



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
441 G ST. NW
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20314-1000

S: 30 June 2008

CEHR-E

04 April 2008

**MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDERS, MAJOR SUBORDINATE COMMANDS,
DISTRICT COMMANDS, MSC/DISTRICT OPERATIONS, NATURAL RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT OFFICES, HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICES, AND OPERATIONS
PROJECT MANAGERS**

**SUBJECT: USACE Guidance for the Classification of Natural Resources Management
Positions, 0400 series**

1. This memorandum provides guidance to USACE managers and supervisors for the application of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Job Family Standard, Natural Resources Management and Biological Sciences Group, GS 0400 series to USACE Natural Resources Management positions. The Supplemental Position Classification Guidance and Tools – Natural Resources Management Positions (Appendix A) provides supplemental guidance on the types of natural resources management work performed and a process for converting positions performing natural resources management work but not currently classified in the GS-401 series. For encumbered positions, incumbents must meet the qualifications requirements for assignment to the GS-401 series. Guidance on the types of work experience, education, and course work creditable toward qualifying for the Natural Resources Management, GS-0401 series is also provided (Appendix B and C). This guidance provides the process for converting positions and will be used for all current and future conversions (Appendix D).
2. When applying this standard, supervisors and managers of positions performing natural resources management duties must review the principal duties, responsibilities and qualifications requirements of the position. The correct series for the position will represent the primary work, the highest level of work of the position and the paramount qualifications required to perform the work. Consideration of factors such as the primary purpose or reason for existence of the position, mission and responsibility to the organization it serves, and the qualifications required to perform the work, are important to properly classify the position. Where these factors result in reclassifying the position to the Natural Resources Management, GS-0401 series, and managers must determine if immediate conversion can occur based on the requirements of the position and qualifications of the incumbent. Where positions do not meet the criteria for reclassification to the Natural Resources Management, GS-0401 series, these positions should remain classified in the current series, if appropriate, e.g., Park Ranger, GS-025.
3. The nature of work performed by some USACE Operations Project Managers, Park Managers and Park Rangers has evolved from planning long term projects to comply with strict regulatory requirement and complex design standards. The work now requires an increased knowledge of

CEHR-E

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natural resource sciences. Performance of day-to-day duties of stewardship and recreation management requires an enhanced understanding of natural resources and related scientific and recreation disciplines. The new job family standard specifically references "recreation management" and outlines typical natural resources and recreation management activities performed by some USACE Park Manager and Park Ranger positions. A sample position description is provided at Appendix E.

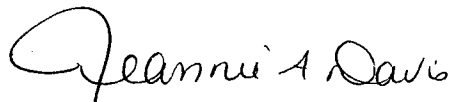
4. Action must be taken to implement this guidance not later than 30 June 2008. Feedback on the results of the implementation will be gathered through Operations and Natural Resources Management Communities of Practice. Supervisors and managers need to work closely with their Civilian Personnel Advisory Centers (CPAC) to develop and implement a plan for application of the standard and conversion of positions, where appropriate.

5. Questions on the overall conversion process and implementation should be directed to the following individuals: Marilyn K. Jones, Operations Manager, CENAB, (570) 835-5281 ext 101 Marilyn.K.Jones@nab02.usace.army.mil; Omar Lugo, Human Resources Specialist, CEHR-E, (202)761-1698, omar.lugo@usace.army.mil; or Laurie Toland, Personnel Management Specialist, HQUSACE Directorate of Human Resources, South Atlantic Division, (404) 562-5031, laurie.a.toland@usace.army.mil.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

5 Encls

1. Appendix A
2. Appendix B
3. Appendix C
4. Appendix D
5. Appendix E


JEANNIE A. DAVIS
Director of Human Resources

CF:

Civilian Personnel Advisory Centers (w/encls)

APPENDIX A

SUPPLEMENTAL POSITION CLASSIFICATION GUIDANCE AND TOOLS NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT POSITIONS

1. References.

- a. Job Family Standard for Professional Work in the Natural Resources and Biological Sciences Group, GS-0400, September 2005
- b. Park Ranger, GS-0025, November 1985
- c. Operating Manual for Qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions, July 1995
- d. The US Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Introduction to the Position Classification Standards, July 1995
- e. OPM Classifier's Handbook, August 1991

