership skills. This program helps to prepare people to step into leadership positions, when the time comes, armed with the skills as well as the attitude needed to succeed, not only today but into the future.*

*Our assignment during the intermission is to collaborate with 3 others from our group in putting together a presentation on an assigned book. My group was fortunate enough to get "Leadership Secrets of Colin Powell" assigned to us. This is a great book that I think everyone should read. I am excited to participate in the presentation of our report, as well as hear about the other books that were assigned.*

*I look forward to learning more in the next session from our presenters. I would like to hear what management's vision is for the Aspiring Leaders they are cultivating.*

Mike Byrnes

*I learned a lot about personality types and how to deal with certain personalities. I think that is very helpful in leadership because it proves you can't deal with everyone the same. One of the biggest things that I learned and started using in my life is that Communication is both "Clarity of Perception" and "Accuracy of Response." If you don't have both, you don't have good communication. I've also learned to manage my time, not my energy. If I am too stressed I am not as beneficial to other people as I could be.*

*What I hope to get from the second part of the class is just more ideas and training on how to be an effective leader and also an effective employee to my leaders. I hope to gain more knowledge on how in the future I can become a supervisor, and a great one at that.*

Brittany Overdiek

We look forward to seeing all of the participants back for the second half of the course on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. Remember to have your book presentations ready.

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## Nature High Summer Camp Committee Announces Science Fair Winners!



Stacey Smith and Hannah Bennett - Stansbury High School

Each year, Utah's Nature High Summer Camp (NHSC) committee members attend state science fairs, and award camp scholarships to eight winning projects. In March, NHSC partners representing BLM, BOR, USFS, and Utah State University attended the, Central Utah Science & Engineering Fair, Southern Utah Science and Engineering Fair, and the Ritchey Science & Engineering Fair of Utah.

Students were able to present their scientific work and interact with experts in their field to receive feedback on their efforts. "I continue to be inspired by the students and their impressive projects," says Jody Oostema, the fair's program manager. "These students are just beginning amazing journeys that will undoubtedly shape and change our future for the better."

"We are excited to showcase the scientific and engineering endeavors of these students. They are intelligent, creative and innovative, and they are enthusiastic to share their work with the scientists and engineers who serve as our judges," says fair Director Brenda Mann, a vice president at SentrX Animal Care and a research associate professor of bioengineering at the University of Utah. "In the past few years, there has been a push for more STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education, and these students are clearly putting words into action. By participating in the fair, these students gain a hands-on experience in the field."



Each Science Fair drew hundreds of participants and visitors. More than 2700 public, private and charter school students from around Utah for a chance to attend the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (Intel ISEF) the world's largest pre-college science fair.

At the science fairs, the NHSC partners saw firsthand how Utah students are benefitting from DOI's Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) programs. While engaging participants and spreading the word about the camp, we met the stewards and leaders of our future workforce.

However, the real satisfaction comes from awarding NHSC scholarships to students from each science fair. Congratulations to the 2014 NHSC science fair scholarship winners!

***Nityam Rathi - Hillcrest High***

***Kaitlin Smith- Syracuse Arts Academy***

***Gilberto Castro- Entheos Expeditionary***

***Seth Pope- Davis High School***

***Hannah Bennett - Stansbury High School***

***Carvel Allen- Success Academy***

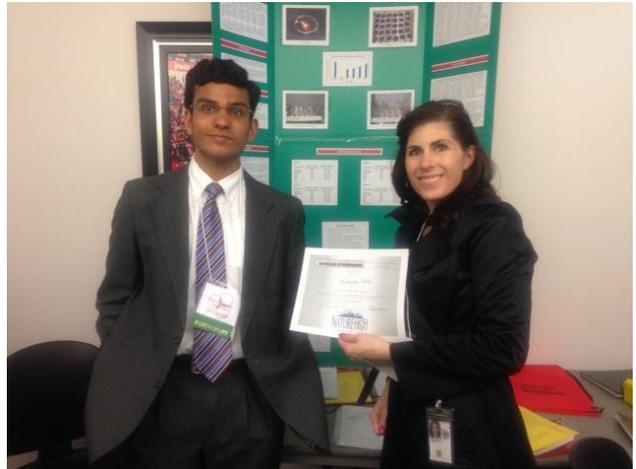
***Trevor Ottenschot- Dixie Success***

***Shaylyn Knappenberger –Riverton High School***

**Photos below**



Overhead view of Salt Lake Science and Engineering Fair at U of U



Nityam Rathi and NHSC Director, Jeanette Shackleford, BLM

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## From the Front Office

April 30, 2014

During the last few years, we have all been hearing about how dry conditions are in many of the Western states. Although this spring has been wetter in some areas of the region than was originally predicted, there is still a need to focus on what the water managers in the West can do to alleviate/mitigate these concerns if the drought continues.

As a result of this, our basin states partners have begun discussions among themselves about what steps they can take either on their own or with Reclamation. The Lower Basin States (Arizona, California, and Nevada) have engaged heavily with the Lower Colorado Regional Office on this drought contingency planning. The Upper Basin States (Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming) are just beginning to engage with our region.

