

## John Kwait

**Profile:** Over 25 years of program evaluation, project and administrative management, problem-solving experience. Very adept at multi-tasking; supervising multi-discipline teams; building coalitions among/public and private organizations; coaching and directing groups in the development and implementation of strategic goals, objectives and targets; managing business operations; leading change/reorganizations; streamlining or reengineering initiatives and activities; and developing and maintaining inter- and intra-agency partnerships.

### Notable achievements include:

- Managing interagency programs that led to a cost avoidance of \$1.4 million annually for 5 years to the federal government.
- Creating Partnerships with tribal governments.
- Project Management.
- Development of new programs or improving existing ones.
- Strategic Planning.

### Key Leadership Competencies

- |                             |                         |                             |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ✓ Creativity and Innovation | ✓ Problem Solving       | ✓ Collaborative Leadership  |
| ✓ Flexibility               | ✓ Relationship Building | ✓ Political Savvy           |
| ✓ Conflict Management       | ✓ Resilience            | ✓ Decision Making Abilities |

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### Executive Director, New Mexico Federal Executive Board

03/21/2006 – Retired –May 2014  
Bureau of Land Management  
Supervisor: Ed Singleton (retired)

Managed the day-to-day operations of the New Mexico Federal Executive Board (NMFEB); directed the work of 5 interagency committees; served as liaison and a resource for 109 Federal Executives which represents 33,000 employees (civilian, military, and postal). Provided leadership to assure the successful planning and coordination of activities across agency lines. Advocated on behalf of the agencies to provide change to existing federal, state and local practices to improve the services provided by those agencies. The NMFEB strives to provide a clear and effective communications medium between federal agencies as well as all levels of government. The NMFEB brings diverse parties to the table and facilitates valuable collaboration.

## **Accomplishments:**

### **Leadership**

- Directed an interagency mediation program for federal agencies in New Mexico. As a result of our program, the federal community has been educated on the benefits of mediation and more than 30 federal employees have been trained and certified as mediators. In FY11, 42 cases were mediated that resulted in cost avoidance of more than \$964,000 in litigation costs.
- Oversaw the accomplishment of the goals set by the Emergency Preparedness and Employee Safety line of business. Facilitated efforts of the Emergency Preparedness Committee to ensure goals are met. Planned courses and recruited instructors for training sessions associated with the Emergency Preparedness Committee of the NMFEB. Served on the planning committee of several Continuity of Operations (COOP) workshops. Creates lesson plans and instructed in workshops and training sessions.
- Organized and provided leadership to the Diversity Committee of the NMFEB. Committee goals are to coordinate programs and activities that promote a diverse workforce within the Federal Government and incorporate and expand upon the tenets and principles of Special Emphasis programs. Committee serves as a forum for Equal Employment Opportunity Officers/Managers to collaborate on topics such as: Partnerships between agencies, Recruitment and conversion of STEP/SCEP Students, Awareness of methods and processes in resolving EEO complaints through mediation and other avenues, Accommodation and Title VI and Title VII programs, Functions of Special Emphasis programs, Diversity events for employees such as a Diversity Day celebrations, and promotion of public service by hosting Federal Career Awareness events for the public.
- Represented the Federal Executive Board at federal, state, and local government activities as well as at non-government sponsored meetings, seminars or conferences. Participates in annual national FEB/Office of Personnel Management (OPM) meetings for Executive Directors. Briefs agency leaders on the federal budget, status of pending Congressional legislation, new national programs and objectives for which FEBs are responsible.

### **Workforce Support**

- Developed the training program and schedule to accomplish the Human Capital Readiness Line of Business. Course topics included Leadership, Supervision, Financial Planning, Human Resources, Pre-retirement and Mediation. Negotiated contracts with various vendors on delivery of the courses. Evaluated individual courses after completion for improvements and suitability for target audience. By leveraging resources the training garnered cost avoidance to the federal government in FY12 \$272,313.
- Oversaw the development of a Two Tier Leadership Program for New Leaders and Middle Leaders. The programs address Office of Personnel Management Core Competencies in conflict management, external awareness, continuously learning, interpersonal skills, influencing/negotiating, flexibility, and influencing/negotiating.
- Organized and administered the annual NMFEB Public Service Awards banquet. Over 250 people attend this event annually. The event recognizes the contributions of federal employees throughout New Mexico. Oversaw the creation of all event materials that include the program for the event, employee nomination guidelines.

## **Strategic Planning**

- Established a board of directors, increased membership by 50 percent, and developed a strategic plan that includes concrete mission, goals, and performance metrics. The strategic plan integrates Administration (national) priorities, regulatory requirements, and the needs of the local federal community.
- Developed the annual NMFEB operating plans the operating plans addressing the three lines of business; Human Capital Readiness; Emergency Preparedness and Employee Safety; Intergovernmental and Community. During FY11, more than 1,351 people attended workshops, seminars or training sponsored by the NMFEB.

