



UC Region Big Picture Issues from the Front Office Planning and Performance Management

By Brent Esplin
Deputy Regional Director



I recently returned from a 120 developmental assignment as part of the Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program. For my assignment, I worked in the Department's Office of Planning and Performance Management, where I had an opportunity to learn more about the Department in general, and more specifically, how the senior leadership is looking at and implementing strategic planning in guiding the mission of the Department.

Many of us have heard about the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) goals and may have been asked to provide data that is reported through the Commissioner's Office to the Department. I had the opportunity to see the other side of the curtain and to experience what goes on at the Department level with the data that is provided. Our former Commissioner and now Deputy Secretary Michael Connor has a quarterly meeting with the all of the Interior Bureaus' senior managers where key data is reviewed and discussed to see if we are on track to accomplish our goals.

The experience was beneficial to me is looking at the work that we do a little more strategically. My entire career has been spent in the field, were I've focused on the tactical issues of how to accomplish the work at hand. Thinking a little more strategically is looking down the road several years of what we need to accomplish and then aligning resources so that we can meet those challenges.

While I appreciated the opportunity to complete a developmental assignment, I am happy to be back in the Region. I get great personal satisfaction in the work that we do in Reclamation and in particular in our Region. The success of the Region depends on the individual contributions of each of you.

For those interested, I've include an excerpt of a paper that I developed on the topic of strategic planning and performance management for use in the upcoming of transition of leadership that will take place next month. Enjoy the reading if you are so inclined.

Background

Key objectives of strategic planning and performance measurement include improving government performance (i.e. effectiveness) by setting goals that reflect top priorities for accomplishment, utilizing



data to measure results, and communicating the results to the public. The Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRAMA) directs the executive branch of government to develop strategic and performance plans. Strategic plans must be updated every four years and are timed to coincide with presidential terms of office. Performance plans are updated annually and are linked to the President's annual budget submission to the Congress in February.

Strategic plans present the long-term goals and objectives an agency hopes to accomplish. Updates to strategic plans must be made available to the public no later than the first Monday in February in the year following a presidential inauguration. The GPRAMA stipulates that the strategic plan shall include:

- A comprehensive mission statement covering the major functions and operations of the agency
- Lists of goals and objectives, including outcome-oriented goals, for the major functions and operations of the agency; outcome goals should express the benefits to the public produced by the agency
- A description of how the goals and objectives are to be achieved
- A description of how the goals and objectives incorporate views and suggestions obtained through congressional consultation
- Identification of key factors external to the agency and beyond its control that could significantly affect the achievement of the goals and objective
- Creation of Agency Priority Goals that identify a specific high priority quantifiable target, usually an area of desired change or improvement, to be achieved in two years

Using the strategic goals and objectives, agencies then establish an annual process to set and monitor performance metrics. Agency performance plans, which are to be made available to the public no later than the first Monday in February each year, need to:

- Provide a basis for comparing actual program results with the established performance targets; and discuss corrective actions where performance targets are not met
- Establish performance indicators to be used in measuring or assessing progress toward each performance target
- Describe how the performance metrics contribute to the goals and objectives in the agency's strategic plan
- Express targets in an objective, quantifiable, and measureable form
- Establish performance targets during the year the plan is submitted and the subsequent fiscal year, displayed relative to the past five years of actual results
- Describe how the performance targets are to be achieved
- Identify which of the performance metrics are considered the agency's priority goals
- Describe how the agency will ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data used to measure goal progress

Department of the Interior's Strategic Plan and Performance Measures

The Department's current Strategic Plan (Plan) covers the years 2014-2018. The Plan contains 19 strategic goals, 38 related strategic objectives, 8 priority performance goals, and 117 performance measures that reflect the work of the Department's ten diverse bureaus and other offices. The strategic goals and related performance measures are presently organized into six mission areas, which are:

- Celebrating and enhancing America's great outdoors
- Strengthening Tribal Nations
- Powering our future and responsible use of our resources



- Engaging the next generation
- Ensuring healthy watersheds and sustainable, secure water supplies
- Building a landscape-level understanding of our resources

The Plan was developed through collaboration among the bureaus along with input from stakeholders. The existing Plan lists goals expected to be achieved by the conclusion of fiscal year 2018, assuming a reasonable level of resources. The goals are reviewed annually to track progress toward their accomplishment.

