



OEIG Investigation No.: 24-02234
Subject(s) Name(s): Stuart Whitaker

Investigative Summary Report Publication

The Executive Ethics Commission ("Commission") is responsible for publishing the attached redacted Executive Inspector General for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor investigative summary report pursuant to the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act. 5 ILCS 430/20-52. An Executive Inspector General issues an investigative summary report at the conclusion of an investigation if they determine that reasonable cause exists to believe a violation has occurred. 5 ILCS 430/20-50. The Commission did not write the report, conduct the investigation leading to the report, or impose any discipline upon the subject of the report.

The Commission and Investigative Summary Reports

The Ethics Act requires the Commission to publish an investigative summary report and ultimate jurisdictional authority's response if the report's subject was terminated or suspended for three days or more. 5 ILCS 430/20-52(a). Otherwise, the Commission may, but does not have to, publish the report and response. The ultimate jurisdictional authority varies from report to report and is typically the constitutional officer overseeing the subject's work location.

Investigative Summary Report Redactions

The Ethics Act also requires the Commission to redact, or remove, some information from investigative summary reports before publishing them. 5 ILCS 430/20-52(b). The Commission must redact information that may reveal the identity of witnesses, complainants, or informants or where the Commission determines that redaction is appropriate to protect the identity of a person. The Ethics Act permits the Commission, in its discretion, to redact other information it does not believe should be made public.

Before the Commission publishes a redacted report, it sends the report with the proposed redactions to the subject(s), the Executive Inspector General, and the Office of the Attorney General to review the proposed redactions, offer suggested redactions, and/or provide a response to be published with the report. 5 ILCS 430/20-52(b). The subject has an opportunity to provide a response to the report. If the report is published, the subject's response may be published as well. If the Executive Inspector General finds reasonable cause to believe that the subject(s) violated the Ethics Act's prohibition against sexual harassment, the Commission also sends the report with proposed redactions to the complainant for review and an opportunity to provide a response. 5 ILCS 430/20-63(b)(7).

Investigative Summary Report Publication Considerations

The Commission exercises its investigative summary report publication responsibilities only after thoughtful consideration. While the Ethics Act allows a subject to submit a response to be published with the report, it does not allow a subject to request a hearing before the Commission regarding the contents of a report. By publishing the following redacted report, the Commission neither makes nor adopts any arguments, allegations, determinations of fact, or conclusions of law relating to the subject or any other individual or entity referenced therein.

If you have questions about the content of the report, please contact the Executive Inspector General for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor. For enquiries about the Commission's publication process, please email eec@Illinois.gov or visit eec.illinois.gov for additional information.

Office of Executive Inspector General for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor

Investigation Case No. 24-02234



I. ALLEGATION

On September 9, 2024, the Office of Executive Inspector General (OEIG) received a complaint alleging that Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) employee Stuart Whitaker spoke in a sexually suggestive manner to another employee, [IDNR Employee 1], and placed his hand on her shoulder.

II. BACKGROUND

[State Park 1] is a property in northwestern Illinois that is overseen by IDNR.¹ Mr. Whitaker has been an IDNR Site Superintendent III since February 2020, with responsibilities that include managing the operations of that property and others. [IDNR Employee 1] has been a [Redacted] at IDNR since August 2023.

III. INVESTIGATION

A. Interview Of [IDNR Employee 1]

OEIG investigators interviewed [IDNR Employee 1] on October 4, 2024. She said that her duties at IDNR include managing natural areas in nine counties, and that although her work is mostly in the field, she has an office at [State Park 1]. [IDNR Employee 1] said that Mr. Whitaker also works on site at [State Park 1], but is not in her line of supervision. However, she said that they collaborated quite a bit such as, for example, when she is the resource lead on some of the sites that Mr. Whitaker covers.