The States are looking at what can be done to reduce demand and/or create/save water, and the potential for increasing rain/snow through weather modification, among other things. In the Upper Basin, these ideas are just beginning to be fleshed out so the discussion is very preliminary. The Upper Basin States will be engaging with Reclamation on modeling some of these ideas, and are looking at work that Reclamation has done in the past related to weather modification.

Much more discussion and activity will be forthcoming, but this is an exciting new effort that Reclamation and our partners are working on to focus on an important issue for those of us who live in the dry states of the West.

We will keep you posted on these initiatives as this plays out. So stay tuned.

Ann

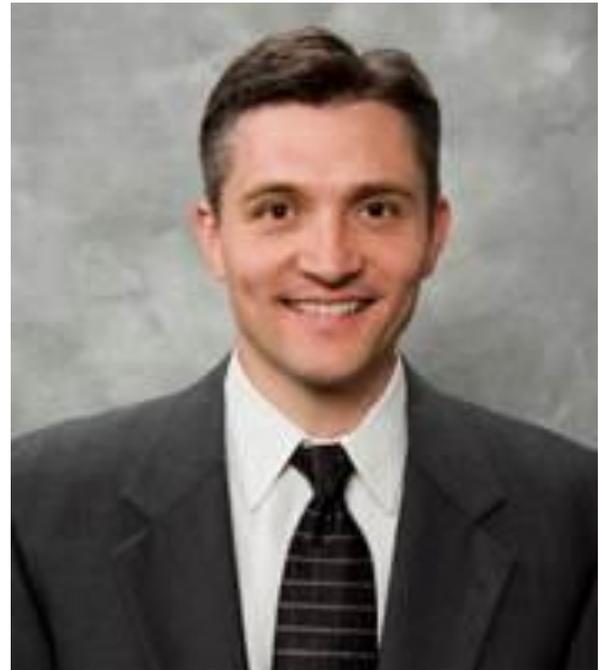
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## Special Advisor to New Federal Reserve Chair, Janet Yellen, is son of Long-Time UC Region Employee Ginger Reeve

Shortly after Janet Yellen was named as the new Chair of the Federal Reserve, she selected Trevor Reeve, son of long-time UC Region employee Ginger Reeve (and husband T. Ross Reeve), to serve as a special advisor to the Chair for up to two years. Trevor is currently a senior associate director for the Federal Reserve Board of Governors Division of International Finance. As a special advisor, Trevor will assist Chair Yellen on monetary policy issues by participating in economic and policy discussions and briefings, facilitating communication between staff and the Chair, and managing the policy-related work flow of the office of the Chair.



Trevor Reeve joined the Board of Directors in 1998 as an economist in the Division of International Finance upon graduating from Harvard University with an M.A. and Ph.D. in economics. He received his B.S. from the University of Utah in international studies. Following his appointment to the official staff in 2006, he had oversight responsibilities for several sections including Advanced Foreign Economies, Emerging Market Economies, and Trade and Quantitative Studies. In April 2012, he served for a year as senior advisor to the U.S. executive director of the International Monetary Fund.

During his tenure with the Board, Reeve has collaborated on a number of international finance discussion papers and he received the Special Achievement Award in 2000 for his analysis of world petroleum markets.

The Federal Reserve Board of Directors Division of International Finance is responsible for basic research, policy analysis and reporting regarding foreign economic activity, U.S. external trade and capital flows, and developments in international financial markets and institutions. As senior associate director of the Program Direction Section of the International Finance Division, Reeve and other staff provide overall direction to the division in the preparation of analysis and research for both the Board and Open Market Committee.

Trevor's wife Lori is a biostatistician at the National Institutes of Health where she designs clinical trials and conducts research in infectious disease. They, and their three children ages 10, 8, and 5, enjoy outdoor activities and traveling and they just returned from a three week trip to Namibia and South Africa. In his spare time, Trevor enjoys photography, whitewater kayaking, gardening, and motorcycling, and he also a Cub Scout leader.

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## **ASC Annual Training and Awards Career Enhancement**

The ASC had their annual training and awards ceremony on March 27-28, 2014. The event was sponsored by the Provo Area Office and included a field trip to the Central Utah Water Conservancy District on Thursday and training on Career Enhancement given by Brett Carlson (owner of B3 staffing) on Friday. Thursday's field trip objective was to learn about the Central Utah Project and how the Bureau of Reclamation works with other agencies in getting water to end users. The trip included a guided bus ride of 13 ASC members to various sites in the Salt Lake and Utah county areas, including a water treatment plant which is currently being renovated to handle increased demand.

Extensive information was provided by lead engineers and project managers on various portions of the Central Utah Project and how it is integral in getting water to the Utah population. A steep drive to the top of an embankment provided a little excitement and a great vantage point for water treatment plant which is currently being renovated to handle increased demand in Utah County.

Lunch was catered by Café Rio and provided a great chance for members from different field offices to get to know each other. After lunch a presentation was given by the District on water conservation and the effective use of water conserving plants in a desert climate. A guided tour of the gardens was provided, enabling ASC members to see how to plant a Water-wise garden. Questions and answers were taken as well as a few photo ops.