Performance measures are developed to provide the details of how the Department intends to achieve its strategic goals and objectives. The measures are reviewed annually with target adjustments made as necessary based on funding levels and actual performance. In order to minimize the administrative reporting burden on bureaus and offices these performance measures are designed to be representative indicators of performance across contributing programmatic areas rather than an exhaustive accounting of all activities that are being conducted.

Agency Priority Goals (APGs) are established for two year intervals. Existing agency priority goals cover the fiscal years 2016-17 and will be reviewed and updated for the fiscal years 2018-19. Progress on APGs achievements are reviewed with the Deputy Secretary on a quarterly basis.

Update of the Strategic Plan

The individual Bureaus and the Department are reviewing the strategic plan and performance measures in preparation for the update required by February 2018. The Department's Office of Planning and Performance Management has requested proposals by November 1, 2016, in preparation for discussions with the new administration.

Challenges to identifying performance measures

The diversity of the programs administered by the bureaus and offices of the Department, the geographic scope (including remote locations), working with natural and complex systems, and working with key stakeholders to gather data present some unique challenges to developing and reporting on meaningful performance measures for some of the Department's strategic goals and objectives. Listed below are some examples of challenges the Department faces in developing meaningful performance measures.

- a) Congress passed the Endangered Species Act in 1973 for the purpose of providing a means whereby the ecosystem, upon which threatened and endangered species depend on, may be conserved. The Secretary of the Interior has responsibilities to determine whether any species is either threatened or endangered, conduct reviews of listed species, develop and implement recovery plans, and consult with other agencies to ensure that their actions are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any threatened or endangered species.

The goal of recovery of threatened and endangered species often takes considerable time to achieve. Gaining an understanding of what led to the decline and how best to recover a listed species is normally done incrementally as science is developed to understand the natural systems, the factors leading to the species decline, and identification and implementation of appropriate actions. Directly measuring the progress of recovery actions in a consistent manner across the broad range of species and habitats is challenging, if not impractical. Multiple other confounding factors not under the bureau's control may affect the recovery. Trying to restore an entire species may take several years.



- b) Through hazardous fuel reduction programs, the Department is taking steps to reduce the severity and more easily suppress catastrophic wildland fires due to their threat to the public, firefighter safety, and damage to property. The costs of implementing hazardous fuels reduction programs vary by location and fuel types. While data is available to measure the costs of reducing hazardous fuels, a challenge is determining the reduced cost of wildland fire suppression that is a direct result of the fuel reduction programs because of other variables. An example of another variable includes the total cost of fighting the fire when the fire impacted area involves both treated and non-treated areas.
- c) Social and cultural factors may affect the ability to collect data from certain stakeholders. For example, while many Indian and Alaskan natives see the benefit of providing data in support of performance measurement for programs from which they benefit, others, acting as sovereign nations, feel less inclined to invest resources to collecting data for the Federal government.
- d) The Department distributes hundreds of millions of dollars, through the Wildlife Sport Fish and Restoration Program, from excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to State fish and wildlife agencies. Most state agencies do not report measurable data back to the Department on how the funds were utilized, which impacts the ability to develop and track performance measures.
- e) In some cases, the Department makes opportunities available to the private sector, such as energy resource development. The Department makes land and offshore tracts available for lease by private entities. However, the ultimate decision to develop the leases is up to the leaseholder and is dependent on economic and other factors such as fluctuating oil prices. The unpredictability of when a leaseholder will develop the resource impacts the targets for inspections for safety and environmental damage protection and revenue generation.
- f) The value of research programs administered by the Department is not always readily apparent in the year it is funded. The research results may answer some questions, but may also lead to additional research before it yields practical applications. Development of performance measures for research-related activities is challenging in some cases due to the nature of the research and the long timeframes required to see the results.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE AND BENEFICIAL USE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Despite these challenges, the Department's strategic goals, strategic objectives and performance metrics provide insights that are beneficial to the Department. The following considerations help provide a practical perspective on the effective use of performance information at the Department so that it is beneficial to public transparency and accountability, assist decision making, and increase the probability of mission success:



High-Flow Experiment Underway at Glen Canyon Dam Simulates Natural Flooding through Grand Canyon

By Marlon Duke
Public Affairs Officer



Click here to view footage of the 2016 fall HFE.

On November 7, the U.S. Department of the Interior initiated another high-flow release of water from Glen Canyon Dam in Arizona under an innovative science-based experimental plan. The fourth such release, the goal is to enhance the environment in Grand Canyon National Park and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area while continuing to meet water and power delivery needs and allowing continued scientific experimentation and monitoring on the Colorado River.

