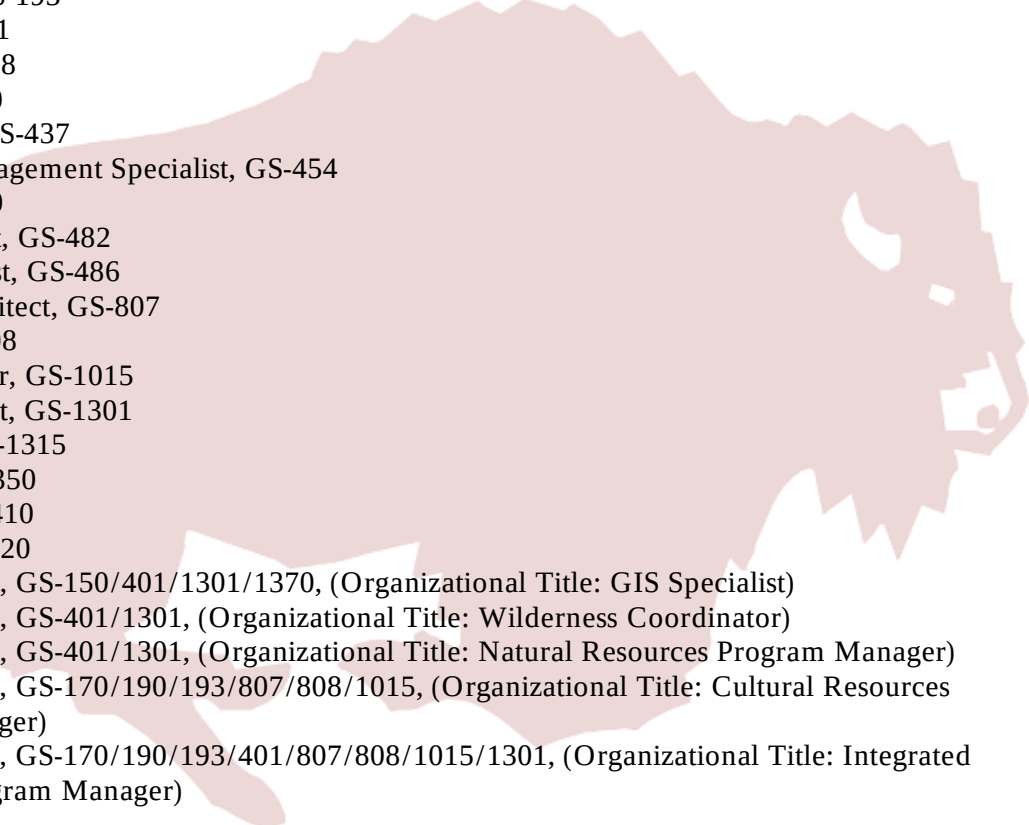


**RESOURCES CAREERS
BENCHMARK POSITION DESCRIPTION
CLASSIFICATION EVALUATION STATEMENT**

FULL PERFORMANCE GRADE GS-12

TITLE AND SERIES DETERMINATION



Historian, GS-170
Cultural Anthropologist, GS-190
Archeologist, GS-193
Biologist, GS-401
Ecologist, GS-408
Botanist, GS-430
Horticulturist, GS-437
Rangeland Management Specialist, GS-454
Forester, GS-460
Fishery Biologist, GS-482
Wildlife Biologist, GS-486
Landscape Architect, GS-807
Architect, GS-808
Museum Curator, GS-1015
Physical Scientist, GS-1301
Hydrologist, GS-1315
Geologist, GS-1350
Librarian, GS-1410
Archivist, GS-1420
Interdisciplinary, GS-150/401/1301/1370, (Organizational Title: GIS Specialist)
Interdisciplinary, GS-401/1301, (Organizational Title: Wilderness Coordinator)
Interdisciplinary, GS-401/1301, (Organizational Title: Natural Resources Program Manager)
Interdisciplinary, GS-170/190/193/807/808/1015, (Organizational Title: Cultural Resources Program Manager)
Interdisciplinary, GS-170/190/193/401/807/808/1015/1301, (Organizational Title: Integrated Resources Program Manager)

REFERENCES

Position Classification Standards
PCS Historian Series, GS-170, 2/62
PCS Archeology Series, GS-193, TS-70, 7/83
PCS Ecology Series, GS-408, TS-28, 6/77
PCS Botany Series, GS-430, TS-61, 4/66
Flysheet, Horticulture Series, GS-437, TS-53, 10/64
PCS Rangeland Management Series, GS-454, TS-126, 9/93
PCS Forestry Series, GS-460, TS-39, 1/80
PCS Agronomy Series, GS-471, 2/61 (to evaluate GS-437)

