United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
National Human Resources Management Center
Denver Federal Center, Building 50
P.O. Box 25047
Denver, Colorado 80225-0047

In Reply Refer To:
1400-511.8 (HR-210)**P**

July 7, 2000

EMS TRANSMISSION 7/13/00

Information Bulletin No. HR-2000-121

To: Servicing Personnel Offices

From: Director, National Human Resources Management Center

Subject: Classification Appeal Decision - Natural Resource Specialist, GS-401-11

Attached is the Bureau's Classification Appeal Decision. The decision sustains the current classification of the position, Natural Resource Specialist, GS-401-11.

Please review all similar or like positions and apply the findings within this decision accordingly.

Any questions pertaining to this decision may be addressed to Mark Whitesell, 303-236-6702.

Signed:
Linda Sedbrook
Director

Authenticated:
Darlene Robitaille
Secretary

1 Attachment
1 - Classification Appeal Decision (14 pp)

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HR-210

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
CLASSIFICATION APPEAL DECISION

Appellant: Xxxx Xxxxxxx

Location: Xxx Xxxxxx Xxxxx Xxxxxx, Xxxxxxxx of Xxxxx-Xxxxxxxxx
Current Classification: Natural Resource Specialist, GS-401-11

Background

A position desk audit of was done by the servicing personnel office (SPO) in February 2000, and reclassified from an Outdoor Recreation Planner, GS-023-11 to a Natural Resource Specialist, GS-401-11. The appellant does not disagree with the change in title and series, but does contend that he is operating at the GS-12 level. This assertion is based on the additional duties assigned to the appellant that were formerly performed by a "Senior Technical Specialist, GS-12," and two GS-11 field specialists. By law, we must classify positions solely by comparing their current duties and responsibilities to OPM standards and guidelines. Since comparison to standards is the exclusive method for classifying positions, we cannot compare the appellant's position to others as a basis for deciding his appeal.

A telephone interview was conducted with the appellant on May 5, 2000; his supervisor responded to questions on June 1, 2000. In addition, the appellant submitted background information to support his request. All written and oral information received is considered in determining the classification of this position.

The appellant's work involves three different functions - wilderness program, recreation management, and land use planning and public affairs. The primary purpose of the position is to accomplish work in the wilderness and recreation programs. Work performed in planning and public affairs are done less than 25% of the appellant's time, and when evaluated is not grade enhancing. Thus, these functions will not be addressed. Associated with the appellant's outdoor recreation duties are supervisory duties over volunteer positions. The appellant does not perform these authorities and responsibilities more than 25% of the time, and will not be evaluated using the General Schedule Supervisory Guide.

DECISION

Determination of Series and Title

The SPO assigned this position to the Natural Resource Specialist Series, GS-401. The position description (PD) requires the appellant to possess a diverse knowledge of natural resources to implement the wilderness and recreation programs. The General Biological Science Series,

GS- 401 includes positions which involve professional work in a natural resource management discipline. Assignment to this series is appropriate if the position requires a combination of several professional fields with none predominant which is a match for the appellant's position. As the GS-401 Series prescribes no titles, it is at the discretion of the appellant's State to assign an appropriate title following guidance for titling of positions.

References

General Biological Science Series, GS-401 (series/title determination); Rangeland Management Series, GS-454; Outdoor Recreation Planner Series, GS-023 (grade determination).

Determination of Grade:

Rangeland Management Series, GS-454

The Rangeland Management Series, GS-454 is a professional series written in the Factor Evaluation System (FES) format, measures non-supervisory, non-research positions involved with natural resource management. It is current, offers clear, specific and well-developed criteria, and compares favorably to BLM field positions with respect to work processes, functions, qualification requirements, and level of difficulty and responsibility. The GS-454 Series is determined to be the best series to evaluate the appellant's natural resource duties.

The Factor Evaluation System (FES) employs nine factors. Under the FES, each factor level description in a standard describes the minimum characteristics needed to receive credit for the described level. Therefore, if a position fails to meet the criteria in a factor level description in any significant aspect, it must be credited at a lower level. Conversely, the position may exceed those criteria in some aspects and still not be credited at a higher level.

