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**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
BENCHMARK POSITION DESCRIPTION**

Historian
GS-170-12

Introduction

The incumbent serves as a cultural resource specialist for one or more parks where historical themes comprise a part of the park story. The park may be one where historical resources are predominant, or one where natural resources are predominant but where significant historical themes and resources are present. Professional fields of study must be pertinent to the park's resources and themes.

Major Duties (80-100%)

Directs an intricate program of historical and other cultural resources activities that involve sensitive and complex issues that may impact a wide variety of park issues.

Serves as an advisor to park management on cultural resources. Identifies, evaluates, and monitors cultural resources, identifies potential threats, and makes recommendations to management regarding status and mitigation of impacts (present and future).

Represents the superintendent when working with others on historical matters. Develops and maintains liaisons and effective working relations with related groups and individuals, agencies, and the public. Attends management and professional conferences and other events for the purposes of exchanging information and advancing advocacy for park stewardship.

Is responsible for, or make significant contributions to cultural resources management plans, interpretive prospectus and spin-off documents such as specific plans, action plans, revisions, and fiscal and budget documents relating to cultural resources.

Represents park on NPS regional task groups or similar organizations. Makes presentations in the parks, in public gatherings, and at professional meetings.

Assists history staff in parks, centers, and support offices in providing direct professional and programmatic advice and support.

Carries out program management duties by developing work plans and schedules, scopes of work, cost estimates, and proposals and/or grants to justify funding requests and accomplish goals. May administer and track project funds and prepare

accomplishment reports, as needed. Maintains awareness of applicable funding sources within NPS and outside.

Develops and implements long range plans for the inventory, evaluation, documentation, preservation, research, and interpretation of the historical and other cultural resources within the appropriate mission, objectives, and resources contexts.

Develops guidelines to deal with the more complex or unusual problems, or with novel, undeveloped or controversial aspects of historical and other cultural resources and their management.

Coordinates park historical and other cultural resources strategies and programs with activities on adjacent lands for the purposes of achieving broad protection strategies and minimizing human impacts.

Negotiates cooperative and interagency agreements and other cooperative instruments needed to effectively carry out resource stewardship goals.

Determines research needs and coordinates efforts toward obtaining needed research through various programs, grants, and contracts. Reviews historical research project proposals, scopes of work, and task directives prepared for planning and other management purposes, including resource management plans. Serves as Contracting Officer's Technical Representative for projects conducted through contracts, interagency agreements, and cooperative agreements. Coordinates research and reviews documents.

Plans and conducts historical research for planning documents, including general management plans, environmental impact statements, environmental assessments, special history studies, and special resource studies as required to meet the needs of the park.

Locates source material within and outside the park, and makes recommendations and/or determinations of significance for additions to the park's museum and archives collection. Conducts oral history interviews and oversees their transcription.

Assembles bibliographies and acquaints park staff with recent historical scholarship pertinent to the park's resources and themes. Summarizes and interprets highly technical materials for park staff. Produces and maintains a site-specific database.

Provides peer review for NPS and non-NPS historical studies, as requested. Seeks peer review for own work.

Responsible for or makes significant contributions to the preparation of historic preservation documentation, compliance and background materials as required by Section 106 and Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), NPS Management Policies, and cultural resources management guideline for all park undertakings. Recommends, plans for, and executes historical investigations required

to meet NHPA, NPS guidelines, and the research needs of the park. Reviews projects initiated by NPS staff at the park and makes recommendations for approval to park managers.

Consults with cultural resource professionals to keep informed of new developments, research, etc. Evaluates pertinent professional literature and provides management with recommendations.

Assists in providing professionally accurate cultural resources interpretive programs.

May supervise seasonal, temporary, permanent, VIP, and other personnel, but less than 25% of the time.

Factor 1. Knowledge Required by the Position Level 1-7; 1250 points

Knowledge of NPS planning and management requirements and guidelines so that plans result in programs that provide adequate long-term protection for resources.

Knowledge of the cultural resources common to the region in which the park is located, together with a broad, well-rounded knowledge of American history and a specialized understanding of all of the specific historical themes which are significant to the park and its historical resources. Such knowledge is used to plan, carry out, and evaluate cultural resources studies and assess the value and quality of investigative results; and to evaluate the significance and proper management or interpretive treatment of historical resources.

Knowledge of the laws, regulations, policies, and procedures that govern cultural resources management in order to provide advice and assistance to park staff concerning the implementation of NPS programs pertaining to the identification, preservation, and enhancement of cultural resources.

In-depth knowledge of program management and administration of budget, contracts, and personnel.

In-depth knowledge of research methods in history acquired through education and experience, and the ability to plan approaches and develop methods of accomplishment for assigned research projects. This includes the ability to collect and analyze historical data, to absorb and synthesize large quantities of information, and to draw logical interpretive conclusions for use in professional research papers, studies, plans, and management recommendations.

Skill to plan and carry out complex management programs so that the resource stewardship needs of the park are met in a cost effective, efficient, timely, and professional manner.

Knowledge of methods and practices in related fields such as museum management,

archeology, cultural anthropology, historical architecture, historical landscape architecture, and natural resources management.

Ability to locate pertinent source material and make determinations of significance based on evidence. Skill in the use of non-bibliographic research tools such as photographs, statistics, maps, remote sensing, oral history, field mapping, and measured drawing. Ability to identify and use pertinent ecological data in analysis of cultural resources.

Ability to write in manuscript format at a level acceptable for professional publications, and to express thoughts and present data clearly and to develop ideas in logical sequence in research studies, surveys, reports, management plans, instructions, guides, etc. Plus, the ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing with non-professional audiences.

