

*“There is a sense ... that the time has come for real change—for not just tinkering around the edges, but for something much more fundamental. We need a model fitting into the 21st century, a model that will facilitate more flexible management ...”*

*- Paul Volker  
Address to Council for  
Excellence in Government,  
July 17, 2002*

## 4. Addressing Unique Programmatic Challenges

As we have seen, the Department faces a number of broad mission challenges with human capital implications. However, three trans-Departmental challenges are receiving special attention due to their extreme urgency and importance:

- Indian Trust Fund Management
- Wildland Fire Management
- Law Enforcement and Security

**Meeting each of these challenges involves several bureaus working collaboratively with senior Departmental leadership to examine and reorganize structures and practices and build a workforce that possesses the skills needed to meet emerging demands.** These efforts serve as a model for the kind of thorough re-examination of work processes and partnerships that will assist the Department in addressing its human capital challenges.

### **Indian Trust Management**

The most serious management challenge currently facing the Department is effectively meeting its fiduciary responsibilities in Indian Trust Management. Our performance goals include improving Indian trust ownership information and management of the trust land and its natural resource assets, managing trust fund assets for timely and productive use, and meeting industry standards for beneficiary services.

The Department has underway a process of building relationships and understanding with the trust beneficiaries. Working with a Tribal Task Force of 24 tribal leaders selected by their peers from tribal governments throughout the United States, Interior officials and tribal leaders are working through the complex issues and challenges of trust reform on a government-to-government basis to seek solutions to some long-standing problems facing both tribes and the Department.



Various organizational proposals have been advanced to improve the effectiveness of trust asset management. These proposals are now being assessed to develop a management structure that provides effective stewardship of trust assets, is consistent with the goals of the Administration and the Secretary, and also meets the expectations of the U. S. District Court. It is virtually certain that any outcome will require restructuring of management functions and hence will have major human capital implications.

A thorough review and standardization of trust business processes must be the foundation of any new organization. Currently, **a three-stage approach is underway to improve the basic business processes involved in delivering trust services.** These include:

- Understanding and documenting the eight key business processes of trust management as they currently exist;
- Re-engineering these existing processes to meet acceptable trust standards; and
- Implementing new processes that are fully integrated and meet fiduciary business process and performance metrics.

Redesigned work processes and practices are keys to successful human capital planning in this critical area. We will use the findings of the business process analyses to determine the competencies and skills needed in the new business environment. The DOI University has developed two workforce planning training courses to serve both the needs of those responsible for creating and implementing workforce plans and the human resources staff that must assist these efforts. Trust managers and human resources staff will work together to support the organizational structure with appropriate staff who possess the training, and skill levels needed to meet our business practice standards.

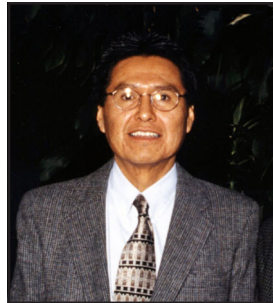
In addition to workforce planning, other related human capital efforts currently underway or under consideration include:

*Trust Staff Training and Development.* Every employee engaged in trust management activities must have an individual development plan (IDP). At a minimum, each IDP identifies the short-term (one year or less) and long-term developmental objectives (knowledge, skills and abilities needed for the position); and, developmental assignments, on-the-job training, and formal training that will help provide the knowledge, skills and abilities needed for the position.

*Examination of Special Personnel Flexibilities.* Similar to the Internal Revenue Service, Federal Aviation Administration and Transportation Security Administration, which have obtained special personnel authorities to accomplish their challenging missions, the Department will explore whether such authorities are needed to attract and retain employees with the requisite skill mix to rapidly transform our management of trust assets. This assessment will also explore how effectively and appropriately trust management bureaus are implementing existing special authorities for attracting and retaining a skilled workforce in this area.

*Royalty Internship Program.* Tribes are becoming partners in managing mineral resource functions currently performed on their behalf. The Minerals Management Service has underway a Royalty Internship Program, where mineral-producing tribes can develop their royalty management expertise in revenue accounting, report processing, exception resolution, product valuation and audit.

