



Natalie B. Huff
Program Manager
For EEO and Diversity

September 2005
Volume 1, Issue 14

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

NOAA Fisheries Welcomes Student Interns

NOAA's Worklife Center Renamed

NOAA Employees Race for the Cure

Upcoming National Conferences

Teleworkers Increase in NOAA Fisheries

Remembering Dr. Nancy Foster

October is National Disability Awareness Month

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

NMFS EEO and Diversity Office
1315 East-West Highway, Room 15416
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301-713-1456

William T. Hogarth, Ph.D.
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries

John Oliver
Deputy Assistant Administrator for Operations

Jim Balsiger
Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs

"Diversity On The Move"



The NOAA Fisheries EEO/Diversity Communiqué

NOAA Fisheries Welcomes 2005 Student Interns

Each year students, both graduates and undergraduates, look to the Department of Commerce and NOAA for internship opportunities. Whether their discipline is in business, communications, graphic design or math, management makes every effort to ensure that students selected are provided an opportunity to participate in hands-on activities that relate, not only to the mission of the agency, but their stud-



Student interns working in the NEFSC prepare for a day out.

ies. Success is often achieved as a result of the many mentors and other volunteers who play a key role in the development of



Christopher Lotson, a student intern with NOAA Fisheries Headquarters office assists Ms. Erika Parker at the annual Maury Project, a program for teachers.

students skills whether they are scientific or administrative in nature.

In the Northeast Fisheries Science Center, Kevin Chu, along with the Northeast Sum-

mer Student Internship Committee, make their 10-week program a success through the planning of field trips and seminars and working with the students on presentations they can build on once they are back at school. This year students in the Northeast spent time at the University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Oceanography observing fishing gear deployment. In addition they participated in catch classification on a research vessel.



Just a few of the many students participating in the NOAA Fisheries internship programs.

In headquarters students became actively involved in the creation of ARC Maps, data entry, and web design. Others assisted in the development of outreach materials for use at local and national training conferences, i.e. the Maury Project, SACNAS, AISES, etc.

According to the Office of Personnel Management, internship programs continue to be a vital part of Federal agencies throughout the United States. In addition to the career intern program, the government sponsors programs that place students in temporary jobs, and some of those can lead to full-time employment. For more information about these programs, please visit:

<http://www.studentjobs.gov/>

Ceremony Marks the Renaming of the NOAA Worklife Center

Recently, the NOAA Worklife Center was renamed after the late James D. Martin, a program analyst with NOAA's Marine and Aviation Operations office (NMAO).

During the dedication ceremony which took place on the campus of the Silver Spring complex, Jim was remembered as a dedicated employee who untiringly worked to create a place in which all people were heard and valued. Tim Kenney, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for NOAA reflected on Jim's contributions. "He was extremely concerned about making sure that the diversity initiatives were an integral part of all strategic planning."



As a father to a young son, Jim recognized the importance of education as well. While he was not formally tasked to work on education issues for NMAO, he took it upon himself to find ways to share the NOAA story with his community. One of his most cherished accomplishments was the formation of a partnership with Shepherd Elementary School in Washington, D.C. He later had NMAO adopt the school.

NOTE: Jim was the first victim of the D.C. area snipers on October 2, 2002, as he was standing in the parking lot of a Wheaton, Maryland, grocery store. He was there to buy groceries for his church.

For more information about the James D. Martin Worklife Center, please visit:

<http://www.rdc.noaa.gov/~Diversity/employeeworklifecenter/>

NOAA Employees Race for the Cure

On June 4, 2005, participants at the 2005 Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation National Race for the Cure took a bold step in the fight against cancer as they descended on the National Mall in Washington DC. Over 47,000 runners and walkers, including nearly 3,700 breast



Pat Simms, John Oliver and Gloria Thompson prepare for the big race.

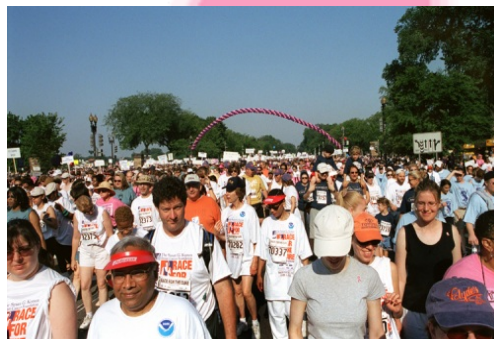
cancer survivors, participated in the 16th annual 5K event in Washington, D.C., to raise money for breast cancer research, education, screening and treatment programs. Joining this tremendous event was the NOAA Team, "Running with the Currents". This fantastic group of over 200 NOAA men and women were led by none other than our own Vice Admiral Lautenbacher, and his wife Susan. Also joining this great group was John Oliver, the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Fisheries; Gloria Thompson, Special Assistant to Dr. Hogarth, and Pat Simms, the Executive Assistant to Vice Admiral Lautenbacher, Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere.