PCS Fishery Biology Series/Wildlife Biology Series, GS-482/486
PCS Landscape Architecture Series, GS-807, TS-44, 2/63
PCS Architecture Series, GS-808, TS-77, 10/86
PCS Museum Curator Series, GS-1015, 2/62
PCS Cartography Series, GS-1370, TS-61, 3/82
PCS Librarian Series, GS-1410, TS-130, 8/94
PCS Archivist Series, GS-1420, 6/65
Job Family Standard for Professional Physical Science Work, GS-1300P, 12/97 (to evaluate General Physical Science Series, GS-1301; Hydrology Series, GS-1315; and Geology Series GS-1350)
Research Grants Grade Evaluation Guide, TS-73, 4/68 (to evaluate GS-1301)

Introduction to the Position Classification Standards,
Section III, Principles and Policies; and Appendix 3, Primary Standard, TS-107, 8/91

Handbook of Occupational Groups and Series, 9/93
Definitions of Occupational Groups and Series for:
General Anthropology Series, GS-190
General Biological Science Series, GS-401

BACKGROUND

This evaluation report supports the classification and grade level determinations for the generic positions listed above. Sample Position Descriptions (PDs) for the above occupations were developed as an outgrowth of the Natural and Cultural Resources Professional Development Program (PDP). As stated in the PDP report of November 21, 1996, "...the minimum full-performance level for resources management personnel was defined as GS-11 based on reviews of 125 positions in 13 parks and one museum center." Over 20 Benchmark Position Descriptions, some of them interdisciplinary, were developed for the full-performance GS-11 level. In generic terms, these Benchmark PDs described the journey level for professional NPS positions independently performing difficult and responsible resources work.

However, it was widely recognized that there is a need for developing PDs for positions which function at the senior journey level, where professional assignments exceed the journey level complexity, where the incumbents may provide assistance and guidance to those at the journey level, and where the higher level of work requires the expertise and judgment of a seasoned specialist. Accordingly, additional sample Position Descriptions were developed which describe work at the GS-12 level. The work assignments described in the major duties section of each PD are similar to those found in the GS-11 PDs in terms of overall subject matter and the professional and administrative requirements which each position must meet. For example, at both the GS-11 and GS-12 levels, there are likely to be requirements for preparing and implementing action plans, defining research needs, and synthesizing results from a number of studies. Although the kinds of work assignments may be similar at both the GS-11 and GS-12 levels, they differ significantly in terms of (1) the judgment needed to apply the guidelines, (2) the nature and intricacy of the tasks, the difficulty in identifying what needs to be done, and the difficulty and originality involved in performing the work, and (3) the expanded breadth or depth of the assignment and the greater

range of activities.

It is important that management understand the difference between GS-11 and GS-12 resources management work, because that understanding will allow managers to select the appropriate position description for the work which needs to be done in a particular park or office. It also will assure that there is consistency across the Service in the way PDs are used. There are serious ramifications if management decides to use a PD that is an improper match for the actual work performed by an incumbent:

If management assigns a GS-11 benchmark to an incumbent who is doing GS-12 work, then the employee will not be adequately compensated for the work he or she is doing.

If management assigns an employee to one of the sample GS-12 PDs and that employee is performing GS-11 work, there are two serious problems which arise: (1) the Service will be paying the employee a GS-12 salary to perform GS-11 work and (2) other GS-11s will point to the erroneously designated GS-12 position and ask why they should remain GS-11s when the position in question is performing work of similar complexity and is graded at the GS-12 level.

Given the importance of making appropriate distinctions between GS-11s and GS-12s, this evaluation will highlight those differences so that both management and employees might understand the elements of the work assignment which causes a position to move from one grade to the next.

TITLE AND SERIES DETERMINATION

(NOTE: The following discussion of title and series determination is identical to that found in the evaluation statement of the GS-11 benchmark positions. If you have already read the GS-11 evaluation, you may wish to skip to the Grade Determination section beginning on page 5.)

The title and series for each benchmark position has been determined in strict accordance with the classification titling instructions prescribed in the applicable classification standard for each series. For those series lacking classification standards and having no prescribed titles (such as GS-190, or "01" series), titles were determined in accordance with instructions in the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards, Section II, H.2. In order to simplify and streamline the implementation process, no parenthetical titles were used. The title and series determination for each position was made on the basis of the predominant professional knowledge required (as stated in Factor 1 - Knowledge Required by the Position) and the presence of significant work in the major duties section of the PD which is directly related to that knowledge.

Although each position is officially titled using only OPM-sanctioned titles without parenthetical designations, this does not preclude the use of other, more site-specific organizational titles that may be added to block #16 of the OF-8 cover sheet.