On Friday morning, the awards ceremony was held again in the area office where all staff gathered into the large conference room. Refreshments were provided. Approximately 25 ASC members were in attendance. Deputy Regional Director, Ann Gold, and Provo Area Manager, Wayne Pullan, spoke of the importance and their appreciation of all administrative personnel pointing out the region's deadlines have not eased up though we have new processes, new systems, and have had a lack of filling vacated positions. The UC Region had a total of 16 nominations. Ann Gold read a brief synopsis from the nominations and called all up individually for recognition.

It was announced that Ameer Baker won the Administrative Professional of the Year, and Radhika Harris, both of the UC Regional Office, had won the Administrative Services Professional awards. The region determined it was in the best interest that all nominees were to receive a \$50 cash award and the winners receive a 24-hour time off award. The outgoing board was recognized by Executive Assistant, Levi Hutchinson with a 4-hour time off award. Photographs were taken and UC Today newsletter articles will be written for awareness of the event.

Friday afternoon's training focused on effective techniques for updating and maintaining job-



specific resumes, an overview of social media sites for professional networking, important interviewing skills, and personal development plans where approximately 15 ASC members were able to attend. Training by Brett Carlson, owner of B3 staffing, also included a series of games to help enable people to think outside the box. The focus of the training was centered on getting the most out of your federal career. Lunch was taken at the University mall—which further enabled members to get to know each other. At the close of the day, a final meeting and collaboration was held among ASC members. Outgoing Board Members answered questions for the incoming 2014 Board.

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## The Next Phase of Document Management

On March 20, 2014, The Upper Colorado Regional Office, Information Management Division, hosted a meeting about the Upper Colorado Region Electronic Document Management System (UCEDMS) and the migration to *eMail* Enterprise Records Document Management System (eERDMS), the Department of the Interior’s solution for email, records, and document management.

The objective of this planning meeting was to make commitments and decisions in regards to the migration of UCEDMS’s current data that resides in FileNet P8, to eERDMS. This will require the design and configuration of DOI’s Opentext software before the migration can occur. An objective statement was sign by everyone in the meeting showing their commitment to the successful implementation of eERDMS.

### Commitment to Success

“I commit myself to Reclamation’s successful implementation of eERDMS and will do everything within my abilities to deliver this product to the customers at the lowest cost, highest quality, and in a timely manner. I understand this will take my cooperation, collaboration and commitment to all my team members.”



The image shows a collection of approximately 15 handwritten signatures in black ink on a yellow background. The signatures are arranged in a loose, non-linear pattern. Some of the more legible signatures include "Kevin A. Roy", "Joshua L. Lauer", "Am. Ojila", and "IG BG Good Front".

### What will eERDMS provide?

- The software (Opentext) provides Records Management (RM), Document Management (DM), Content Management (CM), Electronic Discovery (EDiscovery), for over 30,000 users, Department wide.



- Accessible from mobile devices.
- Enterprise faxing capabilities from your PC.
- Integrates with Microsoft Office Products.

UC Region agreed to migrate our current UCEDMS (document management system) to eERDMS, which will allow us to utilize tools such as "workflow," "electronic signature," and further automate our business practices. Future business process workflows will include:

- 1) Improvements to Action Correspondence/DTS;
- 2) Electronic Mail Distribution;
- 3) Automate the Temporary Duty Extension Process;
- 4) Automate Correspondence Management System with Electronic Signature and Surname.

### **What does this mean to you?**

- All documents/records currently in UCEDMS will be migrated to eERDMS.
- You will have opportunity for input, by functional group.

### **The meeting included the following participants:**

John Montel – Department of Interior, eRecords Service Manager  
 James Judd – Reclamation, Records Officer  
 Randy Brammer – Reclamation, Program Manager  
 Ann Gold – Deputy Regional Director  
 Levi Hutchinson – Executive Assistant  
 Kevin Reynolds – Manager, Information Resources Division  
 De Ann Brown – Chief, Records Management Group  
 Letesia Reid – Records Officer  
 Debbi Fugal – UCEDMS Project Manager  
 Tam Nguyen – UCEDMS System Administrator  
 Sarah Casale – IT Specialist  
 Ameer Baker – Secretary  
 Edica Lopez – Records Clerk  
 Corine Morales – Records Clerk  
 Jerri Quistberg – Records Clerk  
 Joshua Larson – Records Clerk, Provo Area Office  
 Jack Frost – IQ Business Group  
 Priscilla Emery – IQ Business Group  
 Geoff Henton – IQ Business Group (remote)

For additional information, contact [Debbi Fugal](#), [Letesia Reid](#), or [Edica Lopez](#).

### **Want to know more?**

UCEDMS is a steady state single vendor system used to manage electronic documents and records in the Regional, Area, and Field Offices of the UC Region. In 2000 the UC Region was asked to pilot an electronic document/records management system (UCEDMS). There was an agreement between the Department and Reclamation that we could run this system for the next 5 years to get a return on our investment; and we would implement a Departmental solution, if available, at the end of this time period. UCEDMS required an upgrade in 2010 to IBM's suite of products (v.4.5) which included: Application



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Engine, Content Engine, Process Engine, WebSphere, Records Manager, Workplace XT, and an Oracle Database, all of which are housed on five VM ware virtual servers with Windows 2008 R2 operating systems.

