

SPD# S000360
Wildlife Refuge Specialist, GS-0485-11
Standard Position Description

INTRODUCTION

This is a full performance level (FPL) standard position description (SPD) intended for use throughout the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Wildlife Refuge Specialist, GS-0485-11, positions are found throughout National Wildlife Refuges (Refuge), Wetland Management Districts (WMD), Refuge Complexes, or combination of the three. They serve under the Wildlife Refuge Manager responsible for the facility to which assigned.

The incumbent of this position assists the Wildlife Refuge Manager in the development and administration of the operating program and other activities. 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).

MAJOR DUTIES

1. Wildlife Biology, Ecology, and Habitat Management (15-25%)

Responsible for the day-to-day operational aspects of coordinating, planning, and carrying out various duties involved with the effective and efficient running of Refuge/WMD biological programs and services. Oversees and reviews land and aquatic conservation activities, habitat development, clean-up, contaminant and restoration projects, research studies, population studies, wildlife inventory, and monitoring activities to include species lifecycle requirements and management. Ensures all projects comply with national, regional, and Refuge/WMD policies, regulations and mandates.

Develops and fosters partnerships with other Federal, state and local agencies, and private organizations to protect lands around the Refuge/WMD.

Participates in the review of projects proposed by other agencies, stakeholders/partners (i.e., U.S. Forest Service, state fish and wildlife agencies, Tribal representatives), identifying possible conflicts with refuge management objectives, and develops comments and recommendations for the Wildlife Refuge Manager and senior management approval.

Provides the Wildlife Refuge Manager and other senior management input for, and assists in, the preparation of interagency cooperative agreements and memoranda of understanding (MOUs) and subsequent modifications, and assists in the administration of these agreements.

Develops and carries out active stewardship of natural resources beyond Refuge/WMD boundaries to improve or safeguard the Refuge/WMD, and to enhance or protect trust resources over large geographic areas. Implements land and wetland use programs or management techniques designed to improve wildlife habitat such as invasive species control, weed control, seeding, haying, and any other practices resulting in increased benefits to migratory birds and other wildlife using the Refuge/WMD.

May participate in the management and administration of Refuge/WMD interests in land acquisition and/or easement activities that would require working cooperatively with realty specialists and landowners in land acquisition activities and issues.

Prepares Special Use Permits, as needed, for activities such as grazing, planting and harvesting hay or other crops, wildlife and ecological research, and/or commercial filming. Makes appropriate use and compatibility determinations for permits using policies, reviewing projects and making decisions accordingly.

Assists in the management and administration of the Refuge/WMD's fire program in accordance with Service/Department policies. May manage and/or lead staff who are responsible for staffing levels of firefighters required to ensure adequate coverage and ready rapid response for any emergency (prescribed/wildfires) at the Refuge/WMD. May be required to coordinate fire response efforts with surrounding community (both on the giving and receiving end).

2. Natural Resources Program Management

(15-25%)

Participates in the development of required National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation (or portions thereof) including Environmental Assessments (EAs), Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 consultations, archeological clearances, etc. Coordinates with the Wildlife Refuge Manager and other senior management in the gathering and consolidating of data.

Prepares Comprehensive Conservation Plans, Habitat Management Plans, Land Acquisition and Protection Plans, etc. (or portions thereof).

Assists the Wildlife Refuge Manager in applying current and changing natural resources laws, rules, and regulations that affect the National Wildlife Refuge System (e.g., water rights, rights-of-way, oil and gas, easements, fee title lands, etc.) to ensure that all activities within the Refuge/WMD program remains in compliance.

3. Visitor Services

(15-25%)

Assists with the planning and directing of the Refuge/WMD's comprehensive public relations/public use program - including off-refuge programs, interpretive and educational programs, wildlife dependent recreation (hunting, fishing, wildlife observation), and other recreational management activities - to maximize use of the Refuge/WMD.

Routinely responds to information requests from individuals, local groups, and organizations.

Participates in the design of outreach and educational programs for the community. Provides input to the development of brochures, interpretive panels/exhibits, websites, etc.

Participates with the Wildlife Refuge Manager and other senior management or agency specialists in the development and review of site plans and designs.

Conducts tours with groups and may serve as environmental education instructor.

Plans, schedules, attends, and/or conducts a variety of formal and informal meetings (i.e., presenting specific information to targeted audiences on Refuge projects or on the potential impact to the Refuge as a result of commercial activity in surrounding areas, educational presentations, facility tours, open forum meetings to gather public opinion on current and proposed projects/programs) with elected officials (local, county, state legislators, and Congressional staff), individuals at varying levels of government (local, state, and Federal), private landowners, country/state farm bureaus, the media, local and national environmental/conservation groups, academia, Tribal representatives, and the general public. Provides information, discusses issues, resolves problems, and receives public interest on the status of existing, developing, or proposed refuges.