Interdisciplinary Positions

The interdisciplinary allocations require a more detailed explanation. The interdisciplinary GS-12

positions were described so that they would clearly meet the basic criteria for an interdisciplinary determination based on more than one professional specialization identified in the Knowledge factor. However, these benchmarks differ from the typical interdisciplinary profile described in OPM classification guidance. The Classifier's Handbook states that the normal requirement for an interdisciplinary designation (aside from having knowledge characteristic of two or more professional series) is that:

"...the professions or disciplines involved must be logically compatible. There must also be an obvious degree of commonality in the core education, knowledge, and experience necessary to meet the qualification requirements of (each) profession."

An illustration of this requirement for "relatedness" of disciplines would be an interdisciplinary position requiring knowledge of either anthropology or archeology. These are clearly related disciplines in the social sciences. The benchmarks do reflect this relatedness to some degree in that some series for the interdisciplinary positions are clearly compatible with one another and contain an obvious degree of commonality. However, some groupings of series for the interdisciplinary positions are clearly not related to one another.

For example, the Integrated Resources Program Manager includes a range of series in the natural sciences, social sciences, physical sciences, architecture, and museum disciplines. There is no commonality in core education requirements between architecture and wildlife biology, or between history and hydrology. In that respect, this and the other interdisciplinary benchmarks are an attempt **to stretch or "reinvent" the concept of an interdisciplinary position to meet management requirements to perform professional work in unique locations.** These park locations may call for knowledge in professional specialties that may not be directly related. For example, a park may have significant cultural resources that include historic buildings, historic landscaping, and unlandscaped natural areas. These resources may require professional work in history, architecture, landscape architecture, and botany. Depending on the nature of the resources and the requirements for their management, the talents of either an architect, landscape architect, historian or botanist may be required. Botany and history are not kindred professions, but work in those specialties must be integrated into the overall program. In this scenario, the park would be responsible for identifying those professions which would serve as the recruitment base; would strike out the remaining unneeded series (e.g., wildlife biology, hydrology, etc.) on the PD cover sheet; and would issue a vacancy announcement that identifies only those series for which applicants were being recruited. In this manner, park management would be able to customize a generic Benchmark PD to match the requirements of the resources.

The actual presence of work in dissimilar disciplines is not the only reason for establishing interdisciplinary positions in unrelated specialties. **The recognition by park management that issues in natural resources and issues in cultural resources impinge on and affect one another constitutes a second reason for including dissimilar specializations in one interdisciplinary position.** Issues connected with air and water quality (physical science specializations) can have a direct and substantial effect on plant and animal communities (biological specializations). The overall relationship between dissimilar disciplines becomes even more obvious when it is realized that a park's physical and biological resources usually played a substantial role in the creation of the park's cultural resources. In other words, the presence of

water, a hospitable climate, and animal and plant communities served to attract human groups. The cultural expression of those groups often developed in part in response to the physical and natural surroundings. Thus, physical and biological resources typically play an integral role in the history of the cultural resources.

Many parks (not just the large ones) have requirements for dealing with specific issues connected with a number of dissimilar professional occupations, and these issues cannot be dealt with in a vacuum. They must be considered as they relate to other disciplines. The number of specializations coming into play can be quite large, and the effects of decisions in one specialization on another can be considerable. There is a need to look at the broad resource picture, and a need to staff our resource positions with professionals who are capable of looking beyond their own narrow specializations. **They must be able to coordinate and integrate work in a number of specialties.**

Management's requirement to get work done in a variety of specialties (and then giving that requirement to a position which, by definition, is professionally qualified in only one discipline), sets up a requirement to establish interdisciplinary positions which can logically include widely dissimilar specializations. For example, a park may require the coordination and integration of significant work in wildlife biology, the physical sciences, and archeology (where no one specialty predominates), but has funds to fill only one position. That does not mean that work in only one specialty will be accomplished, and work in the other two will not be addressed. It simply means that the employee who is qualified in one specialty will have **to assure that the work in the other dissimilar specialties gets integrated into the park's overall resources management program.** (The work in the other specialties might be accomplished by an outside contractor or by brokering for the services of a professional from another park, a central office or another agency.) The professional qualifications of the incumbent, even though they are limited to one specialty, help to assure that the work from the "other" specialties will be properly integrated into the overall resources management program.

The expectation is that all versions of this benchmark will be customized (in terms of applicable series) to some degree, and is strongly recommended that for recruitment purposes, no more than two Cultural Resources disciplines and at least one Natural Resources discipline would be used for any one position. Those series will usually have a significant degree of commonality with one another. However, there are expected to be a number of occasions where series with dissimilar knowledge bases are required in order to meet the specialized demands of unique park resources. Interdisciplinary positions that include series having little or no commonality will be limited to those positions identified as program managers. For those positions, a degree in an appropriate specialization coupled with management knowledge and skills are the primary requirements for effectively integrating work in a number of different disciplines into an effective resources management program.

