

FISCAL YEAR 2018
U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
SAFETY AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AWARDEES

SAFETY AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

John Byrnes – New York Water Science Center, Northeast Region

In March 2003, Mr. John D. Byrnes was assigned the Collateral Duty Safety Program Coordinator (CDSPR) responsibilities for the Troy, New York Office. This assignment ran until 2016 when Center management decided to make Mr. Byrnes the CDSPC for all of New York, which he continues as today. To effectively act as the CDSPC for the entire state, Mr. Byrnes had to create new uniform safety and health programs that would apply to all four Center sites. When he first took on this position, the Center's Occupational Safety and Health Program had many deficiencies which he immediately addressed. Through his diligence and attention to details Mr. Byrnes developed many of the Center's required written Safety and Health Programs, making them site specific, yet universally applicable. He developed a program to track all required Safety and Health training needs for the Center's staff, and routinely works with the Center's management and staff to ensure they are kept well informed of all Occupational Safety and Health requirements. Mr. Byrnes has worked for the past 16 years to ensure that his co-workers understood and embraced the idea, that all who come to work at or visit the Center, should be able to do so, knowing they are in a safe workplace. He has ensured that the management and employees of the New York Water Science Center are kept apprised of any workplace hazards, and he routinely and quickly abates the hazards thus ensuring the Center maintains an accident free environment. Mr. Byrnes' daily efforts to ensure the Center is the standard of excellence not only in their scientific undertakings, but in Occupational Safety has been impressive. His dedication to the USGS Occupational Safety and Health Program has made the New York Science Center one to be exemplified throughout the Northeast Region. For his outstanding contributions to the Occupational Safety and Health Program of the USGS, Mr. John D. Byrnes is granted the 2018 Safety and Occupational Health Award of Excellence.

David Leeth - South Atlantic Water Science Center, Southeast Region

Mr. David C. Leeth, is the Collateral Duty Safety Program Coordinator (CDSPC) for the Georgia Water Science Center with responsibility in overseeing the entire South Atlantic Water Science Center (Center) of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

Throughout his time as the CDSPC, Mr. Leeth has brought the Georgia office into occupational safety and health compliance and now oversees the safety programs for not only Georgia, but also North Carolina and South Carolina which encompasses nine offices and numerous field sites. He has made outstanding contributions to the safety program of the Center and has methodically brought all the programs into compliance with the standards of the Office of Safety and Health Administration and the USGS. Mr. Leeth is always willing to participate in projects and discussions to lend his experience to the Southeast Region Safety Team to further the mission of the USGS safety program. The recent successful safety program evaluation conducted by the

Department of the Interior (DOI) allowed Mr. Leeth to showcase the Center's safety website and database tools which he developed to allow employees and supervisors to implement their responsibilities with respect to the safety program. The detail of this program so greatly impressed the DOI Safety Team that they specifically commented on Mr. Leeth's inspection database and center-wide implementation of the Personal Hazard Analysis program. For his outstanding contributions to the Occupational Safety and Health Program of the Southeast Region, the South Atlantic Water Science Center and the USGS, Mr. David Leeth is granted the 2018 Safety and Occupational Health Award of Excellence.

Marlon Johnson - Lower Mississippi Gulf Water Science Center, Southeast Region

Mr. Marlon Johnson was the Collateral Duty Safety Program Coordinator (CDSPC) for the Lower Mississippi Gulf Water Science Center's Louisiana offices for the past 15 years. Prior to his current CDSPC duties, Mr. Johnson was the Hazardous Chemicals Coordinator dealing with safety issues and disposal of chemicals in the Center's laboratory. During the period of February 2003 until May 2017 Mr. Johnson took on the additional CDSPC duty, learning the responsibilities of the position and putting programs in place to comply with the Office of Safety and Health Administration and USGS policies. As the local safety officer, Mr. Johnson took his responsibilities seriously and dedicated himself to ensuring that any hazards identified during self and external safety audits were brought to the attention of management and were abated quickly. Mr. Johnson continually fostered an atmosphere throughout the Center that brought Safety to the forefront of daily life which made it possible for employees to focus on safety and bring safety issues to his attention so that they could be formally addressed. For his dedicated contributions to the Occupational Safety and Health Program of the USGS, the Southeast Region, and the South Atlantic Water Science Center, Mr. Marlon Johnson is granted the 2018 Safety and Occupational Health Award of Excellence.

