

# Summary: Investigation of Mismanagement and Misconduct by Officials and Supervisors in the FWS Office of Law Enforcement

Report Date: August 5, 2013

OIG investigated identical anonymous complaints submitted by Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Mark Begich (D-AK) alleging mismanagement and misconduct by a senior member of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) and other OLE supervisors. The complainant alleged, in part, that—

- OLE supervisors intimidated and threatened agents;
- OLE supervisors created a new position for an employee in lieu of discipline;
- one special agent took seminude, compromising photographs of another agent;
- OLE officials promoted another special agent despite knowing that her spouse had been convicted of felony sexual abuse of a minor;
- the special agent's spouse attended OLE functions where minors were present; and
- OLE supervisors testified on behalf of the special agent's spouse.

The complainant also questioned whether a special agent's spouse had registered as a sex offender as required under State law; whether the special agent disclosed her spouse's conviction during routine background investigations; and why this special agent was allowed to keep FWS-issued firearms in her residence despite the presence of a convicted felon.

In addition, the complainant alleged that—

- a refuge law-enforcement officer and FWS special agents used their official positions to secure hunting permits, and illegally hunted and killed musk oxen;
- OLE supervisors allowed their married subordinates' girlfriends to stay with them during an OLE training program;
- an FWS official had intimate relations with a former supervisor and staff while in a previous job; and
- OLE supervisors did not punish subordinates who were close friends for wrongdoing and "outed the messenger" of the allegations made against them.

We found no evidence that OLE supervisors intimidated or threatened special agents, or that they created a new position so they would not have to discipline an employee. We did, however, find that a special agent took compromising photos of another while off duty.

We also found that OLE officials did not know that a promoted special agent's spouse was a convicted felon until after the promotion, but this information would not have affected the promotion; she disclosed her spouse's conviction to background investigators despite having no requirement to do so. In addition, the spouse was properly registered as a sex offender, and the terms of his probation did not prohibit contact with minors. Although we found no evidence that OLE supervisors testified on the spouse's behalf, we learned that one special agent wrote a letter supporting the spouse to the judge who presided over the case. We confirmed that the promoted



special agent abided by FWS policy when storing firearms at home and restricted the spouse's access to those firearms.

We found no evidence that FWS employees used their official positions to secure hunting permits and kill musk oxen, that girlfriends of married special agents were permitted to stay with them during training, that an FWS official had intimate relations with former coworkers, or that OLE supervisors failed to discipline subordinates and shared the identities of people who alleged improprieties against the subordinates.

We provided the results of our investigation to the FWS Director for any action he deemed appropriate. We did not require a response.

*This is a summary of an investigative report that was issued internally to the U.S. Department of the Interior. This summary was posted to the web on April 10, 2015.*