Interdisciplinary manager, coordinator, and specialist positions will be officially titled in accordance with the instructions in the classification standard of the series for which the incumbent (or selectee) is qualified. For example, an individual with a degree in history who is occupying an interdisciplinary cultural resources program manager position will be officially classified and titled as an Historian, GS-170, and will carry an organizational title of Cultural Resources Program

Manager. For a series lacking a classification standard and having no prescribed titles, the official title will be the one which has been assigned to the individual benchmark position description for that series. For example, an individual who qualified for the interdisciplinary wilderness coordinator position under the General Biological Science Series, GS-401, would be classified as a Biologist, GS-401, and would have an organization title of Wilderness Coordinator.

GRADE DETERMINATION

To simplify and expedite the evaluation and certification process, it was determined that all of the positions would be graded using one generic evaluation statement which will document the GS-12 full-performance level using the Factor Evaluation System (FES) scoring system. The FES standard for the Fishery Biology Series/Wildlife Biology Series, GS-482/486, was the most frequently used classification reference for writing the position descriptions. It was found that by substituting "cultural" resources terms for the "natural" resources terms (by referring to "archeological" concepts instead of "biological" concepts, for example) the language of that standard could be readily adapted and applied to cultural resources position descriptions. It was also possible to substitute "physical science" terms for biological ones, and thereby adapt the language of that standard to physical science positions. **The evaluation of grade level was made using the GS-482/486 standard in conjunction with the Primary Standard.**

As noted in the introduction, a special emphasis will be placed on identifying those elements of the work which differentiate the GS-11 benchmarks from the sample GS-12 positions. The PDs are written in the Factor Evaluation System format. That format consists of a major duties section which describes the primary work of the position, and a Factors section which describes the nine factors common to General Schedule occupations. In order to determine the grade of a position, each factor is evaluated and assigned a "factor level" which has a specified number of points. The points for all factors are added together, and the total number of points is converted to a General Schedule grade using a standardized grade-level conversion chart. Under FES, the differences in grade levels between the GS-11 and GS-12 positions will be defined by the different factor levels assigned to each position. The differences between GS-11 benchmarks and the sample GS-12 positions are found in Factor 3 - Guidelines, Factor 4 - Complexity, and Factor 5 - Scope and Effect. These three factors are rated at higher levels for the GS-12 PDs and will be evaluated in greater detail. The other six factors (Factor 1 - Knowledge Required by the Position, Factor 2 - Supervisory Controls, Factor 6 - Personal Contacts, Factor 7 - Purpose of Contacts, Factor 8 - Physical Demands, and Factor 9 - Work Environment) are rated at the same levels for both the GS-11 and GS-12 positions. These differences in factor patterns between the GS-11 and GS-12 Resources Careers PDs mirror the typical differences between GS-11s and GS-12s governmentwide.

Positions covered by FES standards are graded on the basis of the following nine factors:

Factor 1 - Knowledge Required by the Position (Level 1-7, 1250 points)

The knowledge required of all professional positions at this level calls for "a subject matter expert who has the knowledge and expertise to operate independently without day-to-day oversight (PDP)." These positions may function as either resources "integrators" (program managers or division chiefs in small to medium-sized) or as specialists (usually at a medium-to-large park,

museum center, or a support office). According to the PDP, independently operating professional positions:

"...require a similar depth of knowledge and skill necessary to effectively contribute to a changing organization, provide for staff advice on resource matters in the context of park programs within the incumbent's occupational field (and related fields in some cases), and to deal with the (many) and complex resource management functions, problems and issues."

This level of knowledge was judged to exceed that found at Level 1-6, where knowledge of the principles, concepts, and methodology of a professional occupation (supplemented by on-the-job experience or additional education) are sufficient to perform recurring assignments of moderate difficulty, and where the methods and techniques are well established, apply to most situations, and do not require significant deviation from established methods.

The positions at the GS-12 level are required to deal with the more complex resource management functions, problems and issues, and the various major duties statements reflect that. The knowledge required for such an assignment most closely matches Level 1-7, which is described as "knowledge of a wide range of concepts, principles, and practices of a professional ...occupation...and skill in applying this knowledge to difficult or complex work assignments."

Factor 2 - Supervisory Controls (Level 2-4, 450 points)

This factor was written to address the independent performance of complex professional assignments. The generic work situation is one that is a match for Level 2-4. At this level, the supervisors set overall objectives and, in consultation with the employee, develop deadlines, projects, and work to be done. The employee plans and carries out the assignment, resolving most conflicts that arise. Work is reviewed for feasibility, compatibility with other work, and effectiveness in meeting requirements or expected results.

