U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Conservation Planning Career Pathways Report

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and, where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.

Cover photograph: *The planning team for Long Lake National Wildlife Refuge Complex, ND, works on the vision and goals for their comprehensive conservation plan.*
Bernardo Garza/USFWS

Conservation Planning Career Pathways Report

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Conservation Planning Career Pathways Report

Abstract

Recent legislation, executive orders, and agency policies and regulations have created a new commitment to planning for the future of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The requirement of a comprehensive conservation plan for every national wildlife refuge by 2012 is a mandate to create a future vision for the System, embodied in completing hundreds of plans, unparalleled in the agency's history. In addition, the mandate to plan and direct the continued growth of the System ensures that habitat and wildlife will be protected for future generations to enjoy. Using the latest data-gathering and analytical technologies will ensure the success of conservation planning.

Planning professionals play a critical role in fulfilling the mission of the System and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Their efforts impact refuge priorities, budget allocations, partnerships, species, and habitats for many years after plans are completed. A clearly defined, well-recognized career pathway for the planning profession in the Service is central to achieving the level of planning expertise needed. This will foster retention of the Service's best planners through enhancing their prestige and providing opportunities for career growth. This career pathways report will strengthen the ties between the refuge staff and the planning staff. It will also aid in recruiting and developing a diverse cadre of highly motivated conservation planners by providing a nationally recognized career ladder, on-the-job experience, and developmental training programs. As the Service continues to recognize the value of planning, more conservation planners will also assume other positions of leadership in the Service as well.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to define a career pathway for conservation planning within the National Wildlife Refuge System (System) of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). Career pathways will *Fulfill the Promise* of identifying and developing *America's Best and Brightest* to provide the highest level of conservation planning services to the System, to maintain and build *Esprit de Corps* among the planning professionals, and to strengthen the *System Integrity* of refuges and waterfowl production areas.

Since passage of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (Improvement Act), conservation planning has become critical to fulfilling the mission of the Service and the System. We must (1) prepare comprehensive conservation plans (CCPs) for every national wildlife refuge, (2) plan and direct the continued growth of the System through land protection planning, and (3) provide guidance for preparation of step-down management plans. Professional planning must use the latest data-gathering and analytical technologies to inform decision makers. Conservation planning provides needed and diverse services and must be recognized as an integral part of the Service and the System.

The challenge is to recruit planning professionals, develop their skills, provide a career ladder, retain a diverse workforce, and continually motivate a cadre of planners. The attributes of conservation planning must also be recognized as critically important for those considering careers as refuge managers, policy makers, and future leaders of the Service, as well as those considering other career ladders. The planning profession is wide and varied from federal to local governments and from nonprofit organizations to private businesses. Professional registration for those in the conservation planning career pathways will be encouraged. These include membership in the American Institute of Certified Planners through the American Planning Association, certified wildlife biologist through The Wildlife Society, licensed landscape architect through the American Society of Landscape Architects, and geographic information system (GIS) professional through the GIS Certification Institute.

Within the context of planning career pathways, GIS specialists and writer/editors are an integral part of ensuring the success of comprehensive conservation planning and land protection planning. It is recognized that these professions may be included in many other areas in the Service. These disciplines are described here as they relate to accomplishing conservation planning and their importance to completing CCPs and land protection plans (LPPs). Conservation planning is varied and includes other disciplines that are necessary for plan preparation and completion. Sociologists, economists, engineers, GIS data managers, and others contribute to planning; however, these specialties will not be described in this career pathways report.

Implementing the recommendations in this report will ensure that planning is recognized as a profession within the Service and becomes a career aspiration for many currently working and those wanting to work for the Service. We must ensure a career pathway that stimulates professional development and brings new meaning to the lives of conservation planning professionals. The elements of this report, when viewed collectively, represent the career pathway for the conservation planning profession in the Service.

BACKGROUND

The Improvement Act gave new meaning to conservation planning in the Service. In the Improvement Act, Congress directs the Service to complete a CCP for each refuge by 2012. Congress also directs the Service to manage each refuge consistent with an approved CCP.