Michael Bonds – National Wildlife Health Center

Mr. Michael D. Bonds is the Collateral Duty Environmental Program Coordinator (CDEPC) for the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Midwest Region, and the National Wildlife Health Center (NWHC).

Mr. Bonds is a respected colleague and a proven leader of the NWHC's environmental health and safety program. His experience in chemical hazards, laboratory safety, and environmental management, coupled with his dedication in providing personnel with the skills to complete science projects safely and efficiently, make him a vital part of the Center's, Region's, and Bureau's safety team. Mr. Bonds is an ardent member of the Midwest Region Safety Team, Center Safety Committee, and Medical Emergency Response Team. He developed the NWHC Chemical Inventory with Safety Data Sheet live-links which was shared with other Midwest Region Centers as a template. He spearheaded the investigation and update of Center labeling policy to include Global Harmonization System (GHS) requirements and changes and trained Center personnel on the new labeling system requirements. Mr. Bonds presented the Center's GHS labeling system as an option for other Centers across the USGS to adopt via the USGS Safety WebEx Series. He developed the Center's Wilderness First-aid Program and serves as the lead instructor. While the Center's environmental point-of-contact, Mr. Bonds developed the Center's Field Chemical Spill

Kits and Standard Operating Procedures and provided hands-on training to all personnel. He is always available and willing to assist anyone with any safety, health, or environmental topic whether it be laboratory or field related. His abilities to effectively communicate the importance of working safely in the laboratory and field better ensures Center personnel have the skills to reduce accidents, injuries, and property damage. For his outstanding contributions to the Midwest Region, the Center and the USGS, Mr. Michael Bonds is granted the 2018 Safety and Health Award of Excellence.

Michelle Funk - Core Science Systems

Ms. Michelle R. Funk has been the U. S. Geological Survey's (USGS) Core Science Systems Mission Area, Eastern Geographic Science Center (EGSC) Collateral Duty Safety Program Coordinator (CDSPC) for three years.

During that time, Ms. Funk has taken on the task of the CDSPC with exceptional dedication. She established a Science Center Safety Committee which addressed safety hazards identified during local and external evaluations to ensure a safe environment for EGSC employees. She shared her knowledge and expertise with EGSC managers and employees so that they were aware of the hazards associated with their work and knew how to appropriately address them to reduce the risk to themselves and others. When safety and health issues were identified, Ms. Funk made it a top priority to ensure that they were discussed and abated in a timely fashion. Safety was also a regularly discussed topic with management and during staff meetings and quarterly all hands gatherings. It was her focus to make Safety a priority throughout the Center and to share her knowledge and expertise to make every day a safe day. For her outstanding contributions to the Occupational Safety and Health Program of the EGSC and the USGS, Ms. Michelle Funk is granted the 2018 Safety and Occupational Health Award of Excellence.

Molly McLaughlin – St. Petersburg Science Center

Ms. Molly R. McLaughlin has officially been the Collateral Duty Safety Program Manager at the St. Petersburg Science Center of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) for 13 years but has been handling aspects of laboratory safety as the Center's Laboratory Manager for the past 16 years.

