

# 2008 NOAA Fisheries Employee of the Year Nomination Narrative

**Nominee's Name: Last, First, Middle:**  
Muir, William D.

**Nomination Category:**  
Supervisor

**Address at Least One of the Following Factors in the Justification Below.**

**Contributions to NOAA and NOAA Fisheries programs that resulted in:**

**For Non-Management:**

- Enhanced economic viability of commercial and/or recreational fishing;
- Enhanced public appreciation for the mission of the agency;
- Enhanced safety or health of NOAA Fisheries workforce;
- Enhanced morale of the NOAA Fisheries workforce or inspired excellence in its members;
- Enhanced stewardship of NOAA Fisheries protected/managed species/associated habitats;
- Improved accuracy, reliability, or reproducibility of scientific results;
- Improved customer service;
- Increased efficiency and/or reduced cost of operations;
- Improved equal employment opportunity or diversity in NOAA Fisheries;
- Strengthened ties to other NOAA elements or NOAA Fisheries constituents; and/or
- Brought unusual credit to NOAA Fisheries or members of its workforce.

**For Management:**

- Demonstrated exceptional leadership, development of the workforce, and/or program management.

William D. Muir is nominated as Employee of the Year for 2008 (Supervisor) for his exceptional scientific vision and leadership related to Columbia River salmon and the outstanding human resource management of his Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) staff. Bill has worked for NOAA Fisheries, starting as a field biologist for the Coastal Zone and Estuarine Studies Division, NWFSC since 1982. He was promoted into the position of supervisor in 2005 because of his ability to work with people and his demonstrated leadership abilities to motivate others to perform at higher levels. He is now a supervisory research fishery biologist within the Survival Program of the Fish Ecology Division and in 2008 supervised 5 research fishery biologists and 3 research fishery technicians who are stationed at disparate locations...Lower Granite Dam, the NOAA Fisheries Big Pasco Field Station, and at the main NWFSC office in Seattle.

Bill and his staff conduct cutting-edge research to understand the effects of Columbia River hydropower dams on migrating salmon. The research and issues with which he deals are contentious: effects of spill and operations of dams on the migrational speed and survival of juvenile migrants, and the ability of collection and transportation of juveniles around the hydropower system to mitigate for juvenile salmonid losses that would otherwise occur at dams. Bill has demonstrated exceptional leadership by focusing his staff on the task at hand...planning, gearing up, conducting, and reporting on their field research. He has assured that staff conducts the highest quality research that has brought exceptional credit to NOAA Fisheries. The NOAA Fisheries Northwest Regional Administrator and his staff as well as leaders of government agencies throughout the Pacific Northwest seek out results of his research and advice of Bill and his team of researchers before making decisions about actions they should take. This indicates the highest respect for the quality of research that Bill and his team conduct. Bill's supervisory efforts have ensured that his staff is prepared to conduct their research and enthused to do so. The requests by regional bodies for the results of research his staff conducts significantly enhances staff morale and inspires them to excel in the performance of their duties. In 2008, three of Bill's research team were awarded a Department of Commerce Silver medal "For development of radio-telemetry equipment and research to rapidly provide data for management decisions to recover listed salmon."

In 2008, Bill showed many exceptional supervisory qualities that led to the outstanding performance of his staff, which included the following:

- led by example, rather than directed.
- advised and did not order.

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## Narrative (continued)

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**Nomination Category:**

Muir, William D.

Supervisor

- trusted staff to do their jobs, which empowered them to take on the responsibility to conduct outstanding research without waiting for specific directions and detailed oversight.
- managed by encouragement and positive feedback.
- communicated openly.
- listened and heard staff issues.
- encouraged and appreciated creativity and risk taking.

As noted, Bill's leading by example meant that he took responsibility to write reports to funding agencies and develop talks to give to professional associations without coaxing from above. His staff recognizes the importance of self-starting and has begun to work with initiative in these areas without Bill needing to prompt them.

In addition to Bill's supervisory responsibilities, he also provided outstanding service to NOAA Fisheries by serving as a technical advisor to the Independent Scientific Advisory Board. His efforts to educate members of the ISAB about details of Columbia River salmon strengthened ties to NOAA Fisheries constituents and brought unusual credit to NOAA Fisheries and members of its workforce for having such detailed knowledge and insight into Columbia River salmon issues. The ISAB could not have produced the products they did without the input from Bill.