According to Gloria, a breast cancer survivor, all of the NOAA participants were excited about the opportunity to be a part of this annual event. She stated, "for many, this race is a time to remember and honor family, friends and co-workers who have lost their battle with breast cancer and it's a time to celebrate those who are survivors. It is a very moving experience and one that I look forward to each year."

As Nancy Brinker, Founder of the Komen Foundation, said in her speech given before the Race this year: "But never forget — every day is race day! So keep running! Keep walking! Keep standing up! Keep

speaking out! Keep fighting! Keep hoping! Keep believing! We're getting closer! We WILL find the cure! We WILL defeat this disease!"

The Komen National Race is one of more than 100 5K runs/fitness walks in its signa-



ture program, the Komen Race for the Cure® Series. The largest series of 5K runs/fitness walks in the world, the Komen Race Series raises significant funds and awareness for the fight against breast cancer, celebrating breast cancer survivorship and honoring those who lost their battle with the disease.

More about the Komen Foundation

The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation was established in 1982 by Nancy G. Brinker to honor the memory of her sister, Susan G. Komen, who died from breast cancer at the age of 36. Today, the Komen Foundation is an international organization with a network of more than 75,000 active volunteers working through local Affiliates and events like the Komen Race for the Cure® to eradicate breast cancer as a life-threatening disease. A global leader in the fight against breast cancer, the foundation fulfills its mission through support of innovative breast cancer research grants, meritorious awards and educational, scientific and community outreach programs around the world. Together with its Affiliate Network, corporate partners and generous donors, the Komen Foundation has raised nearly \$740 million for the fight against breast cancer. For more information on breast health or breast cancer, visit the foundation's Web site at: www.komen.org or call the Foundation's National Toll-Free Breast Care Helpline at 1.800. I'M AWARE®.

Did you know???

The five-year survival rate for breast cancer is 95 percent when the disease is discovered while still confined to the breast.

Upcoming National Conferences

SACNAS (September 29-October 2, 2005)

For over 30 years, the Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) has provided strong national leadership in improving and expanding opportunities for minorities in the scientific workforce and academia; mentoring college students within science, mathematics and engineering; and supporting quality pre-college science education. This year, attendees will meet in Denver, Colorado. For more information please visit: <http://www.sacnas.org>

HACU (October 15-19, 2005)

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) will hold its 19th Annual Conference in Phoenix, Arizona. This conference fosters and identifies graduate education opportunities for Hispanic students and graduates. Speakers will include Raul Grijalva, United States Representative of the 7th Congressional District of Arizona, and Phil Gordon, Mayor, City of Phoenix, Arizona. For more information please visit: <http://www.hacu.net>

SEAFWA (October 16-19, 2005)

The Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) will hold its 59th annual conference in St. Louis, Missouri. This conference is held for state and federal wildlife and fish agencies personnel, conservation groups, and wildlife and fisheries students to address opportunities and challenges affecting wildlife and fisheries in the southeast. For more information please visit: <http://www.seafwa.org>

AISES (November 3-5, 2005)

The American Indian Science & Engineering Society (AISES) will hold its 27th Annual National Conference, in Charlotte, North Carolina. This 3-day event includes a Career Fair, dynamic speakers, panel discussions, and workshops for students, teachers, and professionals. For additional information please visit: <http://www.aises.org>

IMPORTANT NOTICE
The *Perspectives of Employment for Persons with Disabilities* conference will take place on December 7-9, 2005, at the Bethesda Hyatt, in Maryland. For more information, contact: Isabelle Howes at the Graduate School, USDA, voice or TTY (202) 314-4713. Don't miss it!

More Teleworkers Noted in NOAA Fisheries

According to our latest statistics **over 18%** of NOAA Fisheries work force are now teleworkers. While the numbers are not as large as some would like, it does reflect a steady increase. Interestingly enough, while Telework continues to emerge as an important work option for the Federal Government and its employees, not all employees have expressed interest in working at home. As one employee noted, *"I prefer being at my office. The location is good, the atmosphere is good. So why telework?"* Still, the push is on for agencies to do more to encourage teleworking. In an article from the **Washington Post** dated June 14, 2005, Rep. Frank R. Wolf (R-Va.) is pushing several agencies to certify that they are increasing telecommuting opportunities for their workforces. So the work continues. If you are an employee interested in teleworking, contact your immediate supervisor. Management will need to review your position, and consider other factors before making a final determination.

Below are a few FAQ's and answers that we hope will shed light on this topic.

Q. Does an employee have a right to telework? Could an employee be forced to work at home?

A. No, to both questions. Subject to any applicable union agreement, management decides whether the employee can work off-site, depending on the nature of the position and the characteristics of the employee. Management has the right to end an employee's use of the telework option if, for example, the employee's performance declines or if the arrangement no longer meets the organization's needs.

Q. What about the impact on the office when some employees are working at an alternative worksite?

A. Certain guidelines must be established to minimize any adverse impact on other staff members before employees begin to work at alternative worksites. The overall interests of the office must take precedence over working at alternative sites. A supervisor may require an employee to work at the main worksite on a day scheduled for an alternative worksite if the needs of the office so require. Telework

should not put a burden on staff remaining in the office. An equitable distribution of workload should be maintained, and methods should be instituted to ensure that main office employees are not saddled with a teleworker's responsibilities.