*“Throughout the years since MMS was created, the Navajo Nation and MMS staff have continuously built upon a successful government-to-government working relationship... Today, we can honestly say that this relationship is one in which the Navajo Nation is certainly proud.”*



*– Perry Shirley, former intern in the Royalty Internship Program, now Associate Director of the Navajo Nation's Minerals Department and Chairman of MMS's Royalty Policy Committee*

## Wildland Fire Management

Catastrophic fires threaten the American people, their property, and our environment, particularly the forests and rangelands of the West. Each year these severe wildfires destroy hundreds of millions of trees and invaluable habitat. These unnaturally extreme fires occur in a context of deteriorating forest and rangeland health, the result of a century of well-intentioned but misguided fire management practices. About 190 million acres of Federal forests and rangelands in the lower 48 states face high risk of catastrophic fire due to deteriorating ecosystem health and drought. We need renewed efforts to restore our public lands to healthy conditions.

Using a cooperative approach, Secretary Norton and Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman signed an historic agreement earlier this year with 17 western governors, county commissioners, state foresters, and tribal officials. They agreed on a plan to make communities and the environment safer from wildfires by coordinating Federal, state, and local action. **Under the 10-year Comprehensive Fire Implementation Plan, Federal wildfire agencies, affected states, counties, local governments and tribes agreed to the same goals, implementation outcomes, performance measures and tasks that need to be accomplished by specific deadlines.** The comprehensive agreement covers all phases of the fire program, including fire preparedness, suppression and prevention, hazardous fuels management, restoration of burned areas, community assistance, and monitoring of progress.

More specifically, the Plan lays out four key goals and implementation outcomes:

- **Improve Fire Prevention and Suppression:** Losses of life are eliminated, and firefighter injuries and damage to communities and the environment from severe, unplanned and unwanted wildland fire are reduced.

- **Reduce Hazardous Fuels:**

Hazardous fuels are treated, using appropriate tools, to reduce the risk of unplanned and unwanted wildland fire to communities and the environment.

- **Restore Fire-Adapted Ecosystems:**

Fire-adapted ecosystems are restored, rehabilitated and maintained, using appropriate tools, in a manner that will provide sustainable environmental, social and economic benefits.

- **Promote Community Assistance:** Communities at risk have increased capacity to prevent losses from wildland fire and the potential to seek economic opportunities resulting from treatments and services.

Although firefighting efforts are largely effective (99 percent of fires are controlled during first attack), they are dangerous, uncertain, and expensive. The real antidote to catastrophic wildfires is to reduce fuel hazards and return our forests and rangelands to healthy conditions. Tree thinning and removal of dense underbrush can ensure thriving forests while reducing risks of catastrophic fires and the dangers they pose to firefighters and communities.

The human capital dimension of this undertaking is significant. In addition to the enormous challenges of fire suppression, the Department is actively involved in restoring ecosystems to an appropriate pre-fire regime, based on scientific information. To meet this growing workload, aggressive recruitment, hiring, and training processes have been deployed. Contracts with qualified firms and grants to local, state, and tribal partners are also integral elements to our success.



The size and significance of the fire management challenge require a number of human resources related activities, many of which are already underway.

- *Recruitment.* We have increased the number of positions in the fire program (also in resource programs) by 1,800 since FY 2000. However, certain personnel shortages persist for mission critical work. Often, managers have found there are not enough applicants for positions with the correct skills and experience for mid-level supervisory or senior Incident Command firefighting positions. Common fire vacancy postings and recruitment approaches are being employed and outreach efforts in this area will be intensified.
- *Staffing Models.* New staffing models must be developed to address the changing mission of the fire program, current mid-level supervisory gaps, and the impending exodus of senior firefighters. New training programs are needed, especially to accelerate the education of mid-level supervisory personnel such as engine foremen, crew bosses, strike team leaders, and fire management officers. Consideration of pay scale parity and the use of hazard pay differentials similar to those commonly

provided for fire suppression personnel should be considered for prescribed fire specialists.

