

Diane Stratton, Park Manager, Rough River Lake Project, Louisville District, Kentucky

My name is Diane Stratton and I'm currently working as the Park Manager of the Rough River Lake Project, KY which is part of the Louisville District, Great Lakes and Ohio River Division. I believe the key to any career advancement is developing realistic goals and you taking ownership of your career and your IDP. The IDP is not an exercise for checking a box, but it is the planning tool to develop your path and your training. In writing this, I enjoyed not only looking back to when I started, but I enjoyed looking at all my work history with the realization that when I started we didn't have computers, e-mail, and the fax machine was new technology.

March 1986, I began my career as a student employee with the Corps at Wappapello Lake, MO (St. Louis District, Mississippi Valley Division) as a GW-0026-2 Park Aid. In April of 1988 while still at Wappapello Lake I was converted to a GW-0025-3 Park Ranger (also known as a stay-in-school position). Upon my graduation from college (Bachelors of Science Degree in Agronomy with a Minor in Earth Science) I competed for a permanent Park Ranger position at Wappapello Lake and on August 26, 1990 I was appointed as a career conditional GS-0025-05 Park Ranger. While at Wappapello Lake I was promoted to a GS-0025-07 Park Ranger in September 1991 and in September 1992 I was promoted to a GS-0025-09 position. In August 1993 I was selected for a 3 month temporary detail as the GS-0401-12 Natural Resource Specialist in the St. Louis District Office. The purpose for taking this detail was to obtain additional knowledge and skills that would equip me for a future Lead Park Ranger position.

In February 1994 I applied for and was selected for the GS-0025-11 Lead Natural Resources Park Ranger position at Clarence Cannon Dam and Mark Twain Lake Project, MO (St. Louis District, Mississippi Valley Division), which later lead me to apply for the GS-0025-11 Lead Visitor Assistance Park Ranger position at Wappapello Lake Project, MO in September 1997. Both positions gave me a excellent understanding of the Natural Resources and the Visitor Assistance Programs of the Corps and the many subsequent jobs and tasks within these programs. These positions also provided me the opportunity to hone my skills and abilities as a leader. Then in 2000, in an effort to better prepare me for a position as a GS-0401-12 Assistant Operations Manager or a Park Manager I had the tremendous opportunity to enter into the Mississippi Valley Division Emerging Leaders Program and in 2001 I was inducted into the Emerging Leaders Class of 2001 by completing all the requirements of the Program. Taking what I had learned in the Emerging Leaders Program, I further challenged myself and accepted a temporary 60 day detail as the Assistant Operations Manager at Wappapello Lake from September to October 2005, providing a greater understanding of the operations and maintenance aspect of the Flood Risk Management facility.

In 2000, I was presented the chance to serve on the Nation PDT for National Recreation Reservation Services (NRRS) as a Coach and Assist and Train Team Coordinator Assistant and technical consultant through April 2009. During this period of time, I also served as the NRRS

Performance Monitor and Interagency Coordinator for the Field Management application associated with the reservation contract from January 2007 to April 2009, also serving in a temporary detail as the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative for the Corps to the National Recreation Reservation Services (NRRS) contractor. Soon after I applied for and was selected for the GS-0401-12 Rough River Lake Park Manager.

Since coming to the Louisville District I have participated in career development opportunities, including serving as a member of the Headquarters selected Project Delivery Team that developed a Strategic Plan to transform and reposition the Corps Recreation Program, from January 2010 to May 2011, while participating and graduating from the Louisville District Leadership Development Program. I highly recommend this type of program to anyone within the Corps seeking to improve their leadership and communication skills.

Throughout my career I have taken all types of leadership courses, including Supervisory Development, How to Supervise People, Public Service and Me to name a few. I contribute my success in reaching my career goals to the participation in the Leadership Development Programs, actively participating in District, Division and National initiatives/programs, and maintaining a current Individual Development Plan (IDP).

As I prepare for my future goal of achieving an Operations Project Manager position, I reflect on what I must continue to do which is to expand my knowledge of the Corps mission and project operations. I plan to achieve this by applying for the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division Leadership Development Program.