



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2022

## **DOI MISSION**

The U.S. Department of the Interior protects and manages the Nation’s natural resources and cultural heritage; provides scientific and other information about those resources; and honors its trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and affiliated Island Communities.

## **DOI VISION STATEMENT**

Manage our land, water, and resources for the benefit of all Americans, both today and tomorrow.

## **DOI ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE VISION STATEMENT**

Provide outstanding management of the natural and cultural resources entrusted to us in a manner that is sustainable, equitable, accessible, and inclusive of all populations.

## **ABOUT THIS ANNUAL REPORT**

This document is the Department of the Interior (Department or DOI)’s *Environmental Justice Annual Implementation Report* and highlights several programs, activities, and efforts the Department engaged in during Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) to meet the goals of the Department’s *Environmental Justice Strategic Plan*.

## **COVER IMAGE**

Image courtesy of the National Park Service, Yellowstone National Park showing the Nez Perce Appaloosa Horse Club Ride and Parade events, part of an effort to connect Nez Perce youth and adults to the Nez Perce Trail, their history, and ancestors and share this information and experience with Yellowstone employees and visitors.

All photos credit: DOI

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# Introduction

## BACKGROUND

Signed in February 1994, [Executive Order \(EO\) 12898](#), *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-income Populations*, directs Federal agencies to “make achieving environmental justice part of their missions by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations in the United States and its territories and possessions, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the Commonwealth of the Mariana Islands.”

### WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE?

*Environmental justice (EJ) refers to meeting the needs of underserved communities by reducing disparate environmental burdens, removing barriers to participation in decision making, and increasing access to environmental benefits that help make all communities safe, vibrant, and healthy places to live and work.*

In August 2011, the Department joined other Federal agencies in the signing of the *Memorandum of Understanding on Environmental Justice and Executive Order 12898* (the [2011 MOU](#)). The 2011 MOU reaffirmed the Federal Government’s commitment to environmental justice and called on each Federal agency to “provide a concise report on progress during the previous fiscal year in carrying out the agency’s Environmental Justice Strategy and Executive Order 12898.” The 2011 MOU further indicated that the annual reports should include performance measures as deemed appropriate by the agency; describe participation in interagency collaboration; include responses to recommendations submitted by members of the public to the agency concerning the agency’s *Environmental Justice Strategic Plan* and its implementation of EO 12898; and record any updates or revisions to the agency’s Environmental Justice Strategy, including those resulting from public comment.



President Clinton signing Executive Order 12898 on February 11, 1994.

To integrate EO 12898 and the 2011 MOU into the Department’s actions and activities, the Department established the Department’s *Environmental Justice Implementation Policy* ([Department Manual Chapter Part 525 Chapter 1](#)) in 2017. The policy states that the Department will publish a report on progress made during the previous year in carrying out the Department’s *Environmental Justice Strategic Plan* and EO 12898. The environmental justice annual report includes: information describing how the Department is meeting the goals in the *Environmental Justice Strategic Plan*; identification of new and

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innovative approaches, methods, or examples of successful consideration of environmental justice; and revisions and updates to the Department's *Environmental Justice Strategic Plan* and Departmental policies.

Consistent with the 2011 MOU and the Department's policy, this annual implementation report highlights the programs and activities that the Department conducted in FY22 to support EO 12898 and the Department's *Environmental Justice Strategic Plan*. This document and related environmental justice information are publicly available on the Department's environmental justice [website](#).

In January 2021, President Biden issued three executive orders that strengthen Federal agency efforts related to environmental justice: [EO 13990](#), *Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis*; [EO 14008](#), *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*; and [EO 13985](#), *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*.

EO 14008 established the White House Environmental Justice Interagency Council (IAC) and White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council (WHEJAC) to help inform and oversee the Federal program of work on environmental justice. The IAC is led by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and continues the work of the former Environmental Justice Interagency Working Group (EJ IWG). During FY22, the Department continued to be an active member in the IAC and participates in its collaborative efforts to support healthy and economically viable minority, low-income, and Tribal communities.



*President Biden signing EO 14008 on January 27, 2021.*

EO 14008 also established the [Justice40 initiative](#) (Justice40), a whole-of-government approach to advancing environmental justice, which sets a goal that 40 percent of the overall benefits of Federal investments for covered programs will flow to disadvantaged communities. To implement Justice40, in July 2021, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), and the National Climate Advisor issued [Memorandum M-21-28](#), *Interim Implementation Guidance for the Justice40 Initiative*, and launched the Justice40 Pilot Program. As part of its implementation efforts, the Department identified [65 covered programs](#) that support the Justice40 initiative in August 2022. Some of these programs are highlighted in this annual report.

## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE SCORECARD

In August 2022, the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) launched a process to receive public input on the development of the Biden-Harris Administration's [Environmental Justice Scorecard](#), which will be used to evaluate the progress Federal agencies are making to advance environmental justice, including through the Justice40 Initiative. The Environmental Justice Scorecard assesses the efforts that Federal agencies are taking to: (1) *Reduce burdens and harms in communities*, (2) *Deliver benefits to communities*, and (3) *Center justice in decision making*.

The vision, framework, and outcomes for the first version of the Environmental Justice Scorecard were informed by an initial set of recommendations that the WHEJAC provided in March 2022 and public input. The first version of the scorecard is intended to act as a baseline for future iterations and describe the actions that Federal agencies have undertaken, including processes that they have started, since 2021. The Environmental Justice Scorecard will be updated over time with the goal of creating a durable, robust, and comprehensive platform to assess the Federal Government's efforts to secure environmental justice for all.

