| From: | Winkelman, Larry - OCIO-CEC, Morris, MN |
|---|---|
| To: | Burks, Charles - ARS; Gossel, Heather - REE-ARS, Fort Collins, CO |
| Subject: | FW: Current L/A form -- does not compute |
| Date: | Tuesday, May 4, 2021 10:11:57 AM |
| Attachments: | La_hr_vangj_y20_pp12.xlsx |
| | 2021 LA Tracker & T&A Sheet - Jasmine Vang.xlsm |
| | 2021_ars_latracker2_wtf.xlsm |

Charles,

Those changes are fine with me but probably should run it through Heather.Gossel as she posts it to Axon.  I recently was transferred to CEC so I probably will not be able to do the T&A Spreadsheet much longer … not to mention that I am nearing retirement, likely in the next year or two.  I really have not been doing any updates lately, just changing the year info and holiday dates.  The LA Tracker was a quickie I did for someone and was not sure if anyone else was even using it.

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**From:** Burks, Charles - ARS <charles.burks@usda.gov>
**Sent:** Monday, May 3, 2021 10:06 PM
**To:** Winkelman, Larry - OCIO-CEC, Morris, MN <larry.winkelman@usda.gov>
**Cc:** Perez, Allen - ARS <allen.perez@usda.gov>; Xiao, Chang-Lin - ARS <chang-lin.xiao@usda.gov>; Walse, Spencer - ARS <spencer.walse@usda.gov>
**Subject:** Current L/A form -- does not compute

When I first saw the current version of the L/A tracker, I thought it was a step in the right direction compared to its predecessor. But when I actually tried to use it, I could not figure out how to get the information I believe you need into this form. I suggest that a more simple approach (as described below) would help the administrative objective of preventing L/As from going over their hours while also reducing the diversion of time and attention of Agency scientists from research.

The problem "2021 LA Tracker & T&A Sheet" template is that, in practice, L/A employees may have an anniversary date any time of the year, and their one-year appointment can and usually does

straddle both fiscal years and calendar years. At first he current version of the L/A tracker seems to ignore that reality by providing entry for 2021 only. I can try to put real dates in the "LATrackerALL" tab, as I did in the attached example, but the form still offers only a range of 365 cells (B9:B373) corresponding to 365 days beginning Pay Period 1, 365. I am unable to enter the information for an employee employed with a start date of 6/22/2020 and a not-to-exceed date of  6/21/2021 (see attached LA Tracker and T&A Sheet) without change the values in A9:A373 that the instructions say not to change.

In principle the information need is very simple and straight-forward. The 26 pay periods in an L/A term can be represented as a grid of 26 rows of 14 columns (for example "La_hr_vangj_y20_pp12.xlsx"). Those 14 columns are very close to the same arrangement as that provided by WebTA (https://wta.nfc.usda.gov/usda/). I previously used the R programming language (widely used by USDA-ARS scientists) to re-arrange that grid into a vector of non-0 hours and then re-arrange it into the different grid demanded by the old LA Tracker.  See https://github.com/ChuckBV/La_tracker.

As a work-around to the current form, I could provide something similar to columns A-C in tabl LATrackerALL in "2021 LA Tracker & T&A Sheet.xlsm" with 365 dates starting with the appointment beginning date. I would prefer to override and ignore the Pay Period tabs; they add more complexity than utility (although that form is good for providing to the PSA if a paper time form is necessary). The copied version of your spreadsheet, "2021_ars_latracker2_wtf.xslx" illustrates the approach of obtaining information from a simpler form as described above (more easily checked against WebTA) (see "La_tracker2.R" in the Github repository linked above) and placed back in this mandated form. The result is that the information that I believe is needed is in your tabs "LATrackerALL" and "LATrackerReport". Is this acceptable?


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