Congratulations on Your Promotion to Management: Considerations for New Supervisory Biologists

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Abstract: New supervisory biologists can find themselves tasked with operational responsibilities (e.g., personnel, budgets, procurement, safety) with limited formal training in those areas. This sometimes sudden role change can be jolting, but it need not be debilitating. Here we present information and guidance on various topics ranging from recruiting new personnel and conducting performance evaluations to maintaining a sound safety program as well as confronting legal considerations regarding personal and institutional liabilities for job-related issues. Often, your first task as the new supervisor is to oversee a recruitment effort to fill your old position. This first task is best accomplished by working closely with the designated human resources staff to meet all administrative requirements and deadlines. After the successful hire, effective team leadership is achieved by learning how each staff member is motivated, what they are best able to contribute to the team, and areas for which they may need support. As a new supervisor, you are now responsible for promoting your agency's safety program to mitigate potential job-related hazards. Despite institutional safeguards, accidents happen or interpersonal interactions can go poorly, and the aggrieved party may litigate for due compensation or to punish the perceived wrongdoer. As a supervisor, you may be a party to these litigations, and understanding your responsibilities in these situations is important for keeping you, your supervisees, and your institution safe and free of liability and help to hold any responsible party accountable when accidents, harassment, bias, or bullying occur. We hope the information provided here will facilitate a smooth transition from the role of mid-career biologist to a supervisory biologist who can efficiently carry out your agency's mission in natural resource stewardship.

Since the late 2000s, as "baby boomers" reached retirement age, we have witnessed continued restructuring in the upper management of our respective organizations as senior leaders retired and new leaders were recruited to fill the created vacancies. This trend is expected to continue as many state, federal, and non-governmental natural resource agencies nationally are facing large-scale retire-

ments as the last of the boomers reach retirement age. In our experience, the new senior leaders come from the ranks of mid-level supervisors, and their former positions are staffed by mid-career biologists tasked with taking on new supervisory responsibilities.

As a newly minted supervisory biologist, you now find yourself tasked with operational responsibilities (e.g., personnel, budgets, procurement, safety) with limited, if any, formal training in those areas, as these topics are seldom covered in graduate natural resources curricula. In this paper, we provide an overview of the roles and responsibilities of mid-level managers in natural resource organizations for mid-career biologists who have been recently promoted to a supervisory position or are considering applying to one.

The initial role change of being a newly minted manager can be jolting. As a supervisor, you are tasked generally with the oversight of a group of people, and your main responsibility is assigning them work and assessing and monitoring their performance. Being a supervisor forces you to think about personnel management and accepting additional duties that occur with the need to see and assess the "big picture." As a manager, your focus now has to include assessing how key personnel and resource decisions align with the mission and the emerging challenges and needs of the workplace. Because some of the decisions you now have to make deal with issues that involve sensitive subjects (e.g., personnel actions, budget, redirection or change), maintaining objectivity, practicing consistency, and learning to not take employee reactions and responses personally are keys to success in your new role. The information presented in this paper will cover a variety of topics ranging from recruiting new personnel and conducting performance evaluations to maintaining a sound safety program as well as legal considerations regarding personal and institutional liabilities for job-related issues. Our goal is to provide information that will facilitate a smooth transition from your role as mid-career biologist to that of a supervisory biologist who can efficiently execute their agency's mission in natural resource stewardship.

Recruiting And Hiring Staff

Many newly promoted supervisory biologists may be surprised to learn that their first official management task is to fill the vacancy created by their promotion. Depending on the agency, this staffing effort may have a tight timeline and certainly will come with constraints. Your first step in navigating this process successfully and efficiently will be to familiarize yourself with your agency's hiring procedures and understand your role and that of the Human Resources (HR) Department staff. Aspects of the process such as the number of people to interview, total interview budget, interview type, and starting salary and other potential benefits

(e.g., housing and dedicated agency vehicle) may be beyond your control. However, being aware of all jobs benefits and conveying that information to all applicants would be helpful to your recruitment effort. Additionally, you may be asked to write a position description and job recruitment announcement for the new vacancy. In such instances, decisions about desired skill sets, educational and experience level, special certifications, start date, and time allocation for the new employee and assignment of office space also may be your responsibility. After those decisions have been sorted out, practical issues (e.g., when and where to advertise and for how long) as well as legal issues (e.g., prohibited questions about age, marital status, gender, race) related to the interview also need to be considered. As the person leading this recruitment effort, you may be responsible for contacting the applicants' references, standardizing the information required of the applicants' references, and creating an "evaluation rubric" so that all candidates are evaluated on the same criteria. Other issues to consider include safeguarding candidates' personal information and ensuring confidentiality in all communications related to the hiring process. Finally, understanding who makes the final selection and who communicates the job offer to the successful applicant will make the process go smoothly. Knowing those in HR who deal with recruitment efforts and working with them to meet all administrative requirements and deadlines are essential for successful recruitment efforts. Paying attention to these and similar details will guarantee the successful completion of your first task as a supervisory biologist and engender confidence as you fully embrace the opportunities and challenges that accompany your new role.