2. Determining the Appropriate Series:

Generally, the duties and responsibilities assigned to most positions are covered by one occupational series and the series determination is clear. Some positions, however, are a mix of duties and responsibilities covered by two or more occupational series and classified by more than one standard or guide. Where the work is within the same job family, it may be more appropriate to classify the position to a general series. For positions whose duties fall in more than one occupational group, the most appropriate series for the position depends on consideration of a number of factors. For many of these positions, the grade controlling duties will determine the series. Sometimes, however, the highest level of work performed can be determined only after considering the paramount qualifications required, sources of recruitment, line of progression, reason for establishing the position, and the background knowledge required. Work that involves creativity, analysis, evaluation, and interpretation is considered professional work. It involves applying basic or natural law, principles, or theory; evaluating the research of others; and assessing the need for and validity of proposed changes and improvements in procedures and methods. Professional responsibility involves the ability to reason from existing knowledge to unexplored areas; to adapt methods to circumstances that deviate from the standards; and to stay abreast of and evaluate technical subjects, analyses, and proposals from professional literature. This work requires education and training in the principles, concepts, and theories of the occupation. Typically, these can be gained only through completion of a specified curriculum at a recognized college or university. This requirement is called a "positive education requirement" and is common to nearly all professional occupational series. Where the duties and responsibilities of the work have these characteristics and requirements, the work is considered professional and the position must be classified to a professional series.

3. The Corps typically performs the following types of Natural Resources Management (NRM) work:

a. Corps natural resources management personnel are often multidimensional employees who have a wide variety of responsibilities and at a minimum, 25 percent of those responsibilities are related to the “sciences.” A sample position description depicting typical natural resources management duties and responsibilities is found at Appendix A.

b. USACE Park Rangers routinely deal with issues associated with soils, erosion, trees, water quality, pest control, wildlife management, fisheries, grassland management, etc. Even rangers who spend much of their time dealing with "recreation", also deal with "park related" issues involving "science". They write specifications and/or administer contracts that include tree pruning, pesticide applications, water quality, vegetative management, or shrub and tree plantings. In reviewing applications for shoreline use permits, natural resources management personnel have to consider the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and make accommodations for the same. Park Rangers watch for shoreline erosion at parks and in remote areas and consider wildlife benefits when developing park maintenance contract specifications. Natural science plays a role in a ranger's interpretive efforts. Park Rangers share wildlife and vegetative management concerns with district wildlife biologists and fisheries biologists and answer questions from the public regarding wildlife, fish, habitat management, etc.

c. Park Rangers are involved in many types of natural resources management. At almost every Lake Project, fish and wildlife management is an authorized project purpose. It is the responsibility of the Ranger staff to manage these projects and associated programs. Park Rangers typically do not specialize in one job such as a "Recreation Ranger." Rangers have interpretive programs such as Eagle Days and Ecology Meets (ECO-Meets) and conduct environmental programs for schools, scouts and other groups. They manage trails that require science backgrounds for both the management of the trails and for the environmental interpretation associated with the trails. While preparation of formal environmental assessments or environmental impact statements is the responsibility of the planning organization, local park rangers often provide current and historic information about the environment studied. Park Rangers know who and what will be impacted by the development, what the recreational impact on the environment has been at similar projects, where the eagles roost, etc. Most new recreational development requires some type of environmental assessment that involves habitat loss, effect on endangered species and cultural resources, campsites, flood impacts, construction impact on vegetation, and vegetation planting requirements after construction.

d. Park Rangers are expected to accurately answer questions from our visitors concerning the following:

- (1) Natural Resources Management,
- (2) Wildlife and the natural environment
- (3) Weather recording and documentation
- (4) Controlled burning, including planning, and weather documentation
- (5) Trail establishment, including application of erosion guidelines to specific soil types
- (6) Campground renovations, impacts on trees and vegetation

- (7) Global Positioning System/Global Information System work, including area measurement for contracts, use of boundary inspection, monitoring impacts on environmentally sensitive areas
- (8) Off Road Vehicle (ORV) area point photos to monitor erosion
- (9) Prairie renovation
- (10) Preliminary Assessment Screening (PAS) for Real Estate
- (11) Food plot plantings
- (12) Herbicide contracts
- (13) Interpretive displays regarding lakes and wildlife management
- (14) Fish habitat, selection of areas and placement
- (15) Bird habitat projects such as Bluebird, American Kestrel, Canada Goose tubs

e. USACE establishes contracts for the following goods and services. Park Rangers provide scope of work, specifications and bid schedules for the contracts, and identify and report on issues for proper administration of the contract.

