

## EVALUATION STATEMENT

**Position Number:** S000360

**Proposed Title/Series/Grade:** Wildlife Refuge Specialist, GS-0485-11

**Location:** Various locations – see implementing guidelines on specificities

**References:** OPM Job Family Standard (JFS) for Professional Work in the Natural Resources Management and Biological Sciences Group, GS-0400P, dated September 2005.

**Background:** The proposed action is to reclassify multiple GS-0485 Wildlife Refuge Manager/Specialist positions by standardizing the position descriptions for grades GS-05 through GS-14 throughout the National Refuge System. This proposed position reflects the standard PD (SPD) for Wildlife Refuge Specialist, GS-0485-11.

**Series/Title Determination:** The incumbent draws upon a professional knowledge and background in wildlife biology and refuge management to plan, manage, and coordinate the operating program and other activities on the Refuge/WMD. Refuge operations and programs include wildlife biology, ecology, habitat management, natural resource program management (to include environmental laws, regulations, policies), visitor services (to include public use programs, outreach and education programs, volunteer programs, accessibility issues, representation, and law enforcement).

By virtue of requiring a professional background in the biology and/or natural resources sufficient to enable the incumbent to serve as a recognized technical expert in area of wildlife resource/wetland management, the position is covered under JFS for Professional Work in the Natural Resources Management and Biological Sciences Group, GS-0400P (reference a). Because the responsibility of the position is to plan, manage, and coordinate federal fish and wildlife refuge operations and programs on a National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge), Wetland Management District (WMD), or Refuge Complex, or any combination of the three - the most apparent series that would be appropriate for the described duties and responsibilities is the GS-0485, Wildlife Refuge Management, series. Under series GS-0485, the work involves development, enhancement, protection, and maintenance of land and habitat for a variety of species within the confines of a national wildlife refuge system which fits the proposed position description.

There are two prescribed titles under the GS-0485 series, with the assignment dependent upon the primary focus of the work. For positions whose primary work involves managing, administering, and operating a national wildlife refuge the standard indicates assignment of the prescribed title Wildlife Refuge Manager is in order. For positions performing line or staff work that supports planning, administering, evaluating, managing, and/or operating programs, activities, and projects associated with conserving and managing fish and/or wildlife resources in national wildlife refuges the standard indicates assignment of the prescribed title of Wildlife Refuge Specialist. The duties and responsibilities of this position are support in nature rather than managerial/supervisory; therefore, assignment of the title Wildlife Refuge Specialist is appropriate.

**Grade Level Determination:** The OPM Job Family Standard (JFS) for Professional Work in the Natural Resources Management and Biological Sciences Group, GS-0400P, dated September 2005 provides grade level criteria through the use of nine factors in accordance with the OPM Factor Evaluation System (FES). The GS-0400P JFS also provides benchmark factor level descriptions for individual GS-0400 occupational series (i.e., Wildlife Refuge Specialist, GS-0485) at several Factor Levels. The following is a determination of assigned levels and corresponding points per factor for the proposed SPD.

**Factor 1 – Knowledge Required by the Position:** The incumbent(s) of this position must possess a technical expertise in the theories, principles, concepts, practices, standards, and methods of the various applicable professional biology, ecology, and/or conservation fields, along with all applicable laws, regulations, policies, and procedures of the Service and other associated agencies sufficient to develop innovative solutions to complex resource and land management issues that have complicated environmental impacts and involve conflicting or unclear law and policy. The incumbent(s) is responsible for overseeing and managing refuge programs and operations which are diverse and require the resolution of significant resource, environmental, and/or management issues and problems related to a wildlife refuge, requiring the incumbent to identify, develop, and recommend new and innovative solutions to complex problems. The incumbent serves as a technical expert in the management of wildlife refuges and may represent the Service as needed.

Positions at Level 1-6 require knowledge of and skill in applying the concepts, principles, practices, and methodology of the field; the organization's programs and their governing laws and regulations and reference standards; related mathematical and/or biological disciplines; and Federal, state, local, and/or tribal laws and regulations in order to independently perform recurring, well-precedented projects using standard methods and techniques. The incumbent of this SPD will be handling projects/programs involving complex/complicated resource, environmental and/or management issues, many of which are without precedent. Therefore, this factor level is exceeded.

