Work Environment and Performance News
September 2021

Message from the Work Environment and Performance Office Team

Behavioral Health and Employee Wellbeing Information Kits

The long hours, months of endurance, and continued need for engagement poses risks to the wellbeing of all our employees who are making contributions across our agency.

To facilitate conversations with our employees who are engaged in emergency response, employee health and wellbeing information kits have been developed. This link takes you to a SharePoint site which includes the kits and instructions for use. A zip file can be provided for easy sharing as well. [Incident Kits - Behavioral Health and Employee Wellbeing (sharepoint.com)]

The kits contain ready-made posters, Incident Action Plan inserts, and morning briefing examples for easy deployment. Agency Administrators and Incident Management Teams can work together to use these kits on incidents.

For questions, to provide feedback, share topic ideas, or to get coaching on how to use these kits, please contact K.C. Briggs (WEPO, Behavioral Health and Employee Wellbeing Program Manager) 541-954-6520 kimberly.briggs2@usda.gov.

National Work Environment Survey

We're Listening and Want to Hear from YOU!

You should have received an invitation to take part in the 2021 National Work Environment Survey. From workload, awards, and training, to fair treatment, harassment, and retaliation, this survey inquires about a broad range of topics that affect overall workplace satisfaction. The Forest Service is committed to providing every employee a work environment that is safe, respectful, inclusive, and free from harassment, and this survey is a key tool to achieve this goal.

Widespread participation is key to our ability to understand what is most important to you in your work environment and to take action where improvement is needed. Making many voices heard will help bring about changes that will make a real difference in how we all experience working for the Forest Service.
Many thanks to those of you who have already completed the survey. If you have yet to participate, please take this opportunity to share your truths as a Forest Service employee. The survey is open until September 30, 2021.

Upcoming WEPO Webinars and Virtual Learning Opportunities

**Conflict Management and Prevention**

**A Guide to Virtual and Hybrid Meetings**

What does research suggest about how and why attention, trust and empathy show up differently when we are working through screens? We’ll review some ideas and terms useful for intentionally thinking and talking about the structures of our meetings. Then we’ll outline a set of specific best practices to inclusively improve communication and decision making in virtual and hybrid format meetings.

**Date:** Wednesday, September 1, 2021  
**Time:** 9:00 a.m. Alaska / 10:00 a.m. Pacific / 11:00 a.m. Mountain / 12:00 p.m. Central / 1:00 p.m. Eastern & Atlantic Standard  
**Duration:** 1.5 hours  
**How to Join:** [https://usfs.adobeconnect.com/cr-1000/](https://usfs.adobeconnect.com/cr-1000/)  
**Call-in Number:** 1-888-844-9904 **Access Code:** 6715754#  
**Hosted By:** Kimberly Koch-Hult (R1)

**Communicating Effectively During the Performance Appraisal Process**

Performance-based discussions are often challenging and can sometimes be stressful. Effective communication can change the climate of these conversations by creating a space for meaningful and productive dialogue. Join us to discuss this more, learn some new techniques, and share ways to make this process more valuable by communicating respectfully.

**Date:** Wednesday, September 15, 2021  
**Time:** 9:00 a.m. Alaska / 10:00 a.m. Pacific / 11:00 a.m. Mountain / 12:00 p.m. Central / 1:00 p.m. Eastern & Atlantic Standard  
**Duration:** 1.5 hours  
**How to Join:** [https://usfs.adobeconnect.com/cr-500/](https://usfs.adobeconnect.com/cr-500/)  
**Call-in Number:** 1-888-844-9904 **Access Code:** 6715754#  
**Hosted By:** Linda Burroughs-Glover (WO)

**Resilience and Personal Effectiveness**

**Mindfulness Communication: Using Self-Awareness and Emotional Intelligence to Avoid Conflict and Increase Productivity**

This webinar offers tips for responding to conflict with openness and patience. The most important takeaway is having an outlet to work with strong emotions in the heat of the moment instead of acting
on urges that might end up creating or intensifying problems. Work with your strong emotions so that you can have more choices over how to respond and what to do next.

**Date:** Thursday, September 9, 2021

**Time:** 9:00 a.m. Alaska / 10:00 a.m. Pacific / 11:00 a.m. Mountain / 12:00 p.m. Central / 1:00 p.m. Eastern & Atlantic Standard

**Duration:** 1 hour

**How to Join:** https://usfs.adobeconnect.com/cr-1000/

**Call-in Number:** 1-888-251-2949 or 215-861-0694  **Access Code:** 5674504#

Please plan to join the audio through the conference line. The conference call line will open 5 minutes prior to the webinar start time.

**Hosted By:** Michelle Reugebrink, Work Environment & Performance Office

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**Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction: A Practice for Challenging Times and All times**

Considering the intensity of the past year, from historic wildfires to social and economic tensions to a global pandemic, it is no wonder that many of us are experiencing burnout, stress, and anxiety. As an agency that includes first responders who regularly experience critical incidents and ongoing stress, we are determined to support their well-being, and that of every employee. The Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MSBR) program is available to help you cope with a range of stressors and anxiety through a medical and science-based approach. Psychological resilience can be learned through specific practices and has been found to bolster resiliency in the face of, and in recovering from, stress. Please join us for the upcoming Fall MSBR series to learn ways to cope with stress and improve your quality of life.

**Dates:** Tuesday September 28 – November 16, 2021 (2.5 hrs. each Tuesday for 8 weeks)

**Time:** 9:00 a.m. Alaska / 10:00 a.m. Pacific / 11:00 a.m. Mountain / 12:00 p.m. Central / 1:00 p.m. Eastern & Atlantic Standard

**Duration:** 1.5 hours

**We will accept registration until Friday September 24, 2021.** Please email Michelle Reugebrink: michelle.reugebrink@usda.gov to be placed on a mailing list and to receive access to materials and communication during the course.