Personnel Management

As the new supervisory biologist, you will find that issues relating to personnel management (e.g., staff conflicts, disciplinary issues, annual performance evaluations) often are among the most challenging aspects of your job. Highly competent researchers and field biologists seldom receive formal guidance for developing effective leadership and managerial skills to prepare them for promotions to supervisory roles; therefore, they often feel un(der) prepared for many of the most common challenges in managing personnel. However, intentional development in a few key areas can better prepare new supervisors for these challenges by introducing tools and instilling skills that result in greater confidence, more effective leadership, and enhanced job satisfaction.

New supervisors may not immediately have the trust and respect of their staff, but these can be earned with time and experience as the staff sees how their leader deals with adversity and with them as individuals. Integrity is essential and is best established with long-term patterns, not a single act, but it can certainly be

obliterated with a single act. Honesty, consistency, and transparency are vital, and staff will generally be forgiving of honest mistakes when they are owned rather than passed along. Taking the time to get to know each staff member is critical for understanding how they are motivated (or discouraged), what they are best able to contribute to the team, and areas for which they may need some support or professional growth.

Becoming quickly familiar with the appropriate HR point of contacts and where to obtain the most up-to-date policy documents for agency personnel policies and procedures and any state or federal laws that undergird them will ease your transition to becoming a supervisor. Familiarity with agency policy can be your best friend because it can quickly provide clarity and direction when difficult questions or unpleasant situations arise. Agency policy alleviates the burden of uncertainty or responsibility that you may otherwise internalize. Following established reporting procedures and obligations at all times will avoid any personal liability. If you are responsible for developing or revising policy, input from staff during the process is critical for acceptance. Staff may not be aware of all policies and expectations, may need periodic reminders, or may not understand the underpinnings of the legal obligations of policy. Workshops, brown bag seminars, team meetings, or other means can help facilitate communication of policy, thereby increasing overall awareness and transparency.

Personnel conflict is a reality of working in teams, but it can be minimized and does not need to be debilitating. For example, personality assessment tools can help you understand the personality types of team members (including you) and help identify those who work together well and those who may clash. Understanding personalities and how each bring complementary value to the team can be useful for improving team dynamics, productivity, and overall morale. In the event of personnel conflict, resolution should be handled deliberately with fairness and objectivity; all sides should be heard and carefully considered before any action is taken. Transparency is essential in dealing with conflict, and established policies should be followed to limit subjectivity and bias to the fullest extent possible. Employees should be praised in public but counseled, and if necessary, disciplined in private. Inconsistency in your treatment of all those you supervise is problematic and must be avoided as it damages your objectivity and credibility. You must model the behavior you want to cultivate in your work team(s).

Many personnel problems can be avoided, minimized or resolved with clear and frequent communication. Strong communication skills are essential for personnel management; fortunately, these skills can be learned and improved with attention. Developing excellent listening skills is a key aspect of becoming a good

communicator. Active listening skills such as attentiveness, asking questions, and paraphrasing are useful strategies when you engage with team members. Being a good listener is critical for getting to know staff and addressing problems, but interestingly, often staff do not expect you to 'fix' every situation. Frequently, staff just need to 'vent' and do not necessarily expect any direct action after sharing their thoughts; they simply want to know their voice was heard. Discerning the difference between when action is needed and when a sympathetic ear will suffice is an essential skill for managers to develop. Be aware though that some agencies view conversations initially meant to be venting and confidential (e.g., harassment complaints) may necessitate action by you even if that was not the intent of the employee. Knowing the policies and making employees aware of required reporting can ensure understanding among all parties. This is another reason that establishing and maintaining open and honest two-way communication is paramount. In addition, goals and expectations should be articulated early and often, and regular team meetings where goals are shared and staff input is genuinely sought can be productive and help improve team morale. Remember that employees are your agency's most valuable asset, and successful supervisors continually strive to establish and maintain professional, trusting relationships with their employees.

Finally, as the new supervisor, you will quickly recognize that you are no longer 'one of the gang' and that relationships with colleagues and friends take on an entirely new dynamic. Regardless of how you would like to be viewed by your staff, your former colleagues now view you in a new light and expect you to act as a leader. Embracing this role and developing a network of trusted colleagues and mentors that serve as a sounding board for ideas and struggles is beneficial to all supervisors, especially new ones. Mentors from outside of the organizational unit can help provide valuable perspective when it is most needed.