Positions at Level 1-7 involves positions responsible for refuge management programs and operations involving complicated issues, are often found at refuges that are diverse (diverse habitats, multiplex program services, management services, and operations), and are bound by laws and regulations which may not always have precedent. This is the first level of knowledge, skills and ability that would enable an individual to have the required level technical expertise to work independently in the planning, managing, and administering of a wildlife refuge programs and operations involving a diverse habitat and/or programs as well as environmental and/or day-to-day management issues and problems which may arise, many of which are without precedent – which is what the incumbent of the SPD is responsible for; therefore, this level is fully met.

Position found at Level 1-8 have a mastery and skill in applying, advanced theories, principles, concepts, practices, standards, and methods of wildlife biology, animal ecology, wildlife refuge administration, and habitat manipulation and related biological and physical science disciplines, such as botany, ornithology, and mammalogy. At this level, the employee is considered an expert authority in the management of federal wildlife refuges. Refuges managed at this level involve complex resource and land management issues that have controversial environmental or jurisdictional impact and involve conflicting or unclear law and policy that could result in changing, modifying or issuing of new guidance by the agency. The duties and responsibilities of the SPD do not fully meet the intention of this factor level.

This position meets Level 1-7 which is assigned 1250 points.

**Factor 2. Supervisory Controls:** The incumbent and supervisor together develop plans for the work to be accomplished, establishes the scope of work, and deadlines. The incumbent is responsible for planning and carry out work performed. Day-to-day activities are performed with considerable independence. Completed work is reviewed by the supervisor for compatibility with Complex, Regional and national wildlife refuge system goals, guidelines, adherence to policy, and effectiveness in achieving objectives.

Positions that are assigned Level 2-3 are those in which the supervisor provides general guidance on program goals and objectives. The incumbent works independently to establish timelines, develop a work schedule, accomplish required tasks and submit finished work products to the supervisor for final review and approval. Decisions, recommendations, and commitments are evaluated for conformity to policy. Completed work and recurring reports are reviewed for conformance to requirements and technical soundness. The level of supervisory control for this SPD exceeds this level.

Positions that are assigned Level 2-4 are those where the supervisor assigns work providing a general framework of priorities, funding and project objectives. The supervisor and incumbent develop a mutually acceptable plan, which includes the identification of the work to be done, as well as the scope and deadlines for its completion. The incumbent works independently to plan, schedule and carry out major refuge management programs, operations and projects. The incumbent is subject only to review of meeting overall objectives. The level of supervisory control for this SPD fully meets this level.

For assignment of Level 2-5, the supervision is very general in is in the form of administrative and policy direction in terms of broadly defined missions or functions of the agency with full technical authority delegated to the incumbent. At this level, positions do not receive supervision in the form of general guidance on program goals/objectives, mutually agreed upon scope and deadlines. The supervisory controls of the SPD are tighter than this level implies; therefore, Level 2-5 is not met.

This position meets Factor Level 2-4 which is assigned 450 points.

**Factor 3 – Guidelines:** The guidelines for this position include a variety of refuge and administrative manuals and procedures, precedent, and applicable laws (National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act). Such guidelines are not always applicable to specific assignments and the incumbent must choose, analyze and apply guidelines to specific situations.

At Level 3-2, the employee selects and uses a number of guidelines that are directly applicable to assignments, provide precedent, but may have small differences, and which identify procedures and methods. At this level the employee refers to the supervisor for instruction on assignments where guidelines cannot be used or involve major deviation. Available guidelines for use and judgment required of the incumbent as described in the SPD exceed this description.

At Level 3-3, the employee uses a wide variety of reference materials and manuals that are not always directly applicable to the work or have gaps in specificity. Available precedents outline existing approaches to more general problems or issues. At this level the employee uses judgment in selecting, interpreting, and applying available guidelines for adaptation to specific problems or issues. Available guidelines for use and judgment required of the incumbent as described in the SPD meet this description.