# Overview: Environmental Justice at DOI

## DOI ORGANIZATION

The Department comprises eleven bureaus, each with a unique mission: the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE), Bureau of Trust Funds Administration, Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), National Park Service (NPS), Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE), and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). In addition to the bureaus, the Department has offices within the Office of the Secretary that conduct environmental justice related activities, including the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC); the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Civil Rights (ODICR); the Office of Wildland Fire (OWF); and the Office of Insular Affairs (OIA).



## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IMPLEMENTATION AT DOI

The senior appointed official charged with the Department's implementation of EO 12898 is the Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management and Budget (AS-PMB). The AS-PMB's responsibilities include overseeing compliance with environmental statutes and developing and maintaining internal administrative policies, standards, objectives, and procedures for the Department. Environmental justice activities are administered within AS-PMB by the OEPC. The OEPC is the lead office for advising and assisting the Department's implementation of environmental justice and related executive orders.

The Department coordinates internal environmental justice implementation activities through the Department's Environmental Justice Working Group (EJWG). Chaired by the Director of OEPC, under the senior leadership of the AS-PMB, the EJWG includes representatives from each of the Department's bureaus as well as ODICR, OWF, and OIA. The EJWG collaborates with OEPC in implementing the provisions of EO 12898 throughout the Department, including the development of this annual report.

The Department's Environmental Justice Coordinator is in the OEPC and coordinates with the bureaus' designated Environmental Justice Coordinators, who are tasked with integrating environmental justice throughout their bureaus and offices. Duties may include internal and external coordination, public outreach, public contact, and acting as the liaison with their field-level and regional offices. Each bureau has field-level and regional offices that assist in environmental justice initiatives. A directory of the Department's Environmental Justice Coordinators with contact information is [available](#) on the Department's environmental justice [website](#).

## DOI STRATEGIC PLAN (2022–2026)

A hallmark priority of both the Biden-Harris Administration and Secretary of the Interior, environmental justice figures centrally in the Department's FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan<sup>1</sup> as a cross-cutting theme that informs each of its four strategic goals:

- (1) *Promote Well-Being, Equity, and Justice for Tribes, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and Insular Communities;*
- (2) *Conserve, Protect, Manage, and Restore Natural and Cultural Resources in the Face of Climate Change and Other Stressors;*
- (3) *Sustainably Balance the Use of Resources While Supporting Communities and the Economy; and*
- (4) *Serve and Honor the Public Trust.*

Released in [July 2022](#), the Strategic Plan reiterates the Department's commitment to "ensuring environmental justice in the management of the natural and cultural resources entrusted to DOI so that resources and benefits are sustainable, equitable, accessible, and inclusive of all populations." Its strategic goals have significant and varied intersections with environmental justice that crystallize in the work of the Department and its bureaus and offices.

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<sup>1</sup> Previous DOI Strategic Plans can be found [here](#).



## DOI ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN

EO 12898 directs each Federal agency to prepare its own strategic plan on environmental justice. The last update to the Department's [Environmental Justice Strategic Plan](#) was issued in 2016, with an updated EJ strategic plan projected for release in FY 2024. The structure of this FY22 *Environmental Justice Annual Implementation Report* is informed by the five environmental justice goals identified in the Department's *Environmental Justice Strategic Plan*:

### GOAL 1

Ensure responsible officials are aware of the provisions of Executive Order 12898 and are able to identify and amend programs, policies, and activities under their purview that may have disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority, low-income, or tribal populations

### GOAL 2

Ensure minority, low-income, and tribal populations are provided with the opportunity to engage in meaningful involvement in the Department's decision-making processes

### GOAL 3

The Department will, on its own or in collaboration with partners, identify and address environmental impacts that may result in disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority, low-income, or tribal populations

### GOAL 4

Use existing grant programs, training, and educational opportunities, as available, to aid and empower minority, low-income, and tribal populations in their efforts to build and sustain environmentally and economically sound communities

### GOAL 5

Integrate the Department's environmental justice strategies with its Title VI of the Civil Rights Act enforcement responsibilities to improve efficiencies while preserving the integrity of Title VI and environmental justice activities

# Implementing Environmental Justice at DOI

Over the course of FY22 (October 1, 2021, to September 30, 2022), the Department continued to incorporate the provisions of environmental justice-related executive orders—including EO 12898 and EO 14008—within the scope of its overall mission. This section highlights work that the Department, including its bureaus and offices, conducted in FY22 to meet the five goals outlined in the Department’s *Environmental Justice Strategic Plan*. These actions are not all-inclusive of the Department’s efforts and highlight a few examples that indicate the breadth and types of activities and actions the Department undertook in FY22 to advance environmental justice. In terms of structure, this report briefly details Department-level efforts and highlights one significant example per goal alongside a brief list of other meaningful, innovative, and/or groundbreaking environmental justice contributions from the Department’s bureaus and offices.

## GOAL 1

Ensure responsible officials are aware of the provisions of Executive Order 12898 and are able to identify and amend programs, policies, and activities under their purview that may have disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority, low-income, or tribal populations

In addition to the development of the new FY 2022-2026 DOI Strategic Plan, the Department continued to focus on raising internal awareness of and engagement with environmental justice issues, not only as described in EO 12898 but also in the environmental justice-related executive orders signed by President Biden in January 2021. The task of integrating environmental justice considerations into Department employees’ work is significant: in FY22, the Department increased internal visibility and awareness of environmental justice issues by releasing new plans, issuing new policy, and convening practitioners in new forums.

In [April 2022](#), the Department released its first-ever [Equity Action Plan](#), which addresses multiple environmental justice elements. Identifying opportunities to improve communication strategies and internal procedures, it outlines the Department’s plans to advance equity through all its operations, remove barriers to equal opportunity, and deliver resources and benefits equitably to the public. In particular, the *Equity Action Plan* focuses on leveraging procurement processes to support underserved communities, addressing barriers to support Tribes as they apply for discretionary grants, and cultivating more equitable access to recreation on Department-managed lands and waters.