Refuges face more challenges—from increasing public use demands to ongoing habitat fragmentation and from declining habitats across the landscape to globally declining wildlife and biodiversity. To meet these challenges, the planning leadership prepared the *Strategic Needs Assessment* for CCPs in December 2003. It recommended that the Service leadership elevate the status of developing and completing quality CCPs to one of the highest priorities for the System.

In addition to CCP planning for existing refuges, the Service must continue to consider which lands to add to the System. The Improvement Act directs the Secretary of the Interior to "plan and direct the continued growth of the System." The Service is currently working towards a strategic growth initiative that ensures orderly and defensible growth of the System. These are times of change, and having a cadre of professional planners for land protection planning is important.

A commitment to effective comprehensive conservation and land protection planning, grounded in sound science and guided by professional planners, will improve management at refuges by targeting the highest priority projects and utilizing limited resources more efficiently. The GIS and other tools are critical to ensuring that decisions are made utilizing the most up-to-date analytical methods.

Following passage of the Improvement Act, little refuge planning infrastructure was in place to guide the new massive workload of preparing CCPs for hundreds of refuges in the System. Planning policy had to be revised, a Service-wide CCP training course was instituted, and the culture of the entire System had to be readjusted to integrate conservation planning. Despite the challenges and steep learning curve, comprehensive conservation planning is now well established. New refuge planning policy is in place, hundreds of System personnel and partners have participated in the Service-wide CCP training course, refuge managers and staffs understand and appreciate the value of CCP and LPP planning, and the recommendations in the *Strategic Needs Assessment* and the *2012 Plan* are being implemented.

The last step in instituting a culture of conservation planning is establishing a career pathway for professional planners in the Service. It is important to note that conservation planning encompasses professional planners, GIS specialists, and writer/editors, as well as using the services of sociologists, economists, facilitators, GIS data managers, and other specialties.

USFWS

Conserving lands critical to meeting the needs of wildlife has a long and proud history in the Service and must continue for many years to come.

FULFILLING THE PROMISE

The report, *Fulfilling the Promise*, directs efforts toward the greatest needs and challenges of the System. The leadership, vision, and recommendations of *Fulfilling the Promise* helped guide the development of a career pathways for conservation planning. The leadership recommendations are listed.

Recommendation L1: Make leadership development the priority of the System and the Service.

Recommendation L2: Establish a systematic recruitment, training, and mentoring program to hire the best and brightest, while creating a diverse workforce.

Recommendation L3: Enhance retention and formalize recommended career pathways to develop leaders at all levels of the System.

Recommendation L4: Promote opportunities and an environment for career-long education and personal development for all employees.

Recommendation L5: Ensure that the System produces a cadre of leaders qualified and willing to successfully compete for senior leadership positions in the Service.

Recommendation L10: Develop and maintain consistent organizational structures across regions, providing a consistent set of basic regional office functions for refuge support.

Recommendation L11: Fully implement and integrate the provisions of the Refuge Improvement Act into operations and activities of the System.

Lastly, elevating the profession of conservation planning will enable us to ensure that:

- *Wildlife Comes First*;
- Our refuges are *Anchors of Biodiversity and Healthy Wildlife Habitat*;
- We are the *Leaders and Centers of Excellence*;
- We plan for *Strategic Growth of the System*;
- Our plans are *Models of Land Management*.

Through conservation planning, we can ensure that each refuge as well as our System is a legacy of wildlife, a place where visitors are welcome, and a place with opportunities for public stewardship so we can ensure that Americans have a System to appreciate. A cadre of diverse, highly motivated, and trained planning professionals is necessary to meet our planning mandates and to *Fulfill the Promise*.

VISION

Conservation planning is recognized in the Service as a dynamic activity that uses the best available science to ensure that *Wildlife Comes First*; contributes to the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of each refuge; and facilitates consideration of compatible wildlife-dependent recreational use; while ensuring that other programs, governments (federal, state, and local), tribes, landowners, conservation organizations, and the public have the opportunity to participate in the planning process.

