

Summary: Investigation of Management Practices at FWS Region 5

Report Date: October 31, 2017

OIG investigated allegations that U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) personnel within the Region 5 Headquarters office in Hadley, MA, violated procurement regulations; engaged in retaliation and reprisal, created a hostile work environment, and otherwise mismanaged the Region. We investigated 19 allegations and examined whether an overall hostile work environment and culture of reprisal existed within the 3 regional divisions where most of the complaints originated.

We did not substantiate most of the allegations, but we did substantiate three of them:

- A Region 5 employee inflated performance evaluations and violated Federal regulations by awarding Quality Step Increases to compensate those employees for a reduction in locality pay following an office move.
- Numerous hardcopy contract files were missing from the regional contracting office.
- Region 5 officials violated the FWS policy and OIG directives when they improperly and without authorization distributed copies of an unredacted OIG investigative report, which contained personally identifiable information.

We did not find evidence that an overall hostile work environment or culture of reprisal existed within the Region 5 Headquarters office. Rather, we found that allegations of hostile work environment within specific work units had been reported to Region 5 management in the past, and Region 5 officials were aware of the issues, and had addressed or were working to address them.

This is a summary of a report of investigation that we provided to the Acting FWS Director for any action deemed appropriate.