Ms. Molly McLaughlin has established a comprehensive safety and health program for the St. Petersburg Science Center, a complex research center which conducts unique and ever-changing laboratory and fieldwork projects involving radiation, wild animals, and extreme environmental conditions. Because of Ms. McLaughlin's expertise and excellent training skills, the Center's staff are knowledgeable and well trained on safety related issues. Ms. McLaughlin has always been willing to share her time and expertise on Bureau-level projects and committees to help develop USGS-wide programs in specialized safety areas. She has received accolades from the Department of the Interior Safety Team for her extensive and well written standard operating procedures for the St. Petersburg laboratories which contributed greatly to the Southeast Region Safety Program leaving a highly favorable impression on the Department. For her outstanding contributions to the Occupational Safety and Health Program of the Southeast Region, the St. Petersburg Science Center and the USGS, Ms. Molly McLaughlin is granted the 2018 Safety and Occupational Health Award of Excellence.

Nate Smiley – St. Petersburg Science Center

Mr. Nathan A. Smiley is the Collateral Duty Safety Program Coordinator (CDSPC) for the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) St. Petersburg Science Center (Center).

During his time as the CDSPC, Mr. Smiley has made impressive contributions to the Center. He went beyond expectations establishing safety procedures for the Madeira Beach Coastal Erosion Project including writing a Fall Protection Plan for the project and conducting and writing a Job Hazard Analysis to keep employees safe while staging and operating the camera on a hotel rooftop. Mr. Smiley also prepared for and had a successful external safety audit conducted by the USGS Regional Safety Manager, and an External Safety and Dive Program Evaluation conducted by the Department of the Interior, both of which were highly successful because of Mr. Smiley's focus and dedication to the Center's safety program. For his outstanding contributions to the Occupational Safety and Health Program of the Southeast Region, the St. Petersburg Coastal and Marine Science Center, and the USGS, Mr. Nathan Smiley is granted the 2018 Safety and Occupational Health Award of Excellence.

Bernice Allen – North Carolina Water Science Center, Southeast Region

Mr. Bernice A. Allen was the Collateral Duty Safety Program Coordinator (CDSPC) for the North Carolina offices of the South Atlantic Water Science Center from the summer of 2008 until the fall of 2017.

For nearly a decade, Mr. Allen served as the North Carolina CDSPC. Throughout those years of ever-changing regulations, Mr. Allen took a strong and dedicated interest in field safety and always vigorously advocated for safer working conditions for all Center employees. He provided a technical perspective from his many years as a Hydrologic Technician to assist with solving complex safety issues involving data collection in the Water program area. During his tenure as the CDSPC, Mr. Allen was an active participant in Regional Safety Meetings bringing field safety issues to the forum to ensure everyone was fully aware of the health and safety issues of the South Atlantic Water Science Center and could collectively discuss and resolve issues that had ramifications beyond the Center for which he was responsible. He coordinated many safety training courses for the Center such as basic first aid and CPR, swift water rescue training, over the water training and task specific safety training which are all critical to keeping employees safe in their jobs. He wrote and annually reviewed and updated many of the North Carolina safety programs that exist today. His dedication to the safety of the employees of the Southeast Region and the South Atlantic Water Science Center has earned the respect of his colleagues and management. For his outstanding contributions to the Occupational Safety and Health Program of the USGS, Mr. Bernice A. Allen is granted the 2018 Safety and Occupational Health Award of Excellence.

Shelby Hunter - Oklahoma Water Science Center, Southwest Region

Mr. Shelby L. Hunter came on-board as a Collateral Duty Safety Program Coordinator (CDSPC) just prior to the 2017 U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) CDSPC Safety Training in Phoenix, Arizona. This was his first exposure to the Bureau Safety Program. Since that time, he has

developed a sound safety program at the Oklahoma Water Science Center (Center) offices in Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and Woodward, Oklahoma.