In May 2012 the Department selected Opentext as their solution for document and records management, with the IQ Business Group as the Contractor. Reclamation was given approval to begin development for document and records management immediately. The UC Region started working with IQ in March 2012 to determine if the migration of UCEDMS would be feasible. A draft report of migration requirements has been received from IQ, and additional data gathering is scheduled.

Regardless of the outcome of the IQ migration report, we are still under very strict limitations in regard to our use of the IBM Software. Despite our requests for waivers we have been restricted from developing workflows which would have improved customer's business processes, ultimately providing the cost savings and benefits originally identified for the products.

Our agreement with the Department and Reclamation has always been to migrate our existing document and records management system to a DOI solution when it becomes available.

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### Regional Office Battery Recycling



Every year, billions of used batteries that may contain corrosive materials such as potassium hydroxide (lye) or sulfate acid; reactive metals such as lithium; or toxic metals such as mercury lead, cadmium and nickel are thrown in the trash.



Why should we recycle? Used batteries may be considered a hazardous waste because they may contain corrosive liquids, toxic heavy metals or reactive metals.

Under the Federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), hazardous waste must be properly identified, stored, transported, treated and disposed of and generators are financially responsible for cleaning up the effects of improper disposal.

The batteries that can be recycled are AAA, AA, C, D, 9 volt and lantern of the following types:

**Alkaline**  
**Lead Acid**  
**Lithium/lithium ion**  
**Mercury**  
**Nickel-cadmium**  
**Nickel metal hydride**  
**Silver**  
**Zinc Carbon**



On Friday April 4<sup>th</sup> the Regional Office recycled 236 pounds of batteries. You may be thinking did they go to the landfill? No, we contracted out to a company by the name of Veolia. Veolia sent two of their employees to our office to tape, sort and package our batteries to be sent to various licensed and approved vendors for reclamation, recovery and recycling.

Here's the breakdown of the types that were recycled:

**67 lbs. Lead**  
**5 lbs. Nickel Metal Hydride**  
**21 lbs. Lithium Ion**  
**133 lbs. Alkaline**  
**10 lbs. Nickel-cadmium**

Does recycling make a difference? ABSOLUTELY! Thank you to all of our employees who did their part in recycling batteries. KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK! For specific questions or concerns, please contact Melynda Roberts or Bill Brown in the Property Group.

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## Tagged Razorback Suckers Released in Grand Canyon



**Grand Canyon, Ariz.** – On March 16<sup>th</sup>, in cooperation with the Bureau of Reclamation, the Nevada Department of Wildlife, BIO-WEST, Inc., and the Arizona Game and Fish Department, National Park Service (NPS) biologists successfully released nine adult endangered razorback suckers (*Xyrauchen texanus*) in the Colorado River downstream of Lava Falls (River Mile 180).

A native fish found only in the Colorado River basin, the razorback sucker was previously believed to have been extirpated from Grand Canyon National Park, but was rediscovered in October 2012 during surveys by the Arizona Game and Fish Department. By tracking the sonic-tagged fish that were released, biologists may be able to detect groups of other spawning razorback suckers, and assess their movements and habitat use.

While the monitoring of razorback sucker has been conducted in Lake Mead National Recreation Area for several years, this is the first time a study such as this has been conducted in Grand Canyon National Park. Fisheries biologists will attempt to track the fish during monthly river trips occurring between April and September, by using specialized equipment designed to detect signals emitted from the tagged fish. Grand Canyon National Park Fisheries Biologist Clay Nelson said “The information that may be gained tracking these adult razorback suckers will be valuable for future conservation and management of the species in Grand Canyon.”

Studies conducted during the past three years at the Colorado River inflow area in Lake Mead National Recreation Area suggested that wild razorback suckers are migrating into the Colorado River in lower Grand Canyon. Several fish were tracked upstream as far as Separation Rapid (River Mile 240), and wild un-tagged fish were captured in lower Grand Canyon as part of annual monitoring in 2012 and 2013. These were the first detections of the species in Grand Canyon National Park since the 1990s.

The razorback sucker study is a component of the recently released Comprehensive Fisheries Management Plan for Grand Canyon National Park. Grand Canyon National Park



Superintendent David Uberuaga said, “We’re extremely excited to release one of the Colorado River’s iconic native fish species back into Grand Canyon. It is an important part of our efforts to protect the park’s native fish species.”

For more information, please contact Brian Healy, Fisheries Program Manager at 928-638-7453. Additional information on humpback chub translocations and Grand Canyon National Park’s fisheries program is available online at <http://www.nps.gov/grca/naturescience/fish.htm>.

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### Oral History Spotlight - Curtis W. Bowser



The UC Regional Library has a collection of 110 oral history interviews conducted by Historians, with various Reclamation employees throughout the years. The oral histories capture candid “in their own voice” memories of employees and their experiences working for Reclamation. The oral histories preserve information about Reclamation that would not normally appear in Reclamation’s official records. Contents of the oral histories range from the humorous to reflective of the situation at the time, and all are informative!