Manages Refuge/WMD volunteer programs and supervise volunteer work. Ensures volunteers, Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) crew members or other workers are fully trained.

4. Program Planning and Business Administration

(10-20%)

Assists the Wildlife Refuge Manager and other senior management in the development of long-range plans, annual work plans, budgets and work schedules. Implements short, medium, and long-range operation plans based on existing or approved plans, and coordinates work schedules for equipment and resources with other Refuge/WMDs within the Refuge Complex.

Develops cost estimates and the work sequence of major and minor rehabilitation projects of Refuge/WMD assets.

Prepares administrative reports, annual narrative reports, and other documents associated with wildlife management and administrative programs. Prepares Refuge accomplishment reports gathering data from various automated systems for inclusion in Refuge Complex budget submissions.

Updates, prioritizes, manages, and/or utilizes automated systems and programs for budget tracking, procurement, asset inventories/maintenance. (e.g., Refuge Operation Needs (RONS) and Maintenance Management System (MMS)/Service Asset Maintenance Management System (SAMMS) project entries and Refuge Annual Performance Plan (RAPP) submissions).

5. Facilities and Equipment Management (10-20%)

Administers the facilities and equipment management program. Plans and schedules operations and maintenance projects. Develops various work plans and organizes projects covering the construction, repair and maintenance of equipment, buildings, roads, trails, fences, dikes and other infrastructure.

Utilizes engineering and construction techniques as applied to Refuge/WMD infrastructure, training and operation of heavy equipment, reporting requirements (e.g., real property inventories, personal property inventories, SAMMS, annual maintenance, energy reports, etc.), safety rules, and environmental compliance reporting requirements.

NOTE: The following responsibilities are applicable only if the boxes are checked.

Requires training and up-to-date certification in the operation of small boats, snowmobiles, four-wheel all-terrain vehicles, motor vehicles, and/or other light and heavy equipment for official purposes.

Requires training and an up-to-date license to carry, handle and use firearms for animal control in compliance with safety policies.

ATTENTION: Individuals who are required to carry firearms during duty hours are subject to the Lautenberg Amendment to the Gun Control Act of 1968 which prohibits individuals who have ever been convicted of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence from carrying any form of firearms.

FACTOR EVALUATION

Factor 1. Knowledge Required by the Position

Knowledge and skill in applying a wide range of theories, principles and concepts of population and wildlife and aquatic biology, wildlife management, species lifecycle requirements/ management, and conservation biology sufficient to independently carry out assignments and resolve complex issues and problems related to the day-to-day operations of a wildlife refuge.

Knowledge of related disciplines of plant ecology, soil science, hydrology, plant and wildlife diseases, restoration ecology, forestry, land management/conservation, and fire ecology and management sufficient to restore/preserve and ensure the safety of wildlife flora/fauna of a geographical disperse wildlife refuge and surrounding areas.

Knowledge of applicable laws and agency policies, objectives, planning, and management activities related to the National Wildlife Refuge System (e.g., public use, accessibility, law enforcement, etc.) and knowledge of State, local, and Tribal laws, customs, and economic interests including the National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act (NWRIA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and their requirements sufficient to perform duties within legal boundaries and identify improper or illegal activities on the wildlife refuge.

In-depth knowledge and ability to apply methods, procedures, and techniques in habitat management and in prescribed burning to protect cultural resources and sensitive areas sufficient to safely carry out and contain to the identified area prescribed burning responsibilities.

Ability to plan, develop, coordinate, and manage the resolution of complex resource use issues and problems related to a wildlife Refuge/WMD (e.g. control waterfowl depredation problems associated with a Refuge/WMD located in an area of intensive agricultural development; control disease outbreaks occurring among large concentrations of waterfowl; manage a large, diverse, and complex cooperative farming program; and/or operate a large and diverse hunting program consistent with laws, agency regulations, and local customs) sufficient to effectively and efficiently resolve complex issues and problems related to the day-to-day operations of a wildlife refuge.

Familiarity with realty concepts and procedures sufficient to develop preliminary plans for maintenance, repairs, or remodeling of Refuge/WMD facilities and infrastructure and to assist with contract specifications.

Skill and diplomacy in coordinating station activities with other agencies and organizations; dealing effectively with the general public; and exercising official association with Federal, state, and local agencies, and private and national organizations and interest groups.

Ability to communicate effectively orally sufficient to brief management and present information to a variety of visitors.

Ability to communicate in writing sufficient to prepare objective narrative reports requiring little or no revision.

Knowledge of planning and budgeting processes sufficient to participate in development of long-range plan, annual work plans, and associated budgeting.

Ability to utilize a variety of automated systems/applications/databases (e.g., Microsoft Suite, Lotus Notes, SAMMS, budget tracking, procurement, etc.).

Ability to provide guidance and training to lower-graded employees and to oversee volunteer work.