Managers strive to recruit, develop, and retain the best and brightest cadre of planning professionals to accomplish these tasks. Planners actively seek out input and assistance from other program areas within the Service. Planning positions are highly sought-after due to the diversity of the job, agency support, and career potential. Planners actively participate in a continuing education and development program that sharpens their skills, provides motivation, and promotes excellence.

In the process of guiding the development of refuge plans, planners facilitate teamwork; encourage large-scale and long-term perspectives; build bridges between refuges and other governmental agencies, the public, and partners; transfer their skills to others; and help achieve the mission of the System.

DELIVERY SYSTEM

Conservation planning in each region is organized differently based on funding, workload, and the unique requirements of the geographically diverse refuges. However, all regions should aim to include the core disciplines for the planning function. Each region should have a planning chief. The range of disciplines reflects the wide variety of perspectives required for conservation planning. It is important that the career ladder within regions not have significant grade gaps within their respective structures that would preclude a person from moving up.

There is a need to strengthen the ties between the refuge staff and the planning staff. This could partly be accomplished by staff exchanges and other means of "cross-pollination" of field and planning functions.

Conservation planning will continue to evolve, and there is the reality that conservation planners may become fluent in comprehensive conservation planning and in land protection planning. In these instances, the position descriptions from the two areas should be combined to reflect their duties. For purposes of this report, the requirements for the two areas are separate since there are several regions that continue to have separate functions.

The career ladder consists of supervisory and non-supervisory positions from the GS-5 to the GS-14 level. The full-performance level for most non-supervisory CCP/LPP/GIS positions will be at the GS-12 level; however, there will be some GS-13 non-supervisory senior level positions.

Some conservation planners and GIS positions are placed in the field. Regional consistency in planning may be more easily attained by having field-based personnel report to the regional office, but with an emphasis on region-wide communication among planners, refuge supervisors, project leaders, and regional office staff—either line of supervision can result in high-quality CCPs and LPPs. As workforce planning proceeds, there may also be potential for placing planners in other office arrangements.

The core of conservation planning revolves around two major areas of expertise and one major support function—comprehensive conservation and land protection planning, and GIS support. Each region will require technical writing, editing, document design, and publishing support. Administrative support is important, and planning also uses other professionals such as sociologists, economists, facilitators, and engineers.

Comprehensive Conservation Planning

This function requires a diverse staff of professional disciplines. Because of this, the standard position descriptions are not offered as interdisciplinary. Instead, each discipline is described in a different position description to reflect the need to staff this function with each one of these professional positions. Most of the positions have positive education requirements with the exception of outdoor recreation planners.

There are six disciplines from which to choose, as listed.

Natural Resource Specialists, GS-401. A general or specific background in natural resources is essential for the competent preparation of CCPs. This position requires a knowledge and understanding of fish and wildlife management concepts, principles, and practices in order to prepare plans used for habitat and wildlife management.

Refuge Program Specialists, GS-485. The experience as a refuge manager or refuge program specialist is desirable for the enhancement of the planning process, as well as for the planning knowledge the refuge managers/specialists can take back to refuges if they leave. The staffing of this particular position is one that may have the highest degree of turnover as refuge specialists/managers move through this program to learn the planning function. While individuals filling this function can certainly be a part of the permanent staff, many who come to this function do so for career development purposes with long-term goals of returning to a refuge or other leadership position.

Wildlife Biologists, GS-486. This series requires a professional knowledge of wildlife biology to perform work involving the application of biological facts, including the distribution of habitats and life histories of wildlife. This background is important for the development of CCPs for our refuges.

Community Planners, GS-020. The community planner series includes professional positions concerned with the art and science of planning applied to urban or rural communities. Planners normally work to develop community policies, decisions, and actions in such matters as the development, use, and conservation of the natural resources in the community. Although many community planners have a background in urban rather than rural environments, the definition of this series includes work done within this division. Community planners generally have a background in socioeconomics and a history of building community support. Combining the skills of a community planner with that of biologists will benefit CCP development.

Landscape Architects, GS-807. The skill and education of a landscape architect is a desired perspective in the development of CCPs. Landscape architects have a planning orientation. They are employed in the federal government in agencies requiring professional work in the planning, design, and preservation phases of landscape architectural development for such projects as national parks, national wildlife refuges, and forests or other management areas of similar scope.