[IDNR Employee 1] said that when she started in August 2023, before she had a State phone, she gave Mr. Whitaker her personal phone number in case there was anything she needed to work on. She said that a month or two later, he told her that she had showed up on the messaging app Snapchat as a person he may know; she added that when Mr. Whitaker sent her a friend request, she accepted. [IDNR Employee 1] said that in August 2023 she lived in a camper at the [State Park 1] campground until she moved into an apartment in October 2023, and that when Mr. Whitaker worked on the weekends he would stop by her camper and say hi. She said she only socialized with Mr. Whitaker outside of work on one occasion in August 2023, when she went clay pigeon shooting with him and two other people.

[IDNR Employee 1] said that on February 9, 2024, Mr. Whitaker sent her a Snapchat message about a dream he said he had. She said she took a picture of the message with her State phone, and she provided a copy of the picture to the OEIG after the interview.² The picture was of a phone with an undated message from “STUART” that said:

Girl I had a dream about us last night. Lol. We either went to college together or found out we were in college together. I was helping you move into a dorm. Lol. About all I remember is doing everything together. I remember you telling me you didnt [sic] like people so you stayed in your room all the time. The last thing I

¹ [redacted](last visited Jan. 28, 2025).

² [IDNR Employee 1] said she took a photo of the message instead of a screenshot, which she said she believed would notify Mr. Whitaker.

remember was escorting you back to your room and I had my hand on the small of your back. You turned around and said [Individual 1] does that to me. lol. It was weird. I didn't even eat anything funny before bed. lol

[IDNR Employee 1] said in her OEIG interview that Mr. Whitaker's message made her feel "gross," and like she needed to pour bleach on her brain. She said she did not respond to the message, and deleted Mr. Whitaker from her Snapchat 24 to 48 hours after receiving the message. She added that she thought Mr. Whitaker would take the hint when she deleted him.

[IDNR Employee 1] said she showed the message to two IDNR coworkers, [IDNR Employee 2] and [IDNR Employee 3], and they told her she should report it. [IDNR Employee 1] said she reported it to her supervisor, and that she spoke to IDNR Human Resources Director about it and showed her the message.³ [IDNR Employee 1] said that in February or March 2024 she also spoke about the message to another coworker, [IDNR Employee 4], who told her that Mr. Whitaker had said some weird stuff to her, without giving details.

[IDNR Employee 1] said the February 2024 message made her feel uncomfortable to go into the office and perform her job duties at [State Park 1], and that if she saw Mr. Whitaker coming around the corner, she would duck under a desk so he would not see her. However, she said she continued to have in-person, phone, and text contact with Mr. Whitaker regarding work or the site house where she lives ([IDNR Employee 1] explained that she has lived at an IDNR site house at the [State Park 2] since July 2024). [IDNR Employee 1] said that during this period, Mr. Whitaker made weird little comments to her here and there. For example, she said that once after he asked how her weekend had been and she responded that it was pretty good and she needed to get to the gym, Mr. Whitaker said that if back when he was going to the gym women wore what they wore to the gym now, he would have gotten someone pregnant. She said that when she wore a shirt that exposed her shoulders, Mr. Whitaker made a comment like, "sun's out, guns out," or asked her if she had been hitting the gym. [IDNR Employee 1] estimated that Mr. Whitaker made comments like that to her about once every six weeks.

[IDNR Employee 1] said that on August 20, 2024, when she was getting equipment at [State Park 1], she saw Mr. Whitaker walking toward her in a courtyard area in front of the climate-controlled shop. She said he put his hand on her shoulder and told her he had to tell her about a dream he had about her. [IDNR Employee 1] said she took a step back to get his hand off her and get away from him. She said Mr. Whitaker then said that in the dream they were in his office and he had to show her something on the computer, and [IDNR Employee 1] leaned in and her breast touched his shoulder. [IDNR Employee 1] said that when Mr. Whitaker told her this, she freaked out, panicked, and was dumbfounded, shocked,

³ According to IDNR, an internal complaint about the February 2024 incident was assigned to IDNR's Equal Opportunity Officer, but [IDNR Employee 1] did not respond to the Equal Opportunity Officer's attempts to contact her to schedule an interview. IDNR stated that the Equal Opportunity Officer ultimately received an email from [IDNR Employee 1]'s supervisor advising that [IDNR Employee 1] did not wish to proceed with an investigation and wanted to drop the matter, and therefore the Equal Opportunity Officer did not make additional attempts to reach [IDNR Employee 1].