Mr. Hunter is a strong leader, has exceptional insight, and organizational skills. During the 2018 Water Year, he volunteered to participate on a Water Mission Area (WMA) Field Safety Team organized by the Southwest Region (SWR). Mr. Hunter became interested in a software project called, FAST (Field Activated Safety Tracking). FAST was being developed by the SMIS (Safety Management Information System) IT Development Team and a team of SWR field safety personnel. The goal of FAST was to develop a USGS Bureau-wide field hazard assessment and reporting procedure similar to that of the Department of the Interior SMIS Inspection and Abatement System (IAS) program. It is initially a WMA safety tracking system designed for tracking field gage safety hazards. The WMA has been inspecting its hydrologic gaging station hazards for years, but these paper inspections are not readily available or easily analyzed to document sites with known hazards. FAST will electronically collect field safety data, analyze the data, create hazard logs, assess hazard risk, prioritize Center gage rehabilitation, and place qualifying sites on the deferred maintenance list. The project objective is to provide a robust field hazard analysis system with a long-term goal of removing potentially life-threatening hazards for our employees and to meet USGS and other federal agency safety requirements. It will provide a mechanism for supervisors, managers, and safety personnel to analyze the WMA field safety program and assess the cost of rehab versus the cost of converting to modern technology with less hazardous environments for our employees. Mr. Hunter understood the need for simplifying field safety data collection, analysis, and the ability to use the acquired data to evaluate both the Center and the WMA safety program. He took it upon himself to research the possibility of creating an electronic gage safety inspection form using an established data input procedure employed by Aquarius (AQ), Site Visit (SV) Mobil AQ software. Finding that SV Mobile AQ software was available and could be modified to input safety inspection data electronically in the field, Mr. Hunter worked with Center management to secure the software and the services of a student computer programmer. He initiated a plan with the SWR Field Safety Team to develop an electronic field safety inspection form and worked closely with the Field Safety Team and the Regional Safety Manager to create new software called "SVFAST", providing data input for analysis into the FAST Project. The FAST project is undergoing further development and its application was recently demonstrated during the plenary session at the 2018 Regional Water Data Training Workshop in San Antonio, Texas. This effort goes well beyond the 25% CDSPC duties of a local safety officer. For his outstanding contributions to the USGS, Mr. Shelby Hunter is granted the 2018 Safety and Occupational Health Award of Excellence.

William Falls - South Atlantic Water Science Center - Columbia SC Office, Southeast Region

Mr. William (Fred) Falls was the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) South Atlantic Water Science Center's (Center) Collateral Duty Safety Program Coordinator (CDSPC) from August 2015 until his retirement in February of 2018.

Mr. Falls was a dedicated advocate for safety throughout the Center. His low-key approach to safety helped him develop a rapport with his colleagues in the Center offices which allowed them to comfortably bring safety issues to his attention so they could be identified and mitigated.

Mr. Falls always was willing to tackle and resolve safety issues that were identified in the Center office, the field offices, gage stations, and work sites. He was active in assisting employees with filing accident reports and determining the cause and ways to prevent future occurrences of those types of incidents. He was also the local Chemical Hygiene Officer and was responsible for updating the Chemical Hygiene Plan, the Columbia chemical inventory and he also tested the chemical fume hoods annually to ensure they were working properly so employees would not be harmed. He continually kept Center management informed of all safety issues and resolutions. For his dedicated contributions to the Occupational Safety and Health Program of the USGS, Mr. William (Fred) Falls is granted the 2018 Safety and Occupational Health Award of Excellence.

Cory Stephens - Southwest Region

Mr. Verlin “Cory” Stephens, Hydrologist and Safety and Environmental Coordinator of the U.S. Geological Survey’s (USGS) Colorado Water Science Center has served as the Geographic Regional Watercraft Safety Program Manager for the central portion of the United States for the past five years.

Mr. Stephens has provided outstanding customer service to USGS centers and employees who operate motorized and non-motorized watercraft. His contributions to the Watercraft Safety Program include contributing to the watercraft safety policy and revisions, assisting in curriculum development for non-motorized training, conducting external watercraft audits, providing assistance visits, helping abate hazards and deficiencies, and providing subject matter expertise to the field. Mr. Stephens has trained hundreds of employees in the Motorboat Operators Certification Course and has shared his knowledge with a dedication for employee safety and the protection of USGS resources. For his outstanding contributions to the Safety and Occupational Health Watercraft Safety Program of the USGS, Mr. Verlin “Cory” Stephens is granted the 2018 Gary L. Hill Watercraft Safety Award.