Park Rangers, GS-025. The outdoor recreation planner series is being phased out in favor of the park ranger series. These professionals have a background in a wide variety of fields including but not limited to natural resource management, park and recreation management, recreational use of public lands and facilities, and behavioral sciences. If expertise is required in visitor services, this is the series to be used.

Outdoor Recreation Planners, GS-023. These professionals specialize in dealing with people of differing backgrounds and behavioral patterns; analyze and evaluate outdoor recreation interests; evaluate land and water areas for their recreation and related potential use; prepare plans for natural resources utilization and recreation area development; and provide solutions for providing recreation opportunities while preserving, restoring and enhancing the quality of the outdoor environment. It should be noted that this series is being phased out and that any new recruitments will likely not be advertised in this series, but rather in the park ranger (GS-025) series.

Land Protection Planning

There are two critical skill sets. They are natural resource specialists (GS-401) and wildlife biologists (GS-486). The core occupations required for this work are listed.

Natural Resource Specialists, GS-401. Comprehensive land evaluations benefit from a general approach and understanding of the natural resources being considered; such evaluations require the approach of a natural resources specialist.

Wildlife Biologists, GS-486. The specialized background of a wildlife biologist is critical for the evaluation of land and habitats requiring a complicated biological assessment.

GIS Support Function

The GIS support function requires the talents and skills of a diverse workforce as well. Although this function is ideally placed in the planning function, this support function can effectively exist in other areas of the organization. GIS support is an integral and important function to ensure timely completion of CCPs and LPPs. Some biologists and physical scientists possess mapping and other geographic information technical skills, thereby enabling the conservation planning function to take advantage of this important knowledge. In order to support CCPs and LPPs, full-time GIS specialists are required. The core skill areas can be found in the following classifications.

Natural Resources Specialists/Wildlife Biologists, GS-401/486. Because the biological specialist can be filled as a GS-401 or a GS-486, the position description is written as an interdisciplinary position. Either specialty can meet the biological and GIS requirements in this function.

Physical Scientists, GS-1301. These positions are organizationally titled "remote sensing specialists" to reflect this specialty.

Geographers, GS-150. These positions involve the field of geography including the compilation, synthesis, analysis, interpretation, and presentation of information regarding features of the earth.

Cartographers, GS-1370. These positions relate directly to planning, designing, researching, developing, and modifying maps.

Cartographic Technicians, GS-1371. These positions are entry level and provide technical input to cartographers.

Technical Writing and Editing

Professional writing and editing expertise is essential for preparation and presentation of planning documents. Writer/editors provide an expert critical and objective evaluation of a plan's ability to communicate its content to a wide variety of readers. The writer/editor or editorial assistant (in most regions) also perform desktop publishing and coordinate the publication of documents.

The writing and editing function is officially represented with one position in every planning division. It is currently represented as writer/editors (GS-1082), technical writer/editors (GS-1083), or editorial assistants (GS-1087). The specialist work correctly fits under the definition of technical writer/editor, GS-1083. Those regions that currently have GS-1082 technical writer/editors should convert them to the GS-1083 series.

Technical Writer/Editors, GS-1083. Work covered by this series includes positions that involve writing or editing technical materials such as reports of research findings, or scientific or technical specifications on scientific or technical subjects. Technical writers and technical editors draw on a substantial knowledge of a particular subject-matter area, such as the natural sciences. The work involves the development of information and analysis to select and present information on the specialized subject in a form and at a level suitable for the intended audience. The work involves expert knowledge of current grammar and style standards including those of the federal government. In addition, the work involves substantial knowledge of desktop publishing and the publication procedures of the U.S. Government Printing Office. For every region, a technical writer/editor should be present at a minimum.