IDNR and Governor's Office records reflect that IDNR did not notify the Office of the Governor's Chief Compliance Office of the February 2024 incident, and OEIG records reflect that IDNR did not notify the OEIG of the February 2024 incident until September 2024. The OEIG reminds IDNR of its obligation under Executive Order 2018-02 to report sexual harassment allegations to the Chief Compliance Office, and its obligation under Executive Order 2016- 04 to promptly report allegations of misconduct to the OEIG.

and blank faced. She said she tried to back away slowly and said she had to go, but that her brain froze, and Mr. Whitaker continued talking for at least 40 minutes about work matters.

[IDNR Employee 1] said she immediately called [IDNR Employee 3] and told her what happened, and that she also talked to [IDNR Employee 2] and asked her what to do. [IDNR Employee 1] said [IDNR Employee 2] suggested calling the union president, which [IDNR Employee 1] said she ([IDNR Employee 1]) did about an hour and a half after the incident.

[IDNR Employee 1] said she also sent an email to Mr. Whitaker asking him to stop touching and contacting her. Following her interview, [IDNR Employee 1] provided the OEIG with an August 20, 2024 (6:46 p.m.) email from her State email account to Mr. Whitaker's State email account, which said:

Hi Stu,

I wanted to address a matter that's been on my mind.

Recently, you shared an inappropriate dream about me, touched my shoulder, and a few months ago you sent me a message on Snapchat about another inappropriate dream involving me. Although I've removed you from Snapchat, I feel it's important to address this issue formally.

Our workplace has a strict sexual harassment policy that outlines unacceptable behaviors, including those that make colleagues feel uncomfortable, regardless of intent. You can review the training here: [OneNet link] (right click and select open hyperlink). For specific details on sexual harassment, please refer to page 44 of the 2024 harassment training materials.

It's important to recognize that even if comments or actions are not intended to be harmful, they can still be unwelcome and distressing. I want to make it clear that your behavior has made me uncomfortable, and I kindly request that you avoid making similar comments or any physical contact in the future.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Best regards,

[IDNR Employee 1]

[IDNR Employee 1] also provided the OEIG with an August 21, 2024 (7:37 a.m.) response from Mr. Whitaker's State email account, which stated:

Hi [IDNR Employee 1],

Thank you for bringing this to my attention. I will make sure that we keep any all [sic] of our contact and conversation going forward strictly professional. It is by far the last thing on my mind to offend anyone. Rest assured that will absolutely never happen again.

Stuart Whitaker

[IDNR Employee 1] said in her OEIG interview that since she sent Mr. Whitaker the email, he has stayed away from her, and asked her to include others on their future communications. However, she added that Mr. Whitaker is the site superintendent responsible for the IDNR site

house where she lives, which makes her concerned. [IDNR Employee 1] said that she had told the IDNR Human Resources Director that Mr. Whitaker has a key to her house, and then the locks were changed that night.⁴

B. Interviews Of [IDNR Employee 2], [IDNR Employee 3], And [IDNR Employee 4]

OEIG investigators interviewed IDNR employees [IDNR Employee 2], [IDNR Employee 3], and [IDNR Employee 4].⁵

[IDNR Employee 2]

[IDNR Employee 2] said she has been an [Redacted] at IDNR since 2017, and works at [State Park 1] four days a week. She said she reports to Mr. Whitaker, and that her [relative 1] is one of Mr. Whitaker's best friends. [IDNR Employee 2] confirmed that earlier in 2024, [IDNR Employee 1] told her that Mr. Whitaker had sent [IDNR Employee 1] a Snapchat message about a dream he had in which he touched the small of [IDNR Employee 1]'s back. [IDNR Employee 2] said [IDNR Employee 1] showed her the message and asked her how to handle it, and that [IDNR Employee 1] decided to block Mr. Whitaker on Snapchat.

