

**CAREER PLAN
FOR
NATIONAL PARK
SERVICE
INTERPRETERS**

** This plan will be included in the revised "Servicewide Career Development Placement Plan", when published.*

CAREER PLAN FOR NPS INTERPRETERS

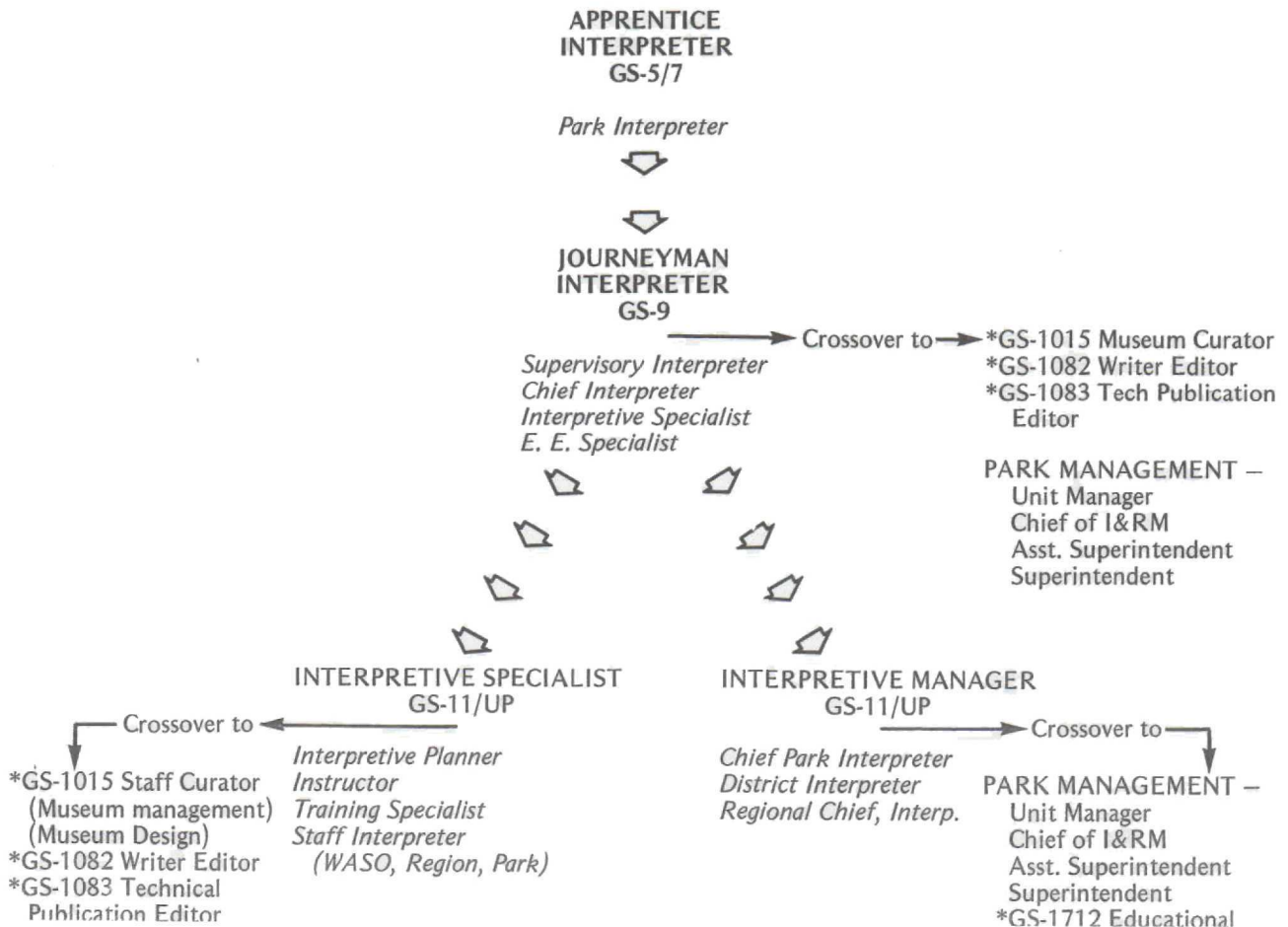
The profession of interpretation in the National Park Service requires a fundamental understanding of subject matter in the resource-oriented disciplines of cultural history, natural history or outdoor recreation combined with a balancing expertise in the field of human communications. This plan is intended to provide criteria and direction to persons looking toward a professional career in interpretation and to those who are already in the profession. It will also serve as a guide to managers in park, regional and Washington offices, whose duties include counseling, evaluating and selecting park interpreters.

