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United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Marketing and  
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Programs

Animal and Plant  
Health Inspection  
Service

Riverdale, MD  
20737

TO: William Clay  
Deputy Administrator  
Wildlife Services  
Washington, DC

FROM: Marjorie C. Bolden  
Chief, Administrative Investigations  
and Compliance Branch  
Human Resources Division  
Riverdale, Maryland

SUBJECT: Report of Investigation  
Agency Request **AR-13-06-WS**  
Jamie Olson, Biological Science Technician, GS 5  
Douglas, Wyoming  
**Conduct Unbecoming**

The enclosed Report of Investigation (ROI) contains the results of the investigation performed to examine allegations of conduct unbecoming on the part of Mr. Olson.

A copy of the ROI has also been provided to the Employee and Management Relations Branch (EMRB) for their review and evaluation. Please review this report in its entirety and consult with David Root, Chief, EMRB, prior to making any decision regarding possible remedial steps, including any disciplinary action. Mr. Root can be reached at (612) 336-3299.

Reproduction of the contents of the ROI can only be done as part of any resulting disciplinary action and only by the EMRB.

In addition, please be advised that upon issuance of this report, the Administrative Investigations and Compliance Branch now considers this case file closed. However, if you have any questions or need additional follow up, please feel free to contact me at (301) 851-2945.

cc:  
J. Green, WS, Ft. Collins  
D. Root, EMRB, Minneapolis, MN  
M. Rucke, EMRB, HRD, Minneapolis, MN

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA)  
ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE (APHIS)  
MARKETING AND REGULATORY PROGRAMS – BUSINESS SERVICE (MRP-BS)  
HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION (HRD)  
ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATIONS AND COMPLIANCE BRANCH (AICB)

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**REPORT OF INVESTIGATION**  
**CASE NUMBER – AR-13-06-WS**

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**Subject:** Jamie P. Olson  
Biological Science Technician, GS-5

**Program:** Wildlife Services (WS)

**Location:** Douglas, Wyoming (WY)

**Allegation:** Conduct unbecoming

**Investigators:** Paul D. Sanchez & Anthony A. Gabaldon

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**SYNOPSIS**

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The investigation was requested and conducted as a result of a complaint (Exhibit 1) submitted by WILLIAM CLAY, Deputy Administrator, WS, SES, Washington, DC. On November 6, 2012, CLAY requested that AICB address allegations that OLSON committed animal cruelty by allowing his dogs to attack trapped and wounded animals; he violated trap check frequency laws; and he created a conflict of interest by sponsoring coyote hunts and maintaining a coyote-hunting website (coyotehunting.net) during his off time.

A series of photographs (Exhibit 2) circulating throughout the internet and various newspaper articles depict OLSON's dogs, BEAR, (an Airedale), and PEPPER, (a black mutt), purportedly attacking and ripping apart a coyote caught in a foot-hold trap. AICB Investigators traveled to Douglas, WY on November 9, 2012, to interview OLSON regarding these pictures and his involvement with coyotehunter.net.

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## DESCRIPTION OF INVESTIGATION

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**Dates of Investigation:** November 5, 2012 – November 27, 2012

**Onsite Investigation Conducted:** November 9, 2012

**Date ROI submitted:** December 6, 2012

**Distribution:**

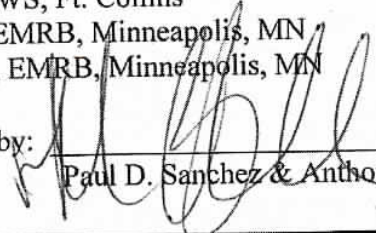
W. Clay, WS, Washington, DC

J. Green, WS, Ft. Collins

D. Root, EMRB, Minneapolis, MN

R. Rucke, EMRB, Minneapolis, MN

Prepared by:

  
Paul D. Sanchez & Anthony Gabaldon

12/6/12  
Date

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## BACKGROUND

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OLSON has been a WS employee since 2007. An experienced trapper and hunter, OLSON has been trapping animals since he was a child. OLSON services the eastern half of Converse County Wyoming. OLSON'S official trapping duties do not extend beyond the state of Wyoming.

On October 30, 2012, WS Western Region officials received a phone call from an individual who resides in Reno, Nevada. The caller left a voice message for Assistant WS Regional Director, GARY LITTAUER, Supervisory Wildlife Biologist, GS-15, Fort Collins, Colorado in response to pictures circulating on the internet reportedly taken by OLSON and involving dogs attacking a trapped coyote.