[IDNR Employee 2] said that in August 2024, [IDNR Employee 1] came in upset and crying, and told her that Mr. Whitaker had put his hand on her ([IDNR Employee 1]'s) shoulder and told [IDNR Employee 1] that he had a dream in which he was sitting at his computer and [IDNR Employee 1] was standing behind him and leaned over with her breast resting on his shoulder. [IDNR Employee 2] said she and [IDNR Employee 1] contacted the union president, and that [IDNR Employee 1] also blind copied her on an email [IDNR Employee 1] sent to Mr. Whitaker.

[IDNR Employee 3]

In her OEIG interview, [IDNR Employee 3] said she has been an IDNR [Redacted] for about seven years, and that she has an office upstairs from Mr. Whitaker's office at [State Park 1] but spends part of her time in the field. [IDNR Employee 3] said that [IDNR Employee 1] had called her and said that Mr. Whitaker had made creepy comments about her ([IDNR Employee 1]'s) appearance, asked her what kind of guy she likes, and commented about how girls dress at the gym and said that back in his day that would have gotten a girl pregnant; [IDNR Employee 3] said she did not recall when [IDNR Employee 1] told her about these incidents. [IDNR Employee 3] added that Mr. Whitaker had sent [IDNR Employee 1] a Snapchat or Instagram message about having a dream about her and having his hand on the small of [IDNR Employee 1]'s back.

⁴ During the OEIG's investigation, IDNR produced typed notes with a signature in the name of the IDNR Human Resources Director, reflecting an August 23, 2024 conversation with an individual identified as "[IDNR Employee 1]," or "[IDNR Employee 1]." The statements attributed to that individual in the notes described the August 20, 2024 incident consistent with [IDNR Employee 1]'s statements in her OEIG interview. The notes further reflect that the individual said she did not like that "he" has a key to the [State Park 2] site house where she lives, and that she asked if the locks could be changed as a precautionary measure. A Monday, August 26, 2024 email from [IDNR Employee 1] to the Human Resources Director, produced by IDNR in the investigation, stated that the locks on the house were changed "Friday evening."

⁵ [IDNR Employee 2] and [IDNR Employee 3] were interviewed on December 13, 2024, and [IDNR Employee 4] was interviewed on October 25, 2024.

[IDNR Employee 3] said [IDNR Employee 1] told her that she had talked to her supervisor about the Snapchat message, and that someone had contacted her ([IDNR Employee 1]) but that she had not called them back because she was not sure she wanted to turn it into a big deal, and did not know what the repercussions would be. [IDNR Employee 3] added that [IDNR Employee 1] was getting more distressed, and told her that she was upset and uncomfortable, but did not want to ruin her relationship with Mr. Whitaker, and did not know if anything would happen. [IDNR Employee 3] explained that [IDNR Employee 1] was new and was trying to build relationships. [IDNR Employee 3] said [IDNR Employee 1] told her that she was going to try to avoid Mr. Whitaker, and hope it would not happen again.

[IDNR Employee 3] said that more recently, [IDNR Employee 1] told her about an in-person encounter in which Mr. Whitaker touched her shoulder and told her that he had a dream about [IDNR Employee 1] in which [IDNR Employee 1] leaned over and her breast touched his shoulder. [IDNR Employee 3] said that [IDNR Employee 1] was distressed, and that [IDNR Employee 1] sent Mr. Whitaker an email.