(1) Vegetative management, herbicide contract, mowing and brush control, requires a broad knowledge of plant species, characteristics, life cycles, chemical use, restoration of turf areas, control of invading species. Examples include when and how to mow to control crown vetch on the dam, what type of grass to plant in high use areas, what chemical and rates to use to control fox tail in food plots, what method to use to control Black Locust in the spillway.

(2) Custodial contracts are written and identify chemical use, disinfectants, control of pests, insects, mold, mildew etc. (e.g. rates of disinfectants to use in shower buildings.)

(3) Construction contracts written require use and knowledge of building techniques, methods, materials, calculation of quantities, volumes, and areas. (e.g. calculation of concrete for park projects, materials for shower building painting, roof repairs.)

(4) Purchase and use of equipment, materials, services (e.g. GPS unit, work boat, planter for food plots, surveying), requires knowledge of specific capabilities and needs, much of which is science related.

f. Miscellaneous

(1) Communications use and knowledge and experience with computers, radios, and internet service.

(2) Wetland development requires, knowledge of species and environmental and wildlife issues, dam design, shoreline and downstream monitoring, planning, knowledge of geology, hydrological issues, weather, erosion control, and soil and vegetation types.

(3) Natural Resources Management (NRM) requires knowledge of a wide variety of scientific methods, i.e. calculation of areas, species type, fertilizer, chemicals for food plots, prairie restoration, controlled burns, and forestry practices; monitoring for invasive species, terrestrial and aquatic; recognition and protection of rare and endangered species, cultural resources.

Appendix B

Supplemental Qualifications Guidance

Reference the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Qualifications Handbook, Group Coverage Qualifications Standards for Professional and Scientific Positions, Section IV-A, Operating Manual for Qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions. Managers, supervisors and employees should refer to Section IV-A for a full and complete discussion of qualification requirements.

The following is an excerpt from the USOPM Qualification Handbook, Group Coverage Qualifications Standards for Professional and Scientific Positions, last updated December 7, 2006

BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL GRADES

Applicants who meet the basic requirements described in the individual occupational requirements are fully qualified for the specified entry grade (generally grade GS-5). Applicants who wish to qualify for positions at higher-grade levels (generally grade GS-7 and above) must also meet the requirements shown in the table on page IV-A-22, in addition to meeting the basic requirements.

The individual occupational requirements typically provide at least two methods for applicants to meet the basic requirements of the occupations covered by this standard:

A. Successful completion of a full 4-year course of study in an accredited college or university leading to a bachelor's or higher degree that included a major field of study or specific course requirements generally as stated in paragraph A in the individual occupational requirements. Where specific course requirements are not indicated in paragraph A, the number of semester hours required to constitute a major field of study is the amount specified by the college or university attended. If this number cannot be obtained, 24 semester hours will be considered as equivalent to a major field of study. The nature and quality of this required course work must have been such that it would serve as a prerequisite for more advanced study in the field or subject-matter area. Related course work generally refers to courses that may be accepted as part of the program major.

OR

B. Appropriate combination of education and experience that is typically specified in paragraph B of the individual occupational requirements. The "paragraph B" method generally requires that an applicant possess a core of educational credit, such as described in paragraph A above, plus additional education and/or experience. The method of determining the number of semester hours required to constitute a major field of study is the same as described in paragraph A. The quality of the combination of education and experience must be sufficient to demonstrate that the applicant possesses the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform work in the occupation, and is comparable to that normally acquired through the successful completion of a full 4-year course of study with a major in the appropriate field. In addition to courses in the major and related fields, a typical college degree would have included courses that involved analysis, writing, critical thinking, research, etc. These courses would have provided an applicant with skills and abilities sufficient to perform progressively more responsible work in the occupation. Therefore, creditable experience should have demonstrated similarly appropriate skills or abilities needed to perform the work of the occupation.

The evaluation of course requirements is handled on a case-by-case basis. Each course on the transcript provided is reviewed for possible credit and further research is done through on-line courses catalogs from each applicable institution. Human Resources Specialists may also contact the school for verification to determine if the course content includes the natural resources emphasis necessary to meet the requirements of the series.