Gary Loman - Hydrologic Instrumentation Facility, Water Resources Mission

Mr. Gary E. Loman, Engineering Technician at the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Hydrologic Instrumentation Facility (HIF), has been incorporating safety engineering and design into his work throughout his career.

One specific example for the USGS Watercraft Safety Program is the installation of Breakaway Sounding Reel Cable Kits to provide for the quick release of the cable from its reel. In 1998, Mr. Loman was a key contributor to a Water Resources Division Memorandum on Mandatory Use of Breakaway Sounding Reel Cable Kits. The breakaway cable design for sounding reels was developed for situations when debris could lodge on the sounding weight or other equipment in the water and subject the cable to an unmanageable force. Transfer of such a force to the reel structure can cause damage, loss of equipment, and danger to anyone in close proximity to that equipment. Through the years, Mr. Loman has promoted this initiative and installed breakaway kits on reels that have been sent to the HIF for maintenance or to be rebuilt. In 2018, he wrote a Technical Information Sheet for Breakaway Sounding Reel Cable Installation which provides all data needed, with pictures, for an employee to order the parts and install the breakaway kit locally. Mr. Loman’s efforts are a great example of incorporating safety into the work place and using

expertise and technology to improve the safety and protection of USGS employees and resources. For his outstanding contributions to the Safety and Occupational Health Watercraft Safety Program of the USGS, Mr. Gary Loman is granted the 2018 Gary L. Hill Watercraft Safety Award.

Tim Frick – New England Water Science Center, Northeast Region

Mr. Timothy W. Frick is the Safety and Environmental Officer for the New England Water Science Center and the Regional Watercraft Safety Program Manager for the Northeast and Southeast Regions.

Mr. Frick has taken a lead in helping the Occupational Safety and Health Management Branch maintain the Watercraft Safety Program of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). He has led our watercraft committee meetings, attended a Department of the Interior watercraft safety workgroup meeting, tracked watercraft goals and accomplishments, and has made himself available for additional inquiries about the program throughout the Northeast and Southeast Regions. Mr. Frick has provided outstanding customer service to the USGS centers and employees who operate motorized and non-motorized watercraft. His contributions to the Watercraft Safety Program include contributing to the watercraft safety policy and revisions, assisting in curriculum development for non-motorized training, conducting external watercraft audits, providing assistance visits, helping to abate hazards and deficiencies, and providing subject matter expertise to the field. Mr. Frick has trained hundreds of employees in the Motorboat Operators Certification Course and has shared his expertise with a passion for employee safety and protection of USGS resources. For his outstanding contributions to the Safety and Occupational Health Watercraft Safety Program of the USGS, Mr. Timothy Frick is granted the 2018 Gary L. Hill Watercraft Safety Award.

Christopher Vallee, California Water Science Center, Pacific Region

Mr. Christopher L. Vallee has been the captain of the research vessel Turning Tide and a small craft operator in the California Water Science Center (Center), Estuarine Hydrodynamics Project in the San Francisco Bay – Delta region since September 2011. In this role he has brought the vessel into compliance with national safety standards while ensuring that the Center and its collaborators can meet the scientific objectives of their diverse studies. Moreover, he is consistently involved in a wide-range of scientific studies using small watercraft. He ensures that complex data acquisition needs are consistently met in a safe environment. The range of projects that Mr. Vallee is involved includes 30-hour trawling studies in San Francisco Bay and complex equipment deployments and recoveries requiring long runs of weighted cables. He consistently ensures staff, equipment, and vessel safety in this inherently dangerous work while executing project needs and consistently demonstrates creative thinking and problem solving to ensure that scientific data collection can be done in a safe environment.