Budget Management

Ensuring adequate fiscal resources for the entire program under your leadership, which is not simply a summation of individual projects, is now among your new supervisory responsibilities. Planning budgets for an entire program instead of individual projects requires long-term strategizing and a broad outlook. Typical cycles for program and project budgets revolve around the fiscal year (FY) and budgetary planning often occurs 0.5 to 1 year prior to implementation. This advance planning can be a major hurdle for inexperienced supervisors, who sometimes struggle to navigate the various funding streams and their unique expenditure constraints. However, quickly learning common funding sources, their past and future balances and allocation trends, their fungibil-

ity among programs, and their expenditure will ease that struggle. Developing good relationships with your program's budget coordinators and administrative assistants as well as shadowing a senior supervisor during budget formulation would provide useful guidance about the budget planning process and help alleviate any budget forecasting anxieties you may face. Navigating a new budgetary system with its new terminology can be cumbersome and intimidating. However, establishing and maintaining good relations with your agency's budget analyst(s) will be beneficial for orienting you to the unfamiliar budgeting process and helpful when learning the new system. Furthermore, having dedicated fiscal office staff track expenditures and fund balances can lighten your new budget management burden. This relationship requires trust, and having a detail-oriented, methodical person who can track spending and provide regular (e.g., monthly) account balance updates is essential. Because financial management software is constantly changing, allowing time and resources for training will make everyone's job easier and help avoid financial mismanagement.

Most new supervisors come to their position by first being Principal Investigators (PI) and managing project-level budgets. Program budgets share some similarities with project budgets, but they differ in important ways as follows.

Project Budgets

Individual project budgets have a defined, finite life span (typically 2–3 years) for which cost estimates have been provided to accomplish specific tasks that vary over time (e.g., evaluate response of stocking species X in lake Y). To accomplish such a task, the PI may charge a portion or all of their salary and that of any support staff to the project. Rarely would an individual project have sufficient funds to buy a vehicle for sole use on that project. Instead, the PI would use an existing agency vehicle, and such usage (usually cost per mile) along with any travel costs (i.e., lodging and per diem) would be charged to the project. If a vehicle or other high-cost, long-life gear was purchased with project funds (considered project equipment), its long-term use and maintenance ultimately will be the responsibility of the agency once the project is completed. In some cases, ownership of the equipment may revert to the funding agency after completion of the project, and the fate of project equipment is usually specified in the funding agreement. Individual projects also include a "supplies" category to pay for specific supplies (e.g., chemicals, tags) to be used on the project. Funds budgeted for supplies typically are exhausted at the end of the project. Each individual project can thus be viewed as stand-alone without necessarily requiring support of other projects or the program.

Program Budgets

The overall program budget comprises all projects budgets as explained above, plus an array of typical budget categories such as: operations and maintenance of program facilities (e.g., physical grounds and structures, equipment and vehicle storage facilities, physical properties,), personnel wages and benefits, capital equipment (e.g., vehicles, boats, trailers, generators), utility bills, services, rental equipment, and travel reimbursements for staff. Most agencies generally track spending by these categories, so you will usually be responsible for reporting your program's FY expenditures by these categories. Maintaining accurate accounting of expenditures by budget category requires monthly updating of a program budget spreadsheet or other financial tracking tool. This can be done when completing monthly spending reports and monthly billing on agency-issued credit cards (i.e., purchase card), purchase orders, and contracts. Retaining some portion of the annual program budget for emergency needs is a good practice to overcome unforeseeable issues such as equipment failure or emergency vehicle maintenance. However, unspent funds remaining at the end of the FY are typically lost, as they usually cannot be carried over and added to the next year's budget. Therefore, knowing cumulative program spending leading up to the end of a FY is important so you are aware of any funds available to spend before the FY closes.

Agencies have administrative and facilities costs (also referred to as overhead or indirect costs) that are unrelated to salaries, supplies, and equipment, and these costs are covered by a fee, which varies by agency, that is assessed to each grant dollar. Therefore, you also need to understand your agency's overhead costs and account for them in your budget planning. You also need to be fully aware of the source of the funds and obligations that accompany them. For example, Sportfish and Wildlife Restoration Funds (i.e., the Dingell-Johnson Act) through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service usually require a 25% match (i.e., cost sharing) of the total grant amount by the receiving agency. Providing the match can be achieved in multiple ways (e.g., waived overhead, personnel time), but finding these funds is the responsibility of the supervisor to document exactly how the match requirement was satisfied.

Implementing New Projects

Agency research focus can change dramatically as new challenges to resource management and resource sustainability emerge; implementing new projects to address those challenges often falls to you. In some cases, projects have been on a priority list awaiting approval and funding. In other cases, novel ideas or emerging issues occur that require a prompt response and a need for capacity building to meet project goals. Both cases involve uncertainty and

potential pitfalls to be avoided for you to successfully implement the project. All projects start with good intentions, but successful projects start with clear goals, objectives, effective planning, and realistic measurable deliverables. New projects usually are preceded by proposals describing the questions to be addressed, a budget, a research schedule, and project deliverables (e.g., periodic progress reports and final reports). However, time lags between a proposal being funded and when the funds are available for implementing the project are common. This mismatch between project funds being available and project schedule can be challenging to you, especially when planning personnel appointments.