Q. Can teleworkers follow an alternative work schedule?

A. Yes. In fact, telework schedules should be sufficiently flexible to permit periodic work schedule adjustments. Initial teleworking schedules may require trial and error adjustments to determine the optimal schedule that meets the needs of the employee and the organization.

For more information about Telework in NOAA Fisheries, please contact Natalie Huff on 301-713-1456 or visit:

<http://home.nmfs.noaa.gov/employee/telework/>

___//___//___



Remembering Dr. Nancy Foster

Dr. Nancy Foster, at the time of her death in June 2000, was the Assistant Administrator for the National Ocean Service (NOS). During her short stay at NOS, she increased the agency's strength and stature, and positioned NOS to lead the nation in coastal stewardship. From 1993-1997, Dr. Foster served as Deputy Assistant Administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), where she helped to create a more efficient, responsive, and scientifically rigorous agency.

While many will remember Dr. Foster for her work as a conservationist and her stewardship of the National Marine Sanctuaries, she will also be remembered as a strong champion of diversity and a true mentor who went out of her way to ensure that employee issues were not only heard, but valued and acted upon. *NBH*

October is National Disability Awareness Month

The **Rehabilitation Act of 1973** was the first "rights" legislation to prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities. However, this law applied to programs conducted by Federal agencies, those receiving federal funds, such as colleges participating in federal student loan programs, Federal employment, and employment practices of businesses with federal contracts. The standards for determining employment discrimination under the Rehabilitation Act are the same as those used in [Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act](#).

Who is protected from employment discrimination?

Employment discrimination is prohibited against "qualified individuals with disabilities."

Who is a qualified individual with a disability?

A **qualified** employee or applicant with a disability is an individual who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the *essential functions* of the job in question. Reasonable accommodation may include, but is not limited to:

- Making existing facilities used by employees readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.
- Job restructuring, modifying work schedules, reassignment to a vacant position;
- Acquiring or modifying equipment or devices, adjusting or modifying examinations, training materials, or policies, and providing qualified readers or interpreters.

What is "reasonable accommodation"?

Reasonable accommodation is any modification or adjustment to a job or the work environment that will enable a qualified applicant or employee with a disability to participate in the application process or to perform the essential job functions. Reasonable accommodations also includes adjustments to assure that a qualified individual with a disability has rights and privileges in employment equal to those of employees without disabilities.

NOTE: An employer is required to make a reasonable accommodation to the known dis-

ability of a qualified applicant or employee if it would not impose an "undue hardship" on the operation of the employer's business. Undue hardship is defined as an action requiring significant difficulty or expense when considered in light of factors such as an employer's size, financial resources, and the nature and structure of its operation.

REMINDER: An employer is not required to lower quality or production standards to make an accommodation; nor is an employer obligated to provide personal use items such as glasses or hearing aids.

If you have additional questions on this issue, please contact Natalie Huff, the NOAA Fisheries Program Manager for EEO and Diversity. She can be reached on 301-713-1456.

JOB ACCOMMODATION NETWORK (JAN)

"Increasing the employability of people with disabilities"

JAN is a free consulting service of the U.S. Department of Labor's office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). This service provides information about job accommodation, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the employability of people with disabilities.

JAN assists employers, people with disabilities rehabilitation professionals and others to improve the employability of people with disabilities. JAN's work helps:

Employers

- Hire retain and prompt qualified employees with disabilities
- Provide information on accommodation options and practical solutions
- Become educated about their responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Rehabilitation Act
- Reduce workers; compensation and other insurance costs
- Address issues pertaining to accessibilities

People with disabilities

- Become educate about their rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Acquire accommodation options
- Learn about other government and placement agencies

People affected by disabilities

- Discover local, regional, and national organizations, resources, and support groups
- Obtain information.

JAN facilitates the employment and retention of workers with disabilities by providing individualized worksite accommodation consultation and training through its toll free number and electronic services.

The Searchable On-line Resource (SOAR), another service provided by JAN, is designed to let users independently explore various accommodation options for people with disabilities in work and educational settings. After answering a few questions, SOAR will automatically provide you with personalized accommodation information and If the accommodation requires equipment or assistive technology then SOAR will provide information about where the product can be purchased.

For information please visit:

JAN's toll free number:
1-800-526-7234 (V/TTY)

JAN's website:
www.jan.wvu.edu

Searchable On-line Accommodation (SOAR)
www.jan.wvu.edu/soar

To subscribe to JAN E-News, just e-mail subscribe@jan.icdi.wvu.edu. Be sure to include the e-mail address at which you want to receive the newsletter.

The NOAA Fisheries EEO and Diversity *Communique* is a Quarterly publication for NMFS employees. Address comments or article suggestions to Natalie Huff, Editor, at: Natalie.Huff@noaa.gov.