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**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Benchmark Position Description**

**Landscape Architect
GS-807-12**

Introduction

The incumbent serves as a specialist for one or more parks in the landscape architecture profession with advanced training in the principles, theories, concepts, methods, and techniques of preserving cultural landscapes. Cultural landscape preservation focuses on preserving a landscape's physical attributes, biotic systems, and use when that use contributes to its historical significance. Research, planning, and stewardship are the framework for the duties of a historical landscape architect. Research defines the features, values, and associations that make a landscape historically significant; planning identifies the issues and alternatives for long-term preservation; and stewardship involves activities such as condition assessment, maintenance, and training. Professional fields of study must be pertinent to the park's resources and themes.

Major Duties (80-100%)

Directs a complex program of cultural landscape preservation activities that involve complex issues that may impact a wide variety of park issues.

Responsible for the identification, research, planning, treatment, and preservation maintenance of cultural landscapes. Performs landscape architectural duties associated with review, design, treatment, and monitoring of cultural landscapes. The project sites may have diverse climatic, geographic, and environmental conditions.

Represents the superintendent when working with others on matters of historical landscape architecture. 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 purpose of exchanging information, presenting technical and policy information, and advancing advocacy for park stewardship.

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

Assists historical landscape architects 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, research, documentation, analysis and evaluation, and treatment of cultural landscapes 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 cultural landscape management.

Identifies research needs and suitable research designs and conducts or oversees various levels of documentary research and field investigation.

Conducts on-site investigations of project sites to determine the feasibility of proposed projects, including the development design alternatives and subsequent analysis to ensure the project is consistent with NPS policies, guidelines, and standards and environmental and cultural compliance laws and regulations.

Conducts and coordinates cultural landscape research projects related to the identification, documentation, analysis and evaluation, and treatment; conducts research involving historical documents, photographs, maps and drawings, and related items to develop knowledge of and data about specific cultural landscapes, such as period design concepts, land use patterns, cultural traditions, and historic plant materials.

Prepares and maintains cultural landscape inventories documenting the location, historical development, condition, and management of cultural landscapes in the park.

Prepares cultural landscape reports documenting existing conditions and defining treatment actions based on examination of the landscape, documentary research, and professional evaluation of all data; and prepares other written reports, graphic illustrations, and plans associated with managing cultural landscapes.

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

Prepares or oversees preparation of scopes of work that clearly define the objectives and requirements of the project for A/E design or documentation services. Examples of such projects include cultural landscapes inventory, cultural landscape reports, existing condition drawings, and design services for treatment work. Participates in negotiations with A/E firms, including development of detailed cost estimates of major work items. Designated as Contracting Officer's Authorized Representative during the course of design contacts. Ensures contractual requirements, including technical

adequacy, design excellence, and project schedules are met.

Reviews contractor shop drawings, samples, and material certification for contract and performance compliance and recommends them for approval or rejection.

Incorporates appropriate Geographic Information System (GIS) technology into job to provide comprehensive and scientifically sound answers to inquiries from managers and others. Utilizes automatic methods of data collection, analysis or illustration. Inputs data into digital form and uses computer applications for data analysis, manipulation, and presentation.

Performs professional review and assessment of plans, comprehensive designs, preliminary designs, special studies, and layouts prepared by other agency offices for accuracy, adequacy, and compliance with historic preservation policies, guidelines, laws, regulations as they relate to cultural landscapes.

Responsible for or makes significant contributions to the preparation of historic preservation documentation and background materials for clearances, permits, licenses, etc., as required by Section 106 and Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, Archeological Resources Protection Act, NPS Management Policies, and cultural resources management guideline, for planning and construction projects that involve cultural resources. Reviews projects initiated by park staff and makes recommendations for approval to park managers.

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.

Professional knowledge of the theories, principles, practices, and techniques of landscape architecture and historic preservation, particularly as they apply to the preservation of cultural landscapes.

Knowledge of horticultural principles and practices, including identification and condition assessment of woody plant material.