At Level 3-4, guidelines and precedents are often quite general and/or vague to include policy statements and/or objectives; may not apply to assignments, may be scarce, or not include specifics. At this level, the incumbent utilizes judgment and considerable interpretation of guidelines to complex issues and problems; in deviating from established methods; and modifying/adapting broad guidelines to resolve refuge specific complex issues/problems. Because the incumbent of the SPD will refer significant deviations to the supervisor for guidance on how to proceed, the full intent of this factor is not met.

This position meets Factor Level 3-3 which is assigned 275 points.

**Factor 4 – Complexity:** The work of this position involves a variety of duties requiring many different and unrelated processes applied to a broad range of activities that cover a wide geographic area, or substantial depth of analysis (i.e., planning, researching, analyzing, coordinating, implementing, designing, monitoring, developing, etc.) and broad and diverse biological programs often involving sensitive and complex migratory bird and endangered/ threatened species issues and evaluation of habitat classification and ecological production functions. Problems encountered may involve unprecedented, undeveloped, or complex aspects of wildlife biology and related disciplines often due to such characteristics as the abstract nature of the concepts, or the existence of serious conflicts among scientific requirements, program direction, and administrative requirements. Incumbent develops new approaches, techniques and methods and must be able to develop strategies based on trends/patterns

in natural resource uses and demands.

At Level 4-3, work performed involves duties that require unrelated steps, processes, methods, or procedures. Tasks may include analyzing and evaluating diverse environmental conditions and proposed refuge management actions changing habitat conditions; ensuring activities conform to standards and comply with regulatory requirements; and applying well established methods and concepts. The employee analyzes, evaluates the assignment at hand before selecting an appropriate course of action from many known alternatives. The employee identifies, interprets, analyzes, and applies a range of established approaches and solutions to problems or issues. Because the incumbent of the SPD will encounter situations without precedence or established procedures to follow requiring him/her to develop new approaches, techniques and methods as well as be able to develop strategies based on trends/patterns in refuge management uses and demands – this level is exceeded.

At Level 4-4, work performed involves applying not only well established methods and concepts, but also requires developing and utilizing new methods/techniques to accomplish refuge management work; selecting, analyzing, and evaluating courses of actions from not only known alternatives but new/unprecedented alternatives to resolve issues; and utilizes new approaches to develop solutions to complex wildlife refuge management problems or issues where data/information may be conflicting/lacking. The duties/responsibilities of the SPD meet the criteria for assignment of this factor level.

At level 4-5, performed involves a variety of refuge management duties requiring in-depth analysis of problems and issues that cover a geographic or environmentally diverse area, involve integrating resource analysis and coordinating and planning activities that cover multiple refuge programs, and in-depth analysis and use of various control methods/techniques – some which may be in the experimental stage. The problems they encounter, and solutions arrived at, may have potential economic impact of agency actions on commercial interests, individuals, and local governments; conflicts between species conservation and recreational interests; may encounter serious conflicts among requirements and program direction or administrative and legal requirements; may draw highly visible political consequences; and must continually be reviewed in anticipation of future trends and requirements. The incumbent of the SPD does not perform work that includes experimental stages; involve serious conflicts among program requirements; or propose solutions to problems that have highly visible political consequences. Therefore, this level is not fully met.

This position meets Factor Level 4-4 which is assigned 225 points.

**Factor 5 – Scope and Effect:** The purpose of the work is to plan, manage and coordinate the programs and operations of a national wildlife refuge. The problems faced are often complicated but not controversial and/or sensitive. The Wildlife Refuge Specialist interacts with stakeholders (i.e., native American Indians, business leaders, county and state officials, the general public, etc.) as a Refuge/WMD representative. When meeting with external senior officials, refers controversial and novel issues and problems to supervisor.

At Level 5-2, assignments are typically developmental in nature, involve common issues and/or problems, and usually include only a segment of a project that impact others with responsibility for the overall project. The breadth of interactions, complexity of the natural resource program and impact of work efforts described in the proposed SPD exceeds this level.