FACTORS

<u>Factor 1 - Knowledge Required by the Position</u>

This factor measures the nature and extent of information or facts required to do acceptable work and the nature and extent of skill necessary to apply this knowledge. To be used as a basis for selecting a level under this factor, knowledge must be required and applied.

At the 1-7 level the employee is required to have professional knowledge and skills required to modify or adapt standard processes and procedures; to assess, select, and apply appropriate precedents; and to devise strategies needed to overcome significant resource problems related to program management and evaluation. Skill and knowledge sufficient to deal with special problems that require sustained efforts for solution are required.

Knowledge of ecological processes and the skill to evaluate and assess the environmental impact

of various management practices on a rangeland ecosystem, or on the complementary or competitive impact of the development, modification, or change in the use of one resource on another. Knowledge and skill sufficient to resolve differences among diverse groups with competing goals in order to effectively recommend and justify the appropriate rangeland management resource strategy.

Illustrative of this level is a specialist who provides program management and quality control for the rangeland management program for a district. The specialist integrates grazing administration, and wildlife, watershed, and soils management, into the total program for the district. He or she works with other resource specialists to integrate the rangeland management program with all other resource programs to achieve multiple-use management goals and objectives. The specialist interprets higher level agency policies and directives, and develops supplemental district guidance as necessary.

The appellant's work meets Level 1-7. The appellant has provided several examples of work reflective of Level 1-7.

The appellant developed an Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Implementation Plan for the Xxxxxxx Xxxxxxxxx. The objective of the plan is to open new OHV routes outside of special management areas, and still protect natural and cultural resources. The Xxx Xxxxxx Xxxxx Xxxxxx has an intense recreation program and the balancing of recreational demands and natural resource management issues (wilderness & recreation) as outlined in the OHV Plan is comparable to Level 1-7 where the employee devises strategies to overcome significant resource issues.

Another example provided by the appellant was an assessment of a riparian area and the feasibility of establishing a recreation area within the riparian area. Taking into account the hydro logic condition, soil erosion, riparian habitat, plant species, and pollution caused by unauthorized trash dumping, the appellant recommended that the BLM not develop a recreation management plan. Instead he provided a remedy to the dumping problem.

The appellant's work does not meet Level 1-8 in the standard, as his duties do not involve the application of new scientific findings, developments and advances and solution of critical problems of particularly unique, novel, or highly controversial nature.

This factor is evaluated at Level 1-7.

<u>Factor 2 - Supervisory Controls</u>

This factor covers the nature and extent of direct or indirect controls exercised by the supervisor, the employee's responsibility, and the review of completed work.

At the 2-4 level the supervisor outlines the overall objectives and resources available. The employee and supervisor confer on priorities within assigned areas. The employee then carries

out the assignment independently in accordance with established techniques, practices, and previous experience. Issues and possible approaches are discussed with the supervisor on potentially controversial issues and those assignments which make major departure from established procedures and techniques. Completed work is reviewed for adequacy, technical soundness, and accomplishment of objectives. This is depictive of the appellant's work.

Level 2-5 is not met as that level is indicative of broad administrative supervision with the employee operating within the context and constraints of national legislation, agency policy, and overall agency objectives.

This factor is evaluated at Level 2-4.

Factor 3 - Guidelines

This factor covers the nature of guidelines and the judgment necessary to apply them.

The PD describe working with guidelines that are available from the Lead Recreation & Cultural Resource Specialist, planning documents, Department and Bureau regulations, manuals, instruction memoranda, etc . . . It also describes the need to devise or adapt procedures for various actions when the guidance is lacking or too broad.

The above excerpt matches Level 3-3. At this level a range of general guidelines is available such as Federal statutes and legislation, agency, regional, and/or State policy statements, procedural handbooks, and manuals. These guidelines may have gaps in specificity or may not be completely applicable to the work situation. Since the available guidelines may not be completely applicable to the work situation, the specialist uses judgment in determining which alternatives should be used. The employee uses judgment in interpreting and adapting guidelines for application to specific situations or problems. In cases where guidelines lack specificity, the specialist makes generalizations from several guidelines in carrying out work efforts, analyzing results, and recommending changes. The employee determines when problems require additional guidance.