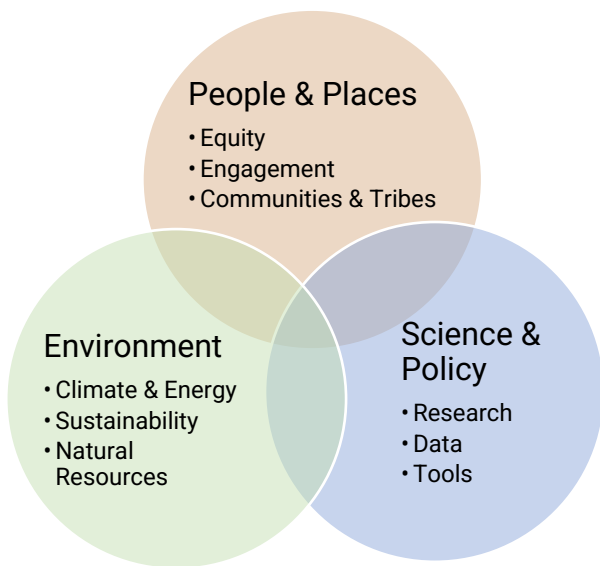
Cover of the Department's Equity Action Plan Summary.

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To ensure that the Department’s Federal trust obligations are fulfilled, the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture signed [Joint Secretarial Order No. 3403](#), *Joint Secretarial Order on Fulfilling the Trust Responsibility to Indian Tribes in the Stewardship of Federal Lands and Waters* in November 2021. It ensures that both Departments and their bureaus and offices manage Federal lands and waters in such a way that protects the treaty, religious, subsistence, and cultural interests of Federally recognized Indian Tribes. It directs relevant bureaus and offices to form agreements with Indian Tribes to collaborate in the co-stewardship of Federal lands and waters under the Departments’ jurisdiction.

Departmental efforts to synchronize its environmental justice efforts across bureaus were also robust in FY22. In March 2022, the Department convened the [Territorial Climate Infrastructure Workshop](#), which brought together Federal partners and teams from several of the U.S. Territories—American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands—to discuss strategies to best facilitate the implementation of projects supported by President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law in the U.S. Territories. The workshop’s conversations around issues such as water security and legacy pollution identified ways to work together to deliver benefits to local environmental justice communities. This followed the [Interagency Group on Insular Areas Conference](#), held in February 2022, which discussed the [implementation](#) of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and how programs administered by agencies, including the Department, could best address needs in the U.S. Territories.

## DOI VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE SYMPOSIUM



Visualization of the three themes of the Department’s Environmental Justice Symposium.

To foster cross-bureau communication and empower Department employees to integrate environmental justice considerations into their work, the OEPC held a three-day Virtual Environmental Justice Symposium in May 2022. Bringing Department employees together with other Federal partners, the Symposium featured a guest appearance from the Secretary of the Interior and highlighted ongoing environmental justice work across the Department. Over 1,200 individuals registered for the Symposium, which dedicated its 32 sessions to the following themes, which represent the areas of the Department’s mission that intersect with environmental justice: (1) *Science & Policy*, (2) *Environment*, and (3) *People & Places*.

The Symposium provided Department employees with a central forum to come together around the topic of environmental justice that addressed varying levels of awareness. To familiarize Department employees with pertinent environmental justice topics and how to actively engage with environmental justice considerations in their work, session topics included the use of Indigenous Knowledge in decision making, environmental justice in the [NEPA](#)

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process,<sup>2</sup> legacy pollution, Tribal water rights settlements, and community assistance and engagement. In addition to learning about Administration and Department-wide priorities, attendees benefitted from vibrant discussion around best management practices as well as trainings on new and existing tools to analyze environmental justice and assist in meaningful involvement. Critically, the Symposium also featured two meet-and-greet sessions that provided Department employees with the opportunity to speak with their bureau or office's Environmental Justice Coordinator and Tribal Liaison Officer.

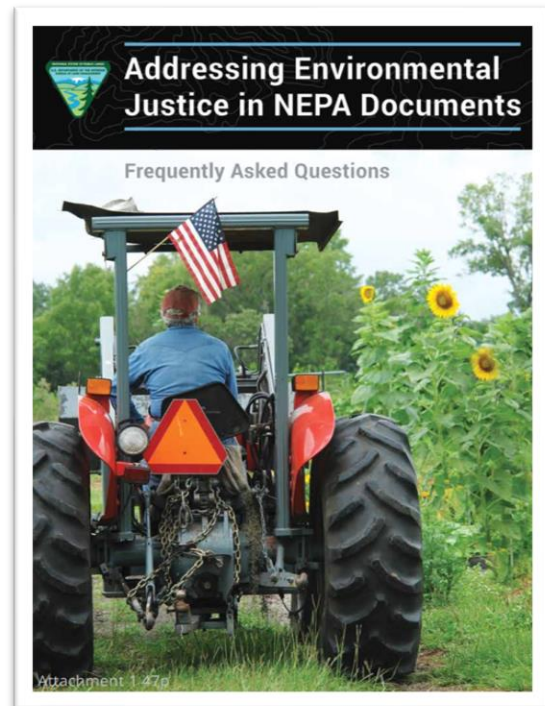
The Symposium also offered an occasion for Department employees to provide their feedback on the Department's existing *Environmental Justice Strategic Plan*. Moving forward, the feedback solicited at the Symposium will be critical in the development of the Department's update to the *Environmental Justice Strategic Plan*.