#### Oral History Interview Curtis W. Bowser

Mr. Bowser joined the Marine Corps in 1945 and was later offered a job as a Vegetation Management Specialist with the Bureau of Reclamation. He would spend his entire career with Reclamation in the Regional Office in Boulder City and later retired in 1982. What follows are excerpts from Mr. Bowser’s oral history book:



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## **Met the Head of the Ranger Force at Hoover Dam**

On my first day here, I had to stay in Las Vegas, and then met with the regional personnel officer, Mitchell, the next day, and he said, "Oh, you go down to the government dorm and see Mrs. *Peterson*." She was the house mother. I went down to the dorm and I met Mrs. Peterson. And here an *enormous, large* man came in, and he shook my hand and said, "Where you from, boy?" And I said, "I'm from Wyoming." He said, "You been to Rawlins?" I said, "I've been to Rawlins hundreds of times," and bragged a little bit by saying out some names that I heard of but, of course, I didn't really know. (Laughter) And, he said, "I was on the state prison warden's staff there, and I brought lots of my men down here to work on the ranger force." We had a ranger force in Boulder City or the Hoover Dam. And I could do no wrong with "Chief Pete" after that.

**"My early experience was primarily tidying up after years of minimum maintenance during the war, and cleaning cattails from drains in Yuma. . ."**

My early experience was primarily tidying up after years of minimum maintenance during the war, and cleaning cattails from drains in Yuma. They were big fellas; they were eight-, ten-, and twelve feet in height.

**"There was also a plant known as water lettuce, was in the Yuma main drain. Chemicals had not been developed . . ."**

There was also a plant known as water lettuce, was in the Yuma main drain. Chemicals had not been developed, and there was a lot of work starting on them, but they were not generally available. So we cleaned the cattail out by dragging heavy chain and hand labor. And the water lettuce, that's a plant that grows on the surface of the water, with roots extending into the water and possibly attaching to the soil, but not a *fixed* plant per se. We put a bunch of men, two in a boat, and had them go down and just physically pluck them out and throw them up on the bank. Now, when I'm talking about plant suppression, plant control, weed control, don't misunderstand me. I didn't dream up these techniques. I would simply go down to Imperial Irrigation District, which was very progressive. It was the largest irrigation district in possibly the world, certainly in the United States. Under Superintendent Hartzog [phonetic] and his right-hand man Oscar Fudge, they attracted a lot of attention because of their size, and people would come and say, "Oh, you should try this product," or, "We'll give you a thousand gallons of this and that." And then I would be a kind of a roving embassy, emissary. I would go around to the other irrigation projects and more or less tell them what they were doing. I was greeted with open arms, because it was a big project for the day.

To read the full interview of Curtis W. Bowser click [here](#), or if you prefer to check out a hard copy contact Chantel Bouchard, Regional Office Library Coordinator.

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## Bicycle Subsidy Benefit Program

The Bureau of Reclamation has been given approval to participate in the Bicycle Subsidy Benefit Program. By way of review, this program works as follows:

1. Incur reasonable expenses related to the use of a bicycle throughout the calendar year
2. Travel by bicycle for one's daily commute for 50% or more of workdays
3. Maintain a commuting log
4. Complete annual re-certification requirements
5. Submit claims for reimbursement

Here are some of the reimbursable fixed costs associated with cycling: the purchase of a non-motorized commuter bicycle, bike lock, safety equipment, bicycle share membership and general maintenance. The maximum monthly statutory benefit is \$20; the maximum annual benefit is \$240.

Employees are ineligible for other transportation benefits (e.g., transportation in a commuter highway vehicle, transit pass or qualified parking benefits) during the months in which they receive the bicycle benefit.

The reimbursable fixed costs are paid out to employees once a year, generally around the month of December.

The program can also be seasonal. For example, you may participate in the Bicycle program during the summer months, and then another program the other months of the year, depending on the availability of programs in your area.

The forms for the program can be found here:

<http://www.doi.gov/ofas/bicycle-subsidy-benefit-program.cfm>

Make sure the signatures are in place, and submit the completed forms back to Bill Brown at the Regional Office. You may submit them via a Blue Envelope due to PII.

Any questions, feel free to contact Bill Brown through the email listed above or at 801-524-3656.

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## Retirement Planning - You May Be Better Off Than You Think



By [Tammy Flanagan](#) National Institute of Transition Planning

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Many federal employees are worried that they may not be financially ready to retire and aren't really sure how to determine when the time is right. Here are some recent comments and questions I've heard at my pre-retirement seminars:

**I will have 30 years and nine months of service on my birthday. Does it make sense for me to work three more months so that I will have 31 years?**

The best thing to do is request retirement estimates from your human resources office for the two different dates. I generally suggest that the two retirement dates are at least six months apart to see how much more your retirement will be if you work a little longer. The bigger question, though, is this: Can you afford to retire? You'll need to take into consideration your expenses and your total retirement income. There's nothing magical about having 31 years of service compared to 30 years and nine months.

**I'm getting a step increase next month. How long do I need to work so I will get credit for the higher pay in my high-three average salary?**

The short answer is: one day. But that means you would have one day of the high three computed at the higher salary and one day of your salary that was in effect three years ago would drop off the computation. So don't expect too big of a difference in your retirement income. Your high three is computed on the highest three consecutive years of salary during your career. For most employees, this is



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the last three years. Of course, if you work three years at the higher pay rate, then you would completely eliminate the salary that was in effect three years ago. But keep in mind you that you'll probably get another pay increase—and then you'll have to decide if you want to work another three years. Keep in mind that by working a little longer you'll also have more time to contribute to your Thrift Savings Plan and earn additional Social Security retirement benefits (if you're covered by Social Security).

