



A word from Dr. Jane

December 12, 2012

Dear NOAA Family,

I write to let you know that I have decided to return to my family and academia at the end of February. I am immensely proud of all we have accomplished in the last four years and know full well that we have been able to do so much only because of your impressive talent and dedication. It has been a special privilege to serve as Administrator and work with all of you.

As many of you know, my home and family are on the West Coast. I'm deeply grateful for the support and love of my family, but as wonderful as Skype is for staying in touch, it is not a viable long-term arrangement!

As I reflect on my time with you, I'm delighted with all we've been able to do — big and small. The list is far too long for complete enumeration here, but I've listed 20 of our top achievements below. I invite you to share with me your top-tier list, as well as any especially memorable moments or photographs from the work we have done together.

We've tackled some big challenges together. Through an emphasis on transparency, integrity, innovation, team work and communication, we have made significant progress on multiple fronts. As you know, NOAA's breadth is one of our greatest challenges, but it's also our great strength. Both are in evidence below. Our notable progress includes (in no particular order!):

Ending over-fishing, rebuilding depleted stocks, and returning fishing to profitability;

Strengthening the Nation's environmental satellite infrastructure because it underpins national security, economic activity and public safety by providing data essential to our short- and long-term weather forecasts;

Delivering life-saving weather forecasts and warnings and strengthening our ability to do so in the future through Weather-Ready Nation, dual-pol upgrades, investments in high performance computing, research, and weather satellites;

Helping create the first National Ocean Policy that recognizes the value of a healthy marine environment, emphasizes collaboration between regions and the federal government and coordination across federal agencies to achieve healthy oceans, coasts and Great Lakes;

Leveling the playing field for our fishermen by reforming international fishery management organizations with the adoption of management measures in line with scientific advice and with strengthened compliance and enforcement tools, and by reducing “pirate fishing” (illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing);

Creating a new generation of climate services to promote public understanding, support mitigation and adaptation efforts, enable smart planning, and promote regional climate partnerships;

Investing in coastal communities and their future resilience through more strategic and better integrated conservation and restoration;

Better serving recreational anglers and boaters by convening a saltwater sport fishing summit, developing a recreational fishing action agenda and ensuring follow through on key commitments;

Strengthening science with our first Scientific Integrity Policy, doubling the number of senior scientific positions, establishing a new Council of Fellows, reinstating the Chief Scientist position, supporting AAAS and Sea Grant Fellows and promoting climate, fishery, ocean acidification, weather and ecosystem science;

Responding effectively as “one-NOAA” to disasters such as Deepwater Horizon, the Japanese earthquake/tsunami/radiation/marine debris catastrophe, Hurricanes Irene, Isaac and Sandy, including helping open ports and waterways, survey coasts, and rebuild and restore communities and coastlines to enhance resilience in the future;

Bringing experience, scientific and legal expertise to bear on the federal response to the Deepwater Horizon catastrophe (as detailed in two papers in the latest issue of the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*), jumpstarting Gulf restoration efforts through partnerships and the Trustee Council, and assessing the full impact of the disaster on natural resources with the goal of holding responsible parties accountable and restoring Gulf ecosystems, communities and economy to health;

Championing NOAA's lean, but effective, education program that plays a unique role in providing atmospheric and oceanographic education to young and old and making NOAA-related sciences more accessible to underrepresented groups;

Creating NOAA's first Aquaculture Policy and a National Shellfish Initiative and using science to ameliorate short-term impacts of ocean acidification on shellfish;

Setting a stronger course for endangered species conservation in places like California's Central Valley and the Columbia River and in the ocean, e.g., for coral conservation.

Streamlining regulations to save taxpayers time and money and improve efficiency, for example in fisheries regulations and shellfish aquaculture permitting;

Increasing effectiveness and decreasing costs of corporate services such as acquisitions and IT, for example by migrating our communication systems to the cloud to enhance functionality, strengthen security and reduce costs

Developing and implementing a "One-NOAA" Arctic Vision and Strategy and Task Force to address environmental, social, economic and safety issues emerging in the fragile Arctic region, including mapping to support new safety, a precautionary fishery management plan, launching the Arctic ERMA tool, and innovative research and data partnerships to improve science-based decision-making;

Strengthening NOAA's fishery enforcement program by implementing policy, oversight, personnel and procedural changes to increase effectiveness and transparency;

Embracing social media, effective communications and communications training to share NOAA science, information and decisions with our diverse constituents, stakeholders and partners — including creation of NOAA's and

my Facebook pages, multiple NOAA Twitter accounts, and use of crowd-sourcing to digitize old weather records; and

Ensuring all our policies, regulations and statements are consistent with the law and legal best practices.

All this and more for less than a nickel a day from each tax payer — now that's a bargain!

Much of this progress required integration of efforts across line and staff offices and with a wide variety of partners and stakeholders. Our One-NOAA approach has proven its power time and again.

I am well aware of how much work lies ahead. But because I have experienced your impressive talent and your deep-felt dedication to our mission, I am confident that you will continue to tackle problems and devise creative solutions.

I'm proud to have been part of your mission. And I am grateful to Acting Secretary Rebecca Blank and her capable staff and numerous members of Congress for their staunch support for our mission. I appreciate the President's confidence in me and the invitation to be part of his science team and serve at the helm of the Nation's spectacular ocean, climate, weather and coastal agency.

But most of all, I appreciate the opportunity to work with all of you. I will miss you, but know you will continue devoting your energy and talent to fulfill our mission. I wish you all a joyous and peaceful holiday season and New Year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dan Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "J".

Dr. Jane

Join me on Facebook

www.facebook.com/noaa.lubchenco