## **Coordination**

- Served as a member of the Northern and Central New Mexico, Local Federal Coordinating Committee that executes the annual Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). CFC includes federal offices, which involves over 30,000 federal employees and more than 1600 not-for-profit charities partners. The 2013 campaign raised \$2.5 million.
- Developed the multi-year MOU and evaluation criteria for the selection of the Principal Combined Fund Organization (PCFO) that administers the current CFC.
- Initiated contacts and partners with local, county, state and tribal government officials to advise them about on-going NMFEB efforts to bring government closer.
- Established and coordinated the scheduling and agendas for the NMFEB agency leaders meetings.
- Developed the public relations program of the NMFEB. In this capacity, advises the Chair and Coordinating Committee members on the impact of public relations efforts within and outside the federal community. Has direct contact with the news media. Originate and developed NMFEB publications and communications; provide staff support to NMFEB committees and responsible for the NMFEB website, Facebook and other publications.

## **Fire Management Officer**

06/18/00 – 3/20/06

Albuquerque District Rio  
Puerco Field Office Bureau  
of Land Management  
Supervisor: Tom Gow (retired)

Provided leadership and coordination for the fire management program for the field office. This included development and implementation of prescribed fire/fuels projects and fire suppression. Standing member of the field office interdisciplinary team.

### **Leadership**

- Served as team leader for the Central Mexico Interagency Fire Planning Unit. Coordinated efforts of the interagency group using the Fire Planning Analysis (FPA) preparedness module.
- Served for three years as chairperson of the Albuquerque Zone Operations Committee. The committee oversaw the operational component of the Albuquerque Zone Dispatch center and coordinated interagency cooperation in all aspects of fire management.

### **Project Planning**

- Authored the Fire Management Plan (FMP) for the Rio Puerco Field Office based on the Interagency Template. This plan was used as a prototype by the national office for the rest of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to be used as an example of an FMP that covered all of the requirements of the new Interagency Template.
- Implemented three Healthy Forest Initiative (HFI) hazardous fuels reduction thinning projects using Category Exemptions. Implemented two Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) environmental assessments for communities at risk from wildfire.
- Developed and implemented budgets for a program of over 1.2 million dollars. I used the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) financial system to monitor expenditures for the entire program and individual projects. Year after year I increased my targets and funding for the program. I used the BLM financial system to report my results.

### **Collaboration**

- Implemented the National Fire Plan by providing local communities contracting opportunities. Developed assistance agreements with three local tribal governments and the Village of Cuba that allowed for the local hiring and training of thinning crews to thin BLM lands adjacent to communities at risk from wildfire.
- Collaborated with the National Park Service (NPS) in developing a joint Fire Management Plan for the El Malpais National Monument and the El Malpais National Conservation Area (NCA) administered by

the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). An overriding resource goal of the plan is the restoration or maintenance of natural ecosystems while providing for firefighter and public safety. The plan contained specific fire suppression strategies by Fire Management Zones and included an Environmental Assessment for Wildland Fire Use for the West Malpais Wilderness Area administered by the BLM and adjoining NPS land. The plan also included an area wide fuels management plan that covers a full range of fuels management projects to be undertaken over the next 5 to 10 years.

- Served as the BLM representative on the New Mexico MOU Smoke Monitoring Workgroup. The group was charged with developing a recommendation for smoke monitoring in the state of New Mexico.
- Partnered with the New Mexico Department of Fish and Wildlife (NMDFW) for habitat improvement projects for Elk and Deer management. Received funds from NMDFW for thinning and pre-scribed fire projects.

### **Coordination**

- Administered the Rural Volunteer Fire Department Grant program for the office that includes 17 different rural fire departments.
- Consulted with grazing permittee's on proposed fire and fuels management projects.
- Coordinated development of three large programmatic fuels management environmental assessments. The assessments covered a full range of fuels management projects with prescribed fire and mechanical treatments for Ponderosa Pine, Pinyon Pine and Sagebrush/Grass ecosystems.

### **Human Resource Management**

- Exercised the full range of supervisory management responsibilities. Planned and assigned work for six subordinate employees for a larger organization of twenty five employees. Worked with staffing and classification specialists to write job descriptions for vacant positions. Actively recruited for the positions and interviewed candidates for the positions and then made the selections.
- Annually with the employee I developed their annual performance plan and throughout the year monitor and make adjustments as needed to work priorities and time frames. As part of the annual performance review with the employee we would develop a training plan for any training needs that were required for the positions as well as training for future career enhancement.
- I worked with my staff to streamline work processes so work could be done in the most efficient manner and as a result we were able to increase our targets of accomplishments year after year.
- I used the awards program to recognize individual and group work achievements within my organization.
- Held staff meetings to brief my organization on substantive administrative matters such as changes in pay roll policies, credit card use and work schedules.
- Served as the New Mexico representative to the National BLM Training committee. Served on a sub-committee of the training group that developed an advanced fire-training program for future fire management leaders within the BLM.

