



March is nearly over, Spring has already begun, we have now celebrated the Gregorian calendar New Year, Lunar New Year, and the Persian New Year, and it's time for our PRA March Newsletter.

We are now nearly 3 months into a new Administration, whose actions represent very clear intentions to reduce the size of the federal workforce, which also includes the [National Park Service](#), [US Fish and Wildlife Service](#), [United States Forest Service](#), and the [United States Geological Survey](#). For the last 15 years, PRA has worked very closely with these agencies to improve both human and planetary health.

Our collaborations, experiences and partnerships with countless federally employed professionals attest to their intelligence, integrity, dedication, and tireless industry. We at PRA have nothing but the highest regard for our partners, many who have lost their jobs, retired earlier than anticipated due to toxic stress of the current work environment, or continue to work with job insecurity. Our partners in the federal government, these public servants, have dedicated their lives and careers to serving the American public through direct service jobs, research, advocacy, and through partnerships both domestically and internationally.

PRA would like to take a moment to put a face to these “faceless bureaucrats” by highlighting these federal agencies, the valuable work that they do, and the real people whose personal and professional lives have been upturned.

An [article](#) published in *TexasMonthly* on March 4, tells the story of Bianca Sicich, who “was abruptly fired, along with more than four hundred other employees of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.”

Brooke Sausser, was also recently fired from National Park Service’s [Land and Water Conservation Fund](#), as part of the [reduction in workforce \(RIF\)](#). Brooke’s position has now been reinstated, and is working again, but within the context of an agency severely understaffed. Here is her story:

Like so many of us, a childhood of family vacations in national parks lit a spark in me to work for NPS. Fifteen years later - after college, graduate school, internships, underpaid seasonal work, and too many tedious USAJobs applications - lightning struck, and I finally landed a permanent position with the National Park Service administering grants for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

My job title isn't ranger, and I don't wear a flat hat or work in a park. My job, like other support and program staff, is less visible and harder to describe, but no less important. At LWCF, we provide federal funds to build parks in your backyard. Every day, we partner with local governments to design quality parks, write legal agreements, ensure compliance with environmental protection and other laws, track available funding, and ensure these parks are open to the public forever. Down to the literal penny, we ensure that federal dollars only cover costs allowed by law, guarding against waste, fraud, and abuse.

Since 1964, LWCF has built a park in every county in this country. That's 46,000 parks, in red states and blue states, in urban cities and rural towns. Offshore drilling, not taxpayers, funds this program. During Trump's first term and with overwhelming bipartisan support, Congress made our program permanent and doubled our funding. Yet, the future of our program is unknown.

Cutting LWCF won't save taxpayers a dime, but it will cost them millions for local parks. Delays in construction will be unavoidable. Without an efficient federal process, cities and states will likely miss time-sensitive

opportunities to acquire land or leverage matching funds from other partners. There will simply be fewer parks, at a time when more and more Americans want to enjoy them.

By law, LWCF funds may only be spent on the work that we do. These funds cannot be repurposed. Without staff like me to provide these grants, figurative sacks of money will sit in the back of the American bank vault, unspent, when they could have been building your next favorite place to hike, fish, take the dog, or watch your kids play on a jungle gym.



Brooke on right and twin sister on left at Mount Rushmore in 2016

Like Brooke, these federal workers and their respective federal agencies with whom PRA has worked so closely over the last 15 years, have made countless contributions in promoting planetary and human health. These people and their jobs, rather than being seen as expendable, should be seen as essential workers. As physicians, we are very familiar with this phrase “essential workers”, which was used quite often during the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic. Although the COVID pandemic is no longer a global threat, we continue to live through a crisis of both planetary and human health. The increasing frequency and intensity of climate catastrophes and an ongoing

global epidemic of physical and mental human health illness should be our top priorities, if we as a species want to survive.

Rather than a reduction in the federal workforce, we should be advocating for an investment in the lives and careers of our federal workers, whose jobs are in fact essential to our survival. Our federal government partners need our support more than ever, during these uncertain times.

We want to hear from you!

With over 1,800 registered providers across the country, we know there are a lot of stories out there of prescribing nature for the first time and patient successes. Take a moment to [Share Your Story](#) and get a chance to be showcased on our [Provider Spotlight](#) page.

[Share Your Story](#)

PRA is grateful for your donation to help us keep our website and platform accessible to all!

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All donations are tax deductible. Our EIN is **82-0856734**.

Keeping in mind the secondary trauma of caring for others, please take the time you need to recover and consider a dose of nature for yourself.

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