## OTHER MEANINGFUL, INNOVATIVE, AND GROUNDBREAKING ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

**Bureau of Land Management, Instruction Memorandum and Environmental Justice in NEPA FAQs:** In September 2022, the BLM published an [Instruction Memorandum](#) (IM) on the subject of *Environmental Justice Implementation* that updates and formalizes best practices while recommending methods for scoping, outreach, and analysis in environmental reviews. The bureau-level guidance document [Addressing Environmental Justice in NEPA Documents: Frequently Asked Questions](#), published as an attachment to the IM, further establishes minimum requirements for the incorporation of environmental justice considerations in the NEPA process for practitioners across the BLM.



BLM Director signing the Environmental Justice Implementation IM



Cover of the Addressing Environmental Justice In NEPA Documents FAQ

<sup>2</sup> Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Federal agencies consider the environmental effects of proposed major Federal actions with the potential to significantly affect the human environment. The NEPA process provides a framework for considering potential, disproportionately high and adverse health and environmental effects on minority and low-income populations.

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**National Parks Service, Policy Memorandum 22-03:** In September 2022, the NPS released new guidance to improve Federal stewardship of national park lands and waters. [NPS Policy Memorandum 22-03](#) provides a strong framework to help park managers move beyond traditional Tribal consultation and support working relationships with Native American and Alaska Native Tribes, relevant Alaska Native entities, and Native Hawaiians that include co-management (through legal authorities) and co-stewardship (often accomplished through agreements, and self-governance agreements including annual funding agreements. It implements Joint Secretarial Order 3403, *Joint Secretarial Order on Fulfilling the Trust Responsibility to Indian Tribes in the Stewardship of Federal Lands and Waters*.

**National Parks Service, Full-Time Civil Penalties Investigator:** In [January 2022](#), the NPS hired the first full-time civil penalties investigator to enhance oversight and museum compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), which requires the return of ancestral remains and cultural objects to their Native American, Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian communities. The investigator will support enforcement actions and provide technical assistance to institutions and Federal, state, and Tribal agencies on compliance.

**Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Environmental Justice Technical Workshop Series:** The BOEM hosted the first of five technical workshops in the Gulf of Mexico region to improve employee consideration of environmental justice issues, particularly as they pertain to NEPA reviews. In June 2022, the BOEM issued a [grant opportunity](#) to support the BOEM's efforts to establish best practices for environmental justice analyses and communications in alignment with EO 12898 and EO 14008.

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Environmental Justice Community of Practice:** In FY22, the FWS started an Environmental Justice Community of Practice. Over 100 FWS employees have participated in discussions and trainings around topics such as: grassroots environmental justice movements and the *Principles of Environmental Justice*; understanding environmental justice in the FWS context; and the Department's environmental justice program and the Justice40 initiative.

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Director's Order 227:** In September 2022, the FWS released new guidance to improve Federal stewardship of national wildlife refuge lands and waters. Director's Order 227 provides a strong framework to help refuge managers fulfil the trust responsibility to Tribes and the Native Hawaiian Community, and other obligations to Alaska Native Corporations and Alaska Native Organizations, in the stewardship of federal lands and waters.

**U.S. Geological Survey, New Environmental Justice Task Force:** The USGS Environmental Justice Task Force was launched in FY22. Composed of more than 60 USGS employees, representing diversity in expertise, lived experience, and identity, the role of the Task Force is to assist the USGS in implementing initiatives and priorities related to executive orders concerning environmental justice and to provide expert support services to the Department on scientific data related to environmental justice.

**GOAL  
2**

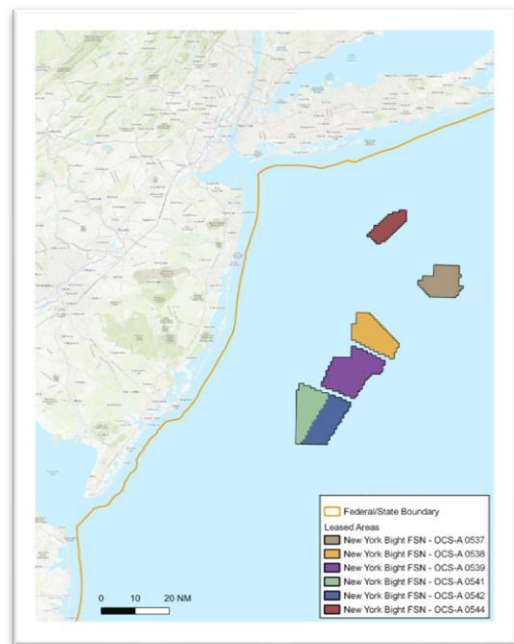
Ensure minority, low-income, and Tribal populations are provided with the opportunity to engage in meaningful involvement in the Department's decision-making processes

The Department engages with communities in a variety of ways, including through the NEPA process, Tribal consultations, listening sessions, and enhanced coordination and partnerships. Meaningful involvement in the Department's data gathering, planning and evaluations, decision-making processes, and day-to-day activities is essential to achieving environmental justice.

## **BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT: ENGAGEMENT WITH UNDERSERVED AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITIES IN THE NEW YORK BIGHT | PILOT APPROACH**

To ensure that environmental justice populations are meaningfully involved in the Department's decision-making process, BOEM designed a pilot outreach effort in the New York Bight region during scoping of the [New York Bight Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement](#) (PEIS), begun in July 2022.

In terms of laying the groundwork for consistent public dialogue, the New York Bight leases themselves were the first to incorporate specific elements of engagement with underserved communities and other ocean users. Following the publication of the [initial proposal](#) of the lease sale in the *Federal Register* in June 2021, BOEM received 134 comment submissions, which led to several changes, primarily the reorientation of the lease area boundaries, resulting in six areas offered for sale. BOEM adopted innovative terms and stipulations for the six lease areas (pictured above) to encourage early engagement and information accessibility by requiring lessees to provide semi-annual reports on engagement activities with ocean users, including underserved communities, coordinate to reduce engagement fatigue, and develop communications plans (for fisheries, Tribes, agencies, etc.).