## **Fire and Fuels Planner**

Siuslaw National Forest  
Supervisor: Carl West (retired)

Dates Employed: 11/1991 – 06/17/00

### **Collaboration**

Represented two Bureau of Land Management Districts and the Forest on an interdisciplinary team that developed management direction for Late Successional Reserves (LSR) in Northwest Oregon. I wrote a complex Fire Management Plan that dealt with fire suppression strategy and tactics for wildfire suppression. The plan also included fuels management guidelines for treatment of hazardous fuels. I worked closely with the Fire Ecologist on the team to develop fire regime blocks that described the role of fire in the LSR.

Lead fire planner on the Northwest Oregon Interagency Fire Protection Study team. This study used the National Fire Management Analysis System (NFMAS) to determine an optimal operational organization in terms of numbers and locations of fire suppression resources for northwestern Oregon. The study took place on two BLM districts, two national forests and the adjoining State of Oregon protected lands.

Served as a senior technical advisor and consultant to the development of the Fuels Analysis, Smoke Tracking, and Report Access Computer System. (FASTRACS). I provided input for system design and functionality to a contracted software developer and technical writer. I provided regional support to fuels specialist on the use of the program in support of their fuels management program of work.

Served on two cadres that development two different regional courses. Those courses were Fuels Appraisal for Fuels Specialist and Advanced Weather Information Management System (WIMS). I wrote and developed lesson plans and instructed in both courses.

Provided technical fuels and fire management input to Environmental Assessments as a member of an interdisciplinary team.

### **Coordination**

Served as the chairperson of the Northwest Oregon Interagency training area. In this role, I facilitate training coordination among numerous agencies within the geographic area. Annually, I served as Course Coordinator and Lead Instructor for S-290 Intermediate Fire Behavior and S-390 Wildland Fire Behavior Calculations.

Responsible for smoke management audits on other agency's prescribed burns in accordance with the Oregon Smoke Management Plan. The audits I performed included: 1) a site visit during burning 2) pre-burn fuel loading determination 3) visual tracking and documentation of smoke dispersal 4) determination of compliance with the burn permit 5) review of written burn plans 6) compliance with the daily smoke management instructions. My findings were summarized in a written report and forwarded to the State Foresters Office. The audits led to changes in the Oregon Smoke Management Plan.

Provided leadership for the Smoke Management program by assuring plan compliance and made recommendations to district Fire Management Officers and supervisor for correction of any potential problems. Analyzed smoke management forecasts and kept supervisor and Fire Management Officers informed on conditions where plan compliance was marginal, or when planned burns could not be accomplished within the requirements of the Oregon Smoke Management Plan. Coordinate smoke management monitoring with adjacent Oregon Department of Forestry Districts.

## Education - Training

### Umpqua Community College

A.S. Forestry 1977

Leading Up – Influencing those above You in Your Organization 2011

Managing Change, Burnout and Negativity for Administrative Professionals 2011

New Mexico Leadership Development Program  
Office of Personnel Management Western Development  
Center Courses included in the program:

Leading People: Understanding Self and Other 2010

Leading People: Building Teams 2010

Emotional Intelligence 2010

Coaching Skills for Leaders 2010

Building Peak Performance: Stress & Resilience 2010

Building Strength in Conflict Management 2010

Leading Change: Becoming a Successful Change Agent 2010

Ethics Integrity and Honesty 2010

Leading on the Spot 2010

Understanding Federal Labor Relations 2010

Senior Officials Workshop 2009

Six Core Competencies of Leadership 2009

Quality New Mexico Program Examiner 2008

Dealing with Conduct and Performance Issues 2007

Project Planning 2007

Supervise First Manage Second 2007

Enhanced Mediation 2007

Group Meditation 2006

Resolving Official Training (USFS R-3) 2005

Leadership Challenge 2004

Fire Program Analysis 2004

Leading in Fire Management 2002

Assistance Agreements for Agency Representatives 2002

A complete list of Fire Management and Continuity courses are available upon request.

**Job-Related Skills:** Mediator, Master Professional Continuity Practitioner (FEMA Certified)

### **Job-Related Awards:**

2013 Time-off award

2012 Star Award for Exceptional Performance

2011 Star Award for Exceptional Performance

2010 Quality Step Increase for Exceptional Performance.

- 2009 Star Award for Exceptional Performance
- 2007 Star Award for leadership and organizational skills as Executive Director of the New Mexico Federal Executive Board.
- 2005 Star Award for leadership and organizational skills in managing a highly successful Fire Program.
- 2005 Public Service Award – In recognition of my commitment to Public Service and dedication to the Federal Community.
- 2004 Star Award for exceptional leadership in the District and State Fire Programs. For working with tribes and for authoring the district Fire Management plan that was utilized nationally as a template for all other offices to emulate.
- 2002 Star Award for providing leadership in the continued growth of the Albuquerque Field Office fire program.
- 2001 Star Award for improving, promoting, and implementing the Albuquerque Field Office fuels management program and completion of the El Malpais Fire Management Plan.

**Volunteer Experience**

- 2010 – Present City of Albuquerque - Open Space Advisory Commission
- 2010 – Present Board of Directors First Unitarian Church of Albuquerque
- 2001 – 2004 Board of Directors La Montanita Cooperative Food Market