Editorial Assistants, GS-1087. A sole editorial assistant on a planning division would only be appropriate if a journey-level (GS-11/12) technical writer/editor were available within the regional office structure to provide guidance, interpretation, and support to the editorial assistant. Based on the workload, this position may be essential for certain regions.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Competencies are knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience that employees develop through formal training, on-the-job experience, continuing education, details, and other employee development opportunities. The Service strives to develop core competencies in all professional planners. All planners—from front-line (field) planners to planners in a regional office to GIS specialists and writer/editors in the planning profession—are expected to develop an advanced level of expertise and share it with others. Entry-level individuals will not possess all of the competencies immediately. Even experienced planners may never possess or need to possess all of the competencies displayed below. The recommendations in this report will outline the expectations for development of these core competencies.

Core competencies have been arranged along a continuum of entry, developmental, and full-performance levels that reflect basic, working, and advanced knowledge, respectively. The Service will ensure maximum proficiency in these competency areas by designing training, professional experience, and career improvement programs for each employee.

Entry Level (GS-5/7)

The completion of an accredited undergraduate degree in the sciences or arts such as planning, environmental science, biology, ecology, wildlife management, or related fields is assumed. There are certain positive education requirements in each job series that an applicant must meet. Application and knowledge of planning and natural resource sciences and the application of that expertise to the interdisciplinary practice of conservation planning are required.

Staff at the entry level perform less complex planning duties on an independent basis and generally work on more complex plans under the supervision of a senior planner. The entry-level planner should have a basic understanding of writing, organizational, and public-speaking skills; analytical methods; and basic computer skills. As entry-level employees gain experience and exposure to refuges, their understanding of basic refuge operations will improve. The following knowledge, skills, and abilities are considered desirable, but not likely achievable at the entry level. Entry-level employees will enter the Service with certain sets of skills and be expected to expand their competencies through on-the-job experience and formal training based on the needs of their positions.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

Basic Knowledge of Planning Discipline

- ❒ Working on and with multidisciplinary teams
- ❒ Conservation planning principles
- ❒ Data gathering and analysis
- ❒ GIS
- ❒ Compliance (laws, regulations, and policy)
- ❒ Computer skills
- ❒ Writing and editing
- ❒ Natural and cultural resources
  - — Ecological principles and processes (land, air, and water)
  - — Conservation biology principles (includes biodiversity)
  - — Landscape ecology
  - — Fish, wildlife, and habitat management
  - — Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act
  - — Cultural resources (includes cultural and social values)
  - — Compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act and other applicable cultural resource laws
  - — Prehistory and historical context
- ❒ Public Use
  - — Knowledge of uses and user groups
  - — Impact and trend analysis
  - — Visitor experience
  - — Visitor capacity analysis
  - — Visitor use management
  - — Six wildlife-dependent recreational uses
- ❒ Socioeconomics
  - — Economic analysis
  - — Demographic description and analysis
  - — Characteristics of communities
- ❒ Ecosystem/landscape-level planning

Basic Knowledge of Agency Culture

- ❒ Mission and vision (includes mission, goals, and purposes policy)
- ❒ Management policies
  - — Refuge planning
  - — Biological integrity, diversity, and environmental heath

— Appropriate refuge uses
— Wilderness stewardship
— Wildlife-dependent recreation

- ❒ Conservation stewardship

Basic Experience of Inter- and Intra-personal Skills

- ❒ Team building
- ❒ Basic facilitation
- ❒ Setting goals and establishing vision
- ❒ Public involvement
- ❒ Communication and presentation (including writing and speaking)

Developmental Level (GS-9/11), Non-supervisory

The employee performs at a more advanced level with less supervision as the employee advances through the developmental stages. The individual collaborates with in-house and external experts. As employees advance in the profession, they are exposed to more comprehensive aspects of relevant subject matter. The developmental-level planning professional should understand refuge operations, apply the Service standards and planning process, and be able to apply a specific discipline to the work of interdisciplinary teams.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

Working Knowledge of Planning Discipline (in addition to knowledge, skills, and experiences developed at the entry level)