**I have 40 years of service, but I need to delay my retirement until I get my last child out of college.**

I've heard many variations on this—"get my mortgage paid off," "see my last child married," "pay off my kitchen remodeling project," and more. But you may be more ready than you think. Some employees could actually have more income if they retire than if they continue working—but they don't even know it. Remember, even if things are really tight, when you're retired from government, you can get another job to supplement your income.

Under the Civil Service Retirement System, the maximum retirement benefit is 80 percent of your high-three average salary, plus credit for unused sick leave. Most employees max out under CSRS at 41 years and 11 months of service. But most also can afford to retire well before they have earned the maximum benefit. Under the Federal Employees Retirement System, there's no maximum benefit, so you'll have to add up your benefits to see if you have enough income to retire.

Forty years of service under CSRS would provide 76.25 percent of your high-three average salary. That is not the end of the story, however. Take into consideration any reduction to this benefit for survivor benefits, unpaid deposits, part-time pro-ration, age reductions and other factors.

Under FERS, 40 years of service (I know, no one has this much service under FERS yet), would provide either 40 percent or 44 percent (if you're 62 or older with more than 20 years of service) of your high-three. In addition, you'll be entitled to Social Security or the FERS Supplement. Once you determine how much your benefit will be, you'll be able to figure out how much you'll need to withdraw from your TSP account to create enough retirement income to cover your expenses.

For both CSRS and FERS, remember that the withholdings from your monthly retirement benefit will be smaller than the withholdings from your salary. Retirement withholdings include taxes and insurance. Depending on your age, where you live (some states exempt your federal retirement from state taxes or don't have an income tax), and how much income you will receive, your taxes may be lower than what you pay on your salary. You'll no longer have withholdings for the Medicare tax, the FICA tax, CSRS and FERS retirement contributions, and TSP contributions. But don't forget to take into account other taxable income such as TSP and other retirement account withdrawals, other retirement income, second-career pay and Social Security benefits.



As you can see, some employees are better off than they give themselves credit for. Others can't afford to retire -- yet. But don't worry, the day will come, as long as you plan ahead and make the right preparations.

By Tammy Flanagan

<http://www.govexec.com/pay-benefits/retirement-planning/2013/08/mystery-vanishing-service-credit/67946/>

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## What is the Federal Bike to Work Challenge?

The Challenge is a free, friendly competition between groups of federal employees to bicycle to and from work as often as possible during the month of May. Participants log their bicycle commutes, or trips, on a website. The website tabulates number of trips, percentage of possible trips commuted by bicycle, total miles bicycled, and reduction in CO2 from bicycling. These statistics are available for the participant, a team the participant is on, an office, a bureau, department, and the Federal Government. Teams may challenge other teams. For more information, the link for the challenge is located here:

<http://www.doi.gov/greening/transportation/biketowork.cfm>

For details of starting or joining a team, links are provided at the bottom of the link provided above.

Other resources on the website are also provided for more information.

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## Saving the Children

*Briton Nicholas Winton helped save hundreds of mostly Jewish children from Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia on the eve of the war*

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60 Minutes producer Harry Radliffe was in a cinema with a friend, waiting to for a movie to start, when his friend asked if he had heard the [story of Nicholas Winton](#). Winton, a 29-year-old stockbroker, used his vacation time to save hundreds of children from the Nazis by organizing a rescue mission from Czechoslovakia to London on the eve of World War II.

"My friend told me what the story was about, and then she said, 'The man who's now Sir Nicholas Winton is still alive.' And I said, 'You're kidding me.'" Other heroes of the Holocaust,



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like Oskar Schindler and Raoul Wallenberg, have been dead for decades. Winton is 104 years old.

That evening, Radliffe called up 60 Minutes correspondent Bob Simon and said "If you had an opportunity to speak with Raoul Wallenberg or Oskar Schindler, you would, wouldn't you?" Simon said yes, and Radliffe said, "Well, we oughta do this story."

Radliffe and Simon's story of Nicholas Winton airs on the 60 Minutes broadcast this week. It's a heart-wrenching and inspiring tale that features an interview with Winton himself.

"We were obviously concerned about what it would be like to interview someone who's 104 years old," says Radliffe. "We didn't know how well he'd be able to articulate his own story."

When the 60 Minutes crew turned its cameras on, Radliffe's concerns disappeared. At turns, Winton was funny, philosophical, and remarkably detailed in his memory of the "kindertransport" he organized in the late 1930s. In all, Winton was able to save 669 children, most of them Jewish and living in Czechoslovakia.

"I think stories that show that one person can make a difference are worth telling," says Radliffe. "Look at the difference that this one person made. Here's a guy who didn't have to get involved, who got involved, and look at what happened. The number of people who are alive today who would not be alive if a guy named Nick Winton hadn't decided to use his vacation to go to Prague and get involved, is extraordinary."