“Healthy watersheds are critical to the economy and environment, and our science-based approach demonstrates that protecting water

supplies alongside other resources tied to the river are not only compatible but intrinsically linked,” said Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell. “This latest release will provide critical fish and wildlife habitat, reduce erosion of archaeological sites and enhance recreational opportunities while meeting our obligations to water users in the region.”

The 96-hour-release will pick up enough sand from tributary channels to fill a building as big as a football field and as tall as the Washington Monument, all the way to the brim. These hundreds of thousands of tons of sediment will be re-deposited along downstream reaches as sandbars and beaches along the Colorado River, mimicking natural river flow.

The high-volume experimental releases are designed to restore sand features and associated backwater habitats to provide key fish and wildlife habitat, potentially reduce erosion of archaeological sites, restore and enhance riparian vegetation, increase beaches and enhance wilderness values along the Colorado River in Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and Grand Canyon National Park. The annual volume of water to be sent toward Lake Mead this year will not change as a result of the experiment – water releases in other months will be adjusted accordingly.



The decision to conduct this experiment followed substantial consultation with Colorado River Basin states, American Indian Tribes and involved federal agencies, including five Interior agencies – Bureau of



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Reclamation, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey and Bureau of Indian Affairs.

In planning the release, officials considered the amount of sediment available in the river; the condition of cultural and archaeological resources near the river; biological resources such as endangered species, the Lees Ferry recreational fishery and riparian vegetation; and seasonal demands for water and hydroelectric power deliveries. During and after the release, the USGS Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center will gather a variety of scientific data, including how beaches and sandbars change, differences in sediment concentration and composition, and water quality.

Recognizing the importance of annual water deliveries and dependable hydroelectric power generation, the Grand Canyon Protection Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-575) directed the Secretary of the Interior to manage Glen Canyon Dam in such a way as to "protect, mitigate adverse impacts to, and improve the values for which Grand Canyon National Park and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area were established."



Former Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar triggered the first release under the experimental long-term protocol in November 2012. The protocol calls for conducting more frequent high-flow experimental releases and timing them to occur following sediment inputs to the Colorado River downstream from Glen Canyon Dam.

Department of the Interior officials remind recreational users to use extreme caution during the high flows when on or along the Colorado River through Glen, Marble and Grand Canyons. Flow-level information will be posted at multiple locations in both Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and Grand Canyon National Park.

Three-Peat Winner of the Dino AlArabi Gold Safety Medal Curecanti Field Division



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The Upper Colorado Region's Facility Safety Recognition Program assessment for 2016 resulted in the Curecanti Field Division (CFD) receiving the Dino AlArabi Gold Safety Medal (formally the Regional Director's Gold Safety Medal). This is the third consecutive award presented to CCI and confirms the consistent effort and dedication employees and management have put forth to work together to enhance their safety program.

In addition to taking care of their own, CFD took the lead in the Reclamation-wide implementation of the new Electrical Safety Program (FIST 5-14) by hosting an implementation exercise. The exercise brought together some of the most experienced personnel in Reclamation and resulted in the development of workplace assessment forms that will assist all facilities in Reclamation with implementing their Electrical Safety Program.

The CFD has set the standard for safety and demonstrated professionalism and dedication to taking care of our Reclamation family.

Construction Begins at Lemon Dam

By Justyn Liff

Western Colorado Area Office Public Affairs Specialist



Construction mobilization began on October 31, 2016, on high pressure slide gates at Lemon Dam, part of the Florida Project located near Durango, Colo. The purpose of construction is to perform preventative maintenance on the high pressure slide gates that are used to regulate the water releases from Lemon Dam.

Work will begin with setting a new steel bulkhead gate on the intake structure to provide a dry work environment for working on the high pressure slide gates while allowing flows into the Florida River to continue.

The bulkhead will be set in the intake structure starting in early November 2016, and will take several weeks to complete. During this time the releases from Lemon Dam will be approximately 3 to 4 cubic-feet-per-second and will be pumped over the crest of the dam. After the bulkhead is set in the intake structure limited releases will be made through the bulkhead of approximately 8 to 10 cfs while preventive maintenance is being performed on the high-pressure slide gates.

Once the preventive maintenance is complete, which is scheduled for late January 2017 to February 2017, the bulkhead will be removed from the intake structure. While the bulkhead is being removed the releases from Lemon Dam will be approximately 3 to 4 cubic-feet-per-second and will again be pumped over the crest of the dam. Once the bulkhead is removed the releases from Lemon Dam will resume as usual.