Neither the audit nor examples provided depicted the appellant dealing with novel, undeveloped, or controversial aspects of natural resource or wilderness management illustrative of Level 3-4. At this level the employee develops essentially new and vastly modified techniques and methods for obtaining effective results.

This factor is evaluated at Level 3-3.

Factor 4 - Complexity

This factor covers the nature, number, variety, and intricacy of tasks, processes, or methods in work performed; the difficulty in identifying what needs to be done; the difficulty and

originality required to perform the work.

At Level 4-4, specialists independently carry out a wide variety of assignments consisting of diverse and complex technical or administrative problems and considerations. They regularly encounter interdependent rangeland resource and cultural-economic problems requiring flexibility and judgment in approach and in the practices applied to obtain an optimum balance between the needs and demands of various user groups and the rangeland resources.

Assignments typically involve rangeland management problems that require in-depth analysis and evaluation of alternatives because of such complicating factors as heavy user demand when the condition of the range is unsatisfactory; environmental problems whose resolution may have serious public or tribal impacts; or strong and conflicting public or tribal demands and pressures to redirect rangeland management strategies.

The work requires the specialist to identify independently the boundaries of all phases of the problems involved, the kinds of data needed to solve the problems, and the criteria and techniques to be applied in accomplishing the assignment. Typically, the assignments require the employee to relate new work situations to precedent situations, extend or modify existing techniques, or develop compromises with standard rangeland management practice to solve the rangeland resource problems. Assignments may require substantial effort to overcome resistance to change when it is necessary to modify traditional, long-standing methods or approaches.

Level 4-5 is depictive of work that includes varied duties requiring many different and unrelated processes applied to a broad range of activities that cover a wide geographic and environmentally varied area, such as a region encompassing several states, or a substantial depth of analysis. Specialists at this level are responsible for integrated resource analysis, information development, and fact-finding in a particular program area. They may also be responsible for coordinating and planning activities that cover a broad multiple-resource program. Assignments involve sensitive and complex resource management issues. They require the independent assessment of the effects and interrelationships of variables unique to each rangeland management situation or condition. The work involves solving problems concerned with novel, undeveloped, or controversial aspects of rangeland management and related fields. The problems have become complex or difficult due to such characteristics as the abstract nature of the concepts involved, the inability in the past to overcome the problems, or the existence of serious conflicts between scientific information, program, and economic requirements.

The assignments require the specialist to be especially versatile and innovative in order to recognize possible new directions or approaches; to devise new or improved techniques or strategies for obtaining effective results; or to anticipate future trends and requirements in rangeland resource use and demands.

<u>Nature of assignment.</u> Nature of assignment is an equitable match to Level 4-4. Typical of Level 4-4 the appellant’s work typically includes varied duties requiring many different and unrelated

processes and methods such as those relating to a biological field such as wildlife, range, botany, etc.

At Level 4-5 assignments typical of the above are applied to a broad geographic area. A Field Office is not typical of a broad geographic area. Other assignments typical of Level 4-5 require a substantial depth of analysis. The audit and examples provided were not depictive of the depth of analysis required of Level 4-5 to accomplish assignments when concepts are of an abstract nature, serious conflicts between scientific requirements and program direction exist and one must over come problems of an intractable nature.

Difficulty in identifying what needs to be done. Difficulty in identifying what needs to be done is an equitable match to Level 4-4. At Level 4-4 decisions regarding what needs to be done include the assessment of unusual circumstances, variation in approach, and incomplete or conflicting data. For example, complicating factors this position is required to deal with heavy user demand coupled with a need to protect fragile natural resources.

Difficulty and originality involved in performing the work. Difficulty and originality involved in performing the work are an equitable match to Level 4-4. At Level 4-4 the work requires 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. Typical of Level 4-4 the appellant develops a variety of plans.

Level 4-5 is not appropriate because this position does not meet the threshold level for nature of assignments typical of Level 4-5.

This factor is evaluated at Level 4-4.

Factor 5 - Scope and Effect

This factor covers the relationship between the nature of the work and the effect of the work products or services.