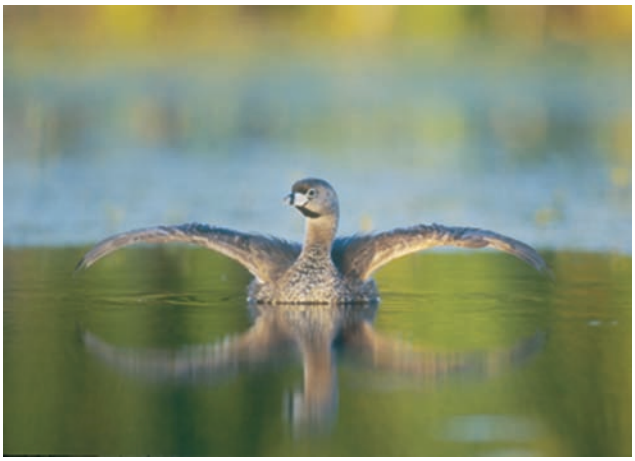
- ❒ Facilitation
- ❒ Public involvement
- ❒ Contracting (professional services)
- ❒ Customer service
- ❒ GIS and remote sensing
- ❒ Writing and editing

Working Knowledge of Agency Culture (in addition to knowledge, skills, and abilities developed at the entry level)

- ❒ Constituency building
- ❒ Legislative process
- ❒ Cross-cultural perspective

Working Experience of Inter- and Intra-personal Skills (in addition to those experiences developed at the entry level)

- ❒ Team building and management skills
- ❒ Partnership building (developing synergistic relationships)
- ❒ Conflict resolution



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Wildlife Comes First

Service Leadership and Management

- ❒ Achieving mission and goals
- ❒ Creative problem solving
- ❒ Strategic thinking

Full-performance Level (GS-12/13), Non-supervisory and Supervisory

The employee performs advanced studies, compliance actions, and project/team coordination. The full-performance employee works independently on complex planning efforts. It is envisioned that field-based planners will perform at this level. All planning professionals are considered subject matter experts, collaborate with a wide variety of audiences, and possess the experience to train others.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

Advanced Knowledge of Planning Discipline (in addition to knowledge, skills, and abilities developed at the entry and developmental levels)

- ❒ Same as entry and developmental levels with a higher level of expertise

Advanced Knowledge of Agency Culture

- ❒ Same as entry and developmental levels with a higher level of expertise

Extensive Experience of Inter- and Intra-personal Skills

- ❒ Negotiation, conflict resolution, alternative dispute resolution, and mediation

Advanced Knowledge of Service Leadership and Management

- ❒ Creative and complex problem solving
- ❒ Program and budget formulation

- ❐ Measurement and evaluation of performance
- ❐ Managing change process
- ❐ Project management
- ❐ Supervision
- ❐ Leadership

Conservation Planning Leader Level (GS-14), Supervisory

The employee provides leadership to staff, manages diverse programs, and ensures successful implementation of the Improvement Act. The individual should be knowledgeable and experienced in all facets of conservation planning. More importantly, the individual must provide leadership and be capable of managing diverse programs in times of stability as well as change.

RECOMMENDED TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

Once core competencies have been established for the planning profession, an integrated training program will ensure that all employees can meet their core competencies—knowledge, skills, and abilities. In addition to training, education and on-the-job experience contributes greatly to an employee's core competencies.

It is important to develop training and supervisory programs as well as provide an environment that encourages mentoring as a developmental approach. There must be support to promote existing advanced degree and certification programs (for example, membership in the American Institute of Certified Planners through the American Planning Association, a certified wildlife biologist through The Wildlife Society, a licensed landscape architect through the American Society of landscape architects, and a GIS professional through the GIS Certification Institute).

A process for evaluating and validating training courses and developmental programs is needed to assure that these courses and programs result in the organizational and individual benefits for which they were developed. An evaluation method needs to be developed and adopted to determine whether a training course, supervisory program, on-the-job learning, or other activities have produced the intended results: (1) that the person learned the essential competency for which the training was developed; and (2) that the organization received a return on the investment through improved employee performance and teamwork.

If we are to plan for the future conservation of fish and wildlife and facilitate compatible wildlife-dependent recreation, there must be a highly trained conservation planning workforce. Every planning professional will be trained (assuming that they are not already competent in that topic area) based on the continuum of competencies—entry, developmental, and full-performance levels. Employees in conservation planning, working closely with their supervisors, will be required to prepare individual development plans that are incorporated into their annual performance plans.