The plan addresses itself to interpreters as a general group, with emphasis on developing communications and management skills through on-the-job experience, training and outside contacts. It is expected that interpreters will continue to come in to the Service with an academic major in one of the resource-oriented disciplines and that subsequent assignments will be in keeping with the appropriate discipline. In natural, historical or archeological parks the normal situation will be that the person in charge of the interpretive program will have a professional background in natural history, human history or anthropology. His or her organization title normally would be Chief Naturalist, Chief Historian or Chief Archeologist for those areas, or it may be Chief Interpreter if the assignment is in a recreational area.

The plan identifies three basic levels of responsibility for interpreters with a split at the highest level leading to interpretive management positions and other senior interpretive positions which do not involve management. The titles, Apprentice Interpreter, Journeyman Interpreter, Interpretive Specialist and Interpretive Manager, are conceptual rather than formal job titles. Typical organization titles are listed for each level; Civil Service titles would not be affected. Typical, but not exclusive, crossover opportunities into other related NPS positions are indicated.

Selective factors, listed for each level, identify the kind of experience and training that is most desirable for interpreters to have had in preparation for advancement into that particular level. For specific positions, some factors will be more important than others, and in some cases other experience and training factors may be more important than those listed. It is recognized that other general criteria such as those described on the NPS Appraisal For Promotion and Reassignment Forms will also have an equally important bearing on whether or not an individual is ready for promotion to the next higher level.

The selective factors are in no way intended to be a formal requirement for advancement, but they will serve as a general guide to identify the most highly qualified candidates for promotion or transfer.



**SELECTIVE FACTORS TO IDENTIFY HIGHLY QUALIFIED CANDIDATES FOR THE
APPRENTICE INTERPRETER LEVEL**

TYPICAL ORGANIZATIONAL TITLES	ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE	WORK EXPERIENCE	TRAINING LEADING TO PROFICIENCY IN THE FOLLOWING—	OTHER
<p>APPRENTICE INTERPRETER GS-5/7</p> <p>Park Interpreter Park Naturalist Park Historian Park Archeologist</p>	<p>Bachelors degree with concentration in natural history (ecology) cultural history, or recreation management.</p> <p>Balancing coursework leading to public communication skills with subjects such as environmental education, human behavior, psychology, and creative expression.</p>	<p>Direct public contact activities such as public speaking, tour guiding, and visitor center information.</p> <p>General interpretive operations such as museums, A/V, self-guiding devices and interpretive publications.</p> <p>Environmental education activities.</p>	<p>Basic interpretive skills</p> <p>Basic human behavior</p> <p>Public speaking</p> <p>Basic park operations</p>	<p>Membership in public speaking organizations.</p> <p>Professional society membership.</p> <p>Independent study in career related field.</p>