Knowledge of federal cultural resources preservation legislation, policies, guidelines, and standards, particularly the National Historic Preservation Act and the Secretary's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation, and NPS Management Policies, guidelines, and standards.

Ability to interpret and apply current laws, policies, guidelines, standards, and technical information to formulate agency positions, conduct project reviews, and

provide technical assistance and information regarding cultural landscape management.

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

Ability to conduct and supervise Section 106, Section 110, and Section 4F compliance procedures and participate in conflict resolution.

Ability to perform historical research, conduct field investigations, analyze data, and prepare reports, plans, specifications, and cost estimates to support planning for cultural landscape preservation.

Knowledge of related resources management disciplines, such as history, architecture, archeology, ethnography, horticulture, and the natural sciences to ensure their proper consideration in research, planning, and treatment.

Ability to organize and coordinate complex projects involving professionals from several disciplines, including both NPS staff and consultants from outside the agency.

Ability to work effectively with park operations responsible for cultural landscape management in developing treatment and maintenance solutions.

Knowledge of computer hardware, software, and application so that information, primarily field data, can be processed, summarized, and reports generated.

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 manages 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. For personally conducted research, the incumbent is responsible for developing work plans and blocking out the major areas of research for accomplishing the assignment, for determining approaches and techniques to be employed, and for modifying working plans and approaches as necessary in the course of the study. 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, and compatibility with other work.

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, landscape architectural and related professional standards, ethics, and practices, and any additional direction 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 cultural landscape management encountered at the field level. These kinds of situations occur when precedents or guides point toward conflicting decisions, 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 landscape issues can be publicly controversial and require substantial initiative and skill in building consensus and obtaining public and cooperating agency support. The identification, research, planning, and preservation maintenance of cultural landscapes is a very complex endeavor requiring professional and/or scientific judgments. The incumbent must be able to exercise professional skills in

research, evaluation, and writing applied to (1) a broad range of landscape architecture 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 scientific requirements, program direction, and administrative requirements. These conditions create major areas of uncertainty in the decision-making process. Consideration must be given to both cultural and natural processes and features in preserving the historical integrity of cultural landscapes. Significant landscape characteristics, such as natural systems, topography, vegetation, and land use, vary between cultural landscapes, and the varying conditions sometime require departures from standard approaches to meet project objectives. Information collected must be reorganized, interpreted, and presented to reflect supportable recommendations and

decisions. The incumbent must be able to conduct research in specific subject areas related to preservation, materials, and architecture.

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, (2) identify resources, evaluate their significance, and 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 preserve and maintain historic landscapes and resolve problems with solutions that achieve management objectives. The successful accomplishment of the duties of this position is critical for perpetuation of historic landscapes. 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.

Management strategies developed and conducted by the incumbent are essential to maintaining the resources. The work includes planning and carrying out a series of cultural landscape projects for (1) determining the extent and location of resources, (2) research, planning, and treatment, and (3) ongoing preservation maintenance. The information gained through research provides the scholarly and professionally credible basis for management decisions, thereby directly affects the adequacy of preservation, protection, management, and use of cultural landscapes in nationally significant units of the National Park System.

The work influences the effectiveness or acceptability of agency goals and programs by program managers or specialists of outside agencies. Programs carried out by the incumbent directly effect the preservation or enhancement of the cultural and/or natural resources of the park.

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

Contacts are made with managers and staff, staff in regional and support offices and centers, and subject matter experts both within and outside the agency including individuals in such related

professional fields such as history, architecture, archeology, ethnography, horticulture, and natural sciences. Contacts are also made with representatives of A/E firms, concessionaires, local and state governments, manufacturers, material suppliers, construction contractors, members of technical and professional societies, academic institutions, the interested public, and the media. 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 maintain continuing consultative or collaborative relationships; to exchange information; to comply with historic preservation legislation; to coordinate and advise on mutual work efforts and research; to train; 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 basically sedentary with occasional physical activity (walking, climbing, bending, stooping) during fieldwork, 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. Work Environment Level 9-1; 5 points

The work is performed in both an office setting and occasionally in the field as required to perform on-site investigations and inspections.

Total Points 2835

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