With the help of co-producer Vanessa Fica, Radliffe tracked down several of the children Winton saved. Fourteen-year-old Alice Eberstark, now 88 and living in Bethesda, Md., is one of them.

The story of how Alice and her two sisters made it onto one of Winton's trains is the subject of this week's 60 Minutes Overtime feature (in the video player above).

"Alice has one of the most heart-wrenching stories to tell," says Radliffe. "She remembers very clearly, before they left home, her father sitting on the edge of the bed, sobbing uncontrollably. They clearly had debated whether this was the right thing or not."

At one point in the interview, Alice showed the 60 Minutes team several things her parents gave her just before she boarded the train to London. Some of the items were made by her mother, including a beautifully embroidered nightgown.

"Think about what it must represent to Alice," says Radliffe. "This was the last act of love on the part of her mother."

After boarding the train that day, Alice never saw her parents again. They likely perished in a concentration camp.



"Many survivors feel guilty for having survived--I feel very grateful to my parents," says Alice, who now goes by the last name Masters. "Our parents' courage, I think, is the most important because most people said, 'We will go together or not at all.'"

*Nicholas Winton's list of children courtesy the Yad Vashem Archives*

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## In Transition

### Former GP Region Employee Stephen (Steve) F. Ronshaugen dies

Stephen (Steve) F. Ronshaugen, 66 of Grand Island died Saturday, April 5, 2014 at Tiffany Square.

Services will be 10:30 a.m. Friday at St. Pauls Lutheran Church in Grand Island. The Reverend Edgar L. Schambach, Jr. will officiate. Burial will be in the Grand Island Cemetery.

Visitation will be from 5-7 p.m. Thursday at All Faiths Funeral Home.

Mr. Ronshaugen was born March 23, 1948 at Webster, SD the son of Hjalmer and Josie (Aspen) Ronshaugen.

Survivors include his wife, Janet and sons and daughter-in-law, Robert Ronshaugen of Grand Island and Scott and Dr. Natalie Ronshaugen of Easthampton, Massachusetts, brother and sister-in-law, James and Mary Jo Ronshaugen of East Helena, Montana, and sister-in-law Judy Ronshaugen of Webster, South Dakota. He is also survived by his father-in-law Robert (Alva) DeMarais, and two brothers-in-law, John DeMarais, and Bob DeMarais.



He is preceded in death by his son, William; his parents; sister, Mary Christopherson; twin brother, Howard and nephew, Jim Christopherson.

Steve was raised on a family farm near Webster, SD and graduated from Webster High School, class of 1966. He served in the South Dakota National Guard for 6 years. Steve graduated from South Dakota State University in Brookings with a BS in Agricultural Economics.

Steve was united in marriage to his college sweetheart, Janet DeMarais on February 20, 1971 at Aberdeen, SD. They lived in Sturgis for 2 years where Steve worked with Farmers Home Administration. He began his career with the Bureau of Reclamation in 1973 when they moved to Huron, SD and then Fort Morgan, CO. In 1977 they moved to Grand Island where Steve continued working for the Bureau. He worked in the areas of land acquisition and programs coordination before becoming deputy area manager in 2002. Steve retired in 2008 with 37 years of service. He then worked for the Nebraska Department of Revenue from 2009-2013.



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He is a member of St. Pauls Lutheran Church. Steve loved to spend time with his family. Together they enjoyed boating, fishing, camping and traveling. He was an avid Nebraska football fan. He also liked to spend time at the farm in South Dakota.

Memorials are suggested to St. Pauls Lutheran Church.

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## **Former Denver Employee George Richard “Rich” Hagan dies**

Born in 1924 in Hannibal, Missouri to George & Hazel Hagan, Rich passed away April 14, 2014, of natural causes in Bozeman, Montana where he had lived for the past four years. Previously, Rich resided with his late (August, 2012) wife, Milly (Barnes) Hagan in Loveland, Colorado where, together, they built their own home.

Rich grew up in Mexico, Missouri where his Mexico High School track record was broken only recently. He and Milly met at twelve years of age. They married in 1945 when he left his studies at the University of Missouri to join the US Navy. He served as a radio operator on the USS California in the Pacific during WWII. Following the war, he returned to Denver University in Colorado to finish his degree. Throughout his 35-year career he worked as a civil engineer for the US Bureau of Reclamation on water projects in six western states. He retired in 1980.

Loveland Meals on Wheels had no better friend than Rich Hagan! He was a 30-year volunteer who delivered meals in his dilapidated red Toyota pick-up. He shared his love of fly-fishing, camping, hunting, hiking, and road trips with his family and friends. Fishing trips on the Yellowstone, Tongue, Madison, Missouri, Snake, Colorado, and Gunnison rivers provide salty memories treasured by all. When no one else was able to land a trout, Rich could. His casting prowess, ability to read water, and luck were legendary!

In all ways, Rich was the epitome of the “Greatest Generation.” All who walked his path will miss his generous, sweet, and genuine fun-loving spirit. He is survived by his elder brother, Sydney Hagan, his children, Cindy Owings (husband Graham McIlwaine) and Richard Hagan (wife Noelle Hagan) four grand children, Maya Owings (Tim Ranahan), Nicholas Hagan, Celia Hagan, Ian Hagan and great-grand son, Otis Ranahan, sister-in-law, Carol Harfert and brother-in-law, Allen McGlone plus nine nieces and nephews. Our family thanks all those at Bear Creek Respite who cared for our father and his special friend Edith, who made his final years a joy.