Map of the six lease areas of the New York Bight region.

Recognizing the need to tailor its approach to the local context, prior to the announcement of the PEIS, BOEM partnered with the states of New York and New Jersey to release [A Shared Vision on the Development of an Offshore Wind Supply Chain](#) in the New York Bight in January 2022. The document initiated the process to convene the New York-New Jersey Bight Regional Working Group on Supply Chain Development, which is focused on coordinating efforts to address impacts and deliver benefits to underserved, disadvantaged, and overburdened communities.

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To seek input on ways BOEM could better engage underserved communities in offshore wind decision making, BOEM held three virtual public engagement sessions as part of its *Underserved Community Dialogue Series* in March 2022. Over the course of the three sessions, 59 participants from diverse audiences (community-based organizations, academia, local government, business, and others working at the nexus of offshore wind energy development and underserved community engagement) offered their insights. The principles of ongoing, iterative engagement and authentic, reciprocal communication were emphasized by the public. Individuals also stressed the need for robust and clear feedback mechanisms that spell out how BOEM is actively incorporating community input. These results informed the BOEM public engagement process in the New York Bight.

In June and July 2022, BOEM held four meetings as part of its [Environmental Justice Roundtable Convening Series](#) for the New York Bight PEIS. These four sessions engaged approximately 90 participants. In addition to acting as a forum for communities to identify environmental justice issues to include in the draft PEIS, the *Roundtable Convening Series* sought to share information gathered in coordination meetings with state partners, Federal agencies, and community members while refining New York Bight coordination and engagement processes. To cultivate trusted, collaborative relationships with participants, the *Roundtable Convening Series* further built out its engagement network, refined its local engagement strategy to advance equitable participation, and identified opportunities to work with regional partners on equity-related efforts.

This early engagement informed BOEM's approach to its quarterly [New York and New Jersey Offshore Wind Environmental Justice Forums](#), held throughout the PEIS development period, and comprised of Federal and state government partners and community-based organizations that are working to build an iterative engagement framework for communities affected by offshore wind projects in the New York and New Jersey area. These forums, in which BSEE also participates, were designed to be bidirectional information-sharing sessions, co-designed with participants, including Federal agencies whose work overlaps with BOEM activities, state agencies, and community-based organizations.

## TRIBAL INVOLVEMENT

As articulated in the FY 2022-2026 DOI Strategic Plan, it is the policy of the Department to “consult [with Tribal nations] on a government-to-government basis through all Bureaus and Offices to engage in robust, interactive, pre-decisional, informative, and transparent consultation on their plans or actions that impact Tribal interests.” The Department formalized this language following a series of government-to-government [Tribal](#) and [Alaska Native Corporation consultation sessions](#) on the draft Strategic Plan to help inform its development and final form in October and November 2021.



Assistant Secretary Bryan Newland hosts a Tribal Listening Session in Bend, OR, in October 2021.

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To strengthen the Department's nation-to-nation relationship with federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes and facilitate direct conversations with Tribal leaders, the Department [announced](#) the formation of a new Secretary's Tribal Advisory Committee (STAC) in November 2021 as part of the White House Tribal Nations Summit. Comprised of a primary Tribal representative and an alternative member from each of the 12 BIA regions, the STAC [convened](#) for the first time in September 2022.

In December 2021 and September 2022, the Department conducted consultations with Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations, respectively, on draft updates to the Departmental consultation policies and procedures. The Department sought input on potential updates to improve the consultation process, best practices, and recommendations to strengthen the Department's relationship with Tribal governments.

## **OTHER MEANINGFUL, INNOVATIVE, AND GROUNDBREAKING ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES**

**U.S. Geological Survey, Indigenous Advisory Group:** In September 2022, the USGS [convened](#) an Indigenous Advisory Group (IAG) comprising members from 14 Indigenous Nations (eight Canadian First Nations, six U.S. Tribal Nations) in the watershed to advise the International Joint Commission, International St. Mary & Milk River Study. The Study focuses on more effective water allocation between the U.S. and Canada and potential infrastructure improvements to facilitate the storage and movement of water in the face of climate change and increasing water demand.

**U.S. Geological Survey, Coastal Vulnerability Assessments for Puerto Rico:** The USGS Risk Community of Practice launched a project to cultivate stakeholder engagement for equity and inclusion as it conducts coastal vulnerability assessments in Puerto Rico. Conducted through the [State of Our Nations' Coast](#) project, the project conducted focus groups with stakeholders from a wide range of sectors to learn about their needs, their experience with USGS products and data and any recommendations to make them more accessible.



**GOAL  
3**

The Department will, on its own or in collaboration with partners, identify and address environmental impacts that may result in disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority, low-income, or Tribal populations

To identify environmental impacts that may disproportionately burden communities, the Department is working to partner with and empower local communities to identify the issues that most impact them. The Department is also continuing its efforts to build relevant tools and compile relevant resources to allow for more effective and transparent data analysis.

### **NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE, UNIVERSITY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA & ANACOSTIA HIGH SCHOOL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

During the summer of 2022, the OEPC and the NPS Stewardship Institute partnered with the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) and Anacostia High School (Anacostia HS) to host a six-week, paid internship program for five high school students and three university students to help shift terms of engagement towards communities. These students engaged with their community and conducted interviews with local individuals to highlight the Anacostia community's assets (strengths/resources) and needs. This partnership was developed to have the community, especially the youth, lead the process.