At Level 5-3 the purpose of the work is to: (1) investigate and analyze conventional rangeland resource problems and/or environmental conditions to recommend or implement solutions that satisfy resource management objectives; or (2) ensure the effective development and utilization of a multiple-use rangeland resource area. Typically, the work requires the employee to identify conventional problems (e.g., riparian degradation, downward trends in ecological site condition, habitat conditions, or range improvement construction and maintenance) and to devise plans or recommend procedures to alleviate the problems.

The work affects the efficient utilization, protection and development of the resources involved, and the social and/or economic well-being of users of the resources.

At Level 5-4 specialists develop essentially new or vastly improved techniques or solutions to specific problems in a resource management program or program area and coordinate results with related resource activities. They advise on, plan, or review specific problems, programs, or functions. They are typically concerned with problems that occur at a number of locations within a broad geographic area of responsibility.

The results of the work directly influence the effectiveness and acceptability of agency goals, programs, and/or activities.

The appellant meets Level 5-3 for scope and effect. Typical of Level 5-3 the appellant proposes solutions to a variety of resources problems that impact the resources and their users.

Although the position has some of the characteristics of Level 5-4 it does not meet the complete threshold of that level. Neither the audit nor examples indicated the appellant developed essentially new or vastly improved techniques typical of Level 5-4. Typical of Level 5-4 the appellant does develop solutions to specific problems and coordinate results with related resource activities. The appellant also advises on problems and plans for the resolution of specific problems. The appellant is not concerned with problems that occur at a number of locations within a broad geographic area of responsibility typical of Level 5-4.

Although the position meets some aspects of Level 5-4 for Scope, it does meet the threshold level for Level 5-4 for Effect. The work of the appellant meets the goals of the Field Office such as those depicted in the Annual Work Plan. This is not comparable to directly influencing the effectiveness and acceptability of agency goals programs, and/or activities typical of Level 5-4.

This factor is evaluated at Level 5-3.

Factor 6 - Personal Contacts

Personal Contacts are:

At Level 6-2 contacts are with employees in the same agency but outside the immediate organization (e.g., rangeland management specialists from higher level organizational units), or, resource persons from State or local rangeland resource units, and the general public or users (e.g., livestock owners, private landowners). The contacts are usually established on a routine basis, but the specialist's authority may not be initially clear to the person contacted. The appellant meets this level as he has a variety of contacts with persons outside the Field Office.

At Level 6-3 contacts are with subject matter specialists and managers within the agency, in other Federal agencies, universities, private foundations and professional societies, and influential local community leaders, tribal governing bodies, State officials, private landowners, representatives of organized livestock, conservation, or environmental groups; newspaper, radio, and television reporters; and prospective and current permittees. The contacts may be on an ad hoc basis, and

the role of each party is established and developed during the course of the contact. The appellant does not meet the full intent of this level. Although the appellant may have some contacts with persons typical of Level 6-3 they are not the appellant's primary contacts. In addition the role of the appellant is established when in contact with persons typical of Level 6-3.

This factor is evaluated at Level 6-2.

Factor 7 - Purpose of Contacts

The Purposes of Contacts are:

At Level 7b the purpose of contacts is to plan, coordinate, or advise on work efforts and solve operating problems by influencing or motivating individuals or groups who are working toward mutual goals and who have basically cooperative attitudes. The appellant meets this level as most contacts are to plan and coordinate projects and to influence others in working groups working toward a common goal.

At Level 7c the purpose of contacts is to negotiate controversial issues with various parties in a way that will achieve agency objectives and result in retention of good will; to influence or persuade various organizations or individuals who have conflicting interests and viewpoints on the use of various resources so as to reach an agreement that is consistent with technical as well as practical goals and objectives; to justify the feasibility of significant rangeland resource plans and proposals; or to influence or persuade other experts to adopt techniques or methods about which there may be conflicting opinions. Contacts typical of this level are usually accomplished by program leads in the State Office, Supervisors, or Managers.

This factor is evaluated at Level 7-b.

Factor 8 - Physical Demands

The physical demands on the appellant meet Level 8-1. Work is principally sedentary although there may be some walking, standing, and carrying of source material, supply items, or manuscripts to include overlays.