The individual occupational requirements for some series make no provision for combining experience and education. Therefore, they do *not* include paragraph B provisions.

For a small number of occupations or positions covered by this standard, applicants may possess certain kinds of experience *in lieu* of education. In such cases, applicants may meet minimum qualification requirements through experience equivalent to a 4-year degree. These situations are generally described in paragraph C of the individual occupational requirements.

Applicants whose experience is used to meet the basic requirements through a paragraph B or C provision may qualify for grades above the entry level if that experience includes 1 year of specialized experience. In such cases, the specialized experience would have to be evaluated to determine if it is at the appropriate grade level in the normal line of progression.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS FOR GS-7 AND ABOVE.
 In addition to meeting the basic entry qualification requirements, applicants must have specialized experience and/or directly related education in the amounts shown in the table below.

GRADE/POSITIONS	EDUCATION	SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE
GS-7	1 year of graduate-level education <i>or</i> superior academic achievement	1 year equivalent to at least GS-5
GS-9	2 years of progressively higher level graduate education leading to a master's degree <i>or</i> master's or equivalent graduate degree	1 year equivalent to at least GS-7
GS-11	3 years of progressively higher level graduate education leading to a Ph.D. degree <i>or</i> Ph.D. or equivalent doctoral degree	1 year equivalent to at least GS-9
GS-12 and above		1 year equivalent to at least next lower grade level
<i>Research Positions</i>		
GS-11 research positions	Master's or equivalent graduate degree	1 year equivalent to at least GS-9
GS-12 research positions	Ph.D. or equivalent doctoral degree	1 year equivalent to at least GS-11
GS-13 and above research positions		1 year equivalent to at least next lower grade level

NOTE: Education and experience may be combined for all grade levels for which both education and experience are acceptable.

While the levels of experience shown for most positions covered by this standard follow the grade level progression pattern outlined in the table, users of the standard should refer to E.3.(p) in the "General Policies and Instructions" (Section II of the OPM Qualifications Handbook) for guidance on crediting experience for positions with different lines of progression.

Combining Education and Experience: When combining education with experience, first determine the applicant's total qualifying education as a percentage of the education required for the grade level; then determine the applicant's experience as a percentage of the experience required for the grade level; finally, add the two percentages. The total percentage must equal at least 100 percent to qualify an applicant for that grade level. For example, an applicant for a GS-184, Sociology position has successfully completed 60 undergraduate semester hours, including 24 semester hours in sociology, and, in addition, has 2 full-time years of appropriate experience that demonstrates that the applicant possesses the necessary analytical and communication skills. The applicant would qualify for GS-5, since the 60 semester hours (the equivalent of 2 years of undergraduate education, or 50 percent of the total requirement) were supplemented by 2 additional years of appropriate experience that provided the remaining 50 percent of the total required education and experience.

Specialized Experience: Experience that equipped the applicant with the particular knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform successfully the duties of the position, and that is typically in or related to the work of the position to be filled. To be creditable, specialized experience must have been equivalent to at least the next lower grade level in the normal line of progression for the occupation in the organization.

Superior Academic Achievement: The superior academic achievement provision is applicable to all occupations covered by this standard. See the "General Policies and Instructions" for specific guidance on applying the superior academic achievement provision.

Graduate Education: Completion of graduate level education in the amounts shown in the table, in addition to meeting the basic requirements, is qualifying for positions at grades GS-7 through GS-11, and GS-12 research positions if it provided the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to do the work. One year of full-time graduate education is considered to be the number of credit hours that the school attended has determined to represent 1 year of full-time study. If that number cannot be obtained from the school, 18 semester hours should be considered an academic year of graduate study. Part-time graduate education is creditable in accordance with its relationship to a year of full-time study at the school attended.

Excerpt from Section IV-B of the Operating Manual for Qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions.

Use these individual occupational requirements in conjunction with the "Group Coverage Qualification Standard for Professional and Scientific Positions."

Basic Requirements:

- A. Degree: biological sciences, agriculture, natural resource management, chemistry, or related disciplines appropriate to the position.

OR

- B. Combination of education and experience--Courses equivalent to a major, as shown in A above, plus appropriate experience or additional education.