Your first consideration is whether capacity exists to begin a new project or if doing so will distract from ongoing efforts such as standardized sampling. For example, a newly funded project can require the reallocation of limited resources to the new project, which may require many unplanned hours in the field, the need to acquire supplies, or unexpected maintenance for equipment. You are responsible for ascertaining whether these tasks can be accomplished with existing resources or if additional staff or new equipment will be needed. If new staff are required and hiring authority exists, working closely with the HR department will expedite that recruitment and onboarding process (see recruitment section earlier in this paper). Onboarding new staff (e.g., advertising, interviews) can take months as does receiving funding through grants, contracts, or agreements. These longer-than-anticipated delays can delay a project starting time, which can result in either missing the targeted sampling season or the need to find innovative ways to cover it. Similarly, thorough understanding of the procurement and purchasing processes of your agency can help develop realistic assessments of the time required to develop equipment specifications for bidding and evaluating bid proposals (see section on procurement below) and ensure that new equipment or supplies needed for the project can be obtained in time for the project start date.

Receiving project funding and implementing a new project is always rewarding, especially for activities that have been a long-standing management need, but close attention to budgeting and project cash flow is a major consideration for you. Over budgeting (requesting more money than needed) and under budgeting (requesting less money than needed) can present problems and should be avoided. Spending "left over money" at the end of a project for items not needed specifically on the project can be perceived as extraneous and unjustified if there was not communication with the funding agency about replacing consumables or other wear-and-tear items. Furthermore, having leftover funds that need to be returned to the funding source can raise questions about opportunities lost to other projects because of poor budgeting or if more work could have been accomplished with the unspent funds. Further, re-

turning left over money to funding agencies can be difficult and involves complex accounting procedures that most agencies want to avoid. However, a no-cost time extension is the best and, sometimes only, option that can allow unspent funds to be carried-over beyond the original period of performance. No-cost extension approval is at the discretion of the funding agency but can provide additional time to carry out a project that was not fully implemented because of unplanned delays (e.g., receiving funds, weather delay, personnel changes, equipment failure). Under budgeting during project planning also is a major challenge. Factors such as changes in administrative fees (e.g., overhead), unplanned travel, weather delays, equipment break downs and many others unanticipated costs can derail a well-planned and budgeted field project. Overspending the budget can result in limitations to the original scope of work and deliverables. The ultimate cost could be the inability to complete a project or having to reduce the work force because of either poor planning or unforeseen budget complications. Collaborating with experienced peers within your agency can help identify and avoid agency-specific constraints to project implementation.

Many of these budgeting issues can be minimized or avoided entirely by establishing clear and open communications between you and the funding agency about what the funding agency expects for their financial investment and project progress (and setbacks) via written interim reports and in-person updates. Finally, a well-executed project that addresses the funding agency's information needs will engender confidence in you (or the PI) and increase the likelihood of future funding for new investigations. Conversely, poor project execution and the failure to furnish project deliverables can result in the loss of credibility for you and your agency as well reduce the likelihood of continued collaboration with the funding agency.

Procurement And Purchasing

Organizations have established procedures to acquire equipment, supplies, and services used in the pursuit of their core mission, and these procedures fall into two related but different categories called "procurement" and "purchasing." Procurement involves the process of selecting vendors, identifying products and services available from the vendor, negotiating contract terms for special pricing, and establishing payment terms; whereas, purchasing involves the procedures for actually acquiring items from a vendor. Purchasing and procurement systems can have pitfalls and present administrative challenges for new supervisors unfamiliar with them. However, these pitfalls and challenges can be avoided by recognizing the attitude and flexibility of the administrative staff charged with procurement and purchasing of needed equipment and supplies.

Agency procedures like purchasing rules and regulations are established to promote fairness and neutrality to all vendors, protect institutions from fraud and misuse of funds, avoid conflicts of interests, and to protect employees from making costly mistakes that might result in personal legal or financial liability. Further, purchasing and procurement statutes, procedures, and polices change frequently, and supervisors should expect to operate in a shifting regulatory environment. They should also expect to adhere to (or if necessary, build) checks/balances and proper oversight mechanisms to ensure procedural compliance. Most agencies require new supervisors to attend classes aimed at familiarizing them with its purchasing and procurement systems. Updating training as the systems change and maintaining the policy documents and an FAQs file would be very helpful to the new supervisor. Directly applying the knowledge learned in these classes to your program and project spending and adhering to agency policies when purchasing are keys to efficiently provisioning your employees to be successful in their jobs.

Generally, purchasing and procurement guidelines establish cost limits that dictate whether something can be bought "off the shelf" or can be bought only through a competitive bid process. If bids are necessary, you may be tasked with describing the specifications of the required items and soliciting bids from multiple vendors, unless there is a purchasing contract in place with a specific vendor. However, many tools and equipment (e.g., electrofishing, telemetry systems) in fisheries and wildlife sciences are highly specialized, often available from only a few vendors or customized equipment available only from a single vendor. These limited-vendor opportunities often do not conform to typical purchasing procedures, which may require quotes from several vendors before purchases can be made. In such instances, asking questions of the purchasing staff before the process begins and understanding the constraints on acquiring specialized items are required for successful purchasing.