**SELECTIVE FACTORS TO IDENTIFY HIGHLY QUALIFIED CANDIDATES FOR THE
JOURNEYMAN INTERPRETER LEVEL**

TYPICAL ORGANIZATIONAL TITLES	ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE	WORK EXPERIENCE	TRAINING LEADING TO PROFICIENCY IN THE FOLLOWING—	OTHER
<p>JOURNEYMAN INTERPRETER GS-9</p> <p>Park Interpreter Park Naturalist Park Historian Park Archeologist Chief Park Interpreter Chief Park Naturalist Chief Park Historian Chief Park Archeologist Interpretive Specialist Environmental Education Specialist</p>	<p>Additional college level or equivalent courses in natural history (ecology) cultural history, behavioral science, communications, environmental education or other career-related fields.</p>	<p>Field experience in two or more areas, including apprentice interpreter in at least one area.</p> <p>Giving regularly scheduled interpretive talks for at least one year.</p> <p>Planning, programming and budgeting.</p> <p>Cooperation Association operation.</p> <p>Interpretive facilities operation.</p> <p>Recruiting, supervising and training seasonal interpreters.</p> <p>Interpretive writing.</p>	<p>Interpretive operations</p> <p>Basic supervision</p> <p>Training others</p> <p>Interpretive demonstrations</p> <p>Basic law enforcement</p> <p>Interpretive writing</p> <p>Curatorial methods</p> <p>Administrative and fiscal management</p> <p>Resource management</p>	<p>Memberships in public speaking organizations.</p> <p>Professional society membership.</p> <p>Independent study in career related field.</p>

**SELECTIVE FACTORS TO IDENTIFY HIGHLY QUALIFIED CANDIDATES FOR THE
INTERPRETIVE SPECIALIST LEVEL**

TYPICAL ORGANIZATIONAL TITLES	ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE	WORK EXPERIENCE	TRAINING LEADING TO PROFICIENCY IN THE FOLLOWING--	OTHER
<p>INTERPRETIVE SPECIALIST GS-11/UP</p> <p>Interpretive Specialist Interpretive planner <i>Instructor</i> Training specialist Staff interpreter (WASO, Region, Park)</p>	<p>Additional college level courses or graduate work in natural or social sciences, communication and/or education.</p>	<p>Journeyman interpreter at one or more areas.</p> <p>Teaching/coordinating interpretive training courses.</p> <p>Park and interpretive planning.</p> <p>Interpretive program evaluation.</p> <p>Technical aspects of interpretive equipment and facilities operation.</p>	<p>Park and Interpretive planning</p> <p>Advanced adult education</p> <p>Advanced curatorial methods</p> <p>Human relations</p> <p>Interpretive facilities design and construction</p>	<p>Professional society membership</p> <p>Publication authorship</p> <p>Internships</p> <p>Exchange assignments with other agencies</p> <p>Professional conferences in and beyond NPS</p>

**SELECTIVE FACTORS TO IDENTIFY HIGHLY QUALIFIED CANDIDATES FOR THE
INTERPRETIVE MANAGER LEVEL**

TYPICAL ORGANIZATIONAL TITLES	ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE	WORK EXPERIENCE	TRAINING LEADING TO PROFICIENCY IN THE FOLLOWING--	OTHER
<p>INTERPRETIVE MANAGER GS-11/UP</p> <p>Chief or District Park Interpreter Chief or District Naturalist Chief or District Historian Chief or District Archeologist Regional Chief of Interpretation WASO Chief of Interpretation</p>	<p>Additional college level courses or graduate studies in management, public administration, and/or behavioral science.</p>	<p>Journeyman interpreter at one or more areas.</p> <p>Chief interpreter in at least one area.</p> <p>Park and interpretive planning.</p> <p>Long range programming.</p> <p>Direct supervision of five or more employees.</p> <p>Cooperating association management.</p> <p>Working relationship with community representatives and professional specialists.</p>	<p>Cooperating association management</p> <p>MBO and NPS management systems</p> <p>Park and interpretive planning</p> <p>Resource management</p> <p>Human relations</p> <p>Advanced supervision</p> <p>Employee development</p>	<p>Professional society membership</p> <p>Leadership in community and civic organizations</p> <p>Independent study</p> <p>Participation in public speaking organizations</p> <p>Professional conferences in and beyond NPS</p>