For positions interacting with tribal and/or Native American groups, knowledge of the culture, tradition and use of natural resources for subsistence and other purposes, and ability to interact in a culturally sensitive, tactful, and objective manner.

Knowledge of Service/Department fire management policies and procedures, firefighting techniques, and the structure of fire management programs sufficient to assist in the management and administration of the Refuge/WMD's fire program.

Skill in operating automotive equipment requiring a current driver's license.

Employees assigned to operate watercraft are required to possess knowledge and skills as certified by the completion of the Department's Motorboat Operator Certification Course (MOCC) or other approved watercraft training program (such as USCG Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessel (OUPV, commonly known as "six pack"). This includes the knowledge needed to safely operate watercraft; familiarity with state-of-the-art watercraft safety equipment and other gear; and adequate grasp of motorboat handling techniques and knowledge to safely operate a motorboat.

If applicable, ability to carry, handle and use firearms for animal control, in compliance with safety policies.

Factor 2. Supervisory Controls

The Wildlife Refuge Manager establishes overall goals and resources available. The incumbent and supervisor confer on the development of general objectives, assignments to be completed, and deadlines. The incumbent is responsible for independently planning and carrying out assignments, identifying solutions to problems, and coordinating program activities with appropriate personnel. This includes coordinating work and resolving conflicts with others outside of the Fish and Wildlife Service. The incumbent reports progress, advises on problems and possible adverse reactions and

recommends solutions to supervisor. The supervisor reviews completed work for soundness of overall approach, effectiveness in meeting requirements or producing expected results, the feasibility of recommendations, and adherence to requirements. The supervisor usually does not review methods used.

Factor 3. Guidelines

Well-defined guidelines are available in the form of refuge manuals, administrative manuals, the statutory provisions of applicable legislation, policies specified in correspondence, and interchange with other Wildlife Refuge Managers and biologists. Incumbent uses judgment to make frequent and considerable interpretation and adaptation of guidelines. Significant deviations are referred to supervisor.

Factor 4. Complexity

Major emphasis of the work is to plan for, provide, and maintain adequate habitat management and restoration projects that involve many different and unrelated processes, methods and problems. The incumbent is expected to solve complex problems where tested solutions are not applicable and to develop innovative management techniques or modify existing techniques. The incumbent considers several factors in planning Refuge/WMD operations, such as habitat protection and environmental systems within the habitats; visitor or recreational uses of the Refuge/WMD; protection of Refuge/WMD boundaries; employee, volunteer, and visitor safety; maintenance of Refuge/WMD structures, roads, water control equipment, dikes, and dams; and administrative matters, such as budget and procurement records. Field inspections, wildlife population and habitat condition surveys, and completion of associated reports are routinely completed. To decide what needs to be done, the employee evaluates unusual circumstances, works with incomplete and conflicting information, reconciles environmental goals that have conflicting requirements, contends with the absence of precedent, and contends with new methods and equipment.

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/WMD. Work requires the incumbent to review, investigate, analyze, or advise the Refuge Manager on a variety of conventional resource or refuge problems and environmental conditions (such as plant and animal diseases, habitat conditions, or environmental impacts from recreational, commercial, and industrial operations) in accordance with established criteria; work with other refuge staff in developing and implementing effective multiple-use resources areas; and resolve a variety of problems, questions, or conditions in accordance with established procedures or precedents.

Incumbent's work impacts the Refuge's/Service's credibility with internal and external customers; the progress and direction of the Refuge/WMD program; and the efficient utilization, development, and protection of Refuge/WMD activities as they relate to preservation of wildlife resources.

Factor 6. Personal Contacts

Contacts are with co-workers; elected and appointed Federal, state, and local agency officials and employees; university and school officials; professional and technical subject matter specialists in the same or related disciplines; local conservation organizations and groups; Tribal representatives; contractors; local and regional media; volunteers; and the general public.

Factor 7. Purpose of Contacts

The purpose of making contacts is to promote the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and programs pertinent to the Refuge/WMD; exchange information and ideas; discuss complicated problems; draft plans and recommendations for projects; coordinate activities with others; and inform and educate about Refuge/WMD operations. Contacts are also for the purpose of discussing work assignments, providing work direction to employees, explaining and disseminating information to groups and individuals, and exchange of data and information.

Factor 8. Physical Demands

The work requires some physical exertion such as walking over wet, rough, uneven, or marshy surfaces; bending, crouching, stooping, stretching, reaching, or similar activities; and recurring lifting of moderately heavy items weighing up to 50 pounds. Work requires average agility and dexterity.

Factor 9. Work Environment

The work is performed both in an office and outdoors. The office is adequately lighted, heated and ventilated. The incumbent may be subject to large numbers of biting insects 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. The incumbent is expected to conduct duties in a safe and orderly manner so as not to endanger oneself, fellow workers, or property.