Further, recognizing the attitude and rigidity of the administrative staff charged with overseeing procurement and purchasing is an important step in successful and efficient purchasing. Administrative staff often operate along a continuum that may range from very bottom-up, service-oriented (e.g., "always here to help") types to top-down regulatory types (e.g., "I set the rules") who do not afford supervisors purchasing flexibility available under existing regulations. Recognizing the mindset of the staff and following their lead are keys to accomplishing your purchasing goals. The "here to help" administrative staff are flexible and accommodate your purchasing needs to the largest degree possible within the rules of the institution. In contrast, the "I set the rules" administrative staff require you to give them the power to make decisions,

such that the processes followed conform to the staff's required steps. Transactions with the latter can be efficient, but they require you to understand that mindset before initiating the process. Interactions resulting in conflict with the less-flexible staff can cause difficulties that may limit science productivity and hinder completion of agency mission.

Although training in administrative functions like procurement and purchasing is often lacking in fisheries and wildlife curricula, these skills can be acquired through training and experience while on the job. New supervisors can efficiently procure goods and services for their staff by learning the agency's regulations and knowing the attitudes of the administrative staff charged with implementing them. Applying this knowledge can help the new supervisor achieve effective purchasing with maximum efficiency and minimal conflict.

Safety, Safety, Safety

Field biologists engage in a wide variety of job-related activities that can be simultaneously exhilarating and potentially dangerous. Our job duties may include electrofishing, rocket-netting, low-altitude flying, use of firearms, use of hazardous chemicals, handling live animals (some dangerous; e.g., bears, venomous snakes, disease carrying insects) and sometimes working in hazardous conditions such as high-flowing waters, steep uneven terrain, and extreme hot or cold temperatures. These activities necessitate that natural resources agencies establish proactive actions and controls that help to mitigate potential hazards to its staff. Field biologists are expected to comply with their agency's safety program, which includes wearing required personal protective equipment (PPE; such as personal floatation devices), completing required training, reporting hazardous conditions, and generally performing their duties in a safe manner. However, as a new supervisor, you are now responsible for providing a safe work environment for your employees. This is now an important part of your job, and performing it effectively helps to protect your staff from being hurt or killed. As a new supervisor, you may be tasked with defining and implementing aspects of your agency's safety program requirements (including required training and use of PPE); dedicating appropriate resources (funding and staffing) to support safety program implementation; facilitating, tracking and reporting employee compliance; and importantly, setting a good example.

Your new safety responsibilities are arguably among the most important of your new duties. No other aspect of your new job carries the same weight or the potential to result in serious injury or death to one of your employees or others as a result of an employee's actions. Consequently, your decisions, actions, or omissions regarding your safety program have the potential to put you,

your employees, your boss, and your agency in legal jeopardy if someone is seriously hurt or killed. The sobering reality is that in our present, litigious society, if any of your employees are seriously hurt or are responsible for hurting someone else, your adherence to your agency's safety program will be the focus of any serious accident investigation. There has been a paradigm shift in accident investigations over the past few decades, where the emphasis is not on the lapses of a given individual but rather on the safety program and systems that are in place to mitigate risks to employees.

Your role in your organization's safety program is now that of an advocate tasked with building a "Safety First" culture within the workplace. This includes understanding the hazards your employees face and the steps necessary to mitigate them. Conscientious supervisors ensure a safety-first culture that is inclusive and ensures that everyone has a responsibility for work-place safety. For example, safe workplaces have employees that proactively participate in identifying work-place risks and hazards and recommending needed controls to mitigate those hazards. You and your managers have a responsibility to provide adequate infrastructure and resources to implement those recommendations and to establish a set of metrics to track and measure the safety program's success.

Your new safety responsibilities may seem daunting; but fear not, ensuring the safety of your employees also can be rewarding. Building and advocating for a strong, inclusive safety program is a win-win for everyone in your organization and is simply good business. Proactively investing in the safety and well-being of your employees is not only rewarding for you personally but can save your agency considerable time and financial resources. This point is conveyed by the long-standing safety adage, "if you think safety is expensive, try an accident." Accidents are expensive for employers, because paying workers' compensation claims and settling legal actions are far more expensive than implementing a sound safety program that preemptively avoids the accident. Your commitment to safety should be based primarily on your concern for the health and well-being of your employees. Hence, as a new supervisor, your biggest reward is knowing you have sent your employees home to their families safely every night.