*Anacostia interns benefitting from training and mentorship from the OEPC and NPS Stewardship Institute.*



*Anacostia interns visiting the Smithsonian Folk Live Festival in Summer 2022.*

Over the course of the summer, interns met with many different people who live and work within the Anacostia community. UDC and Anacostia HS, along with other community leaders, supported identifying people and organizations to interview. Interns learned how to conduct interviews, perform qualitative data analysis, and organize information to highlight assets and needs based on stressors impacting the community. In their final presentation, students highlighted the community's strengths and assets as well as the needs that the community

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wanted the students, the Federal Government, and our partners to hear.

Through robust partnerships—across Federal agencies, within the Department (and our bureaus), with colleges/universities, non-governmental organizations, and private entities—this program provided a platform for the community to lead the conversation. The Department is exploring how this model and its associated tools can be used to support the implementation of more holistic, community-led engagement processes across the country.

## IDENTIFYING IMPACTS: OTHER NEW APPROACHES, TOOLS, AND RESOURCES

**Bureau of Land Management, Environmental Justice Mapping Tool:** The BLM developed an environmental justice mapping tool that provides nationally consistent demographic data to facilitate identifying potential low-income, minority, and Tribal populations for environmental justice screenings, creating visualizations, and siting public engagement. This tool is available internally to employees across the Department. The BLM also worked with Headwaters Economics to update their publicly available [Socioeconomic Profile Tool](#).

**Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Environmental Justice-Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Dashboard:** The OSMRE developed an Environmental Justice-AML Dashboard to assist states and tribes in prioritizing AML projects that align with the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Justice40 initiative. This dashboard uses existing AML data, environmental justice data from multiple sources, and GIS to gain a better understanding of areas where efforts and resources should be focused to support overburdened, underserved, or disadvantaged communities.

**Bureau of Indian Affairs, New Tool Dedicated to Solving Missing and Murdered Cases in Indian Country:** In December 2021, the BIA launched a new [website](#) dedicated to solving missing and murdered cases in Indian Country. Drawing attention to unsolved cases involving Indigenous persons under the Missing and Murdered Unit of the BIA by providing detailed case information that can be easily shared, the website encourages the public to submit information that may support ongoing investigations.

## ADDRESSING EFFECTS: OTHER MEANINGFUL, INNOVATIVE, AND GROUNDBREAKING ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

**Bureau of Indian Affairs, Support to Alaska Native Villages:** In September 2022, in response to damaging coastal storms, the BIA [distributed](#) \$2.6 million to support the needs of 45 Alaska Native villages. These funds provided critical resources for Alaska Native communities prior to winter's arrival, including immediate aid for food, water, and other essential supplies.

**Bureau of Indian Affairs & Bureau of Indian Education, Indigenous Food Hubs:** In September 2022, the Department announced that the BIA and BIE will create [Indigenous Food Hubs](#) for BIE-operated schools and BIA-operated detention centers to help source Indigenous foods, enhance culturally based healthy nutrition education, and boost training for healthy and culturally appropriate food preparation. For the first time, a nutritionist will be hired to support the BIA and BIE in developing and implementing culturally appropriate nutrition and training standards that draw from Indigenous Knowledge. Special efforts will be made to identify and connect Native

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venders and producers, as well as community-based systems such as Tribal food sovereignty and health programs.

**U.S. Geological Survey, Drinking Water in Northern Mariana Islands:** In June 2022, scientists from the USGS installed equipment in two monitor wells in Saipan, the capital of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, providing near-continuous freshwater thickness data. Drinking water supplies in Saipan exceed the Environmental Protection Agency's secondary drinking water standard for chloride concentration, which strains its water infrastructure. Through the [USGS National Water information web tool](#), local water suppliers can actively monitor conditions in the aquifer and adjust their groundwater-management strategies in real-time to minimize saltwater intrusion of nearby municipal wells. This monitoring technique aims to help managers reduce risks and provide higher quality drinking-water supply for the people of Saipan.

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Memorandum of Understanding with Lenape National Wildlife Refuge Complex:** In June 2022, the FWS signed a memorandum of understanding with three federally recognized Tribal Nations who seek a secure, respectful location on Federal lands in the Delaware River Basin for the reburial of ancestral remains repatriated to the Tribes via NAGPRA. The Lenape National Wildlife Refuge Complex worked with the three Tribes, which all share [Lenape ancestry](#): the Delaware Nation and the Delaware Tribe reside in Oklahoma, and the Stockbridge-Munsee Community band of Mohicans in Wisconsin. FWS offered the Tribes a reburial site at Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge, part of the Lenape National Wildlife Refuge complex, in Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. The memorandum of understanding will guide the reburial process and the future relationship between the FWS/Refuge and the Tribes.



*Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge in Stroudsburg, PA.*

**GOAL  
4**

Use existing grant programs, training, and educational opportunities, as available, to aid and empower minority, low-income, and Tribal populations in their efforts to build and sustain environmentally and economically sound communities

As noted in the FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, the Department strives to prioritize the “equitable treatment of, and benefit accrual to, communities that have traditionally been underserved or underrepresented in decisions.” Throughout FY22, the Department continued to provide training and funding opportunities and vital services to students and communities.

Over the course of the year, the Justice40 initiative as outlined in EO 14008 emerged as a central mechanism for directing investment towards communities with environmental justice concerns. In June 2022, the Department of the Interior released a [list of covered programs](#) included in President Biden’s Justice40 initiative, which aims to deliver 40 percent of the overall benefits of climate, clean energy, and related investments to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, overburdened, and underserved. There are 65 covered programs within the Department and its bureaus, each of which advance environmental justice. This list of programs, which includes grant-making and direct Federal spending, is expected to evolve over time as new Federal programs are created or existing Federal programs sunset. The Department is developing methodologies to track and report the benefits going toward disadvantaged communities.