At Level 5-3, responsibilities involve performing the full range of refuge management activities involving a variety of conventional resource or refuge and environmental conditions; involve refuge management activities that are accordance with established criteria; identifying common problems involving plant and animal diseases, habitat conditions, or environmental impacts from recreational, commercial, and industrial operations; and ensuring the effective development and use of multiple-use resources areas at the local level. Work results affect agency credibility with internal and external customers; adequacy, accuracy, and effectiveness of activities, such as field investigations, research studies, or laboratory services; and/or efficient utilization, development,

protection, and management of natural resources and socioeconomic well-being of lease and permit holders and other users of natural resources. The incumbent of this SPD is responsible for identifying, analyzing and resolving a variety of conventional refuge problems and environmental conditions involving the established criteria; therefore, the criteria for this level is fully met.

At Level 5-4, responsibilities include investigating, analyzing, and evaluating problems and situations involving a wide variety of circumstances or unusual conditions; developing new or improved techniques, criteria, or alternatives to meet requirements involving specific refuge management problems, and issues, or agency activities; and upgrading current capabilities involving refuge management program and/or operations' activities; and/or assessing program effectiveness. The results at this level affect the effectiveness and acceptability of agency goals, programs, and activities; continued compliance with applicable legislation, regulation, and agency policy, and public interest; and/or diverse refuge management uses and conditions. The level of interactions, complexity of the natural resource program and impact of work efforts described in the proposed SPD does not fully meet the intent of the criteria established for Level 4.

This position meets Factor Level 5-3 which is assigned 150 points.

**Factors 6 - Personal Contacts:** Contacts are with management officials/employees of the Service and Department; Federal, state, and local agencies, elected and appointed officials; university and school officials; professional and technical subject matter specialists in the same or related disciplines; local and national level conservation and recreational use organizations and groups; Tribal representatives; contractors; local and regional media; volunteers; and the general public.

Contacts at Level 6-2 are primarily within the employing agency but may extend out in moderate structured settings. The level of contacts for the proposed SPD exceeds this level.

Contacts at Level 6-3 are with individuals or groups representing high levels of organizations -internal and external to the Federal Government. Typical contacts are with contractors, legal professionals, management officials or senior technical staff of corporations, other Federal agencies, academia, or professional organizations. The diversity of contacts for the proposed PD meets this level.

Contacts at Level 6-4 are with high-ranking officials from outside the employing department or agency at national or international levels in highly unstructured settings. Some typical contacts expected at this level include leaders of national stakeholder and/or interest groups; presidents of large national or international firms; national news media; representatives of community action committees; State governors, mayors of large cities, or tribal leaders; Members of Congress; and Presidential advisors and cabinet-level appointees of major departments and agencies. The level of contacts described in the SPD does not fully meet this Level's criteria.

Level 6-3 is assigned. Factor 6 will be combined with Factor 7 for point assignment.

**Factor 7 – Purpose of Contacts:** The primary purpose of making contacts for this SPD is to obtain/exchange information to promote the Service and programs pertinent to the Refuge/WMD; complete assignments; provide direction; resolve problems and conflicts; and coordinate activities.

Contacts at Level 7-A are simply to obtain, clarify, or exchange information or facts needed to complete an assignment. The purpose of contacts described within the proposed SPD exceeds this level.

Contacts at Level 7-B involves exchanging basic information in the planning, coordinating, or advising on work efforts, or to resolve issues or operating problems. If any influencing or persuading needs to occur, it is with cooperative individuals who are working toward mutual goals and have cooperative attitudes. The purpose of contacts described in the proposed SPD meets this level.

Contacts at Level 7-C begin to see interactions involved with influencing and persuading persons or groups who may be skeptical or uncooperative. Many interactions will involve the use of stronger communications skills/tactics such as persuasion or negotiation, or establishing rapport to gain information. What the incumbent seeks is arriving at a desired effect, such as gaining compliance with established policies or acceptance of established methods. The interactions described in the proposed SPD does not describe needing to influence/persuade other who may be skeptical and/or uncooperative; therefore, the proposed PD does not fully meet the criteria for assignment of Level C.

Level 7-B is assigned.

Overall, this position meets Factor 6/7 Levels 3-B which is assigned 110 points.

**Factor 8 – Physical Demands:** This position requires a good amount of time spent outdoors when engaged in field work which involves walking for long periods, crouching, stooping and possibly climbing/crawling. The incumbent may be exposed to inclement weather, wild animals, poisonous plants and insects/snakes. The incumbent may be required to lift and carry objects weighing up to 50 pounds, and carry a firearm.