The subject areas that follow are intended as a guide only for those in conservation planning. Not everyone will receive formal training in all of these subject areas; however, employees (and their supervisors) should ensure that they have training critical to their specific positions. Many of the subject areas represented below are offered through the National Conservation Training Center, as well as through private vendors. In addition, new training courses need to be developed to adequately cover some of the listed subject areas.

Refuges are places where visitors are welcome.

Entry Level

- ❐ Refuge Management Academy
- ❐ Introduction to Comprehensive Conservation Planning
- ❐ Introduction to the National Environmental Policy Act
- ❐ Orientation to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- ❐ Understanding Refuge System Compatibility
- ❐ Cultural Resources Overview
- ❐ Introduction to Conservation Biology
- ❐ Recreation and Human Dimensions
- ❐ Basic Grammar and Usage
- ❐ Writing Environmental Documents
- ❐ Introduction to Desktop Publishing

- ❒ Introduction to Adobe (Acrobat, Photoshop, and Illustrator)
- ❒ GIS Cartographic Design
- ❒ Global Positioning System (GPS) Introduction for Natural Resource Field Personnel
- ❒ GPS Overview for Natural Resources
- ❒ Introduction to GIS for Resource Managers
- ❒ National GIS Service Workshop

Developmental Level

- ❒ Refuge Management Academy
- ❒ Facilitation
- ❒ Understanding the Requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act
- ❒ GIS Introduction (Overview for Planners)
- ❒ Public Involvement
- ❒ Land Protection Planning Overview (Planning and Realty)
- ❒ Consensus Building
- ❒ Communication and Interpersonal Relationships
- ❒ Wilderness Stewardship
- ❒ Principles of Conservation Planning
- ❒ Socioeconomics
- ❒ Team Building
- ❒ Conflict Resolution
- ❒ Building Community Support
- ❒ Advanced Grammar and Usage
- ❒ Effective Writing for Your Audience
- ❒ Document Printing, Layout, and Design
- ❒ Intermediate Desktop Publishing
- ❒ Intermediate Adobe (Photoshop and Illustrator)
- ❒ GIS Design for Regional Conservation Planning
- ❒ GIS Design for Natural Resource Lands Management
- ❒ National GIS Service Workshop
- ❒ Hardware and Software Management
- ❒ Basic Database Design
- ❒ ESRI User Conference
- ❒ Basic Image Processing

Full-performance Level

- ❒ Advanced Refuge Management Academy
- ❒ Understanding How Congress Works
- ❒ Budget Development
- ❒ Project Management
- ❒ Leadership Development
- ❒ Conflict Resolution and Alternative Dispute Resolution
- ❒ Negotiations and Mediation
- ❒ Supervision
- ❒ Outreach to Public, Partners, and News Media
- ❒ Writing for the Web
- ❒ Professional Page Layout
- ❒ Advanced Desktop Publishing
- ❒ Advanced Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator
- ❒ National GIS Service Workshop
- ❒ GIS Remote Sensing Technology
- ❒ GIS Vegetative Cover Mapping
- ❒ GPS Advanced Applications for Natural Resources
- ❒ Software Programming
- ❒ Advanced Database Design
- ❒ Advanced Image Processing

STANDARD POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

Using standard position descriptions for the planning profession, ranging from GS-5 through GS-14, will ensure consistency throughout the Service. These position descriptions will represent the expectations of Service management for professional conservation planners, GIS personnel, and writer/editors. As stated earlier, sociologists, economists, engineers, facilitators, GIS data managers, and other professions will not have a standard position description. These are specialty positions that will not be represented in most planning divisions.

Each position description will outline the major duties required for the job as well as the knowledge required for the position, supervisory controls, guidelines to be followed, complexity of work, scope and effect, personal contacts, purpose of contacts, physical demands, work environment, and familiarity with safety and equal opportunity policies. For those regions where CCP and LPP planning are combined in the same position, it is suggested that the two position descriptions be merged. The planning position descriptions reflect seven occupational series; not all seven may be used (usually two to three) during time of recruitment.