Modeling Low Streamflow's and Assessing the Ecological Impacts of Potential Stream Drying Under Climate Change in the Upper Colorado River Basin

When is a stream bed just a stream bed? When it does not have water!

Streamflows in late spring and summer have declined over the last century in the Western United States. Mean annual streamflow is projected to decrease by 6 to 25% over the next 100 years. In arid and semi-arid regions, some perennial streams will likely become intermittent with climate-driven changes in timing and magnitude of precipitation, runoff, and evapotranspiration. A study supported by the Southern Rockies Landscape Conservation Cooperative examined climate change impacts on small stream low-flows and potential effects on riparian vegetation in the Upper Colorado River Basin (UCRB).

The Colorado State University research team developed a conceptual model of characteristic species for riparian communities along a wet-to-dry hydrology gradient that can be used to guide management and restoration of riparian plant communities in the UCRB.

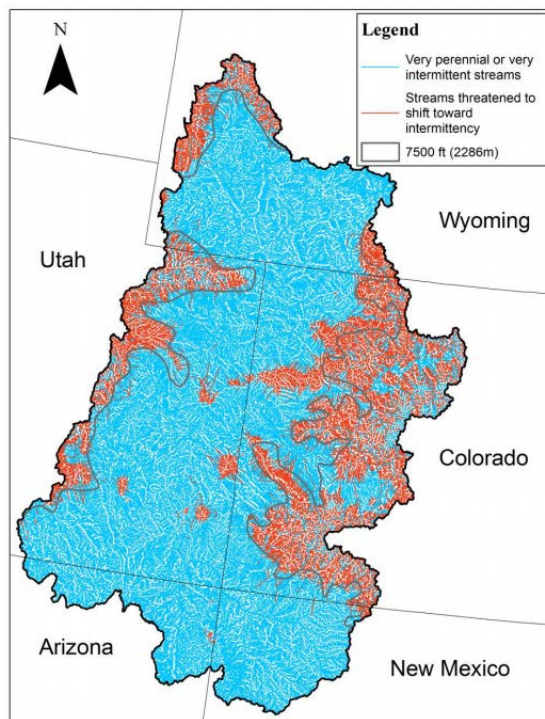
The research team addressed two research questions:

1. How will small-stream hydrology be impacted by predicted longer, drier summers in the UCRB under climate change?
2. In turn, what will be the resulting impacts on riparian plant communities?

Project produced should be products from the study include GIS layers/maps available online, and a US Geological Survey publication. Water managers, land managers, scientists, and citizens can use these tools to inform decision-making and improve understanding of climate change effects on low flows and riparian plant communities along streams in the UCRB.

Resources:

- Project datasets and publication can be accessed from the Southern Rockies LCC Conservation Planning Atlas: <https://srlcc.databasin.org/galleries/5c72a88b0d8e4df88a5ecbf37c7bba1c>
- UCRB map viewer: <http://centroid1.acns.colostate.edu/flexviewers/crb1>
- Southern Rockies LCC website: <http://southernrockieslcc.org>



Streams that may shift from perennial to intermittent are noted in red.



Upper Colorado Region's Employee Photo Contest

By Amee Andreason
Public Affairs Specialist

The *UC Today* Editorial Team would like to encourage all employees to start capturing your experiences on Reclamation's lands, waters and facilities by submitting photos to the shared Google drive - UC Region Photo Contest. This will be a means to build the Upper Colorado (UC) Region's photo database and show off the beauty Reclamation has to offer. The contest will be seasonally themed and each photo will be featured in *UC Today*. Each month, based on popular vote using Doodle, the winners' photo will be featured on the intranet and published on the back cover of the UC Region's Annual Accomplishments Book.



Additionally, we can use the photos to promote Reclamation's social media by submitting them for Wildlife Wednesdays, Scenic Saturday and Sunrise/Sunset Sunday. The Washington Office is always looking for exciting photos.

Everyone can be a photographer, the technology is already in your pocket – just use your cell phone! When submitting the photos, please be sure to add a caption, photographer's name and area the picture was taken. For information on taking photos, visit the [Taking a Quality Photo](#) page on our intranet site.

Please note, once you submit a photo, it will become Reclamation's property and may be used for public and media requests.

For more information, please feel free to contact Amee Andreason at 801-524-3769.

The deadline for submitting your photos is the first Friday of every month.