Mr. Vallee is the primary coordinator of the Motorboat Operator Certification Course (MOCC) and Motorboat Operator Instructor Certification Course (MOICC) training in the Center. Beyond

the 24-hour course, he makes himself available to work with junior vessel operators to ensure that they can safely navigate their specific field environments and provides feedback and suggestions on ways to improve safety. During weekly project meetings, Mr. Vallee speaks of safety issues ranging from safe trailering to safe navigation. The Center periodically hosts “hands-on” safety demonstrations such as “prop-swap” and radar use to ensure that team members are familiar with how to execute tasks and use equipment in a low-stress environment so that they are comfortable if an event arises in the field. Perhaps as the greatest testament to Mr. Vallee’s expertise in vessel safety is his recent work with the California Department of Water Resources (CADWR). CADWR did not have an MOCC program and Mr. Vallee provided both MOCC and MOICC training and is working with CADWR to develop a strong motorboat training program for the State. CADWR recognized his strengths as a captain and as a teacher and asked him to work with them to develop a motorboat safety program within their own agency. Mr. Vallee not only personally demonstrates high safety standards while ensuring that high caliber scientific data are collected, he also acts as teacher and mentor to many watercraft operators throughout the USGS, across other agencies, and with collaborators in the San Francisco Bay and Delta in California ensuring that his high standards are carried well beyond the work that he is personally involved in. For his outstanding contributions to the USGS, Christopher L. Vallee is granted the Gary L. Hill Watercraft Safety Award.

SAFETY AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AWARD OF EXCELLENCE GROUP AWARDEE

Clarence King Memorial Library Staff, Core Science Systems

Holly Nickle
Sally Roberts
Tami Morse
Pam Callais
Helen Keremedjiev
Kelly Haberstroh
Jez Gaddoura
Devon Galena
Keegan Johnson
Erin Donnelly

In 2018, the Collateral Duty Safety Program Coordinator (CDSPC) for the Core Science Systems Mission Area, Ms. Holly Nickle, focused on mitigating risk for employees, contractors, volunteers and the public when visiting the Clarence King Memorial Library which serves as headquarters for the USGS Library. In 2017, the Library supported over 5,000 visitors touring and conducting research on the lower floors of the John Wesley Powell Building. Upon analysis of the facilities and emergency procedures, Ms. Nickle and the Library staff consisting of Sally Roberts, Tami Morse, Pam Callais, Helen Keremedjiev, Kelly Haberstroh, Jez Gaddoura, Devon Galena, Keegan Johnson, and Erin Donnelly supported the development of an action plan to meet or exceed federal safety and health requirements. Specific focus areas of the action plan included public evacuation planning, ongoing staff education, and facilities review. To ensure the safety of the public, an evacuation plan was developed based on emergency scenarios and evacuation requirements. The

need for efficiency in the event of evacuation is a high priority and requires the support of all Library staff. Staff volunteers cover zones of the Library basement and main floor collection, ensuring the closest emergency exits are being utilized. Other staff volunteers aid those who have disabilities or require additional help evacuating. Ongoing communication takes place throughout an evacuation, which is then finalized by a designated official who indicates to emergency personnel (with emergency signage) that the facility is fully evacuated. During the last evacuation drill, the plan was followed and assessed, and a full facility evacuation was achieved in under seven minutes. To assist with the efficiency of emergency evacuation protocol, the Library emergency exit indicators and lighting were improved. Posted instructions have been updated and are continuously reviewed for accuracy. Additional emergency exits, and telephones have been established in new Library work areas. Site specific evacuation training is provided for both contract and volunteer staff as a component of new employee orientation. Educational materials are provided for all staff on an ongoing basis. For those staff serving the public, training materials on recognizing signs of heart attack and stroke, choking incidents, and other emergency preparedness information is disseminated and reviewed. The Library staff have supported the new safety practices with participation in fire drills, shelter in place drills, earthquake drills, and active shooter training. In 2017-18, the USGS Library – Reston had a 100% staff participation rate in Office of Emergency Preparedness training and reported no accidents or injuries. For their outstanding contributions to the Occupational Safety and Health Program of the USGS, Ms. Holly Nickle and the staff of the Clarence King Memorial Library are granted the 2018 Safety and Occupational Health Award of Excellence.