- Use of Qualified Personnel from Other Programs.* The Fire Program uses fire-qualified personnel from other program areas to fill wildland fire suppression positions during peak times. In the past, we were able to meet the relatively short-term suppression needs for experienced fire-fighters and the critically needed mid-level management firefighting positions by mobilizing qualified personnel from other areas within the Department. However, because of the intense and extended duration of fire seasons, this practice is becoming less desirable. For example, staff needed to do fuels treatment projects are increasingly diverted to fire suppression efforts, causing delays in project planning. A number of possible solutions are being examined, including financial incentives for collateral fire-fighters, requiring mandatory fire training and assignment for fire-qualified employees commensurate with their physical condition and job, and continuing education in fire suppression and fuels management for all part time fire personnel. The career seasonal workforce remains the backbone of fire suppression and actions must be taken to keep it strong.
- Partnerships.* Forest health and wildland fire prevention efforts can only be successful through collaboration with states, local governments, tribes, and other partners. President Bush recently announced his support for legislation to provide fire-fighting agencies with permanent authority for stewardship contracting to partner with the private sector in areas such as rangeland and forest re-



habilitation and restoration. Under stewardship contracting arrangements, contractors receive forest byproducts from Federal lands in exchange for performing specific work such as habitat improvements and forest thinning. Stewardship contracting will give the Department access to experience and resources that would be otherwise difficult to obtain.

Similarly, the fire agencies will need to work more closely with rural and volunteer fire departments, which in turn respond to fires on Federal lands. Volunteer and rural fire departments are the first line of initial attack in up to 90 percent of all wildland fires. Federal agencies must build skills in their workforce to ensure that communication, consultation, and cooperation are second nature.

Working with a variety of Federal, state, and local partners, including private sector growers, the Department and the Forest Service are building the capacity to supply native plant materials for emergency stabilization and longer-term rehabilitation and restoration efforts. This partnership is developing a reliable source of native vegetation for ecosystem restoration projects.

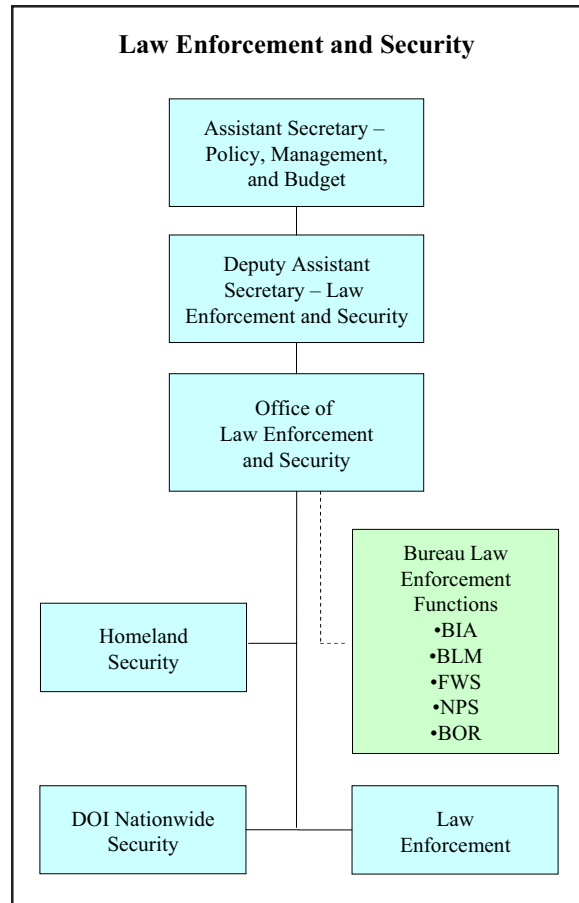
Finally, Student Conservation Association (SCA) volunteers have enlisted in the fight against wildfires. SCA volunteers are doing vital work on many forest health restoration and fire safety education projects. The number of volunteers doing such work quadrupled last year. These young men and women could serve as a potential pool for meeting the significant skill shortfalls in fire management identified above.

- *Accountability and Performance.* The Department has appointed a full-time fuels treatment director to insure accountability for fuels treatment projects. The Department and the Forest Service are developing common, outcome-oriented performance measures consistent with the Government Performance and Results Act. Bureaus involved in wildland fire management are including implementation of the National Fire Plan in annual performance evaluations of their staff.

## Law Enforcement, Public Safety, and Security

The Secretary has directed the Department to develop and maintain its law enforcement capability in the most professional, modern, and effective manner possible. To achieve this objective, in March 2001 the Secretary requested that the Inspector General conduct a comprehensive assessment of law enforcement within the Department and identify organizational and management strategies that would enhance law enforcement performance and professionalism across the Department, including supervision and management structures.

With the **third largest public safety organization in government**, the Department has focused on this significant undertaking. The review resulted in strategic realignment of functions, including the establishment of a new senior level position to provide overall Department leadership.



