

APPENDIX E

SITE HISTORIAN INFORMATION

Site Historian Information

Site Historians in each of the participating Demonstration Group and Comparison Group organizations documented events that occurred during the timeframe of April 1, 2000—March 31, 2001 that provide context for the Demonstration Project activities.

Event	Potential Impact on Demonstration Project	Reporting Organization
Presidential Hiring Freeze	<p>The Presidential hiring freeze was enacted for all recruitment and other personnel actions as of the last week of January 2001. One organization reported that the hiring freeze put approximately 3 recruitment actions on hold and delayed a few reassignments and promotions. This had a slight impact on the recruitment and other personnel actions in the organization.</p> <p>Another organization reported that the hiring freeze impacted their abilities to bring employees on-board quickly. Almost all details, promotions and transfers had to be approved by the Department.</p> <p>Another organization reported that the hiring freeze adversely impacted the ability to bring employees on board quickly between mid-January through the end of March. This also adversely impacted the ability to retain highly qualified term employees whose appointments lapsed. The Department's stringent waiver process criteria, despite the best of intentions, also had an adverse impact by discounting the need for reasonable infrastructure stability during a period of transition.</p> <p>Although security clearances are not a part of the Demonstration Project, it is important to note that this has slowed down the hiring process. This year security clearances were incredibly slow in transferring or being able to transfer within Commerce or from other agencies. New clearances were very slow.</p>	NESDIS, NMFS, OAR, ESA
OAR Hiring Freeze	<p>Under the direction of the NOAA Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, OAR self-imposed a hiring freeze on July 2, 2000. The purpose of the freeze was to help address FY 00 shortfalls that occurred as a result of inadequate funding for adjustments to base, recoveries of deobligations running far below levels mandated in the appropriations bill, rescissions, and declining agency reimbursements for some of the activities. Critical vacancies received a hiring freeze exemption. The OAR freeze was still in effect when the Presidential hiring freeze was imposed on January 20, 2001. The OAR hiring freeze, as well as the Presidential hiring freeze, adversely impacted the ability to hire employees and retain term employees whose appointments lapsed between July 2000 and March 2001.</p>	OAR
Higher Pay Rates for Information Technology (IT) Workers	<p>Effective January 01, 2001, IT professionals in grade 12 and below were put on a special pay rate to make the public sector as competitive as the private sector in the recruitment and retention of computer specialists. While not automatic for employees in the Demonstration Project, Demonstration Group organizations reported that they did provide this increase to their IT professionals. It is expected that this special pay rate will have a significant impact on the recruitment and retention of computers specialists in Commerce and across the Federal workforce.</p>	ESA, NESDIS, NMFS, OAR

Event	Potential Impact on Demonstration Project	Reporting Organization
Union Issues	<p>On August 1, 2000, the OAR Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory (AOML) in Miami, FL elected to have the National Weather Service Employees Organization (NWSEO) serve as their exclusive bargaining representative. Of 77 eligible members, 43 cast ballots; 29 voted for the NSWEO and 14 voted against it. The results placed all eligible professional and non-professional employees together in a single bargaining unit. The first order of business was to try to get AOML out of the Demonstration Project. A negotiating team was formed, training was held, and the negotiating team is meeting on a regular basis.</p> <p>The lack of a permanent Regional Administrator and Deputy Regional Administrator presence in NMFS' Southeast Region (SERO) was regarded as a significant factor in the decision of SERO bargaining unit representatives, and the employees they represent, to decline reinstatement in the Demonstration Project.</p>	OAR, NMFS
Automated Classification System (ACS)	<p>The ACS is being converted from a DOS based software to a web based software application. This will be a major improvement for managers since they will be able to review other managers' position descriptions and quickly revise them to fit their needs. NESDIS has been testing the new software.</p> <p>At least one organization reported being behind schedule in using the ACS system due to the programming of levels of access that were not identified to the programmer at the beginning of the project.</p>	NESDIS, NMFS, OAR
Conversion to Web-based PPS	<p>The DPMB Operating Board voted to convert the PPS to a web-based program. Hopefully, this change will enhance the ability to have working PPS software. By using web-based software, all users of PPS will have the latest software as soon as they log on. The NESDIS systems administrator and the other systems administrators have been working with the Department to ensure that the new software works correctly.</p>	NESDIS, NMFS, OAR, ESA
Software Issues	<p>NIST decided to use the Demonstration Project's PPS software and this had a major impact on the Department's Project. Although the Demonstration Project team had identified many changes that needed to be made to the PPS software, most of the changes were not done. The programmers that had been previously assigned to the Departmental project were diverted to work on the NIST project and were latter reassigned to NIST. All of the Department's agencies struggled to use software that was flawed. None of the reports were reprogrammed.</p> <p>The programmers were supposed to have documented the PPS system. This was not done for DoC, but was done for NIST by programmers formerly assigned to the Demonstration Project. In addition, the Demonstration Project experienced several changes in DoC Demonstration Project Managers and Programmers during this period.</p>	NESDIS, NMFS, OAR
Morale Following the Transition	<p>Many regarded the transition to a new Administration and the lack of permanent selections of staff for NMFS Assistant Administrator, Deputy Assistant Administrator, and other key headquarters and field management positions in the Senior Executive Service, to have created subliminal morale issues among employees.</p>	NMFS

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ESA Headquarters Reorganization	The reorganization established the delegation of authority in ESA Headquarters as of June 19, 2001. It has had a minimal impact on the Demonstration Project.	ESA
Pay Pool Percentages	<p>NESDIS' board voted to keep the same percentage contributions for increase and bonus pools.</p> <p>NMFS increased percentage contributions by approximately .2 percent for the ZA and ZP career paths to account for an increasing number of supervisors eligible for supervisory performance pay and the compounding effect of banded grades. The ZS and ZT career path increase contributions were increased by approximately .1 percent to adjust for the compounding effect of banded grades. It will be necessary to continue these adjustments to all career paths for an estimated total of nine years to balance the effect of employee accessions with expected employee attrition. No adjustments were made to Bonus Pay Pool amounts, which remained at 2 percent.</p> <p>OAR has retained its original historical increase and bonus percentages with a slight variation in the ZP career path. Pay Pool Managers in OAR Labs who are financially stable and whose employees have had an extraordinary performance year, may request up to a 3 percent overall average increase for their ZP employees. This is reflective of past history, before the Demonstration Project, where some labs gave more and some less.</p>	NESDIS, NMFS, OAR
Requests for Re-consideration	There were fewer written Requests for Reconsideration during this period. However, one organization reported that there were increased cases where administrative errors by Pay Pool Managers necessitated retroactive pay increase adjustments.	NMFS, OAR
Grievances	Due to increased communications between management and employees, there were no formal grievances in the Third Year of the Demonstration Project. There were fewer informal grievances during this period.	NESDIS
Demonstration Project Expansion	NMFS management officials reconfirmed, for the third year in a row, their desire to seek expansion of the Project to include employees assigned to Fisheries Science Centers.	NMFS
Demonstration Project Extension	<p>NMFS officials endorsed the technical extension of the Project through the performance cycle ending September 30, 2003.</p> <p>NMFS officials also endorsed the notion of extending the duration of the Project beyond that date, assuming approval by OPM of Project expansion, for a sufficient period of time (five years) to provide for credible evaluation of new Project participants.</p>	NMFS