Factor 2. Supervisory Controls Level 2-4; 450 points

The supervisor sets the overall goals and resources available. Guidance is provided only to determine priorities, approve work plans, and assist in working through unprecedented situations that have a bearing on the overall program.

The incumbent independently plans, designs, implements, and oversees the program with a minimum of direct supervision. Independent judgement is required on a regular basis in developing, testing, and refining procedures and methods, and in the application of these methods in the field. The incumbent resolves most problems that arise and coordinates the work both within the work unit and with other park divisions. The incumbent keeps the supervisor informed of progress, potentially controversial problems, and concerns, issues or other matters having far-reaching implications.

The supervisor evaluates the completed work based on general adequacy in meeting program or project objectives, expected results, compatibility with other work, adequacy of presentation, and conformance to professional standards. Research methodology is usually not reviewed, and work produced is considered technically correct and is normally accepted without significant change.

Factor 3. Guidelines Level 3-4; 450 points

Guidelines include laws, regulations, policies, plans, procedures, professional standards, ethics, practices, and any additional directions given and defined by the supervisor. Policies and precedents are applicable but are stated in general terms; guidelines are scarce or of limited use. Guidelines are often inadequate to deal with the more complex or unusual problems, or with novel, undeveloped, or controversial aspects of historical resources management encountered at the field level. These kinds of situations occur when precedents or guides point toward 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.

The employee uses initiative and resourcefulness in deviating from traditional methods or researching trends and patterns to develop new methods, criteria or proposed new policies.

Factor 4. Complexity Level 4-5; 325 points

The work includes varied duties requiring many different and unrelated processes and methods that are applied to a broad range of activities or substantial depth of analysis. Decisions regarding what needs to be done include major areas of uncertainty in approach, methodology or interpretation and evaluation processes that result from such elements as continuing changes in program, technological developments or conflicting requirements. The work requires originating new techniques, establishing criteria or developing new information.

Historical issues can be publicly controversial and require substantial initiative and skill in building consensus and obtaining public and cooperating agency support. The incumbent must exercise professional skills in historical research, evaluation, and writing applied to (1) a broad range of historical themes or (2) substantial depth of analysis.

Assignments involve sensitive and complex issues that require solving problems concerned with novel, undeveloped or controversial aspects. The problems are difficult due to the abstract nature of the concepts, or the existence of serious conflicts among research requirements, program direction, and administrative requirements. These conditions create major areas of uncertainty in the decision-making process. Information collected must be reorganized, interpreted, and presented to reflect supportable hypotheses and themes. The incumbent must be able to examine separate subject areas to draw upon research and sources of several fields of history related to the park. Multiple themes and diverse types of resources are involved in research and planning assignments.

The incumbent must be especially versatile and innovative in order to recognize new approaches, devise new or improved techniques or strategies for obtaining effective results, or to anticipate future trends and requirements. The person must be able to (1) exercise good professional judgement in ensuring the appropriate consideration of historical resources in the overall picture of park operations, development, interpretation, and resources management, (2) identify resources, evaluate their significance, develop management options that take into account all levels and areas of concern, and (3) prepare plans to preserve, conserve, mitigate impacts, and manage the resources.

Factor 5. Scope and Effect Level 5-4; 225 points

The purpose of the work is to plan and carry out programs and strategies to protect resources and resolve problems with solutions that achieve management objectives. The successful accomplishment of the duties of this position provides the professional foundation of the program. The work involves establishing criteria, formulating projects, assessing program effectiveness or investigating or analyzing a variety of

unusual conditions, problems or questions. The product or service affects a wide range of agency activities, major activities or issues, or the operation of other agencies or entities. Projects developed and conducted by the incumbent are essential to maintaining the integrity of the resources. Information gained through research and inventory provide the scholarly and professionally credible basis for decisions; thereby, directly affecting the current and future integrity of the resources.

The work includes both program management and research. Plans and carries out a series of historical research projects for the park which require a variety of special studies to provide data for use in (1) management decisions, (2) treatment of historic structures and historic cultural landscapes, (3) establishment of boundaries, (4) determination of the location of events, (5) preparation and completion of cultural/historical segments of management plans, and/or (6) the development and updating of interpretive themes. Using results of research conducted by incumbent or others, provides technical advice to park managers regarding the full scope of cultural resources.

The work influences the effectiveness or acceptability of agency goals and programs, especially as they relate to state officials, Native American organizations and other traditionally associated groups, and program managers or specialists in outside agencies.

Factor 6. Personal Contacts Level 6-3; 60 points

Contacts are made with park management and staff in parks, Harpers Ferry, Denver Service Center, regional and support office personnel, other historians, and subject matter experts both within and outside the agency. Contacts made with individuals in related professions such as architecture, archeology, archives, library sciences, and natural sciences. Contacts also include members of historical organizations, and municipal, county, and/or state officials, administrators of historic sites, the interested public, etc. Contacts typically are not established on a routine basis, and the role and authority are identified and developed during the course of the contact.

Factor 7. Purpose of Contacts Level 7-2; 50 points

The purposes of the contacts are to provide professional advice to managers and other staff; to exchange information; to maintain continuing consultative or collaborative relationships with other historians and professionals in other related disciplines; to collect historical data; to comply with historic preservation legislation; to train; to coordinate and advise on mutual work efforts and research; to procure supplies and materials; and to secure cooperation for park programs from other agencies, individuals or interest groups.

Factor 8. Physical Demands Level 8-2; 20 points

The work is sedentary, but at times requires travel to repositories of information, and may require visits to remote sites which require walking or riding over rough, uneven surfaces. Documentary research and report writing work is sedentary, which entails the ability to concentrate and write for long periods of time.

Factor 9. Working Conditions Level 9-1; 5 points

Most work is performed in offices, archives, and libraries. Assignments may entail work with dusty records or objects.

Total Points 2835



Resources Careers