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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE BENCHMARK POSITION DESCRIPTION

Wilderness Coordinator
Interdisciplinary
Biologist, GS-401-12
Physical Scientist, GS-1301-12

Introduction

The incumbent serves as a senior principal advisor in wilderness and backcountry management for one or more parks and is responsible for program development and implementation. Program elements may include, but are not limited to, recreational use, vegetation, wildlife, control of exotic and pest species, fisheries, natural quiet, aircraft overflight, air and water quality, caves, mines, soils, geology, hydrology, historic structures, archeology, and other natural, physical, cultural, and social resources. The wilderness manager will work closely with other specialists on wilderness activities and issues.

Major Duties (80-100%)

Directs an intricate program of wilderness/backcountry activities that involve sensitive and complex issues that may impact a wide variety of park issues.

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

Develops and prepares the wilderness/backcountry sections of the resources management plan and specific action plans pertaining to the management and protection of wilderness/backcountry values and resources.

Represents wilderness/backcountry on NPS regional and/or servicewide task groups or similar organizations. Makes presentations in parks, public gatherings, and professional meetings.

Assists pertinent staff in parks, centers, and support offices by 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, preservation, management, research, and interpretation of wilderness and backcountry 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 wilderness/backcountry use and management.

Coordinates wilderness/backcountry permit system.

Coordinates wilderness/backcountry management programs with activities on adjacent lands for the purposes of achieving broad protection strategies and preventing human impacts. Provides for public involvement, including Native American and traditionally associated groups, in sensitive or potentially controversial resource and use issues and assures that wilderness programs are well coordinated within the local and regional context. Develops and maintains peer relationships with researchers, subject matter experts, resources managers, cooperating universities, traditionally associated groups, and other entities in order to encourage and facilitate cooperative regional wilderness values and strategies.

Negotiates cooperative and interagency agreements and other cooperative instruments needed to effectively carry out wilderness/backcountry stewardship goals.

Identifies research needs, prepares requests for proposals and statements of work, and provides oversight for research projects. Serves as a Contracting Officer's Technical Representative for projects conducted through contracts, interagency agreements, and cooperative agreements. Evaluates research results for management implications.

In cooperation with appropriate staff, researchers, and partners, the incumbent designs, develops, tests, and implements scientific monitoring protocols to identify, evaluate, and do long-term monitoring of wilderness/backcountry resources and visitor use. This includes conducting inventories to determine statistically valid plot distributions and design, conducting visitor use surveys and threshold limits, and implementing monitoring protocols needed to assess the status and trends. Writes new monitoring documents that define monitoring techniques and develops methods for future refinements of protocols.

Based on results of inventories, in-depth studies, monitoring, and legal mandates, the incumbent develops and conducts scientifically and socially credible protection, mitigation, and restoration projects to restore and/or maintain resources integrity and to manage use, facilities, and impacts in the wilderness/backcountry.

Collects, analyzes, and synthesizes scientific and social information from research; monitors management actions and other sources of information; and prepares reports for specific projects. Summarizes new and conventional information for use by scientists, managers, park staff, cooperators, and partners.

Prepares environmental assessments (EAs) for projects noncompliant with the National Environmental Policy Act and ensures compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act. Evaluates EAs and environmental impact statements prepared by other federal agencies and groups for impacts on park resources.

Works with park education program and visitor services staff to assure that wilderness/backcountry users are provided with appropriate information and planning tools to enhance their recreational experience

while minimizing impact.

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 wilderness.

Knowledge of wilderness ecosystems including geology, soils, water quality and aquatic systems, air quality, native flora and fauna and their associated habitat requirements, and cultural entities in order to design, test, and effectively implement scientifically credible protection, inventory, monitoring, and mitigation programs.

Knowledge of the range of social values placed on wilderness/backcountry.

Knowledge of the principles and techniques of wilderness management and recreation ecology in order to manage use to minimize adverse impacts on resources and the wilderness experience.

Extensive knowledge of laws and regulations relating to the protection of the natural and cultural resources in wilderness, and NPS regulations, policies, and guidelines regarding the management of wilderness resources in order to assure that program goals and objectives meet legal requirements and reflect national priorities and policies.

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

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

In-depth knowledge of principles and techniques associated with measuring wilderness values and recreational resources. This knowledge is required to determine which techniques should be used to acquire the desired information and achieve needed accuracy; and to develop new techniques and methods when careful analysis indicates that existing techniques are not satisfactory.

Knowledge of scientific data acquisition and analysis standards, methods, and recording techniques so that the incumbent can efficiently manage the collection and summation of data, and accomplish data analysis in a way that is highly credible and meets scientifically acceptable standards.

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

Skill in oral and written communication in order to insure that plans are well written and easily understood; scientific reports and journal articles are of high scientific credibility; pertinent information is shared effectively with others; and oral presentations are well designed, informative, and clearly convey the intended message.

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 work completed 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, scientific protocols, plans, procedures, 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 wilderness/backcountry management encountered. 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.

Wilderness issues are often publicly controversial and require substantial initiative and skill in building consensus and obtaining public and cooperating agency support. The incumbent must be able to exercise professional skills in natural, physical, cultural, and social concepts, evaluation, and writing. The work includes varied duties requiring many different and unrelated processes and methods that are applied to (1) a broad range of subjects 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. 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 disciplines.

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. In addition, the person must be able to (1) exercise good professional judgement in ensuring the appropriate consideration of wilderness and backcountry 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 develop and implement plans and strategies to protect wilderness/backcountry resources and resolve problems with solutions that achieve objectives. The successful accomplishment of the duties of this position provides the professional foundation of wilderness/backcountry protection and use. 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 wilderness values, the resources within, and visitor enjoyment. Information gained through research, inventory, and monitoring provide the professionally credible basis for management decisions, thereby directly affecting the current and future integrity of the resources.

The work influences the effectiveness or acceptability of agency goals and programs by program managers or specialists in outside agencies. Programs carried out by the incumbent directly affect the preservation or enhancement of the ecological integrity of park ecosystems and surrounding landscapes.

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

Contacts are made with wilderness/backcountry managers, resources managers, and subject matter experts of other agencies and tribes, researchers and other members of the scientific community, science and management staff of other parks, conservation and preservation organizations, the media, the general public, and other park staff. 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 provide instruction and services; to coordinate and advise on mutual work efforts and research; to insure compliance with laws and regulations; 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 position may require strenuous physical activity including periods of standing, walking, climbing, and lifting and carrying heavy objects. Some activities will occur in physically dangerous areas or settings. 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 9-2; 20 points

Work is performed both indoors and outdoors in all types of weather. Assignments may be performed in potentially hazardous areas including steep slopes, rocky terrain, volcanoes, caves, firelines, arctic environments, swamps, deserts, and forests. Flying in fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters is possible.

Total Points 2850



Resources Careers