Factor 3 - Guidelines (Level 3-4, 450 points)

The work of both GS-11 and GS-12 positions in the same professional specialty typically requires a reliance on the same body of complex guidelines. At the GS-11 level, these guidelines are not completely applicable to the work. The inherent difficulty of the work assignments and the variety of issues confronted assure that there will be many situations where guidelines are "not completely applicable to the work or have gaps in specificity." These situations call for judgment in interpreting and adapting guidelines for application to specific cases or problems. This is characteristic of Level 3-3, which is commonly described in FES standards using nearly identical language. These kinds of guidelines and the judgment needed to apply them when not completely applicable are documented in all of the PDs and supported by the audit findings.

While guidelines for the GS-11 benchmark work are not completely applicable or have gaps in specificity, those same guidelines for the GS-12 position "are **often** inadequate to deal with the **more complex or unusual** problems, or with **novel, undeveloped, or controversial** aspects of resources management (emphasis added)" encountered at this level. In other words, the nature of the problems, and/or the nature of the resources **often** render the guidelines inadequate to deal with **more difficult issues**. This can occur on a rare or occasional basis at the GS-11 level, but it

often occurs at the GS-12 level. As stated in the GS-12 position, "these kinds of situations occur when precedents or guides point to conflicting decisions; recent court decisions or legislation may appear to require a technical decision at variance with existing guides; or there may be relatively few precedents or guides which are pertinent to specific methods; or proven methods are incomplete." These situations constitute problems of a significantly higher order of magnitude than those at the GS-11 level. In terms of the judgment which must be applied, both the GS-11 and GS-12 PDs note that the incumbent must determine when problems require additional guidance. But at the GS-11 level, in cases where guidelines lack specificity the incumbent can usually **make generalizations** from several guidelines in carrying out work efforts. At the GS-12 level, the resource professional is required to **deviate from or extend traditional methods and practices, or to develop essentially new or vastly modified** techniques or methods for obtaining effective results.

The factor description for the GS-12 position is a match for Factor Level 3-4, where policies and precedents are applicable, but where guidelines for performing the work are scarce or of limited use. At this level the employee uses initiative and resourcefulness in deviating from traditional methods.

Factor 4 - Complexity (Level 4-5, 325 points)

The Complexity factor is made up of three sub-elements:

The first sub-element covers "the nature, number, variety, and intricacy of tasks, steps, processes, and methods in the work performed." At Level 4-4, the Primary Standard states that the assignment "typically includes varied duties that require many different and unrelated processes and methods, such as those relating to well established aspects of (a)...professional field." The newer FES standards characterize such work as involvement in "the full range of professional activities and in the application of many different and unrelated (subject-matter specific) concepts." This is an accurate characterization of the work performed by the GS-11 journey level positions, all of which are expected to be able to handle a broad range of different and unrelated resources issues that are found in a typical, multi-faceted resource program. The GS-11 incumbent must be able to conduct research and other work in separate subject areas and be able to draw upon research and sources of several subfields of the profession. Multiple themes and diverse types of resources are involved in research or planning assignments. In contrast, resource professionals at the GS-12 level apply many different and unrelated processes and methods to (1) a **broad range** of themes within the profession or (2) a **substantial depth** of analysis.

The second sub-element covers the "difficulty in identifying what needs to be done." At Level 4-4, the Primary Standard states that "decisions regarding what needs to be done include the assessment of unusual circumstances, variations in approach, and incomplete or conflicting data." All of the GS-11 Benchmark PDs document the need for in-depth analysis, evaluation of alternative methods, and/or dealing with conflicting data or information which is consistent with Level 4-4. This level of complexity is related to and consistent with the way guidelines are used by GS-11s, i.e., they require interpretation and adaptation, and they may not be completely applicable or may have gaps in specificity. In comparison, incumbents at the GS-12 level work on assignments involving sensitive and complex issues concerned with requirements for solving problems concerned with **novel, undeveloped or controversial aspects** of the profession and

its related disciplines. For GS-12 positions, the difficulty is due to the abstract nature of the concepts, the existence of **serious conflicts** among scientific/professional requirements, program direction, and administrative requirements. These conditions create **major areas of uncertainty** in the decision-making process.