This factor is evaluated at Level 8-1.

Factor 9 - Work Environment

The appellant's work environment is best evaluated at Level 9-1. Work is usually performed in an office setting where normal temperature, humidity, adequate lighting, and control of noise levels are maintained.

This factor is evaluated at Level 9-1.

Factor 1 - Knowledge Required by the Position	Level 1-7	1250 points
Factor 2 - Supervisory Controls	Level 2-4	450 points
Factor 3 - Guidelines	Level 3-3	275 points
Factor 4 - Complexity	Level 4-4	225 points
Factor 5 - Scope and Effect	Level 5-3	150 points
Factor 6 - Personal Contacts	Level 6-2	
Factor 7 - Purpose of Contacts	Level 7-b	75 points
Factor 8 - Physical Demands	Level 8-1	5 points
Factor 9 - Work Environment	Level 9-1	5 points
2435 points = GS-11	Total	2435 points

The point total, 2435, falls between the range 2355-2750 and converts to a GS-11.

Outdoor Recreation Planning, GS-023

The GS-023 is determined to be the most appropriate series to evaluate outdoor recreation and wilderness duties. Grade level determinations for Outdoor Recreation Planners, GS-023, are determined through the use of two factors: (1) Nature of the Assignment and (2) Level of Responsibility.

Nature of Assignment

GS-11 planners perform assignments requiring substantial resourcefulness and the exercise of experienced judgment. They analyze, evaluate, and coordinate matters involving recreation planning, development, and use. They evaluate several alternative approaches to problems and select the best. They regularly adapt standard guides, method, principles, and-procedures in carrying out their duties. GS-11 planners must understand and know the organizational, political, economic, social and conversational factors involved in recreation planning and use.

Examples of work done at the GS-11 level include:

1. Review and appraise comprehensive outdoor recreation development plans and projects of Federal and State agencies to ascertain how they relate to each other and to developments in the field of recreation. Through contacts with officials of Federal and State agencies, and other organizations promote coordination and cooperation in the development of outdoor recreation

plans. Recommend courses of action looking toward optimum results from recreation planning in the jurisdiction.

2. Conduct comprehensive studies of large existing recreational complexes or reservoir developments to reassess recreational development needs and to determine the means to achieve optimum recreation use for the useful life of the project. Make studies relate to water supply, sewage disposal, traffic control, safety, and protection for public use areas.

3. Work closely with State to which assigned and render technical advice and assistance in developing its project proposals for matching Federal funds. Review and evaluate complex project proposals that require a high awareness of resource capabilities, demands for recreation, priorities, intergovernmental relationships, and other interrelated factors.

GS-12 planners carry out assignments which require highly developed and experienced judgment and a great deal of originality and resourcefulness. They identify problems in the development and management of recreation resources. They work especially on matters of controversy, inadequate data, inconsistent procedures or lack of guides. By comparison, GS-11 planners have complex but well-defined assignments. GS-12 planners operate with marked freedom from technical control in selecting techniques and establishing methods and procedures for problem solving or program execution. They identify alternatives in seeking settlement of conflicts and negotiate sensitive issues.

Representative assignments for Outdoor Recreation Planners GS-12 are to:

1. Develop guidelines, standards, and procedures for recreation planning elements such as: measuring and reporting recreation use and predicting demand; analyzing recreation values; establishing and maintaining fee programs; operating and managing concessions; and other resource planning and management aspects.

2. Provide technical assistance and advice to numerous establishments in an area on various phases of recreation plan development. Concentrate on particularly difficult and complex matters. Provide guidance in studies and development of recreation inventories and plans.

3. Review or direct the recreation planning aspects of intensive and comprehensive water resource studies. Such studies are used in developing comprehensive basin wide plans for the conservation and development of water and related land resources. These studies require an in-depth analysis of the organizational, economic, social, intergovernmental and conversational factors involved. The planners also give full consideration to the natural, scenic, cultural and historic values of the environment. Coordinate recreation planning aspects with Federal, State, local and private planning agencies. Direct the preparation of reports on findings and recommendations.