[IDNR Employee 4]

In her OEIG interview, [IDNR Employee 4] said she has been a [Redacted] at IDNR since 2020, and that her office is located at [State Park 3], but that she also works at [State Park 1] and another location. [IDNR Employee 4] confirmed that [IDNR Employee 1] told her that Mr. Whitaker had sent her ([IDNR Employee 1]) a Snapchat message about a dream where he had his hand on the small of [IDNR Employee 1]'s back. [IDNR Employee 4] described Mr. Whitaker as not having filters or boundaries, and said that in her own interactions with him, he has made comments about his sex life, said something about not getting some in a while, asked if she was dating anyone, and talked about his vasectomy. Although she said her conversations with Mr. Whitaker were a little awkward, and made her a little uncomfortable, [IDNR Employee 4] ultimately said she felt comfortable at work and did not feel harassed.

C. Interview Of Stuart Whitaker

OEIG investigators interviewed Mr. Whitaker on January 15, 2025. Mr. Whitaker confirmed that he sent [IDNR Employee 1] the Snapchat message described above, although he said he did not recall doing so. He said he did not know how [IDNR Employee 1] responded to the message, and that he did not recall if she blocked him from Snapchat. Mr. Whitaker acknowledged that the Snapchat message was an inappropriate message to send to a coworker.

Mr. Whitaker confirmed that he also told [IDNR Employee 1] about a dream in which she leaned over him when he was sitting at his desk and one of her breasts rubbed against his shoulder. He said that when he approached [IDNR Employee 1], prior to telling her about the dream, he tapped her on her arm, between her shoulder and elbow; he denied that he touched her in any other way. When asked how [IDNR Employee 1] responded, Mr. Whitaker said he did not recall what she said. He said this conversation occurred at [State Park 1], and lasted approximately 15 minutes. Mr. Whitaker acknowledged that it was inappropriate to share this dream with [IDNR Employee 1], and confirmed that he received [IDNR Employee 1]'s August 20, 2024 email and sent the response described above.

Mr. Whitaker said he has made comments such as “suns out guns out,” and that he would have said things like that if back in his day women wore what they wear to the gym now he would have gotten somebody pregnant. He said he has also made comments to coworkers such as about not getting some in a while, and that he may have talked about his vasectomy, although he said he did not recall who he made such comments to. However, he denied asking [IDNR Employee 1] if she was hitting the gym, or otherwise talking to coworkers about their appearance, what they were wearing, or sex or dating.

Mr. Whitaker said that in August 2024, the IDNR Director of Lands and his supervisor both instructed him not to have any contact with any of the [Office 1]. He said that based on that direction, he does not interact with [IDNR Employee 1].

IV. ANALYSIS

IDNR policy prohibits employees from being discourteous to other employees, and requires employees to refrain from unbecoming conduct, including conduct that reflects discredit upon the employee as an IDNR member or that tends to impair the operation, efficiency, or integrity of IDNR or the employee.⁶ In addition, the State of Illinois Code of Personal Conduct requires State employees to conduct themselves with integrity and in a manner that reflects favorably upon the State.⁷

The evidence obtained in this investigation revealed that Mr. Whitaker engaged in inappropriate conduct toward [IDNR Employee 1] on multiple occasions. [IDNR Employee 1] described a February 9, 2024 incident in which Mr. Whitaker sent her a message describing a dream in which he touched her, and an August 20, 2024 incident in which Mr. Whitaker put his hand on her shoulder and described a dream to her in which her breast touched his shoulder. [IDNR Employee 1] also said Mr. Whitaker commented on her appearance on other occasions, such as when he said “sun’s out, guns out” or asked her if she had been hitting the gym. [IDNR Employee 1] provided the OEIG with a photo of the February 2024 message, as well as her August 20, 2024 email to Mr. Whitaker telling him that both of the “dream” encounters made her uncomfortable, and his email response that did not dispute that those encounters happened. In addition, in their OEIG interviews, [IDNR Employee 1]’s coworkers confirmed that she told them about the incidents. Mr. Whitaker also admitted in his interview that he sent [IDNR Employee 1] the February 2024 message, had the August 2024 conversation with her and touched her arm, and that his statements to her were inappropriate.