The third sub-element notes the requirement at Level 4-4 for "making many decisions concerning such things as interpretation of considerable data, planning of the work, or refinement of the methods and techniques to be used." This is the Factor Level assigned to the GS-11 benchmarks. A number of FES standards expand on this description to include a requirement "to relate new work situations to precedent situations, extend or modify techniques, or develop compromises which require substantial effort to overcome resistance to change when it is necessary to modify an accepted method or approach." This or comparable language has been incorporated into the description of this sub-element for most of the GS-11 PDs, because the audit findings revealed that this is the typical work situation with which NPS resource specialists must deal. For the remaining GS-11 PDs which do not use the same or similar FES language, the nature of the work itself (as spelled out in major duties, supported by specific knowledges and judgment required for guidelines, and described under the other sub-elements of the Complexity factor) would lead to a determination that the need for "interpretation of considerable data" characteristic of Level 4-4 is integral to the work. Both the GS-11 and GS-12 professionals are expected to exercise good professional judgment in ensuring the appropriate consideration of resources (i.e., those covered by their individual specialties) in the overall picture of park operations, development, interpretation, and resources management. Both are expected to identify resources, evaluate their significance, and develop management options that take into account all levels of concern. Both prepare plans to preserve, conserve, mitigate impacts, and manage resources. However, at the GS-12 level the professional must be **especially versatile and innovative** in order to recognize possible **new approaches**, or to devise **new or improved** techniques and strategies for obtaining effective results. This contrasts with the GS-11 benchmark, where the incumbent is expected to relate new work situations with precedent ones, and to extend or modify existing techniques.

The Complexity factor for the GS-12 position fully meets Level 4-5, where the work includes varied duties requiring different and unrelated processes and methods applied to a broad range of activities or substantial depth of analysis; where the work involves solving problems concerned with novel, undeveloped, or controversial aspects of the profession and its related disciplines; and where the professional must be versatile and innovative in devising new or improved techniques or methods.

Factor 5 - Scope and Effect (Factor Level 5-4, 225 points)

This factor consists of two sub-elements that cover "the relationship between the nature of the work...and the effect of work products or services both within and outside the organization."

The first sub-element deals with "the purpose, breadth, and depth of the assignment." The work of the GS-11 benchmark positions fully meets Level 5-3. The Primary Standard indicates that at Level 5-3 "the work involves treating a variety of conventional problems, questions, or situations in conformance with established criteria." The FES series standards refine this by stating that the incumbent will "investigate and analyze a variety of conventional resource problems and/or environmental conditions and recommend and/or implement solutions that satisfy resource

management objectives." Common problems dealt with are identified by some FES standards as habitat conditions or the impact of construction projects. Even though these types of problems may be characterized as conventional and common (due to their wide prevalence), **they are by no means simple and routine.** These Level 5-3 problems and issues dealt with by journey level GS-11 benchmark positions still require significant professional knowledge to investigate their ramifications, and require significant judgment in the use of established guidelines and in the development and implementation of solutions. While the scope and purpose of work for GS-11 benchmarks usually focuses on conventional problems and conditions (and perhaps occasionally focuses on more unusual issues), the scope of work for the GS-12 positions frequently includes developing new or improved techniques, resolving the more complex or unusual problems, or investigating or analyzing a variety of unusual conditions.

The second sub-element deals with "effect". At Level 5-3, the Primary Standard states that "the work product or service affects the design or operation of...programs; (or) the adequacy of such activities as field investigations...or research conclusions." FES series standards amplify this statement by variously noting that the work affects the adequacy of protection and use of a particular resource, and the adequacy of such activities as field investigations and management operations. Each of the GS-11 benchmark positions documents the performance of major duties which are clearly involved with the design or operation of professional programs (which may be parts of broad resources management programs) which protect specific natural and/or cultural park resources, and which are consistent with the Level 5-3 criteria. GS-12 positions are likewise clearly involved with the design or operation of professional programs that protect specific resources. But work of the GS-12 positions will involve a **wider range of activities**, and more frequently may affect the work of other agencies and organizations. This is characteristic of Level 5-4. While the work of GS-11 benchmark positions may likewise affect other agencies and organizations, the narrower scope of GS-11 work (which is focused on conventional problems at Level 5-3) precludes crediting the work at a higher factor level. In order for a position to fully meet the criteria for Level 5-4, both scope AND effect must be evaluated at Level 5-4. The GS-12 positions are evaluated at Level 5-4 because **both** scope and effect are evaluated at that level.

Factor 6 - Personal Contacts (Level 6-3, 60 points)

Personal contacts for these professional positions typically include members of the park or office staff at all levels; professional colleagues at higher organizational levels within the National Park Service; professionals from other local, state, or national government agencies; and professional researchers from academic and/or museum communities. Contacts are usually not established on a routine basis, and the roles and authorities of each participant in the contact are identified and developed during the course of the contact. This kind of contact is a mirror image of that found at Level 6-3, where according to the Primary Standard, "personal contacts are with individuals or groups from outside the employing agency in a moderately unstructured setting." These "contacts are not established on a routine basis; the purpose and extent of each contact is different; and the role and authority of each party is identified and developed during the course of the contact." Typical contacts at this level include contractors or representatives of professional organizations. These professional positions deal with contract researchers and professionals from a wide variety of organizations and agencies.