Course work found in the degree programs above may include:

Ecology	Land Use Planning	Arboriculture
Zoology	Environmental Law	Wildlife Management
Botany	Fire Science	Landscape Architecture
Forestry	Horticulture	Conservation Education
Fisheries Management	Biology	Earth Science
Fisheries Biology	Plant Physiology	Range Management
Wildlife Biology	Geology	Wildlife Ecology
Range Management	Natural Resources Management	Geographic Information Systems
Soils Science	Horticulture	
Air Resources	Environmental Interpretation	

Appendix C

Excerpt from the USOPM Qualifications Handbook, General Policies, and Instructions, Section II B (2).

8. Special In-service Placement Provisions

In-service placement applicants may meet minimum qualification requirements based on education (including superior academic achievement) and/or experience, as specified in the appropriate qualification standard. To qualify, they must usually have the same level and type of experience or education that is required for initial appointment. However, there are some special provisions, as follows:

a. Minimum educational requirements--When there is a change to or addition of minimum educational requirements to an occupational series, Federal employees currently classified to that series do not have to meet the new educational requirements. (Also see *(b)* below.)

b. The "add-on rule"--If an employee qualified for his or her current position by meeting the provisions of the appropriate standard (either an OPM standard or an agency-modified standard, as described in *(c)* below), the agency need only add on the difference between the length of experience required for the current position and the length of experience required for the proposed position. For example, a GS-2 employee in a clerical position qualified for his or her current position on the basis of high school graduation. The employee would be eligible for promotion to GS-3 after 3 months of employment, since the difference between the experience requirements for GS-2 (3 months) and the experience requirement for GS-3 (6 months) is 3 months. Note that at the GS-2 level, a high school diploma is credited the same as 3 months of experience.

The "add-on rule" can be used even when the current and proposed positions are classified in different series if the level and quality of the experience required for the two series are not significantly different. The "add-on rule" can be used for any in-service placement action as defined in this Manual; however, the following restrictions apply:

(1) If minimum educational requirements have been established or changed for an employee's former series, the "add-on rule" can be used to return the employee to that series only if:

a. The employee has maintained current occupational knowledge through employment or education and meets any licensure or certification requirements; and Comparison of the position descriptions or other documentation of work performed shows clearly that the employee's former position included all the basic duties of the position to be filled and provided the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to perform the duties of the new position. (This is particularly important when a minimum educational requirement has been added to an occupational series that did not have one when the employee served in it. In that instance, some positions formerly classified in the series may not have required full occupational knowledge and are now classified in a different series.)

b. If an employee has been placed in a position based on waiver of qualification requirements, the "add-on rule" does not apply, since the waiver provisions are normally applicable to that position only.

c. Modifying experience requirements for certain in-service placement actions--An agency may determine that an individual can successfully perform the work of a position even though that person may not meet all the requirements in the OPM qualification standard. In that situation, agencies are authorized to modify OPM qualification standards for reassignments, voluntary changes to lower grades, transfers, reinstatements, and re-promotions to a grade not higher than a grade previously held when the applicant's background includes related experience that provided the KSA's necessary for successful job performance. This authority should be used only when there is a reasonable likelihood that the employee will successfully make the transition to the new position, and cannot be used for directed reassignments to positions in which an employee obviously would not be able to perform the work.

This authority is **not** to be used for placement to a higher grade, except where the employee previously held a position at that grade or higher grade levels. This authority can be used to place an employee in a position with greater promotion potential than the position currently or previously held. If an agency's merit promotion plan requires employees to compete for the position, the agency must specify in the vacancy announcement the qualification requirements to be met. The experience accepted as qualifying should equip the employee to meet the critical elements set out in the performance standard for the position. This provision does not authorize agencies to disregard minimum educational, licensure, or certification requirements in OPM standards.

The agency's use of a modified standard should be documented sufficiently to show that it was intentional, and that the assignment did not result from misinterpretation of the OPM standard. When an employee has been placed in a position based on modification of a qualification standard under this provision, the "add-on rule" may be applied in any subsequent in-service placement action.

Note: USACE has not established requirements for a modified standard. The guidance in this document should address the majority of USACE positions. Copies of approved modifications should be submitted through command channels to CEHR-E. When local mission' needs merit a modification to the standard, local managers should work with their CPAC to document modifications to the standard which meet local needs.