Under Level 8-1, work is sedentary and requires the physical exertion that is considered routine. With a requirement to work outdoors, the physical demands of the proposed SPD exceed this level's criteria.

Under Level 8-2, the work requires long periods of standing; walking or riding horses over rough terrain; recurring bending, crouching, stooping, reaching, or similar activities. Work may also include frequent lifting of moderately heavy items, such as equipment and samples that weigh less than 23 kilograms or approximately 50 pounds. The physical demands of the proposed SPD meets this level's criteria.

Under Level 8-3, performance of work requires considerable and strenuous physical exertion and exposure to extreme conditions, such as: frequent crouching or crawling over rough, uneven, or rocky terrain; lifting heavy objects that weigh over 23 kilograms or approximately 50 pounds; and hostile wildlife, or chemical, biological, or physical hazards for which protective precautions are required or mandated by law. Although exertion is expected in the performance of his/her duties, there is no anticipation that this level of exertion will be expected in the performance of duties/responsibilities; therefore, this level is not met.

This position meets Factor Level 8-2, which is assigned 20 points.

**Factor 9 - Work Environment:** The work is performed both in an office and outdoors. The incumbent may be subject to large numbers of biting insects, poisonous plants, and may be required to work in close proximity to large animals. He/she may need to carry a firearm for personal protection from wildlife. Frequent travel by various means of surface and air transportation is required to attend meetings and to conduct field work. The incumbent is expected to conduct duties in a safe and orderly manner so as not to endanger self, fellow workers, or property.

Under Level 9-1, work is performed in a typical office setting that is well ventilated, temperature controlled, with adequate lighting. Because the incumbent of the proposed SPD is required to work outdoors at a Refuge/WMD, this level's criteria is exceeded.

Under Level 9-2, work involves exposure to moderate risks and discomforts, such as those due to adverse weather conditions, travel in safety approved small air and water craft and off-road vehicles; irritating chemicals; noxious fumes; flammable liquids; hostile wildlife; and poisonous insects, plants, or snakes; Work requires special safety precautions and/or protective clothing and equipment. The work environment described in the proposed SPD meets this level's criteria.

Under Level 9-3, work involves high risk of exposure or damage due to: extreme weather conditions; working at great heights in remote locations; hazardous chemicals; wildland fires; serious confrontations with armed hunters; or working with lethal viruses. Although there is risk involved in the performance of this position, with the possibility of carrying a firearm for protection, there is no anticipation that this level of exertion will be expected in the performance of duties/responsibilities; therefore, this level is not met.

This position meets Factor Level 9-2 which is assigned 20 points.

**Point Summary:** The following is a break down by Factor Levels assigned and corresponding points.

<u>Factor</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Points</u>
1. Knowledge Required by the Position	1-7	1250
2. Supervisory Controls	2-4	450
3. Guidelines	3-3	275
4. Complexity	4-4	225
5. Scope and Effect	5-3	150
6/7. Personal Contacts/Purpose of Contacts	3-B	110
8. Physical Demands	8-2	20
9. Work Environment	9-2	<u>20</u>
TOTAL POINTS		2500

A total of 2500 points is assigned and falls within the GS-11 range (2355 – 2750) in accordance with the point to grade conversion chart in the GS-400 standard. Based on the assigned factor levels and points, this position is evaluated at the GS-11 level.

**Final Classification (Title/Series/Grade):** Refuge Wildlife Specialist, GS-0485-11

FLSA Determination: Exempt (learned professional/exercises discretion and independent judgment)

Financial Disclosure: Not Required

Risk Designation: Moderate \*

Drug Testing: No

BUS: 7777 \*\*

\* Determination made by AD-NWRS to set at Moderate based on GS-0485 staff routinely carrying firearms in the performance of their work for either law enforcement, invasive/nuisance animal control, or for bear safety.

\*\* although decisions and/or recommendations made by the incumbent are used by the Wildlife Refuge Manager in developing/modifying Refuge/WMD-specific policies/procedures the incumbent's responsibilities do not involve actively formulating/influencing or participating in the formulation of agency policies)

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 March 31, 2009