In the Right Light Decorate Your Home Safely During the Holidays

From the Safety Council

According to the National Fire Protection Association, 860 home fires caused by holiday decorations occur each year. An additional 210 house fires are caused by Christmas trees per year. Follow these steps to ensure you decorate your home safely during the winter holidays.

- Make sure all extension cords and electrical decorations are marked for proper use.



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- Outdoor electric lights and decorations should be plugged into circuits protected by ground fault circuit interrupters.
- Inspect all lights, decorations, and extension cords for damage before using.
- Exercise caution when decorating near power lines. Keep yourself and your equipment at least 10 feet from power lines.
- Turn off all indoor and outdoor electrical decorations before leaving home or going to sleep.
- Avoid overloading electrical outlets with too many decorations or electrical devices. They can overheat and cause a fire.
- Never connect more than three strings of incandescent lights together.
- Water your Christmas tree daily.
- Keep all decorations at least 3' away from heating equipment or an open flame.
- Purchase electrical decorations from reputable retailers and that are approved by a national recognized testing lab such as Underwriters Laboratory (UL).

For more information on electrical fire prevention, visit the [Electrical Safety Foundation International](#) website.

Green Your Winter and Your Holidays

Save energy by Burning Wise

Have your home heating serviced to keep it efficient. Make sure your fireplace or wood stove is working properly and burns smoke-free indoors.

Properly installed, correctly used wood-burning appliances should be smoke free. If you see or smell smoke, you may have a problem. Reduce smoke inside and outside your home using the steps below:

Building a Fire

An efficient fire requires good firewood, using the right wood in the right amount, and good fire building technique. Get the best efficiency from your wood stove or fireplace using the following steps:



- Dry seasoned wood - Burn only dry, split, well-seasoned wood. Properly seasoned wood is darker, weighs less, and sounds hollow when hit against another piece of wood.
- Season wood for at least 6 months.
- Wood burns best at a moisture content of less than 20 percent. Test wood with a wood moisture meter before you burn it.
- Store wood outdoors, off the ground, with the top covered.
- Start fires with newspaper, dry kindling, or all natural fire starters, or install a natural gas or propane log lighter in your open fireplace.
- Buy and burn locally cut firewood to decrease the risk of transporting invasive forest pests to your property. Learn more from the Don't Move Firewood campaign.

Safe Wood-burning Practices



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When using your wood burning appliance, follow these guidelines for safe operation:

- Keep flammable items, like curtains, furniture, newspapers, and books, away from your appliance.
- Only use newspaper, dry kindling and all-natural or organic fire starters. Never start a fire with gasoline, kerosene, or charcoal starter.
- Do not burn wet or green (unseasoned) wood.
- Many wax and sawdust logs are made for open hearth fireplaces only. Check your wood stove or fireplace insert operating instructions before using artificial logs.
- If you use manufactured logs, choose those made from 100 percent compressed sawdust.
- Build hot fires. For most appliances, a smoldering fire is not safe or efficient.
- Keep the doors of your wood-burning appliance closed unless loading or stoking the live fire. Harmful chemicals, like carbon monoxide, can be released into your home.
- Regularly remove ashes into a covered, metal container. Store the container outdoors on a nonflammable surface.
- Keep a fire extinguisher handy.
- Check your local air quality forecast before you burn.

What Not to Burn

These can materials release toxic or harmful chemicals when burned, and may damage your appliance:

- Household trash, including cardboard, plastics, foam and the colored ink on magazines, boxes, and wrappers
- Coated, painted, and pressure-treated wood
- Ocean driftwood, plywood, particle board, or any wood with glue on or in it
- Wet, rotted, diseased, or moldy wood
- Plastic, asbestos, rubber, manure and animal remains

Money Saving Tips

Improve the insulation in your home to reduce overall heating needs and heating bills. Caulk around windows, doors, and pipes to seal air gaps and add weather-stripping to doors and windows. Check out [EPA's ENERGY STAR Home Improvement](#) for additional tips.

Find local tree cutters who will deliver wood to your home. They save on landfill dumping fees, reducing landfill use, and you may end up with discounted firewood.