The incumbent serves as the Las Cruces Field Office’s staff specialist for the recreation and

wilderness programs. In this capacity he advises and guides management on the recreation and wilderness programs. He personally prepares recreation management plans and recreation sections of environmental documents.

The main product of the outdoor recreation planning effort is a recreation management plan. The plan outlines what recreation uses are now being made of the land, what recreation resources are available on the land, the various groups using the land (i.e., hunters, ranchers, boaters, campers, etc.), any conflicts of use between the groups, any constraints to various uses, how the land should be used in the future, and actions needed to resolve existing problems and improve future use. Once a plan is completed, it provides a guideline which line managers use in managing the land and recreation activities.

Environmental impact statements are the final product of the wilderness studies. These studies are conducted to meet a Congressional mandate that BLM recommend which of its lands should be set aside as wilderness and scenic rivers (such designation would change how the land can be used). Studies that are completed present several alternatives on which parcels of land, if any, should be designated as wilderness and the impact of each on land uses and user groups. Results of the studies can and have been controversial because of concerns by competing interest groups (e.g., conservation groups and ranchers).

The incumbent does prepare plans personally (i.e., those for resources for which he is assigned). Wilderness studies are prepared by multi disciplinary teams in the Field Office. Additional review and approval of the recreation management plans are provided by the line managers. Wilderness studies are also reviewed and approved by line managers in the Field Office and also receive review and approval in the State Office. These studies must ultimately receive approval of the President and finally Congress, where the final decisions will be made.

Similar to the GS-11 level description in the standard, the incumbent's recreation and wilderness work require that he analyze, evaluate, and coordinate matters relating to these programs' planning, development, and use. Through the Lead Recreation & Cultural Resource Specialist, the incumbent provides input in preparation of the Field Office's annual work plan for the two programs and for monitoring and reviewing work accomplishments during the year. Also, he coordinates work products with other Field Offices when projects cross geographical boundaries or with other agencies when necessary. Additionally, he has contacts with user groups such as ranchers, off-road vehicle clubs, conservationists, hunting and fishing organizations, etc . . . to obtain their cooperation and gain information about their concerns over land use.

Also similar to the GS-11 level description, the incumbent must evaluate several alternative approaches to problems and select the best. Recreation management plans by their nature must weigh various alternatives between possible resource uses, different user groups, environmental concerns, etc . . . and suggest the best solutions. Similarly, the wilderness studies present several alternative courses of action and the appellant recommends the best one.

Additionally, as described at GS-11, the incumbent must adapt standard guides, methods, principles, and procedures. The incumbent has guidelines developed by the Department of the Interior, BLM Headquarters, and the New Mexico State Office to follow regarding the development and content of recreation management plans and wilderness studies. These guides were developed to ensure uniformity in planning among BLM Field Offices, but are not so comprehensive as to provide solutions for all problems. Recreation and wilderness planning require that solutions be developed that fit the particular circumstance. There is no "cookbook" upon which the incumbent can rely. Rather, he must adapt the standards to meet the situation at hand.

Finally, similar to the GS-11 description, the incumbent must understand and know the organizational, political, economic, social, and conversational factors involved in the planning effort. Such an understanding is essential to the incumbent because the recommendations he makes impact a wide variety of different interest groups that have differing needs and concerns. A recommendation in a plan or study may satisfy a bird-watcher or a nature photographer, but upset a cattle rancher or timber company. The incumbent must maintain contact with the various interest groups and make recommendations that are cognizant of their goals and objectives.

Work carried out by the incumbent compares favorably to several of the examples described at GS-11 grade level. Completed tasks related to reviewing and appraising planning documents prepared by the Field Office and other Federal agencies are directly comparable to example number one. Technical advice and guidance the incumbent gives compare favorably with example number three. Recreation plans the incumbent develops are of similar scope and complexity to the second example. The position overall compares well with the GS-11 level description under this factor.

Based on the telephone audit and work examples provided by the incumbent, it is determined that the incumbent's assignments fall short of the GS-12 criteria for the following main reasons:

1. As indicated earlier, GS-12 planners establish entirely new methods and procedures for problem solving or program execution. Neither the desk audit nor examples of work indicated that the incumbent established these new methods and procedures on a regular and recurring basis to the extent envisioned at the GS-12 level.