[IDNR Employee 1] told the OEIG that the February 2024 message made her feel uncomfortable to go to the office, and that her reaction to the August 2024 encounter was that she was freaked out, panicked, dumbfounded, and shocked. In her OEIG interview, [IDNR Employee 2] confirmed that [IDNR Employee 1] was visibly upset about the August 2024 incident, and [IDNR Employee 3] also described [IDNR Employee 1] as distressed about both incidents. The evidence showed that Mr. Whitaker’s conduct toward [IDNR Employee 1] was inappropriate on multiple occasions. Based on this evidence, there is reasonable cause to believe that Mr. Whitaker

⁶ IDNR Policies and Procedures Manual, §§ 3D-2.V.a & 3D-2.V.c.

⁷ State of Illinois Code of Personal Conduct.

engaged in conduct unbecoming an IDNR employee, in violation of IDNR policy and the State of

Illinois Code of Conduct.⁸

V. [REDACTED] AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the evidence detailed above, the OEIG has determined **THERE IS REASONABLE CAUSE TO BELIEVE THE FOLLOWING:**

- **[REDACTED]** – IDNR employee Stuart Whitaker engaged in conduct unbecoming an IDNR employee, in violation of IDNR policy and the State of Illinois Code of Conduct.

IDNR has taken some steps to address the situation, such as directing Mr. Whitaker not to have contact with [IDNR Employee 1], and changing the locks on her residence. The OEIG recommends that IDNR also take any disciplinary action against Mr. Whitaker that it deems necessary, and that he receive additional training regarding harassment. The OEIG also requests that IDNR's response to this report describe any actions IDNR has taken to ensure that Mr. Whitaker, as the Site Superintendent, does not currently have access to the IDNR site house where [IDNR Employee 1] is living or its keys, and any procedures in place to ensure that Mr. Whitaker does not access the house if there are any issues with the residence that involve IDNR.

Date: January 31, 2025

Office of Executive Inspector General
for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor
607 E. Adams Street, 14th Floor
Springfield, IL 62701

Angela Luning
Deputy Inspector General and Acting Chief

Mark Garst
Investigator

⁸ Mr. Whitaker's conduct also may have violated the sexual harassment provisions of the IDNR Policies and Procedure Manual, § 3D-6; and the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act, 5 ILCS 430/5-65.



Illinois
Department of
**Natural
Resources**

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VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL TO [REDACTED]@ILLINOIS.GOV

February 27, 2025

Susan M. Haling
Executive Inspector General
Office of Executive Inspector General (for Agencies of the Governor)
69 West Washington Street, Suite 3400
Chicago, Illinois 60602

*Re: Agency Response to Final Report
OEIG Case No. 24-02234 (Stuart Whitaker)*

Dear General Haling:

I serve as Senior Counsel, Ethics Officer and Compliance Officer (Boards and Commissions) for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (Department). Please allow this correspondence to be the Department's response to the Summary Final Report¹ (Report) in OEIG Case No. 24-02234, a matter involving Department employee Stuart Whitaker (Whitaker), an employee within the Department's Office of Land Management (OLM). I'll state below the Department's response to each recommendation contained within the Report.

[REDACTED] RELATED TO WHITAKER:

According to the Report, it is [REDACTED] that Whitaker engaged in conduct unbecoming a Department employee, in violation of (1) Department policy and (2) the State of Illinois Code of Conduct.

RECOMMENDATION(S) RELATED TO WHITAKER:

As to Whitaker's conduct, the Report recommended that the Department "take any disciplinary action against Mr. Whitaker that it deems necessary, and that he receive additional training regarding harassment."

DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATION(S):

¹ Concerning Footnote #3 in the Report (the issue of timely reporting allegations of sexual harassment), the Department, moving forward, will timely report (within the Office of Compliance Portal) every allegation of sexual harassment.



The Department is of the opinion that Whitaker's conduct is unacceptable and cannot and should not be tolerated. As such, the Department agrees with your recommendations to (1) discipline² Whitaker for his conduct and (2) mandate that Whitaker take additional training on harassment.