Four Steps to Building Resilience against Stress

Stress is everywhere! People in workplaces are experiencing high levels of stress. Workloads are increasing with no end in sight. There is a brand new approach to dealing with stress and building resilience that a few wise people have known about for a long time, it's time more people did. There are only four steps required to become less stressed and more resilient:

- Wake up (and stay awake)
- Control your attention
- Detach
- Let go



The four steps are simple to understand but takes work to enact. They take practice but soon start to pay off in unexpected ways. The steps have been tested in workplaces using controlled trails and shown to decrease stress and increase resilience. For many people, the steps start off as a way to decrease stress but lead to a better, more mindful way to live. Whatever it is for you, these works hopefully spark some sense of recognition within you to wake up.

Wake up (and stay awake)

The first step is very simple—wake up. Be present. Be aware of where you are and what you are doing right now. Stop dreaming so much about the past and the future. Wake up to the only moment you have ever been in—now. To do this, you simply need to come to your senses. Begin by giving yourself permission to slow down for 30 seconds (and perhaps notice your thinking mind's resistance to this idea).

Listen to the sounds that are in your environment right now. Hear the sounds that are close to you and the quieter ones in the background. Next, pay attention to the sensations under the soles of your feet. Feel the temperature on your face. Finally, see the shapes and colors of the objects in front of you: the screen, the keyboard, the paper. As you do this, notice that you can only connect to your senses when you are in the present. When you do this with 100% attention, you are wide awake.

Your ability to be present also matters greatly to your performance. Athletes, surgeons, or artists all talk about a state of mind they enter when they are at their best. They talk about how time slows down; they are completely present to the task and their mind stops wandering. Everything just seems to happen naturally and many report that they are simply watching themselves do the task. Psychologists call it “the zone” or a “state of flow.” These high performers find it hard to explain, but they know exactly how it feels. If you have experienced it, then you also know how it feels. It feels like being wide awake.

Control your attention

As little control as we have over our level of wakefulness, most of us have even less control over our attention.

Picture you are having a conversation with someone who mentions an upcoming medical exam. “Exam,” you think. “Gee, I really hope I don’t fail my math exam next week . . . Man, this exam is going to be a disaster because . . .”

In order to build resilience you need to wake up and take back control of your attention. Charismatic leaders understand the power of attention. Bill Clinton is famous for his ability to deeply connect with



people within seconds due to his determination to give them his full, undivided attention. He is said to have the ability to make each person feel like he/she is the only person in the room.

The key to controlling your attention is to practice consciously putting your attention where you want it to be and holding it there. Once you notice that ruminating thoughts are snatching it away, simply acknowledge that your mind has wandered, e.g. thinking about tomorrow's meeting. Then bring your mind back to the present moment. Practice this again and again. Don't get discouraged or frustrated with yourself. Training your mind takes time. First, practice on simple tasks like preparing your breakfast or cleaning your car. Then practice in higher-pressure situations, such as giving a speech or having a tense conversation with your boss or a colleague.

Keep your attention directed in the present on what your senses can see, hear, or feel. Later, compare how much that experience differs from what you get with your waking sleep state of mind.

Detach

Detachment is the ability to get appropriate distance from the situations you are facing. People who score highest on detachment do two things extremely well. First, they maintain perspective. They don't turn molehills into mountains, meaning they don't let situations overwhelm them.

Secondly, they only focus on what they can control. Ruminators spend much of their time focusing on things over which they have no control.

Detached people seem universally to focus their time on issues they can actually influence. When asked, they almost all say, "Why worry about things that I can't control?" (Like we all say, but they actually live it!) Resilient people are very clear about the difference between care and worry. They see caring as essential to high performance and worry as a waste of time. Can you see the difference?

Let go

At the core of why we continue to ruminate about things long after they have happened is that we refuse to let go. The leaders who are best at letting go are those who ask themselves a simple question: Will continuing to focus on this help me, my people, or my organization? If the answer is no, they let it go. A classic example of letting go is Nelson Mandela, who when asked why he was not angrier about spending half his life in jail replied, "If I thought it would be useful, I would be."

Too often we become fixated on things that don't really help us. Consider the metaphor of how to catch a monkey in the forest. First, you build a small cage and put some peanuts in the middle of it. Then you create a hole that is big enough for a monkey to put its hand through but small enough that once it takes a peanut and makes a fist, it cannot pull its hand out. As the monkey struggles with the peanut, you run up and capture it. Had the monkey looked around, it would have seen the forest is full of food. Yet it gave up its whole life for a peanut.

Most of the stuff we spend our lives ruminating about is just peanuts. It's almost never about life and death issues. Don't give up your life for peanuts. Decide to let it go.

This is a section of a paper called *Wake up! The Surprising Truth about What Drives Stress and How Leaders Build Resilience*, to read the full paper, visit the [Center for Creative Leadership](#) website.



