

Ellen Sebastian

From: John Bengtson <John.Bengtson@noaa.gov>
Sent: Thursday, November 10, 2011 8:48 AM
To: Eric_May@doioig.gov
Cc: Williams, Dee; Doug DeMaster; Richard Merrick; John Bengtson
Subject: Assistance to the DOI Office of Inspector General
Attachments: John_Bengtson.vcf

Special Agent Eric May
Office of Inspector General
Department of Interior

Dear Mr. May:

I am writing in regard to your request to interview Dr. Megan Ferguson concerning records associated with BWASP (Bowhead Whale Aerial Survey Program) data. Dr. Ferguson is an employee of the National Marine Mammal Laboratory (NMML), Alaska Fisheries Science Center, NMFS/NOAA, where she leads NMML's involvement in the BWASP surveys. I serve as Director of NMML. The BWASP surveys represent a multi-decade program originated by MMS. There was a transition of program leadership from MMS/BOEMRE to NMML beginning in 2007. Since 2008, NMML has had the main responsibility for implementing the BWASP surveys through an interagency agreement with BOEMRE/BOEM, which provides funding for the surveys. As part of the shift in program leadership to NMML, MMS/BOEMRE requested that we be responsible for storing the BWASP program's historic data files. Those files were shipped to us here in Seattle, and we arranged to house them at a nearby National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) facility.

In September 2011, Dr. Dee Williams, BOEM, relayed to me a request from the DOI Office of Inspector General for copies of the original BWASP aerial survey records from 2004. We retrieved those records from NARA, scanned them to digital file format, and sent them to Dr. Williams in October 2011.

It is my understanding that you are now seeking some additional information from NMML about these BWASP records from 2004.

In order to help NMML to be effective in assisting your investigation, I would be grateful if you would please inform me of the specific objectives for your requested interview with Dr. Ferguson. Knowing those objectives in advance of the interview will allow us to be better prepared for your questions and to inform our NMFS chain of command about the nature of your request. I also ask that you direct all future requests for assistance from NMML staff through me so that I can help to ensure that we are responding to you in a timely and appropriate manner.

Sincerely,

John Bengtson, Director
National Marine Mammal Laboratory
Alaska Fisheries Science Center, NMFS/NOAA

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Ellen Sebastian

From: Eric_May@doioig.gov
Sent: Monday, January 09, 2012 7:52 AM
To: John Bengtson
Subject: Re: Assistance to the DOI Office of Inspector General

Good morning Mr. Bengtson -

As discussed on January 6, 2012, I submit to you the following questions that I would like to discuss with Dr. Megan Ferguson:

1. The background regarding the transition of the BWASP from MMS to NOAA-NMFS?
2. What information does NMFS have in regards to archived MMS BWASP observation data?
3. Does NMFS have the ability to conduct searches of MMS/BWASP archived records regarding past BWASP observations? Specifically, we need to determine if dead polar bears were documented in the BWASP database between 1987 - 2003?
4. Does NMFS use the same BWASP software used to record observations as MMS did between 1987-2003? If so, does the BWASP software have the capability to record a dead polar bear?

If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know. I can be reached at 916-978-6111. Thanks!

SA Eric May, DOI-OIG

From: John Bengtson <John.Bengtson@noaa.gov>
To: Eric_May@doioig.gov
Cc: "Williams, Dee" <Dee.Williams@boem.gov>, Doug DeMaster <Douglas.Demaster@noaa.gov>, Richard Merrick <Richard.Merrick@noaa.gov>, John Bengtson <John.Bengtson@noaa.gov>
Date: 11/10/2011 09:47 AM
Subject: Assistance to the DOI Office of Inspector General

Special Agent Eric May
Office of Inspector General
Department of Interior

Dear Mr. May:

I am writing in regard to your request to interview Dr. Megan Ferguson concerning records associated with BWASP (Bowhead Whale Aerial Survey Program) data. Dr. Ferguson is an employee of the National Marine Mammal Laboratory (NMML), Alaska Fisheries Science Center, NMFS/NOAA, where she leads NMML's involvement in the BWASP surveys. I serve as Director of NMML. The BWASP surveys represent a multi-decade program originated by MMS. There was a transition of program leadership from MMS/BOEMRE to NMML beginning in 2007. Since 2008, NMML has had the main responsibility for implementing the BWASP surveys through an

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From: Doug DeMaster <douglas.demaster@noaa.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, February 29, 2012 4:39 PM
To: Richard Merrick
Cc: Adam Issenberg; bruce.buckson@noaa.gov; Jim Balsiger; Lisa Lindeman; John L. Bengtson; Douglas DeMaster
Subject: Fwd: Re: Assistance to the DOI Office of Inspector General

for the record.

If there is a more formal protocol or a better protocol for AFSC/NMML dealing with direct requests from DOI-OIG special agents, please advise. This request has to do with the DOI-OIG's investigation of Chuck Monett. The AFSC preference in this matter is for BOEM to request the background information and scientific analysis poised by DOI-OIG.

It seems a little odd to us that DOI-OIG is asking NMFS/AFSC to conduct an analysis of BOEM data that BOEM has in hand. It is further a little odd to us that DOI-OIG is seeking an interview with an AFSC/NMML staff person concerning questions that the director of AFSC/NMML has already answered. It may be that DOI-OIG or SA May has discussed his intentions with one or more of you in HQ or NOAA GC; if that is the case, I am not aware of it.

Thanks for your consideration.

Doug DeMaster

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Re: Assistance to the DOI Office of Inspector General

Date: Wed, 29 Feb 2012 17:16:35 -0800

From: John Bengtson <john.bengtson@noaa.gov>

To: Eric_May@doioig.gov

CC: Doug DeMaster <douglas.demaster@noaa.gov>, "Williams, Dee" <Dee.Williams@boemre.gov>, John Bengtson <john.bengtson@noaa.gov>

Dear Mr. May:

Thank you for providing the questions for which you were seeking the assistance of Dr. Megan Ferguson, National Marine Mammal Laboratory, Alaska Fisheries Science Center. I have discussed your request for an interview with my chain of command to determine the most effective way that we can be of assistance to your investigation. Because your questions are principally of a scientific nature, we believe that our assistance will be most constructive if it is provided to you through an interactive dialog with the scientific and programmatic channels at the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), which supports our participation in the BWASP Program. More specifically, if there are