Given the above, the Department has instructed the Office of Labor Relations (OLR) to (1) issue discipline, up to and including termination, against Whitaker and (2) mandate that Whitaker complete additional training on harassment.³

Because Whitaker is a member of a collective bargaining unit (the Illinois Federation of Professional Employees (IFPE)), OLR is required to follow certain steps when seeking to discipline an IFPE employee. To comply with the IFPE contract, OLR advised me they will send a Pre-D notification invitation letter and statement of charges to Whitaker. After the formal Pre-D meeting, Whitaker will have five days to provide a rebuttal to the statement of charges. After the five-day period, OLR will administer the discipline. Whitaker, as a union member, possesses the contractual right to grieve the discipline being contemplated, something that could cause a delay in the disciplinary process. In light of the foregoing, I will report back to your office within **30 business days** or sooner, if possible, concerning the final outcome of the disciplinary process against Whitaker.

Finally, regarding the Report's inquiry about the additional steps (above and beyond changing the locks on the complainant's residence at [REDACTED]) the Department has taken to ensure Whitaker does not come in contact with the complainant/access the complainant's residence, the Department:

1. Issued (through the Office of Human Resources) a no-contact order to Whitaker, prohibiting him from having any contact with the complainant;
2. Created a reporting structure within OLM in which the complainant would interact directly with her immediate supervisor in the Department's Office of Resource Conservation (ORC), after which the ORC supervisor would involve the OLM's regional land manager pertaining to any needs the complainant had concerning her residence or her position with the Department. It should be noted that the aforementioned reporting structure is still in place and will continue in place;
3. Mandated that Whitaker not be in attendance (in person) at meetings that involved the complainant;

² In response to the Department's mandate, OLR is planning to seek against Whitaker a 15-day suspension without pay.

³ OLR is currently in the process of identifying the appropriate harassment training to comply with this particular recommendation in the Report. The goal is for Whitaker to complete the additional harassment training as soon as possible. The Department's Ethics Officer will work with OLR staff to ensure the selected training is appropriate, relevant and timely.




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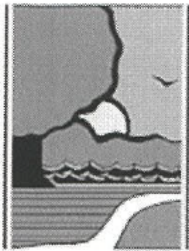
4. Instructed Whitaker to send all site-related emails (pertaining to the complainant and her work-related needs) to (A) OLM's regional land manager and (B) complainant's immediate supervisor in ORC so Whitaker would have no need to directly contact the complainant and
5. Ensured throughout the investigation that OLM and ORC staff worked to ensure the complainant had all her work-related needs met and did not need to rely on Whitaker for anything.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at 217-785-8693.

Most sincerely,


George M. Sisk

cc: Natalie Phelps Finnie, Director
Renee Snow, General Counsel
Michele Cusumano, Director, Human Resources
Carrie Adams, Chief, Labor Relations



Illinois
Department of
**Natural
Resources**

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VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL TO [REDACTED]@ILLINOIS.GOV

May 1, 2025

Susan M. Haling
Executive Inspector General
Office of Executive Inspector General (for Agencies of the Governor)
69 West Washington Street, Suite 3400
Chicago, Illinois 60602

Re: *Updated Agency Response*
OEIG Case No. 24-02234 (Stuart Whitaker)

Dear General Haling:

I am writing to provide an update in this matter. As I shared previously, (1) the Department accepted the recommendations outlined in your office's Final Summary Report and (2), given item 1, the Department's Office of Human Resources (OHR) was planning to take disciplinary action against the subject of the complaint, namely Stuart Whitaker (Whitaker).

I wish to advise your office that:

- (1) Whitaker received a 15-day suspension without pay and
- (2) Whitaker and his supervisor, per OHR, are in the process of identifying an anti-harassment course not offered by the state that will be more intense and better suited for Whitaker; however, Whitaker recently attended (A) conflict resolution training and (B) supervisor training, which an outside contractor conducted.