Who's New

Tyler Spencer

Acquisitions Management Division



I applied for an internship in the Provo Area Office. Honestly, prior to working here, I had never even heard of Reclamation.

Some stuff about me, I have a family of 6. My parents, an older brother and sister-in-law, and an older sister, and myself.

I enjoy competition, so I love playing any kind of sport or game that allows my competitiveness to come out. Umm, I guess you can throw video games in there as a hobby of mine.

I wouldn't say I have a specific favorite book, a few series that I enjoyed are the Giver series, Harry Potter series, Divergent, Hunger Games and Maze Runner.

My favorite genre of books is Fantasy/Fictional and movies would be Horror/Suspense. A television character you simply adore would be Leslie Knope and Andy Dwyer, both from Parks and Recreation. My taste in music is mostly 70's, 80's and 90's rock, but enjoy some modern rock.

My favorite place, holiday and activities are Halloween season and Disneyland and sometimes both together.

The one word to describe myself, what would it be driven.

“Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak – courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.”
Winston Churchill

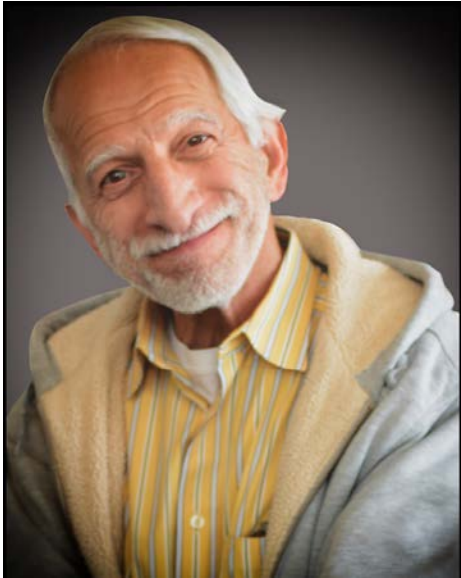


In Transition

Dino (Abdulla) Alaraji

“A person’s true wealth is the good he or she does in the world.”

By Andy Wood



Dino was a wealthy man who left behind a treasure for us all. As I think about Dino I am left with a lot of good memories. He was an example of service, quiet selfless service. His greatest satisfaction seemed to come from helping others. His professional pursuit started with medicine and continued with time, which always allowed him to help others in so many ways. He learned and came to know a lot in the fields of science and medicine. He did not seek to enrich himself but used his knowledge to help others.

Intellectually he was a serious man dedicated to his profession of Occupational Safety and Health. This was evident by looking at his work. However, to stop here does not paint the full picture of who he was and what he was like to work with.

Dino always displayed a sense of humor that was refined and full of subtle observations of common everyday life. I enjoyed going to see him about some work related item or issue and inevitably we would wind up laughing at something he pointed out. He was a great fan of the situation comedy “Seinfeld”. As I remember conversations with him, they were frequently punctuated with laughter or snickering. I often had to wipe away tears from my eyes from his witty lines.

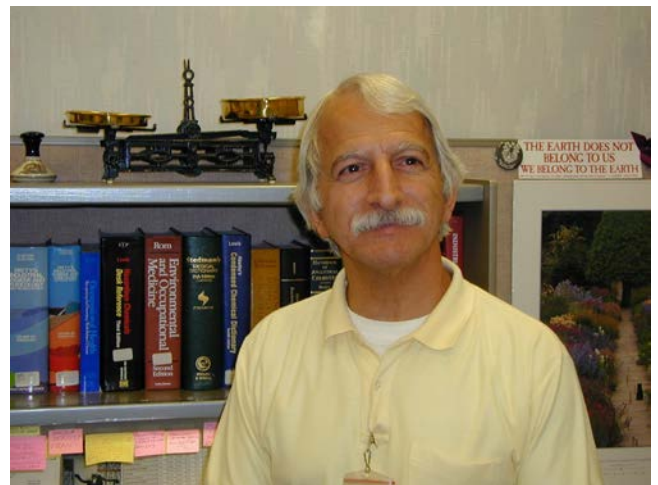
He knew compassion and grief as I found out from our conversations about Iraq, dictators and oppression. He was always respectful of those who served overseas and expressed this to me on several occasions. Having come from Iraq as a teenager and experiencing America for most of his life I was reminded that he did not take for granted the liberties that we enjoy in society. I considered him a great citizen. With his military and civilian government service combined he had a total of 37 years, 7 months and 5 days. This speaks volumes to his dedication and willingness to contribute.