2. GS-12 planners identify alternatives in seeking settlements of conflicts and conduct formal negotiations on sensitive issues. The incumbent's assignments do not fully meet this criterion. While the incumbent does identify alternatives to settle conflicts, he does not have responsibility to formally negotiate solutions. The incumbent does meet with various groups to understand their concerns, but formal negotiations to resolve conflicts are conducted by line managers.

3. The incumbent does not regularly perform any of the GS-12 representative assignments to the extent envisioned in the standard. This point and other indicate that the incumbent does not on a regular and recurring basis develop new guidelines, standards, or procedures for recreation planning elements to the extent envisioned under either of the four

representative assignments in the standard.

Assignments performed by the incumbent compare favorably to the GS-11 description in the standard, and meet neither of the GS-12 criteria, thus GS-11 is assigned to this factor.

Level of Responsibility

GS-11 outdoor recreation planners carry out their assignments within the framework of basic agency policies, defined objectives, and approved procedures. The supervisors indicate the general scope of assignments. GS-11 planners have considerable freedom in planning their day-to-day work and in choosing appropriate methods and techniques for executing various tasks. Higher level planners advise on special problem areas such as applying new policies and making evaluations where controversial and complex matters are involved. Completed work is reviewed for overall adequacy and soundness of results obtained.

Nature and variety of contacts are similar to those at the GS-9 level, but GS-11 planners exercise even greater tact and diplomacy in dealing with professionals in other disciplines, other agencies, and groups. They seek solutions to problems and exchange information through the personal contacts.

GS-12 planners receive most assignments in terms of broad objectives, emphasis, and relative order of priority for completion of projects. During the course of work, little or no technical guidance is provided except in critical or controversial issues. Policy controversies are resolved by consultation with supervisors. Completed assignments are reviewed to ensure they meet program objectives. Reviewing authorities seldom question the decisions and recommendations of GS-12 planners on matters not involving policy considerations.

GS-12 planners are relied upon as authoritative sources of information in many facets of recreation resource projects.

GS-12 planners have broad, varied, and highly important public contacts. They may represent their bureaus at conferences with Federal, State, local and private officials to discuss recreation resource planning and management matters, to seek cooperation, to resolve differences, and to formulate working agreements.

GS-12 planners have substantial latitude in determining which areas merit study and in structuring their assignments. By comparison, GS-11 planners receive guidance on unusual or controversial assignments.

GS-12 positions also differ from those at GS-11 in that their greater breadth and depth of experience enable GS-12 planners to provide direction and guidance to lower level planners and review their work prior to submission to the supervisor. GS-12 planners handle the somewhat controversial, sensitive, and multifaceted problems.

The appellant's level of responsibility compares best with the GS-12 level description in the standard. Similar to the GS-12 description assignments are given in terms of broad objectives, the appellant works with marked freedom from technical control, and completed products are reviewed for general conformance with program objectives. Moreover, the appellant is relied upon as the authoritative source of information in the Field Office for the recreation and wilderness programs and he provides advice, guidance, and work review to Field Office personnel. Also similar to the GS-12 description, the appellant represents the Field Office at meetings with other government and private officials to discuss recreation and wilderness program matters, seek cooperation, and resolve differences. The appellant is called upon to help resolve the controversial and sensitive problems in the Field Office relating to the two programs. GS-12 is assigned to this factor.

Application of the GS-023 Position Classification Standard result in a grade determination of GS-11. The appellant's Nature of Assignment was evaluated at the GS-11 level, and Level of Responsibility at the GS-12 level. Both factors must be evaluated at the higher level in order to assign that grade. As the appellant met only one of the factors, the GS-12 level is not met.

Conclusion:

Application of the Outdoor Recreation Planner Series, GS-023 and the Rangeland Management Series, GS-454 yielded a GS-11 grade.

Decision: The proper series and grade for the appellant's position is GS-401-11. Assignment of an appropriate title is at the state's discretion.

Interviews conducted by Erick A. Kurkowski.

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Mark Whitesell
Supervisory Personnel Management Specialist