You And The Press

All media relations are a form of marketing for your agency, and as a new supervisor, you may be tasked with responding to media requests for information. Additionally, you may be asked to publicize and promote some agency programs or activities. Media interactions can be reactive or proactive. Reactive events include responding to requests for information about an emerging event (e.g., fish kill or new length limit on a popular sport fish). Proactive events are those in which your agency creates content to publicize something positive (e.g., capture of state record fish or a new wildlife management area being opened to hunting). Regardless of the type of interaction, media organizations can portray your agency in a positive or negative light, so cultivating and maintaining good media relationships is important. Such relationships are built by providing accurate, unbiased, and fair information to the media. Good agency spokespersons strive to create positive publicity and to maintain and protect their professional credibility as a valuable, trusted and sought spokesperson for the agency. If the media considers them as such, the work of their agency in protecting, managing, and conserving natural resources will be enhanced with positive and supportive media coverage.

The media serve an important societal function by informing and educating the public, and the stories they tell are only as good as their information source. The media rely on their sources (i.e., you) to provide honest, timely, informative, and interesting stories that appeal to their audiences. If you are tasked with the role of agency spokesperson, your first responsibility is to represent your employer in a truthful, professional manner to your ultimate audience, which is the public, not the media. However, the media can be a supporter who helps your organization or an adversary that can create image problems for it. Strong credibility with the media promotes the former, but weak creditability does not. Your trustworthiness and credibility with the media are easily damaged and are difficult to repair.

Before responding to any media request for comment or information, you should know and follow your agency's media policy, if one exists. If your agency does not have a media response policy, discuss with your supervisor how to handle such requests. The first step is knowing whether you are authorized to provide information to the media. If you are unsure, decline the interview. If you are authorized to provide information, be aware of what information you can provide and what is confidential. Typically, agencies do not release information concerning personnel matters, investigation details and interviews, names of victims, names of juveniles, criminal records, confession statements, litigation and sensitive matters. Such information may be released after trials end and judgements have been rendered. If you are unsure about whether you can release a piece of information, do not release it until your agency authorizes you to do so.

Prior to any media interview, consider researching the reporter to learn of the topics they've covered previously and how the information was presented. This insight and knowing what information the media want will help you prepare to give informative responses. Also, knowing what questions the media contact will ask, their reporting deadline, and the tentative publication or broadcast date will help you prepare for the interview. During the

interview, allow the reporter to lead. Remember that you are representing and responding on behalf of your employer. Respond in a professional, confident, truthful, and unbiased manner. Focus on the facts. Be concise, direct, polite, respectful, cooperative, and accommodating. Use simple, jargon-free language, avoid acronyms, limit technical terms, and define those that are central to the story. Control your emotions and maintain a calm, reserved manner. If you are on camera, look and speak to the camera and be conscious of your body language. You want the viewer to perceive you as believable, friendly, likeable, and trustworthy. Providing only factual information instead of personal views or opinions helps to stay on message. If you do not want to read or hear something, don't say it. Finally, being defensive, negative, or critical of people, your employer or any organization will portray you poorly. Thoughtful pauses during the interview are acceptable, and lulls in conversation should not be filled with answers to questions not asked. Asking reporters to clarify vague questions is prudent. If you lack factual, accurate information, indicate as much, and do not speculate. Being untruthful will damage your, and potentially your agency's credibility. However, sharing your concerns about misleading the public with undue speculation as well as offering to get the requested information will reinforce your credibility with the reporter.

After the interview, you cannot control what the reporter does with the information you provided. Be mindful that there is nothing that reporters consider "off the record" or "only background information." Remember that everything you provide the media can and will be used by them. The media exercise complete content control and ultimately decide when and what to print and broadcast. Media organizations are in a competitive business with firm deadlines and reporting cycles. Knowing and meeting those deadlines are important and should be something you seek to meet. Finally, keeping your supervisor and other agency staff fully informed of what information the media sought and what you furnished is vitally important, especially when dealing with contentious issues. Provide the name of the reporter, the media outlet they represented, what the reporter wanted to know, and your responses. Also, inform your agency about information sought but not provided and when the story will be published or aired.

Liability

Knowledge of and adherence to agency policies have been strongly encouraged in previous sections of this paper because they were developed to keep employees safe when conducting their duties and to protect them during interpersonal interactions. However, accidents happen or interpersonal interactions can go poorly, and the aggrieved party may litigate as a means of righting a wrong (whether actual or perceived). As a supervisor, you may be a party to these litigations. Understanding your responsibilities in these situations is important for keeping you, your supervisees, and your institution safe and free of liability and help to hold the responsible party accountable when accidents, harassment, bias, or bullying occur.