Factor 7 - Purpose of Contacts (Level 7-2, 50 points)

The resource assignments carried out by these positions easily meet the Level 7-2 criteria, where employees contact professionals and staff both inside and outside the Service to plan and coordinate work efforts, and to resolve operating problems by influencing others who are usually working toward mutual goals.

Factor 8 - Physical Demands (Level 8-2, 20 points)

Physical demands above the normal Level 8-1 sedentary office situation were found to be characteristic of virtually all of the positions audited. Fieldwork typically includes long periods of walking over rough, uneven surfaces and lifting or carrying moderately heavy items, as at Level 8-2.

Factor 9 - Work Environment (Level 9-1, 5 points or Level 9-2, 20 points)

The work of the Benchmark PDs was evaluated at Level 9-1 or Level 9-2, depending on the risks and discomforts in performing the assignments.

The work of the positions performed in an office-type setting and under relatively tame conditions outdoors, although occasionally there can be significant periods of time devoted to field work outdoors in all types of weather and terrain was evaluated at Level 9-1 and assigned five points. Whereas, the work of the positions performed both indoors and outdoors in all types of weather and in potentially hazardous areas was evaluated at Level 9-2 and assigned 20 points.

In summary, the evaluation of factors is as follows:

Factor 1 - Knowledge Required by the Position	Level 1-7, 1250	Level 1-7, 1250
Factor 2 - Supervisory Controls	Level 2-4, 450	Level 2-4, 450
Factor 3 - Guidelines	Level 3-3, 450	Level 3-3, 450
Factor 4 - Complexity	Level 4-4, 325	Level 4-4, 325
Factor 5 - Scope and Effect	Level 5-3, 225	Level 5-3, 225
Factor 6 - Personal Contacts	Level 6-3, 60	Level 6-3, 60
Factor 7 - Purpose of Contacts	Level 7-2, 50	Level 7-2, 50
Factor 8 - Physical Demands	Level 8-2, 20	Level 8-2, 20
Factor 9 - Work Environment	Level 9-1, <u>5</u>	Level 9-2, <u>20</u>
	Total 2835	or Total 2850

The point totals fall within the GS-12 point range of 2755-3150.

FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT DETERMINATION

The full-performance level GS-12 PDs were found to meet the professional exemption criteria of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) as cited in 5 CFR 551.206. According to the CFR, a professional employee is one whose **primary duty** consists of:

"(1) Work that requires knowledge in a field of science or learning customarily and characteristically acquired through education or training that meets the requirements for a bachelor's or higher degree, with major study in or pertinent to the specialized field as distinguished from general education; **or** is performing

work, **comparable to that performed by professional employees**, on the basis of **specialized education or training and experience** which has provided both theoretical and practical knowledge of the specialty, including knowledge of related disciplines and of new developments in the field..." (emphasis added)

All GS-12 PDs meet this professional criteria, and nearly all positions are allocated to a series which is identified as "professional" in the classification and qualification standards and which require a bachelor's degree in a specialized field.

NOTE: There is one exception that is not identified as professional in the classification or qualification standards, Librarian Series GS-1410. The librarian is not covered by professional standards. An individual can meet the qualifications for employment in that series through either experience **or** education, or a combination of both.

Librarians are covered under "Individual Qualification Standards," not "Professional and Scientific Positions" qualification standards. NPS employees in the librarian occupation typically have bachelor's degrees or higher in a relevant field and carry out work assignments which are fully comparable to that performed by professional employees. That will be the case for those who occupy a GS-12 level position in this field.

Accordingly, it is concluded that the GS-12 PD for the GS-1410 is assigned work that is comparable to that of professional positions, and therefore should be identified as falling within the professional exemption criteria for primary duties.

In addition, three other series are identified as professional in the qualification and classification standards, but each has qualifications that can be met through education, experience or a combination of both. These series are Anthropologist, GS-190; Archeologist, GS-193; and Museum Curator, GS-1015. Although it is possible to fill a position in any one of these series with an incumbent who does not have a formal educational background in the profession, such an occurrence would be rare. All incumbents in these series are believed to meet the education requirements for their respective positions. All benchmark positions in these series perform work which meets FLSA professional criteria and which is fully comparable to that performed by professional employees.

In addition, there is a general expectation described in the PDP that the degree is necessary to provide both the theoretical and practical knowledge of the specialty and related disciplines in order to perform the function of resources "integrators." The integrators "function to integrate the efforts of a number of specialists into a program based on a comprehensive approach...and focus on the linkages among disciplines."