Appendix D

USACE Plan for Restructuring Positions to the Natural Resources Management (0401) Series

1. Purpose

This plan outlines how eligible employees assigned to the Park Ranger/Manager job series (GS-0025) may transition to the Natural Resource Specialist/Manager job series (GS-0401). In some cases, as determined by organizational needs, eligible employees in the Outdoor Recreation Specialist Planner job series (GS-0023) and the Environmental Protection Specialist job series (GS-0028) may also convert. This plan is intended to allow the conversion to occur in a consistent manner.

2. Background

a. The nature of the work performed by Corps Park Rangers and Managers has evolved and now requires these employees to apply knowledge of natural resources sciences in their day-to-day job duties. The 0401 series more accurately reflects the professional work that natural resources management personnel perform. Other advantages of converting to a professional series include greater assurance in receiving qualified applicants for positions, improved competitive posture for positions in other professional series, increased job satisfaction, and Broadened career ladder

b. The Office of Personnel Management updated the Classification Standards (or Job Family Standards) for the Biological Sciences Group (0400 series) in September 2005. Several changes to this standard strongly support the conversion of the Corps Park Rangers and Managers to the professional GS-0400 series. For example, the title of the standard now reads “Natural Resources Management and Biological Sciences Group, GS-0400. The addition of natural resources management includes specific reference to “recreation management” and outlines typical recreation management activities that describe many of the duties performed by Corps Park Rangers and Managers.

3. Status

a. Civilian Personnel Advisory Centers (CPAC) have classified non-supervisory and non-team leader position descriptions (PDs) for application to all field level positions that may be converted throughout HQUSACE. These PDs are intended for use as model position descriptions. All supervisory and team leader positions will be classified individually based on specific job responsibilities utilizing the model PDs. Most higher graded Operations Project Managers and Operations Branch/Division Chiefs positions are currently classified as professional “interdisciplinary” to include the GS-0401 series and therefore are not being reclassified. However, Districts are encouraged to convert qualified incumbents occupying these higher graded positions from the 0025 series to the new position descriptions in the 0401 series.

b. Management may consider restructuring Park Ranger (GS-0025) positions to Natural Resources Specialist (GS-0401) based on mission and workload requirements. Park Rangers (GS-0025) may continue to be required in some locations. Incumbents of Park Rangers (GS-0025) positions who

meet the education requirements may be considered for conversion to Natural Resources Specialist (GS-0401) positions.

c. Supervisors and managers should delay application of this guidance when the application results in the displacement of employees. The conversion of the position only can occur when the employee meets the requirement for the 0401 series, retires or the position became vacant.

4. Process and Schedule

a. District Operations Chiefs in coordination with their CPAC will assess current positions and determine which positions could be restructured. Managers may decide that there is a need to retain some positions, such as summer hires, in the 0025 series.

b. The position conversion request will be forwarded through the chain of command (e.g. Operations Project Manager, Assistant Chief of Operations, Chief of Operations, HR/CPAC) with a cover memo requesting conversion.

c. CPACs will need the following from each individual to determine eligibility for conversion:

(1) Current resume and official college transcripts sent from an accredited academic institution directly to a CPAC point of contact. Employees are encouraged to highlight accredited coursework on their transcripts that they feel contributes toward the 24 semester hour requirement for natural/biological sciences, for example courses specifically related to the natural resources management duties. Attaching accredited course descriptions to the resume in cases where the course does address the impacts of recreation on natural resources, or similar focus, may help the CPAC in determining acceptability of courses towards the 24 hours requirement.

(2) Statement signed by the employee's immediate supervisor that the employee's updated resume accurately reflects experience that has been performed while employed as a Park Ranger at a Corps project or office.

d. If the conversion is not approved, the CPAC will provide a memo stating the reasons for disapproval.

e. Each District Operations Chief will determine the order of priority for submission of RPAs. An RPA should not be initiated until it is determined if an employee meets the qualification requirements for the 0401 series. For questions about course work requirements to qualify for the professional 401 series, please coordinate with the servicing CPACs to obtain a response on the qualifications issue.

f. Each employee will obtain the information needed to process the conversion, and is responsible for the expense of obtaining official transcripts and having them delivered directly to their servicing CPAC.