Negligence and liability are terms that are related but have different legal meanings. Negligence is failing to do something that a reasonable person would be expected to do in a given situation, whereas liability refers to the amount of blame a person may have in the same situation. Negligence can lead to liability. For example, if an agency does not service an electrofishing boat regularly and replace parts as needed, it can be charged with negligence if the boat malfunctions while being used and a worker is injured in the process. Failure to clear sidewalks of snow, repair a leaky pipe, or performing regular maintenance on properties and equipment are examples of negligence that can lead to liability. How liable you are for that negligence depends on the circumstances. For example, did you fail to repair or service something after the need was brought to your attention (i.e., negligence) or did the accident occur despite good maintenance and proper employee training? What are your legal obligations if an employee reports being bullied, harassed sexually, or being the subject of discrimination? These factors and others can be used to determine negligence and liability if there is a lawsuit and you are named as a defendant. Following your agency's policies on all aspects of your interactions with staff (e.g., interviewing, hiring, employee supervision and evaluation, providing safety training, PPE, and reporting discriminatory behavior) is the best defense against personal and institutional liability.

Sexual harassment complaints sometimes occur within an agency and need to be addressed promptly by supervisors and agency management. Sexual harassment occurs when an employee receives unwanted comments, solicitations, or touching from anyone in the workplace. There are two specific types of sexual harassment that are prohibited under applicable laws. The first type occurs when an employee complies with an unwelcome sexual advance by a person of authority (e.g., a supervisor) as a condition of employment. The second type, called hostile work environment harassment, occurs when employees experience sexually-charged behavior (e.g., unwelcome sexual advances and sexually derogatory comments) that makes them feel uncomfortable in the workplace. These actions can be in person or through texting, email, or other electronic communication. Personal and institutional liability for harassment is dependent on two scenarios. In the first scenario, the institution is liable when a supervisor or other person of authority requests or engages in sexual dialog or activity with another employee which leads to a tangible employment action

(e.g., hiring, promotion, compensation decision, change in work assignments). In the second scenario, you as the supervisor are personally liable when harassment does not lead to a specific employment action, but you knew or should have known and failed take appropriate corrective action to prevent sexual harassment and follow through to correct issues and protect the victim from retaliation. Immediately relaying all reports of sexual harassment to your supervisor and following your agency's policy fully will reduce your liability and protect your organization from the costly consequences of ignoring this important workplace issue.

Understanding your agency's rules and your responsibilities for work-place safety, training, and an inclusive working environment can help prevent lawsuits against you and your agency. For example, having a policy that defines sexual harassment, provides examples of specific behaviors that constitute harassment, establishes a grievance procedure for reporting harassment, and reviewing that policy with all employees (including new hires) will make them aware of the issue. Investigating all complaints quickly and fairly will help protect the affected employees and diminish or eliminate you and your agency's liability if accidents happen or interpersonal interactions end poorly. Getting your HR and legal department involved, as appropriate, and documenting all pertinent information are necessary steps to resolve an issue quickly and fairly for all involved parties.

Expect The Unexpected

Oscar Wilde noted, "To expect the unexpected shows a thoroughly modern intellect," and this quote exemplifies what seasoned managers know: you cannot plan for everything. In spite of the best laid plans, circumstances conspire to abruptly change your plans and make life "interesting." Unplanned events such as budget cuts, personnel actions, change in agency priorities, and changes in administration all can happen at inopportune times. Unfortunately, outside of an organization's standard operating procedures, a directed playbook for addressing these scenarios does not exist, and flexibility and adaptability are required to keep your program working effectively to fulfill your agency's mission. Some of the best strategies occur in the moment, but others require time for reflection. Being familiar with some simple strategies and managerial approaches (e.g., zero-based budgeting, logic models, visioning retreats) can help you address these issues when they occur.

Changes in Administration

Changes in administration and management hierarchy can be challenging. Clear lines of communication and sharing important information with your immediate staff can help ease concerns as administrative shifts occur. Sometimes changes to agency mis-

sion are minimal; however, new administrations can lead to the development of a new vision and mission statement, shifts in priorities, restructuring of work units, or all of the above. Depending on where the change occurs, you could be involved in strategic planning that involves defining objectives, developing action plans as well as setting short- and long-term goals. Often, strategic planning occurs high in the organization and involves senior-level managers. Visioning retreats are similar to strategic planning retreats, but they are more useful when the change in hierarchy is at the mid-level of an organization. Such retreats allow new supervisors a chance to understand the dynamics of the working group, provide opportunities to identify existing or emerging topics or problems, and locate resources that could be mobilized to address the opportunities or challenges. Used correctly, visioning retreats can be used to help build, enhance, and align relationships within a working unit and effectively deal with unexpected changes in organizational leadership.

Fiscal Changes

Agency budgets can be dynamic and may respond to the vagaries of state and federal funding authorizations. Budget challenges vary, and surprisingly, increases in budgets or sudden requests for spending plans can be as stressful as budget cuts. Financial constraints of capped budgets also can cause stress when employee raises are announced. Logic models are one tool that helps maintain some objectivity when deciding how best to allocate limited funds or funding increases. Logic models provide a means to evaluate the associated inputs (e.g., financial, personnel, time), outputs (e.g., completed work, deliverables), and outcomes (evaluated as short, mid, and long term). When projects or personnel assessments are needed, logic models can help identify projects that are productive and others that are no longer meeting their needs. Zero-based budgeting is another tool that can be used to evaluate budgets for excessive or unnecessary expenditures, building expenses from the ground up based on current needs instead of relying on past budgets, and help determine where expenses are being directed in a broader context. Occasionally, managers are asked to draft spending plans for unanticipated additional funding (e.g., donations or pre-proposals for small, non-competitive grants). Maintaining a file of projects that your agency would like to undertake but are presently unfunded can help put pre-proposals at your fingertips should unexpected funds suddenly become available.