## **BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW & INFLATION REDUCTION ACT**

Significantly, FY22 saw two Federal laws enacted that direct investment flows towards Department programs that advance environmental justice: the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#) (BIL), signed in November 2021, and the [Inflation Reduction Act](#) (IRA), signed in August 2022.

Communities are already benefitting from BIL investments: as part of the significant funding dedicated to cleaning up legacy pollution, the Department awarded \$560 million from the BIL to 24 states in [August 2022](#) to begin the plugging, capping, and reclamation of over 10,000 high-priority orphaned oil and gas wells across the country. According to initial plans, 12 states are prioritizing capping wells in disadvantaged communities. The prioritization of environmental justice communities is also occurring as the Department implements BIL, such as in initiating the [Orphaned Well Site Plugging, Remediation, and Restoration program](#) where the Department developed evaluation criteria to prioritize disadvantaged communities.



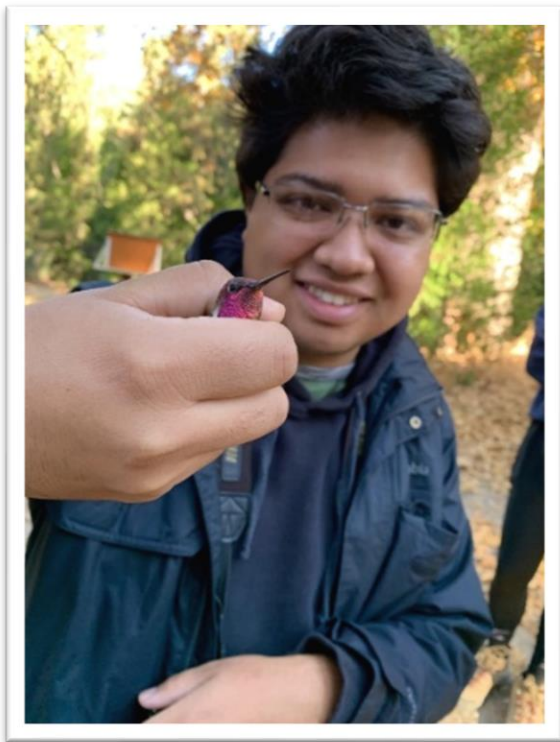
*Secretary Haaland attending an environmental justice roundtable concerning orphaned wells in Wilmington, CA, in December 2021.*

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To strengthen Tribal communities, BIL funds were also instrumental in financing the Department's investment of \$46 million to fund climate resilience and adaptation initiatives in Tribal communities, which are disproportionately impacted by climate change. Announced in [April 2022](#), and supported by \$21.7 million from the BIL and \$24.5 million from FY22 annual appropriation, this funding is available for activities relating to climate resilience and adaptation; ocean and coastal management; community-driven relocation and protect-in-place activities; and internships and youth engagement.

## OTHER MEANINGFUL, INNOVATIVE, AND GROUNDBREAKING ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

**Bureau of Reclamation, WaterSMART Evaluation Criteria Update:** The BOR updated its FY22 WaterSMART notices of funding opportunities ([NOFOs](#)) to include environmental justice in their evaluation criteria. These NOFOs indicate that points will be awarded based on the extent to which a given proposal benefits economically disadvantaged or underserved communities. To fulfill the Department's trust responsibilities and honor the Federal Government's commitments to Tribal nations as described in President Biden's 2021 [Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships](#), additional points will also be awarded to proposed projects that serve Tribal communities.



*FWS Fellow Kevin Salgado holds an Anna's hummingbird that was banded at the James San Jacinto Mountains Reserve.*

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Science in the Service Fellowship:** Building on the successes of its first iteration in FY21, the FWS Science in the Service Fellowship [program](#) welcomed its second cohort in [FY22](#). Realized through a partnership between the FWS [Science Applications Program in Region 8](#) and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, the Fellowship program provides professional training and educational opportunities in conservation to underrepresented groups. Working to build and sustain environmentally sound communities, fellows from this second cohort are now working across the Region at three National Wildlife Refuges, two Ecological Service Field Offices, the Migratory Birds Program, and the Fisheries and Aquatic Conservation Program.

**Bureau of Reclamation, Native American Affairs Technical Assistance to Tribes Program:** In September 2022, the BOR [announced](#) that 26 Tribes across 12 states would receive \$10.3 million as part of the Native American Affairs Technical Assistance to Tribes

Program. Supporting Native American Tribes as they prepare for and mitigate the impacts of drought. This funding upholds the Department's trust responsibilities to Tribal nations and in

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the face of historic drought conditions in the West, will assist Tribes with enhanced preparedness, impact mitigation, and resiliency while improving the efficiency of water deliveries and reducing reliance on declining water sources.

**Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Capacity Building and Collaboration with Aquinnah and Mashpee Wampanoag Tribes:** In [August 2022](#), BOEM [issued](#) a \$490,000 funding announcement for the development and provision of capacity to the Aquinnah and Mashpee Wampanoag Tribes to develop proactive, best practices for the management of data and information regarding places that hold cultural and archaeological significance for both Tribes. The project will also entail the incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge and language into BOEM studies and further solidify effective collaboration between Federal and Tribal parties.

**Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization Program:** In [May 2022](#), the OSMRE's Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization Program [appropriated](#) \$122.5 million to six states (Alabama, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia) and three tribes (Crow, Hip, and Navajo) to explore and implement strategies that sustainably and productively revitalize legacy coal mining sites through economic and community development.