5. Contacts

Each District will designate Points of Contact (POC) in Operations Divisions to Act as a collection point and assist employees; and a POC in the Civilian Personnel Advisory Centers (CPAC) for

sending position classification actions to the CPOC. To avoid processing delays, these District contacts will review the employee information and resolve any deficiencies before forwarding to the CPAC.

6. Documentation of University/College Education

a. Positions in the General Natural Resources Management and Biological Sciences Series, GS-0401 series require one of the following basic qualifications:

(1) Degree: biological sciences, agriculture, natural resource management, chemistry, or related disciplines appropriate to the position. OR

(2) Combination of education and experience—Courses equivalent to a major, as shown in A above, plus appropriate experience or additional education. (See extract Qualification Standards for GS Positions, Professional and Scientific Positions)

b. For example, an applicant for a GS-0401 Natural Resources Management position has successfully completed 60 undergraduate semester hours including 24 semester hours in natural resources management and in addition has 2 full-time years of appropriate experience that demonstrates that the applicant possesses the necessary analytical and communication skills. The applicant would qualify for GS-5 since the 60 semester hours (the equivalent of 2 years of undergraduate education, or 50 percent of the total requirement) were supplemented by 2 additional years of appropriate experience that provided the remaining 50 percent of the total required education and experience.

c. The number of semester hours required to constitute a major field of study is the amount specified by the college or university attended. If this number cannot be obtained 24 semester hours will be considered as equivalent to a major field of study. The 24 semester hours must have been obtained from an accredited university/college and be documented on an official transcript. **Non-university/college training cannot be substituted for the 24 semester hours course requirement.**

d. The employee is responsible for contacting an accredited university to request an evaluation of his/her knowledge, skills, abilities for semester hours credit; as well as an evaluation of university/college courses previously completed. This information will be used to determine qualifications in accordance with OPM Operating Manual for Qualification Standards. The employee is responsible for all costs related to this requirement.

7. Recruitment

Managers will determine the series an entry-level position will be advertised and inform the servicing CPOC of the decision.

8. Resources

Online resources listed below provide information on various aspects of the conversion process and educational/experience requirements:

- a. The South Atlantic Division 0025/0401 Conversion Review Web Site:
<https://sadnet.sad.usace.army.mil/resources/PDT/pdtdefault.htm>

- b. The Office of Personnel Management Operating Manual for Qualification Standards:
<http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/index.asp>

- c. The Office of Personnel Management Qualification Standards for Natural Resources Management and Biological Sciences GS-400 through GS-499:
<http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/sec-iii/a/0400-NDX.asp>

- d. The Natural Resources Distance Learning Consortium, Virginia Tech University:
<http://nrclc.iddl.vt.edu/>

- e. Qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions, General Policies and Instructions, Part E.4. (g) – E.5 (*Interpreting minimum educational requirements*)
<http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/sec-ii/s2-e6.asp>

Appendix E

Natural Resources Ranger
GS-0401-09

Major Duties:

Serves as a NRM staff specialist for one or more water resource development dams and lakes. Performs a variety of assignments involving all aspects of lake operations including natural and park resources management and public use. Responsibilities include long and short range planning, administration, coordination and management of various activities in the areas of fish and wildlife habitat, soil conservation, forest and range conservation, water quality, environmental stewardship, park management, public relations, visitor assistance, interpretation of environmental issues and Corps policies, public safety, historic and cultural resources, real estate actions, and other related fields.

1. Participates in the development of various planning documents including Master Plans and Operational Management Plans (OMP), for management of natural and park resources. Documents also include the Safety Plan, Fire Prevention Plan, Physical Security Plan and Shoreline Management Plan. Coordinates the short-range planning and execution of all activities related to one or more of the following programs: park management, domestic and lake water resource management, shoreline management, forestry, fisheries and wildlife habitat, shoreline/stream bank stabilization, pest control, soil conservation, boundary surveillance, historic and cultural properties protection, public education and interpretation, visitor assistance, security and public safety, structural safety, flood control, and operation and maintenance (O&M) contract administration for care and conservation of parks and natural areas. Assists in developing and implementing specific land use plans for the management of fish, wildlife, vegetation, soil, air, and water resources. 25%

