Battling Brain Drain: Meeting the Challenge of Changing Workforce Needs

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Fish and Wildlife Conservation Offices

- Manage and restore Service trust fisheries
- Strong fish population assessment, monitoring and evaluation expertise
- Technical assistance to tribes
- Aquatic invasive species control
- Administer National Fish Passage Program and National Fish Habitat Action Plan
Drivers of Change

- Political landscape
- Advances in science
- Advances in technology
- Resource challenges
- Demographic changes
- Workforce shifts
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Drivers of Change: Resource Challenges

- Climate change
  - Connectivity
  - Habitat stability
- Expanding habitat restoration role
- Invasive species

*Project leaders will need new skills in negotiation, collaboration, facilitation, and leading across boundaries…*

  – *USFWS Workforce Plan FY2008-2013*
Aquatic Invasive Species

• Federal implementation lead of Aquatic Nuisance Species Prevention and Control Act of 1990

• Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force

• Social marketing approaches: Advances innovative public-private partnerships to prevent introduction and spread
Drivers of Change: Demographics

- The Baby Boom
- The Longevity Boom
- The Birth Dearth

The [highest priority] mission critical challenge likely to affect the Service is ... loss of valuable institutional knowledge, management expertise, and leadership capability through retirement and attrition.

– USFWS Workforce Plan FY2008-2013
Drivers of Change: Workforce Shifts

- Avocation as a vocation
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Education

- Family
- Aspiration
- Wealth
- Loyalty

The definition of the job and the workplace will change – and culture must begin to substitute for physical proximity in transmitting organizational DNA.

– USFWS Workforce Plan FY2008-2013
Increase Learning Opportunities

• “People are our most important asset,” so . . .
Look at training and education as the principal way to maintain and increase their value
• Leverage the existing infrastructure
• Escape the one-size-fits-all approach to learning
• Build knowledge networks

Adapted from Dychtwald et al. 2006; FWS 2008; and TWS 2009
Framework for Building a Learning Agency

• Commit to life-long learning for all employees
• Employ all channels of learning
• Leverage information technology
• Turn diversity into learning
• Develop and follow a learning agenda

Shamelessly adapted from Dychtwald et al. 2006
Communicating the Role of Learning

• Measure what you can
• Accept lack of precision as a fact of life
• Communicate results

Virtually plagiarized from Dychtwald et al. 2006