

So, Steve, let's summarize the BLM Arizona -- or if you can summarize all the elements of the BLM Arizona Youth Initiative and give us an idea of how it can work for both the students and the agency.

>> S. Cohn: Sure, Leon and I'll talk from a specific example.

Let's say that we have a student, a diverse student, 17-year-old high school student, named Lisa.

Lisa learns about ecology, resource management and conservation through her high school science class as part of the River Pathways module.

She becomes interested in the concepts and decides to participate in the after-school programs at the Rio Salado Audubon Center.

As her interests grow, she participates in hands-on projects on the Agua Fria National Monument and is accepted as an Audubon intern to conduct bird surveys on the monument in the summer after her senior year of high school.

That fall Lisa enrolls at Phoenix College and begins taking classes.

In the following spring, she works as an SCA

intern in the semester of service program completing 16 weeks of work on BLM lands, primarily focused on the Agua Fria National Monument, and receiving a semester's worth of college credit.

Also that spring she successfully competes for a position as a BLM STEP employee and that summer Lisa begins her first season as a wildland firefighter in the Phoenix fire program.

Her work continues into the fall and following spring as a part-time resource technician while she is finishing coursework leading do you remember her associate's degree and certificate.

Lisa then successfully competes for a SCEP position while enrolling in her bachelor's degree program.

Upon completion of her bachelor's degree, Lisa is converted into a permanent position and is well on her way along a successful federal natural resources career pathway.

The BLM has succeeded in recruiting and retaining a diverse, well trained and highly motivated career professional.

>> L. Thomas: Thanks, Steve.

That's an excellent example and something that can be modeled throughout the agency.

Well, we've heard a lot about all of the wonderful things BLM and the Department are doing to support diversity.

Now we would like to hear from you.

If you have a question or a comment for us, you can call us toll-free at 1-877-862-5346.

To send us a fax use 602-906-5701.

If you would like to send us an e-mail or text message, that address is [BLM TC telecast@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_TC_telecast@blm.gov).

So call, fax or shoot us an e-mail or text message.

We'll be glad to take any questions or comments you may have regarding what we've discussed so far.

First, we have a question that was sent in earlier.

Steve, what is your future vision for the Arizona Youth Initiative?

>> S. Cohn: That's a good question.

I think that what we wanted to talk about today was just to present one approach, something that we've done here that worked for us because we had

the partners and we had certainly the youth, motivated youth, that wanted to get greater exposure to natural resources and were interested in federal careers.

By sharing this today, our hope is that other offices around the Bureau can look at what they're already doing and perhaps take some ideas from what we've talked about and continue to grow their own pathways.

I think if there's one thing we would like to propose as part of this Youth Initiative that we've developed here is this idea of a pathway, that we start with youth at a young age, that we get them interested in the environment, that we get them excited about what we do, what we're passionate about, and then we provide those pathways for them as they want to continue growing and learning and perhaps move towards a career, that those pathways are there for them and they're clearly articulated.

>> L. Thomas: Thank you, Steve.

Great answer.

We have a question that was -- looks like it was e-mailed in from Teresa McPherson.

Thanks for e-mailing in a question for us.

This could go to either one of you, Steve or Angie.

The question is: with so many senior employees eligible to retire, could BLM soon become an agency of the very old and the very young?

And what would -- and would that be a healthy work environment?

>> A. Bullets: Well, I can take that question.

I don't really see that happening just because we have so many employees that are diverse ages.

We do have the seriousness of a lot of our senior employees that will leave in the next five years.

But I think overall it is important for the Bureau and it is important for our employees to make sure that we do have training, that they have the ability to have their individual development program -- projects and be able to develop themselves through training, and I believe just the diversity of our organization right now gives us that ability to maintain the great Bureau that we do have right now.

So, my hope is that that is what we will do as supervisors.

>> L. Thomas: Thank you, Angie.

Thanks again for the question.

Another question, and this one is for Juan: as a student in the STEP program, is there a standardized set of courses you have to take?

>> J. Ledezma: No, you're required to take six credits per semester and, of course, the Department encourages you to take courses that pertain to BLM such as biology or agriculture -- or archaeology, agriculture, but I'm studying admin stray -- administration of justice, so there isn't a required courses you have to take.

>> L. Thomas: Angie, another question: how complicated is it to get a Youth Initiative started in regards to developing partnerships?

>> A. Bullets: As you heard today, there are several pieces to our Youth Initiative, and I think it is important for offices to decide what is it that you want to work on?

What is it that I don't you want to make an

improvement on?

And if you just pick a piece of some part of our Youth Initiative and work it so it is right for you, is right for your office, is right for your employees, and every office is going to be different.

Our advantage here is -- in Phoenix is that we do, as Steve said, have a lot of partnerships.

We have a lot of colleges, community colleges.

We have the 22 tribes.

So we have that diversity here in Arizona already.

So that's an advantage for us.

And I realize that in some of the communities where offices are, they don't have that advantage.

But you can get a piece of our -- our white paper and find out what works best for you and at least try one.

We're making headway with our Workforce Investment Act through partnerships, and I think even that piece, because we are in the forefront, I think people can easily mold that into their areas and make it their own.

>> L. Thomas: All right.

Juan, as a STEP student, is the process of moving

up the ladder the same as being a seasonal employee?

>> J. Ledezma: It's pretty much the same.

You take the courses you need to move up the ladder.

If you want to be a sawyer, you take your chainsaw certification class.

If you want to be a squad boss, you're required to have two seasons of experience and then you take your class and work on your test book, and you can move up the ladder just as easy as a seasonal as a STEP.

That's from the fire perspective.

So pretty similar.

>> L. Thomas: Angie, we talk a lot about the hiring initiatives for the youth.

What about different and inclusiveness for employees who have been with the agency for a while.

Can you talk to us about that for a little bit?

>> A. Bullets: I think the answer to that is the development of the relationship between the

supervisor and employee.

I can tell you that a lot of our employees, they didn't start out in the positions that they're in now.

I have range cons are supervisory land leads.

Well, that's a big difference.

But I think what it's important for the employee to make sure that they are talking to their supervisor and letting them know what their career plans are, what the objective is, and I think it's equally important for the supervisor to have those conversations, and with that relationship that's developed, you can -- the potential to be anything you want to be in the Bureau is there.

You just have to want it.

>> L. Thomas: Thank you, Angie.