On November 2, 2012, the Sacramento Bee, Kansas City Star, and the Missoula Independent (Exhibit 3) published photographs of OLSON'S dogs allegedly tormenting and mauling trapped wildlife. In addition, various environmentalist and wildlife advocacy groups also circulated the photographs via the internet. In response to this information, the Animal Welfare Institute (AWI) sent a letter (Exhibit 4) to Congressmen Peter DeFazio, Joe Campbell, and to WS officials demanding OLSON'S termination. Project Coyote also initiated an online petition through Change.org in an attempt to have OLSON terminated. Other organizations also sent letters to California Congressman Darrel Issa asking him to discontinue support for the WS Program. Online bloggers reported that OLSON'S photographs were found in his Facebook and Twitter accounts and on other hunting websites. The pictures (Exhibit 5) found in OLSON'S Facebook account were located in a file entitled "work."

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## SUMMARY OF THE FACTS

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In his sworn statement (Exhibit 6), OLSON stated that the photographs in question were shown out of context thereby giving the appearance that he allows his dogs to rip apart trapped animals and to portray him in a negative way. The photographs that were circulated throughout the internet and various newspapers were taken at different locations and on different dates.

However, the way they were presented gives the appearance it was the event. OLSON stated that some of the pictures were taken prior to his employment with WS or were taken in states such as Arizona and Utah. He explained that hunting coyotes is a complex job, and he uses dogs to track and corner coyotes. OLSON stated that in all of these photographs, PEPPER and BEAR are wearing electronic training collars. He stated that when some of the pictures were taken, PEPPER was in a training period. OLSON explained that he was trying to train PEPPER how to "posture" when confronting a trapped coyote. By OLSON'S definition, posturing is when a dog keeps a coyote stationary.

OLSON explained that the photographs in circulation were stolen from a private folder on his Facebook account. He stated that he established his Facebook account in 2006, and created the folder called "work," prior to his employment with WS. OLSON claimed that an anonymous Facebook user(s) hacked into his Facebook account and made various photos in his account available to the public without his knowledge and/or consent. When asked to explain the photographs (Exhibit 6 – Attachment 3) of PEPPER purportedly attacking a coyote, OLSON replied that he took those pictures to show his father the training progress of PEPPER. OLSON stated that he deleted all of the pictures in question from his Facebook account and then deactivated the account on October 30, 2012. OLSON stated that he used Twitter to communicate with other trappers. However, he has closed his Twitter account since this incident began. OLSON stated that he posted two photographs (Exhibit 6 – Attachment 4) on his Twitter account.

OLSON stated that the pictures he takes, while performing his official duties with WS, are used as photographic evidence for ranchers requesting verification that OLSON did in fact capture and kill a predatory animal on their property. OLSON provided five letters from Converse County ranchers who are supportive of his work. Four of these ranchers have written that they requested photographic evidence from OLSON. OLSON stated he used his personal phone camera to take the pictures because he could then send them directly to the ranchers. Once the pictures were sent, he deleted them.

Reporters and bloggers claimed that OLSON allowed his dogs to "tear apart" trapped coyotes. As evidence of these claims, they posted two pictures of dead coyotes. The first photograph (Exhibit 6 – Attachment 5) shows OLSON holding up a shredded coyote carcass. Online bloggers claim that OLSON allowed his dogs to rip apart this coyote. However, upon closer inspection of the photograph it appears that this particular coyote was killed with an M44 sodium cyanide trap. OLSON pointed out in the photograph that the plunger for the M44 is visible, which indicates that the trap was activated by the coyote. Death is immediate for any animal that ingests a sodium cyanide capsule. OLSON stated that the requirement to check an M44 trap is every 2 weeks. OLSON stated that his dogs did not rip apart this coyote but scavengers

consumed this coyote after it had died. According to OLSON, the photo was taken during his employment with WS, but he was uncertain of the exact date.

A second photograph (Exhibit 7) shows a disemboweled coyote on a log. In response to this photograph, OLSON explained that this photograph was taken after witnessing eagles eviscerate the coyote's corpse. OLSON, unsure of the exact date, believes this photograph was taken sometime in 2010 in Wyoming.

OLSON stated that some of these pictures in question (Exhibit 6 – Attachment 1) were also taken from the Strongbow Airedales website. Strongbow Airedales is the dog breeder where OLSON acquired BEAR. OLSON stated that he was unaware that the breeder had identified him as an employee with USDA and WS on the Strongbow Airedales website. OLSON stated that some of these pictures were very old because the breeder listed him and his ex-wife as having ownership of BEAR. There are seven photographs of BEAR on this website; four of these photographs show BEAR posturing at a trapped coyote, a trapped bobcat, and at a raccoon. OLSON pointed out that none of the photographs shows BEAR attacking or biting the animals. OLSON stated that he contacted the breeder and requested that she remove all information pertaining to his official position with USDA. As of November 27, 2012, all but two pictures of OLSON and BEAR remain on the website. Moreover, there is no information that connects OLSON with USDA.