**Bureau of Indian Affairs, Vital Repairs and Upgrades to BIA-Owned Water Systems:** In [May 2022](#), the BIA received \$10.65 million from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to support three projects related to addressing Environmental Protection Agency notice violations, contamination issues, critical risks of system failure, and other system upgrades to BIA-owned water systems. The majority of the allocation (\$8.72 million) will fund the Hopi Arsenic Management Project in Arizona; \$1.05 million will invest in the Nez Perce Northern Idaho Water System; and \$880,000 will cover infrastructure upgrades for Columbia River In-lieu Treaty Fishing Sites.

**GOAL  
5**

Integrate the Department’s environmental justice strategies with its Title VI of the Civil Rights Act enforcement responsibilities to improve efficiencies while preserving the integrity of Title VI and environmental justice activities

## **ENFORCEMENT OF TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964**

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (“Title VI”) prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin by recipients of Federal financial assistance. ODICR leads the Department’s compliance efforts to ensure that its Federally assistance programs, including those that affect human health or the environment, do not discriminate based on race, color, or national origin, and comply with the affirmative requirements of Title VI.

To ensure adherence to Title VI—specifically its prohibition against discrimination based on national origin—recipients of financial assistance must take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to its programs and activities, including for persons with limited English proficiency (LEP). In carrying out enforcement of Title VI, it is critical for the Department to identify its intersection with environmental justice and educate recipients as to their language access obligations. To that end, integrating LEP persons into environmental justice efforts, such as through multilingual outreach and the regular use of competent interpreters at meetings and in other interactions, supports environmental justice goals and Title VI compliance. In addition to ODICR, Department bureaus have offices that implement civil rights and Title VI compliance at the bureau level.

**Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Title VI Investigations:** In accordance with the OSMRE’s Five Year Compliance Review Schedule, the OSMRE’s Office for Equal Opportunity (OEO) is in the process of reviewing two procurement compliance reviews of state agency recipients of Federal financial assistance in FY22: Alabama and New Mexico. The reviews have a Title VI element, which includes the Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Reclamation Program which addresses the hazards and environmental degradation posed by AML sites.

**U.S. Geological Survey, Environmental Justice and Civil Rights Title VI Program:** In FY22, the USGS began developing a dedicated Environmental Justice Program, under its Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity, as part of its Civil Rights Title VI Program. By structurally integrating these programs, the USGS is fulfilling its responsibility to align and synergize Title VI responsibilities and environmental justice concerns.

## Highlight: Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge

In FY22, Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge in Albuquerque, New Mexico, continued to shine as a model in terms of community engagement and cutting-edge environmental justice integration. From its annual Environmental Justice Community Days—hosted in collaboration with over 15 community partners—to its newly forged partnership with the BIA and the Pueblo of Isleta to start a hyper-local air quality monitoring program at the Refuge, Valle de Oro’s commitment to serving its local community serves as an example of environmental justice integration into the entirety of the Refuge’s work.

### ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE-ORIENTED VISITOR CENTER

Among Valle de Oro’s accomplishments in FY22 was the opening of a new Visitor Center, which was designed over multiple years with significant community involvement in both facility design and exhibit content. The Visitor Center features an Environmental Justice Library that contains over 200 community-selected texts that highlight the environmental justice movement as well as diverse perspectives on conservation, the environment, and public lands. The library displays the *Principles of Environmental Justice* and the *Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing* while also highlighting the *Valle de Oro Environmental and Economic Justice Strategic Plan*.

The Visitor Center also features multiple community gathering spaces that are readily available to local groups for meetings, trainings, and other gatherings. This space has already hosted multiple roundtable discussions on environmental and economic justice issues as well as a training session for community groups on cumulative impact regulations. The Visitor Center also includes a Center for Conservation Careers that serves as a job office to share local employment opportunities in conservation.



Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center.

### EMPOWERMENT OF YOUTH SERVICE CORPS

Demonstrating its institutional commitment to empowering the next generation of environmental leaders, Valle de Oro hosted Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland for the launch of the Department’s Indian Youth Service Corps Program, which provides meaningful education, employment, and training opportunities to Indigenous youth through conservation projects across the country.



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Valle de Oro is home to two local-serving youth corps: the New Mexico-based Rocky Mountain Youth Corps and the Indigenous-serving Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps. In FY 2022, the FWS provided funding to both organizations to provide a total of 18 weeks of youth crew employment. The Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps was also awarded funding to employ two full-time interns in the Refuge's biology and visitor service program. It also received funding to start the first Pueblo of Isleta Hiking Club in conjunction with the Refuge.



*FWS staff working with the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps at Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge.*

## **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ROUNDTABLE WITH SECRETARY HAALAND**

During her visit to the Refuge, Secretary Haaland also participated in a roundtable discussion with Valle de Oro partners and community members about environmental justice issues in the neighborhoods surrounding the Refuge and the Refuge's role in advancing environmental and economic justice. Representatives from the Mountain View Neighborhood, Pueblo of Isleta, University of New Mexico, Friends of Valle de Oro, Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps, and Los Jardines Institute were in attendance.



*Secretary Haaland visiting Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge in June 2022.*

## Public Comments

As noted in the 2011 MOU, consistent with EO 12898, section 5-5, each Federal agency will ensure that meaningful opportunities exist for the public to submit comments and recommendations relating to the agency's *Environmental Justice Strategic Plan*, *Annual Implementation Progress Reports*, and ongoing efforts to incorporate environmental justice principles into its programs, policies, and activities.

No public comments were received on the Department's FY21 *Environmental Justice Annual Implementation Report* or the Department's *Environmental Justice Strategic Plan* in FY22. The Department remains open to public comment on its *Environmental Justice Strategic Plan* and *Annual Environmental Justice Implementation Reports*. Comments and questions on this annual report and the Department's implementation of environmental justice can be submitted to: [environmental\\_justice@ios.doi.gov](mailto:environmental_justice@ios.doi.gov).



Mural at FWS's Valle De Oro National Wildlife Refuge painted by a local artist.