Dino worked with many Regional Directors while in Reclamation. He saw supervisors and managers come and go, so his observations and conclusions were always something to be respected and considered.

If there is one picture that describes him as we know him, this is it. Please take a moment to observe the items in the background. The titles on the books, the quote, the scale or balance. These are the things he knew and practiced. They surrounded him and were a part of him. He was always quick to use them to help us be safer and live a better quality of life.

I only knew a part of him; however, others observed:

“[he was] very intelligent and willing to share his knowledge about safety, ergonomics and exercise.



Many people who signed his card mentioned that he was very dependable.”

“Dino was kind of a ‘foodie.’ He liked to share different foods he liked and if he found a recipe, he would share that as well. He was a very generous person. Loved his Turkish coffee! Dino was always so positive - well most of the time (Ha). He was caring and understanding and he listened to people. He was creative. I think he used to teach years ago. He worked for OSHA for several years. He was just a good human being and a good person. It's not right he's gone.”

With so many things that seem wrong with the world today the last sentence seems to really stick with us. Dino was good and we will all miss him for that. It is sad to lose such a good person. I find comfort by doing some mental exercises and things I would like to share with you.

When I start to feel sad about his loss I really think about him. I think about him as though he were still here and I was able to talk and laugh with him as I did before. Then I am reminded of his personality. He would not like it if I were sad and he would say so. Then I tell myself that I will see him again. I visualize myself laughing with him. This is easy to do because of his sense of humor.

Sooner or later we will all pass through the same portal that Dino did. Until we meet with him again we can reflect on his life and the many good memories he left for us. This is his treasure, he worked hard at it and has left it behind for us to enjoy. When you meet him again you will be able to say – Thankyou.

What Is the Media Saying About Reclamation This Week?

[Teen volunteers get down, dirty to help the Rio Grande](#)

[Battle for the Butte](#)

[No criminal charges in EPA-caused Colorado mine waste spill](#)

[Study: Idea to drain Powell badly flawed](#)

[More than 260 Million Gallons of Water Began Flowing Into the Parched Rio Grande This Month](#)

[Invasive mussels' risk limits access on McPhee](#)

[Autumn snow has been scarce in the Rocky Mountains, forcing some ski areas to push back opening day and causing some nervousness about how much water will be available next spring for the Colorado River, the lifeblood of the Southwest](#)

[The Bureau of Reclamation Releases Two WaterSMART Grants Funding Opportunities for Water Conservation and Energy Efficiency Projects](#)

[Navajo youths travel 1,000 miles to protest power plant haze](#)

[federal dam operations in a Trump administration](#)

[Durango to get all winter water from Animas River](#)

[Author: It's Better To Conserve Colorado River Water Than Fight Over It](#)

[Reclamation Closes East Portal Road Located Near Montrose, Colorado For The Winter](#)

[Dam Project Threatens Imperiled Rio Grande Fish](#)



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[U.S.-Mexico Water Talks Threatened By A Trump Presidency](#)

[Inside the Glen Canyon Dam during a high-flow experiment](#)

[The Latest: Snow off to a slow start in Rockies](#)

[QUALIFICATIONS OF INTERIOR CANDIDATES PALIN, GILLAM QUESTIONED](#)

[Navajo Lake State Park visitor center renovated](#)

Reclamation Trivia

Here's this week's set of questions:

1. The Curecanti Field Division (CFD) received the Dino al-Araji Gold Safety Medal (formally the _____ Medal).
2. According to the National Fire Protection Association, _____ home fires caused by holiday decorations occur each year. An additional _____ house fires are caused by Christmas trees per year.
3. There are only four steps required to become less stressed and more resilient: _____, _____, _____, _____

Last week, We asked,

1. The ECO (**E**xplore, **C**reate and **O**bserve) Challenge is a **multidisciplinary, environmental** education program designed to give high school students (grades 9-12) an opportunity to express their opinions.
2. The Gallegos Pumping Plant became the largest pumping plant in the BIA's Asset Inventory with a total pumping rate of **880** cubic feet per second and **337** feet of total dynamic head.
3. When is a stream bed just a stream bed? **When it does not have water!**

Last winner was – **N/A**

Please use this [link to send your answers](#). To be fair we will draw names from the winners and one person will receive a prize. We will reach into the prize bin for something suitable for the winner...as long as supplies last.

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