The preceding paragraphs illustrate but a few examples of unexpected situations that you might encounter. Obviously, there are many others. Dealing successfully with these unexpected scenarios requires that you acknowledge that they can happen and to have "contingency plans" for some probable events (e.g., staff changes,

new funding priorities). Maintaining a sense of humor and not losing sight of the big picture also help to navigate unexpected situations when they occur. Most of us are familiar with Murphy's Law and the adage that what can go wrong will. Successful supervisors subscribe to O'Toole's Law, which states that "Murphy was an optimist."

Maintaining High Morale

Maintaining personal and team morale may be an unexpected challenge you face as you leave the familiar behind and may be uncertain about your new roles. Maintaining good personal morale is important because it sets an example for the rest of your team. Beyond your personal morale, other aspects of the workplace environment can affect employee morale, productivity, and engagement both positively and negatively. The work environment can be a place of great productivity where supervisors and their employees are fulfilled in their duties and enjoy their work. However, if not managed well, the workplace can quickly become a toxic environment filled with mistrust, disrespect, a lack of focus, and low productivity. As the supervisor, your attitude and behavior towards the people you supervise play a key role in stimulating positive employee morale. The first step in this process is to lead by example, because your attitude, positive or negative, and the standards of integrity and excellence you demonstrate influence that of your team.

In previous sections of this paper, we outlined many new responsibilities that may tax one's morale because the new roles may not seem as enjoyable or gratifying as field sampling, laboratory work or the data analysis tasks for which we were well prepared and enjoyed. Indeed, just about all of us have wondered at some point whether the move to management was prudent. However, realizing that you are well positioned to have a strong positive effect on how our agency carries out its stewardship mission will make you a good, successful supervisor. This opportunity begins with the recognition that just about all the skills used in your previous position are transferrable to the new one. The focus may change, but the methods are the same. For example, situational awareness, problem solving, analysis, and team leadership necessary to manage an individual project also apply to managing a program. This realization should bring you comfort.

There are many strategies you can use to maintain high personal morale and set a good example for your team. Some of these strategies include being excited by the opportunity to learn something new, finding purpose in the new responsibilities, and finding ways to reward yourself and your team for important accomplishments. A focus on the agency's broad mission (e.g., conservation, education, outdoor opportunity) can form a common bond

among coworkers, even during challenging periods or situations. Other strategies include requesting feedback from team members, developing a network of other new supervisors inside and outside the agency with whom you can commiserate, and seeking mentors who have traveled your path successfully and have now moved to senior management. Finally, you can avoid getting in a rut by focusing on strategic deliverables and identifying new challenges. Your high morale is infectious and will engender the same in your team.

Successful supervisors have respect for their employees and their contributions to the agency. High team morale occurs when employees know they are supported, respected, treated with dignity, and that their work matters. Increased job performance and loyalty to the agency as well as overall higher job satisfaction all result from high team morale. Alternatively, job stress, high pressure deadlines, and toxic environments can lead to high rates of absenteeism, increased turnover among employees, and an overall negative effect on the quality and quantity of the work an agency accomplishes.

There are many ways you can actively and positively address low morale in the workspace. The key is finding actions that reach your employees and building upon them. You can create an enjoyable workplace, build relationships, support staff, encourage a healthy work-life balance, provide opportunities for training and professional development, provide positive feedback, encourage feedback from employees, be transparent, and lastly provide opportunities for mentorship. Singularly, none of these options will solve all morale problems that arise in the workplace. However, actively moving to an environment that places a priority on these outcomes can be key in converting your workplace from a toxic environment to one where employees thrive and enjoy their work. Finding ways to boost workplace morale or prevent it from eroding is not necessarily a solitary venture. Using valuable research and online tools to get started will help build lasting and positive relationships with members of your staff and increase your supervisory effectiveness in implementing and achieving your agency's mission.

In summary, becoming a supervisory biologist is a logical step in your career ontogeny. Though initially exciting, this progression can seem daunting because of the lack of formal training on the topics required to be successful in the new role. However, we know that such need not be the case. My coauthors and I have made this transition successfully and benefited to one degree or the other from on-the-job "trial and error" and informal mentoring by experienced supervisors. The information provided in this paper is not comprehensive and certainly not meant to be the definitive treatise on the subject. Instead, our aim was to share our collective expe-

riences with the transition to management and have them readily available to new supervisory biologists to ease their transition to agency leadership positions.