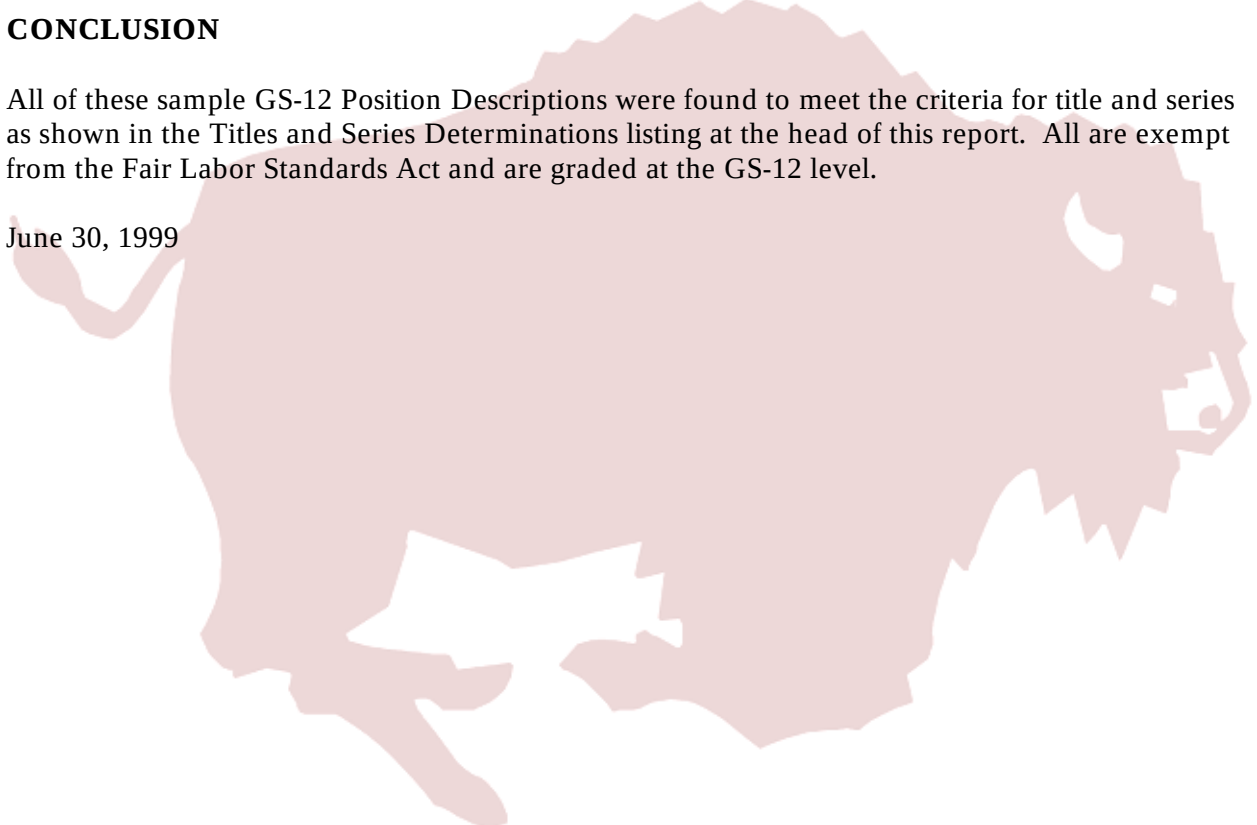
Other criteria in 5 CFR 551 state that a professional employee's work must be "predominantly intellectual and varied in nature, requiring creative, analytical, or evaluative, or interpretative thought process for satisfactory performance." All GS-12 positions fit this description in that work assignments demand a level of intellect capable of sorting out complex variables, utilizing analytical and evaluative thought processes, and interpreting frequently complex and conflicting data.

The final professional criterion is a requirement that the employee must frequently exercise "discretion and independent judgment, under only general supervision, in performing the normal day-to-day work." As described in the Supervisory Controls factor, the GS-12 position receives assignments in terms of general objectives, but typically carries out the work and resolves most problems which arise. The Guidelines factor makes reference to the need for using initiative and resourcefulness in deviating from traditional methods and in developing new methods. These characteristics, coupled with those described in the Complexity factor, support the conclusion that this final professional criterion is met. **Accordingly, these positions at the full-performance GS-12 level are determined to be exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act.**

CONCLUSION

All of these sample GS-12 Position Descriptions were found to meet the criteria for title and series as shown in the Titles and Series Determinations listing at the head of this report. All are exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act and are graded at the GS-12 level.

June 30, 1999



Resources Careers