A graveside service will be held in Loveland, Colorado at a future date.  
Condolences and memories may be shared with the family at [www.dahlcares.com](http://www.dahlcares.com)

Read more: <http://www.mexicoledger.com/article/20140422/News/140429645#ixzz30ZBvYnR5>

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## Former UC Region Employee Herman Wittman dies

Herman Wittman passed away on Dec. 20, 2013, of complications associated with long-term cancer issues. He was 92 years old. He was born in Sydney on Feb. 20, 1921. His parents were the late Katherine (Schleilining) and Fredrick Wittman. His formative years were spent in eastern Montana and later in Tacoma, Wash.



In 1940, Herman entered the U.S. Army and served in the Pacific in three combat theaters during World War II. He was awarded two Bronze Stars and other awards. He attained the rank of captain and held various leadership positions. He was able to withstand the rigors of training to become a Green Beret at the age of 45. Herman recently flew to Washington, D.C., with the Montana Honor Flight to visit the WW II Veterans Memorial.

Herman studied journalism at the University of Omaha in Nebraska where he earned a bachelor's.

Herman worked as a professional photographer, which included jobs at the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. While at the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, he managed the photography department and was the public information officer in Farmington, N.M.

Herman married Mildred Marie Trast on Feb. 4, 1949. Herman had two sons and one adopted daughter from Milli's previous marriage. Those surviving are Laurie M. Hoobs of Emmett, Idaho, Gregory P. (Karan) Wittman of Reno, Nev., and Mark A. Wittman of Helena. Also surviving are four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Herman was very involved in church and community activities. For many years, he was active in the Western Montana Boy Scouts of America where he received the Silver Reclamation. He became involved with the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association, where he held several national level offices. He was a regular participant in the Montana Legacy Legislature for many years.



Herman had many hobbies that included hunting, fishing, gardening, RVing and boating. He was a longtime member on the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, where Herman participated in both quartets and choirs. He will be missed by both his family and many friends.

A memorial service will be held at the Plymouth Congregational Church at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 26, on the corner of Winne and S. Oaks. Cremation has taken place under direction of Stevenson Funeral Homes.

Memorials may be made in Herman's name to the Fort Harrison Military Museum, P.O. Box 125, Fort Harrison, MT 59636.

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### **Former PN Region Employee LaVern M. Conner dies**

LaVern M. Conner, 88, of Quincy, WA, died on Saturday, April 19, 2014. LaVern was born at home on November 23, 1925, in Burwell NE, the fourth son of nine children. While in high school, he spent his summers doing various jobs around the community to help support the family. He graduated from high school in Burwell, NE in June 1944. Shortly after graduating, LaVern and his family moved to Fruitland, ID to a farm they homesteaded. Four days after arriving, LaVern received his draft notice and had to return to Burwell for induction into the Army. While he was stationed in Europe, he earned three Combat Stars and a Purple Heart. Following discharge in May 1946, LaVern returned to Fruitland, ID, where he worked for three years as a farm laborer. Seeking further opportunities, he moved to Portland, OR in March of 1949. In Portland, he met Alta Heath and they married on September 9, 1950.



During their six and a half years in Portland, the couple had four children; a son, followed by three daughters. LaVern worked as a furniture assemblyman until March 1957. LaVern and his family relocated to Fruitland, ID, where he worked with the Black Canyon Irrigation District. In 1963, they moved to Quincy, WA to begin employment with the Bureau of Reclamation Irrigation District. LaVern worked at the Columbia Basin District for a total of 26 years as a Ditch Rider and later, as an Assistant Watermaster. LaVern's wife of 60 years passed away in Quincy on February 24, 2011.



LaVern will be remembered for his commitment to family and his faith. He was respected and honest in his dealing with others. The Depression era helped form his strong work ethic and sense of responsibility. Though he was a serious man, in later years, he was recognized by his dry sense of humor. Things he most enjoyed were visits from his kids, his garden, cars, walks, watching sports, hunting, fishing, and sitting quietly with Alta on the patio. He additionally enjoyed escaping the Washington winters by snow-birding in Arizona. LaVern was a pragmatist with a strong sense of survival that carried him through difficult times.

LaVern is survived by his four children: Larry Conner, Marcy Hutchins, Delores Guest, and Karla Thompson; his sisters, Anna Rickard and Alta Southwell; 17 grandchildren; and 30 great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents, Stephen Jay and Helena Conner; and six brothers, Stephen Henry Conner, Calvin E. Conner, Clayton Conner, Stanley Jay Conner, Joseph Edward Conner and Phillip Conner.

Funeral Services will be held at the Church of the Nazarene in Quincy, WA on Sunday, April 27, 2014, at 2:30 p.m. A luncheon will be served at the church at 12:30, prior to the Service. Please make any memorial donations to the Quincy Church of the Nazarene or to the American Cancer Society. Arrangements by Telford's Chapel of the Valley, East Wenatchee.

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