If there are questions, please contact me at 217-785-8693.

Most sincerely, 

[REDACTED]

George M. Sisk

cc: Natalie Phelps Finnie, Director
Renee Snow, General Counsel
Michele Cusumano, Director, Human Resources
Carrie Adams, Chief, Labor Relations

From: [Sisk, George](#)
To: [Yang, Debbie](#)
Cc: [Snow, Renee](#)
Subject: Re: Xerox Scan/Agency Update/IDNR
Date: Tuesday, May 6, 2025 2:18:46 PM

DNR reached the following agreement with AFSCME:

AFSCME agreed they wouldn't grieve any discipline below 30 days in length. HR determined that the proper progressive discipline in the instant matter was 15 days without pay.

If there are additional questions, please let me know. G

George M. Sisk

Senior Counsel | Ethics Officer | Compliance Officer (Boards & Commissions)
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From: Yang, Debbie <[REDACTED]@illinois.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, May 6, 2025 1:05 PM
To: Sisk, George <[REDACTED]@illinois.gov>
Cc: Snow, Renee <[REDACTED]@illinois.gov>
Subject: RE: Xerox Scan/Agency Update/IDNR

Thanks! Just for clarification, when you say that the 15-day suspension without pay is final, does that mean that any time for him to file a grievance has run?

Debbie Yang

Executive Assistant
Office of Executive Inspector General

for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor
69 W. Washington, Suite 3400
Chicago, IL 60602
Office: [REDACTED]
Pronouns: she/her/hers

From: Sisk, George <[REDACTED]@illinois.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, May 6, 2025 10:34 AM
To: Yang, Debbie <[REDACTED]@illinois.gov>
Cc: Snow, Renee <[REDACTED]@illinois.gov>
Subject: Re: Xerox Scan/Agency Update/IDNR

Hi Debbie. No pending grievances re Whitaker. 15-day suspension w/o pay is final. G

George M. Sisk
Senior Counsel | Ethics Officer | Compliance Officer (Boards & Commissions)
Office of Legal Counsel
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, Illinois 62702
Direct: [REDACTED]
Facsimile: [REDACTED]

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From: Yang, Debbie <[REDACTED]@illinois.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, May 6, 2025 9:13 AM
To: Sisk, George <[REDACTED]@illinois.gov>
Cc: Snow, Renee <[REDACTED]@illinois.gov>
Subject: RE: Xerox Scan/Agency Update/IDNR

Good morning George,

Would you verify if Stuart Whitaker has any grievance rights and if so, what is the timeframe for this?

Thank you,

Debbie Yang
Executive Assistant
Office of Executive Inspector General
for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor
69 W. Washington, Suite 3400
Chicago, IL 60602
Office: [REDACTED]
Pronouns: she/her/hers

-----Original Message-----

From: Sisk, George <[REDACTED]@illinois.gov>
Sent: Thursday, May 1, 2025 10:25 AM
To: Yang, Debbie <[REDACTED]@illinois.gov>
Cc: Snow, Renee <[REDACTED]@illinois.gov>
Subject: FW: Xerox Scan/Agency Update/IDNR
Importance: High

Hi Debbie. Attached is DNR's update (on agency letterhead) in OEIG #24-02234. Thanks for your patience as I got around to submitting this. G

George M. Sisk
Senior Counsel | Ethics Officer | Compliance Officer (Boards & Commissions) Office of Legal Counsel Illinois Department of Natural Resources One Natural Resources Way Springfield, Illinois 62702
Direct: [REDACTED]
Facsimile: [REDACTED]

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-----Original Message-----

From: donotreply@illinois.gov <donotreply@illinois.gov>

Sent: Thursday, May 1, 2025 10:14 AM

To: Sisk, George <[REDACTED]@illinois.gov>

Subject: Xerox Scan

Please open the scanned attachment

Number of Images: 1

Attachment File Type: PDF

Device Name: P4225DA860313

Device Location: X34

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