The Department, working closely with its law enforcement officials, is **developing a clearly defined and documented set of policies, procedures, techniques, and mechanisms to guide this critical activity across all law enforcement bureau lines.** To address the 25 recommendations from the Inspector General’s study, the Secretary convened a Law Enforcement Review Panel comprising Office of the Secretary, bureau management, and Federal law enforcement officials including career DOI officers. On July 19, 2002, the Secretary commended the work of the panel and endorsed all of its recommendations for reform. The recommendations include:

- Procedures for the emergency deployment of law enforcement officers;

- Restructuring of bureau law enforcement operations and reporting relationships;
- Better allocation of law enforcement personnel;
- Improved security and emergency preparedness;
- Strengthened recruitment and training standards;
- Improved law enforcement data gathering and records management; and
- Greater budgetary oversight and accountability for law enforcement spending.



A significant challenge to the Department's law enforcement and security functions is how to balance and maintain current law enforcement activities while addressing increased homeland security issues. Law enforcement personnel face increasing challenges to protect our visitors, employees, and facilities.

In meeting the Department's law enforcement and security challenges, the Department has identified or has underway a number of human resources related activities.

- *Leadership.* To oversee and guide the Department's overall law enforcement and security effort, the Department created a new Deputy Assistant Secretary position for Law Enforcement and Security, appointing a law enforcement professional with broad Federal law enforcement and security experience.
- *Clearly Defined Roles and Responsibilities.* The roles and responsibilities for both uniformed officers and special agents to carry out "homeland security" must be clearly defined

by the new Deputy Assistant Secretary for Law Enforcement and Security. This definition will help maintain a balance between natural resource issues and criminal environmental impacts versus protecting public lands from external threats.

- *Skill Definition.* In defining these roles and responsibilities, attention must also be paid to clearly defining the skill set needed for those performing "homeland security" functions. Core inter-bureau training must be identified and developed to mold these new skills. Because of the extensive border lands managed by DOI, the Department must assess its responsibility in protecting our nation's borders in concert with the new Department of Homeland Security. The Department must ensure that its law enforcement personnel are properly trained and equipped for the challenges of enforcement on the border. Cross-Department training must be defined, organized and implemented.
- *Common Staffing Models and Methodologies.* The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Law Enforcement and Security and the DOI bureaus are developing a comprehensive analysis of the number and types of law enforce-

ment positions needed throughout the Department. Common staffing models and methodologies will be developed to ensure consistent approaches between programs and detail the appropriate staffing and deployment patterns (numbers, seniority, geographic location, required competencies, etc.) to be used in general or in specific situations. This analysis may also identify situations such as facility security that could be obtained from the private sector with or without a supplement of full-time DOI uniformed officers.

- *Standardized Position Descriptions.* The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Law Enforcement and Security, working with the Department's law enforcement professionals, is developing standardized position descriptions to ensure consistent grade structures and career paths across the Department. Training and development profiles associated with the standardized position descriptions will be crafted for core inter-bureau training, refresher/mandatory training, and other development to ensure that the law enforcement workforce maintains the competencies to carry out mission-oriented law enforcement.
- *Training.* Core inter-bureau training must be developed to build new skills and ensure law enforcement personnel possess the necessary competencies. Departmental law enforcement officers will use this training to develop a better understanding of the differences in Bureau enforcement issues, priorities and techniques. While most officers receive similar basic training, the Department would benefit from having officers cross-trained in bureau-specific enforcement issues.
- *Developmental Assignments.* Opportunities should be developed for law enforcement managers to participate in extended assignments with other bureaus. These managers

and officers would bring new ideas to the other law enforcement programs and gain valuable new experience for their own bureaus. Additional opportunities should be provided for field law enforcement personnel to work within the management structure of the bureau law enforcement headquarter offices as a way of increasing their knowledge of administrative policies, procedures and information systems.

- *Pay Equity.* In order to retain its trained law enforcement staff, pay equity issues need to be regularly assessed. The Department monitors the pay for DOI law enforcement officers to ensure it is on par with other Federal, state and local law enforcement agencies.

## Summary

By providing strategic guidance and direction; attracting, developing, and maintaining a skilled workforce; and setting, measuring, and achieving appropriate performance-based goals, we will accelerate our progress in meeting these three key programmatic challenges. ✓