OLSON stated that he uses BEAR and PEPPER to assist him with his official trapping duties. He stated that it is ridiculous for anyone to think that he would want to incur expensive veterinary medical expenses by allowing his dogs to attack a trapped coyote, bobcat, or other animal. He added that even a trapped and wounded coyote still possesses a danger to his dogs. Contrary to what news groups and activist websites have reported, OLSON pointed out that in all of the photographs, BEAR is not attacking any of the trapped animals. He stated that over the years BEAR has successfully learned to posture and he hopes to repeat this success with PEPPER.

Investigators contacted Wyoming WS State Director RODNEY KRISCHKE, Supervisory Wildlife Biologist, GS-14, Casper, WY; and his immediate supervisor PAUL KOKES, Supervisory Wildlife Biologist, GS-11, WS, Newcastle, WY; and asked them if they ever experienced any problems with OLSON not checking his traps as required by WS directives. In response, both KRISCHKE and KOKES replied (Exhibit 8) that they have never received a complaint about OLSON, nor have they experienced any problems with him on this issue. OLSON stated that he does check his traps as required, and this information can be substantiated in WS' Management Information Systems (MIS) reporting database. Per WS Directive, trappers have to check their traps every 72 hours after setting them up. The only time the 72-hour rule could be impacted is during inclement weather.

Investigators also contacted the MARY ROYSTR, Branch Chief, USDA Office of Ethics, regarding Departmental Regulations that prohibit employees from identifying themselves on social media websites. In response, ROYSTR replied (Exhibit 9) "There is a policy regarding the use of social media in an employee's official capacity on behalf of USDA. However, her office is unaware of any such policy on the proper use of social media while an employee is in a

personal capacity, and using his personal computer. An employee is not prohibited from including his/her official title as part of his personal Facebook profile. However, the employee should not use or permit the use of his Government position or title or any authority associated with his public office in a manner that could reasonably be construed to imply that WS or the Government sanctions or endorses his personal activities or those of another."

ROYSTER stated that based on information provided in the complaint, it did not appear that OLSON violated any part of the Standards of Ethical Conduct. There did not appear to be a conflict of interest, an appearance of loss of impartiality, or an inappropriate use of his official position or title without further investigation into the matter. However, she added that it does not mean that the employee did not violate other Agency policy or regulations not covered by the Standards of Ethical Conduct regarding cruelty to animals.

According to ROYSTER, an employee is prohibited, under 5 CFR 2635.702, from using his official position for his own private gain or for the private gain of another. In other words, if OLSON were trapping animals on a WS cooperators' property while he was on leave or on his personal time, this would present an appearance of using his official position for his own private gain. Based on this information, investigators asked OLSON about his involvement with coyotehunter.net.

OLSON replied that he owns the website domain address, coyotehunter.net, but he has other people manage the website for him. He stated that coyote hunts are advertised through his website, and the money raised through these events is converted into memorial funds and scholarships (Exhibit 10). OLSON stated that his website does sell t-shirts and hats, but the bulk of the profits are re-invested back to maintenance of the website. OLSON stated that he started coyotehunter.net as a way for coyote hunters to communicate with each other. As the sport of coyote hunting grew, OLSON decided that he wanted to bring some refinement to these hunts. OLSON stated that he plays an administrative role in organizing coyote hunts. OLSON stated that the coyote hunts he sponsors take place outside of Wyoming. He stated that most of the hunts occur in North Dakota and he attempted to organize a coyote hunt in Billings, Montana in late October 2012.

In addition, investigators conducted a computer forensics examination of OLSON's government computer, and an e-mail review of his official Outlook account. The purpose of this examination and review was to search for additional images of alleged animal cruelty; and to ascertain if OLSON was conducting personal business in support of coyotehunter.net during government time and utilizing government equipment. The results of the forensic examination and e-mail review did not reveal any evidence to support these claims.

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**DESCRIPTION/LIST OF EXHIBITS**

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1. Request for investigation, dated November 6, 2012
2. Photographs of alleged animal abuse and cruelty
3. News articles
4. AWI's letter to KRISCHKE
5. Facebook photos found in folder entitled "work"
6. Sworn Statement – OLSON
7. Photograph of a dead coyote on a log
8. E-mail from KOKES and KRISCHKE
9. E-mail response from ROYSTER
10. Coyotehunter.net information