Not all position descriptions should be prepared once the career pathways report is approved. It is recommended that those disciplines that are most prevalent and needed be prepared first. In those instances where a region may desire recruitment of a discipline not as common, it is recommended that they prepare a position description for that position. In

turn, they should share it with the other regions for future reference.

The position descriptions will be for the GS-5/7 entry level, GS-9/11 developmental level, and the GS-12/13 full-performance level. The GS-13 position descriptions reflect both a supervisory position for CCP/LPP/GIS as well as a non-supervisory senior CCP/LPP/GIS position. A conservation planner and GIS specialist can ascend to the GS-13 level without supervisory responsibilities if the individual is considered a Service-wide expert in the field of conservation planning. Based on complexity and the nature of the duties, a writer/editor can attain a full-performance level GS-12. The GS-14 position description reflects a supervisory/management position as a division chief for refuge planning. The position description for a field-based planner is no different from that for other planners. When the OF-8 and SF-52 forms are prepared, they reflect the assignments of the planners to their duty stations.

APPENDIX A—List of Preparers

The conservation planning career pathways team consists of representatives from the headquarters office, the National Conservation Training Center, and each region.

Washington Office Representatives

Liz Bellantoni, (former) Refuge Planning Program Leader

Dawn Phillips, Headquarters Branch Chief for Human Resources Operations

National Conservation Training Center

Liz Fritsch, Training Course Leader

Regional Representatives

Region 1—Jane Bardolf, Conservation Planner

Region 1—Carolyn Bohan, Associate Regional Director, National Wildlife Refuge System

Region 1—Forrest Cameron, Refuge Supervisor

Region 2—John Slown, Conservation Planner

Region 2—Cameron Tongier, Remote Sensing Specialist

Region 3—John Schomaker, Refuge Planner

Region 4—Cheri Ehrhardt, Natural Resource Planner (field-based)

Region 5—Carl Melberg, Land Acquisition Planner

Region 5—Sharon Riley, Human Resource Specialist

Region 6—Michael Spratt, Chief for Division of Refuge Planning (Chair)

Region 6—Deb Parker, Writer/Editor

Region 7—Peter Wikoff, Natural Resource Planner

APPENDIX B—Standard Position Descriptions for Conservation Planning

Not all of the following position descriptions should be prepared following approval of this report. Rather, those that are most prevalent should be written first. It is the responsibility of the conservation planning leadership, working closely with human resources personnel, to determine which positions require a standard position description. For the conservation planning leader GS-14, the 480 series (fish and wildlife administrator) would also be appropriate.

Entry Level, Non-supervisory

GS-5/7 CCP Planner (401, 485, 486, 020, 025, 807)

GS-5/7 LPP Planner (486, 401)

GS-5/7 GIS Specialist (401 or 486, 1301, 150, 1370, 1371)

GS-5/7 Writer/Editor (1083, 1087)

Developmental Level, Non-supervisory

GS-9/11 CCP Planner (401, 485, 486, 020, 025, 807)

GS-9/11 LPP Planner (486, 401)

GS-9/11 GIS Specialist (401 or 486, 1301, 150, 1370)

GS-9/11 Writer/Editor (1083, 1087)

Full-performance Level, Supervisory and Non-supervisory

GS-12 Senior Writer/Editor (1083)

GS-12/13 Senior CCP Planner (401, 485, 486, 020, 025, 807), Non-supervisory

GS-12/13 Senior LPP Planner (486, 401), Non-supervisory

GS-12/13 Senior GIS Specialist (401 or 486, 1301, 150, 1370), Non-supervisory

GS-13 CCP Planning (401, 485, 486, 020, 025, 807), Supervisory

GS-13 LPP Planning (486, 401), Supervisory

GS-13 GIS and Mapping (401 or 486, 1301, 150, 1370), Supervisory

Conservation Planning Leader Level Supervisory GS-14 Division Chief (401, 480, 485, 486, 020, 025, 807)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Wildlife Refuge System
Conservation Planning Career Pathways Team
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