2. Assists in developing and implementing specific land use plans while integrating public use with fish, wildlife, vegetation, soil, air, park and water resources management. Participates in the management of multiple plant and animal species to comply with regional species and habitat management requirements. Addresses both aquatic and terrestrial species and the impact of Corps activities and public use on those species. Utilizes knowledge of scientific principles, biological systems, and related disciplines in support of regional management plans, and to assist with development of long-term management strategies for Corps activities. Involved in the management of invasive plant and animal species such as: lawn fungus, zebra mussels, aquatic and upland weeds, as well as pest organisms such as rodents, Canadian geese, pigeons and gulls. Coordinates management activities with contractors, maintenance staff, and powerhouse O&M crews. Coordinates with District and Division offices including planning, engineering, operations, water management and other various elements. Participates in conservation, preservation, protection, restoration, and use of natural, cultural, and park resources. Prescribes and implements resource management actions that promote biodiversity and native species re-establishment. Monitors cultural resources sites and investigates/reports illegal use or destruction of same. Evaluates proposed real estate actions for environmental, cultural, and public use impacts and performs out grant inspections. 25%

3. Conducts public education and interpretive services for the general public and for special groups. Provides lake and dam information to local, state, and federal agencies, the visiting public, and private organizations through brochures, bulletin boards, news releases, telephone calls, radio/video public service announcements, and other written or oral correspondence/presentations. Meets with adjacent property owners, civic groups, conservation associations, school groups, stakeholder groups, and other members of the public to explain natural resources and environmental programs, promote interest in Corps activities, and explain management policies, rules, and regulations. Plans, promotes and executes special programs such as eco-meets, environmental awareness events, lake cleanup activities, and safety promotions. Develops and presents interpretive programs including slide shows, public speeches, and demonstrations. Develops brochures for public distribution. Evaluates interpretive exhibits in the lake visitor center and coordinates improvement and updates. Develops and coordinates the volunteer program. Provides assistance to local communities, the district office, and other lakes during emergency situations. During emergency situations and potential emergency situations, may be required to be available in an On-Call status. 20%

4. Enforces Title 36 CFR by educating the visiting public on the purposes of the dam and lake, conservation measures, environmental features, and Corps policies and regulations. Patrols public lands and waters to prevent unauthorized use, trespass, destruction of natural, cultural, or historic resources or government property; to insure compliance with rules and regulations; and for the protection of public lands and waters. Investigates violations, issues citations, and testifies in court. Enforces a public safety program for the lake that includes surveillance, and maintenance of regulatory buoys/signs and maintenance of boundary fences/identifiers. Participates in search and rescue operations and investigates boating, fishing, hunting, and park related accidents. Renders first aid/emergency medical services to the ill or injured. Deals regularly with the public in high stress emotional and potentially volatile situations. Works closely with other federal, state, and local natural resources, environmental, and law enforcement agencies. 10%

5. Assists with lake's environmental compliance and safety program. Keeps informed regarding environmental regulations, using the Environmental Review Guide for Operations (ERGO) as a guide. May participate on an interdisciplinary team to perform environmental assessments and in development of post assessment action plans. Performs surveillance of lake and watershed environments to monitor water quality and investigate sources of natural resources degradation. Conducts training for other staff members regarding environmental regulations and methods of operating within compliance. Investigates and reports non-compliance issues. Ensures strict enforcement of safe working habits, strictly enforces safety regulations, and personally exhibits safe working practices. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, developing and updating miscellaneous safety plans, participating in job hazard analyses, conducting safety meetings, and identifying, recommending, and implementing corrective action plans for hazardous conditions and environmental concerns. 10%

6. Participates in all aspects of park management at the lake(s). Assists in developing plans for facility improvements that are environmentally sound and consistent with current and future demands. Implements plans for special park projects and improvements. For public safety, inspects facilities including playgrounds, restrooms, trails, campground areas, boat ramps, picnic/lawn areas, signs and wayside exhibits. Assists with park maintenance activities.

Implements user fee program including the collection, remittance and safeguarding of fees. Plans, implements, and oversees special events to ensure public safety and protection of environmental features. Assists in specification writing and administration of contracts for lawn care, refuse removal, facility cleanup, gate attendants, tree pruning/removal, vegetation maintenance and landscape management, pesticides management, law enforcement, domestic and lake water quality testing, and any other contract necessary for the O&M of Corps lands and waters. Provides instruction and guidance to temporary or seasonal staff members. May serve as assistant park manager or assistant natural resource manager and may act as park manager or natural resources manager in the absence of the incumbent manager. 10%