**Required:** Add this training manually to your individual development plan (IDP) as a goal.

**Type of Session:** Conference Call (More information will be provided at sign-up)

**Hosted By:** Michelle Reugebrink, Work Environment & Performance Office

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**Weekly Guided Breaks**

Mindfulness Meditation is a simple, effective method that can help us be more productive and face setback with resiliency. The right side of our brain, which is responsible for creating new ideas, will increase in activity for those who meditate regularly. As a result, improved creativity, engagement, and productivity are often a result. **To see the weekly guided breaks schedule, please click here.**

**Type of Session:** Conference Call

**Duration:** 15 minutes

**Hosted By:** Michelle Reugebrink, Work Environment & Performance Office
Training and Employee Development

National Supervisor Training: Creating a Positive Work Environment

Grow your supervisory skills to help navigate the unique challenges and opportunities supervisors face every day. This five-hour interactive webinar equips supervisors with knowledge, skills, and techniques to grow their performance as leaders, motivate employees, improve engagement, and get results. Participants will have the opportunity to engage with peer supervisors and explore the interdependence of skills in emotional intelligence and the role supervisors play in fostering a positive work environment. All supervisors are highly encouraged to attend one session.

**Dates:** Weekly sessions April through November 2021

**Duration:** 5 hours

**Type of Session:** MS Teams Webinar

**AgLearn Registration:** [FS National Supervisor Training 2021](#)

> After logging into AgLearn, select "Sign-up" for the session you would like to attend.

**Hosted by:** WEPO-Training and Employee Development Branch (TED)

**Questions or Special Accommodations:** Please send an email to [SM.FS.TED_SupvrDev@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FS.TED_SupvrDev@usda.gov)

2021 Informal Coaching Skills for Supervisors: A Lunch and Learn Workshop Series

Join us for twice-monthly *Supervisors Lunch and Learn Workshops*. USFS Learning Coaches will lead each one-hour workshop, during which participants will gain practical tips for composed conversations, followed by practice with coaches and peers.

Register to participate in these workshops through AgLearn. Each session is limited to 24 participants per session, so sign up early! Supervisors may sign up for multiple sessions.

**Upcoming Dates:** September 8 & 24 | October 7 & 20

**More dates & information:** [2021 Lunch & Learn Workshop Series Flyer](#)

**Duration:** 1 hour

**Time:** 9:00 a.m. Alaska / 10:00 a.m. Pacific / 11:00 a.m. Mountain / 12:00 p.m. Central / 1:00 p.m. Eastern & Atlantic Standard

**Registration link:** [Informal Coaching Techniques for Supervisors Lunch and Learn Workshops](#)

> After logging into AgLearn, select "Enroll" for the session/s you would like to attend.

**Hosted by:** WEPO-Training and Employee Development Branch (TED)

**Questions or Special Accommodations:** Please send an email to [SM.FS.TED_SupvrDev@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FS.TED_SupvrDev@usda.gov)

Are You Ready to Improve Your Financial Wellness?

Financial wellness is a critical aspect in our personal wellbeing because money-related stress can affect every aspect of our lives. As such, our personal and professional productivity could potentially suffer due to financial worry.
We’re happy to announce a new tool for all employees from Dmason Financial Planning. We have self-paced, training tools in AgLearn to help you understand Federal benefits and make plans to manage and invest your money to fund the lifestyle you choose.

For more information about Dmason Financial Planning Tools, please visit: Dmason Financial Planning Tools site announcement. To enroll in a financial planning course, please visit: https://aglearn.usda.gov/totara/coursecatalog/courses.php

**Conflict Resolution Day 2021: Seeds of Peace**

WEPO’s Conflict Management and Prevention Center is sponsoring a Conflict Resolution Day event on October 21, 2021. This year’s event will celebrate Forest Service team members who plant seeds of peace. We encourage you to contemplate who in your work environment is worthy of these acknowledgements and take a few minutes to nominate them for this recognition. Please fill out this nomination form by September 3, 2021, and email it to the address listed on the form. More details will be shared about the Conflict Resolution Day event, including how to join, soon.

**Learn What’s Possible! Join a This Is Who We Are Engagement**

*This is Who We Are* (TIWWA) continues to raise the bar on what it means to be values-based, purpose-driven, and relationship-focused. In direct demonstration of the core concepts of TIWWA, several agency units are “stewarding the whole” by volunteering trained, experienced ambassadors for a new national team offering weekly engagements to employees throughout the agency. This new cadre will host engagements on Tuesdays (9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Pacific) and Wednesdays (9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Eastern), with a third day to be added after the busy summer field season. These engagements are open to any employee in the agency and satisfy the AgLearn requirement for “6140 National This is Who We Are Employee Engagement Session 1”. To register, employees simply visit EventBrite and choose a date and time that fits their schedule.

If you have any questions about TIWWA or just want to learn more, contact national program manager Brad Tait at bradley.tait@usda.gov.

**New Employee Video Onboarding Series**

The video series is available via AgLearn - Onboarding Video Series. The videos provide an overview of the Forest Service, benefits, resources, and much more. You can register for the series and receive training credit.

**Questions?** Please join human resources specialists to answer your questions regarding HR systems, pay, leave, benefits, and retirement. Q&A session details are in AgLearn.

**Note:** eAuthentication login is needed to access AgLearn. The new hire guide and onboarding checklist also have helpful resources.

**Additional Tools and Resources**

Information on the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
https://usdagcc.sharepoint.com/sites/fs-osoh/Pages/EAP.aspx

National Institute for Health (NIH) Mental Health Resources