

RESOURCES CAREERS

**Position Management Guidance
and
Implementing Instructions**

**US Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

June 30, 1999

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Introduction	1
Occupational Series and Interdisciplinary Positions in Resources Careers	2
Position Management Guidance	3
Implementing Instructions	9
Part I. Instructions for Supervisors and Managers	9
Part II. Instructions for Servicing Personnel Office Staff	16
Part III. Instructions for Employees	26
Part IV. Frequently Asked Questions	26
Attachment 1: Amendment to GS-11 Benchmark Position Description--Supervisory Duties and Evaluation Factors	31
Attachment 2: Amendment to Benchmark Position Description--Other Duties	36
Attachment 3: Amendment to Benchmark Position Description--Technical Supervision Agreement	37

Introduction

In February 1994, the Careers Council of the Vail Agenda created the Resources Careers initiative with the given purpose to define and implement a human resources development program for resources management careers that will meet the stewardship needs of the National Park Service (NPS) and strengthen the profession. **This document guides the administrative process of implementing Resources Careers.**

It contains the *Position Management Guidance and Implementing Instructions*. Benchmark Position Descriptions (PD) were written for 24 professional occupations for the GS-5/7/9/11 career ladder. Additionally, Benchmark PDs were written for nine technician occupations at the GS-5, 6, and 7 full-performance levels. These define resources management work needed in NPS to deal with the demands being placed on the resources and the people responsible for providing specialized advice about cultural and/or natural resources.

The *Position Management Guidance* discusses the applicability of the Benchmark PDs; the relationship to FIREPRO-funded fire management positions; grade and series coverage of the initiative; use of the Benchmark PDs for term or temporary positions; differences between professional and technician positions and series; the 80% criterion in the PD; what to do if none of the Benchmark PDs is a precise fit for the job; supporting GS-11 positions; the filling of vacant career ladder positions; how to address supervisory duties; how to deal with combined law enforcement and resources management positions; and the equal opportunity (EO) impact of the program.

The *Implementing Instructions* are written for supervisors and managers, servicing personnel staff, and employees. These are in three parts to address each group. Topics include labor-management relations, position classification, staffing, employee development, performance management, and employees' responsibilities. Attachments include forms to: identify other duties not specified in the Benchmark PD; amend GS-11 Benchmark PDs to include supervisory responsibilities; and arrange technical supervision from a GS-11 or higher level professional in an appropriate field when the expertise is not available in the park unit.

Occupational Series and Interdisciplinary Positions in Resources Careers

Professional series and interdisciplinary positions with benchmark position descriptions written at the GS-5/7/9/11 career ladder:

*Integrated Resources Program Manager,
Interdisciplinary, GS-170/190/193/401/
807/808/1015/1301

Cultural Resources Program Manager,
Interdisciplinary, GS-170/190/193/807/
808/1015

Natural Resources Program Manager,
Interdisciplinary, GS-401/1301

Wilderness Coordinator,
Interdisciplinary, GS-401/1301

GIS Specialist,
Interdisciplinary, GS-150/401/1301/1370

Historian, GS-170

Cultural Anthropologist, GS-190

Archeologist, GS-193

Biologist, GS-401

Ecologist, GS-408

Botanist, GS-430

Horticulturist, GS-437

Rangeland Management Specialist, GS-454

Forester, GS-460

Fishery Biologist, GS-482

Wildlife Biologist, GS-486

Landscape Architect (Historical), GS-807

Architect (Historical), GS-808

Museum Curator, GS-1015

Physical Scientist, GS-1301

Hydrologist, GS-1315

Geologist, GS-1350

Librarian, GS-1410

Archivist, GS-1420

Technician series for which full performance benchmark position descriptions are written at the GS-5, 6, and 7 levels:

Archeological Technician (Social Science),
GS-102

Biological Technician, GS-404

Museum Technician, GS-1016

Physical Science Technician, GS-1311

Physical Science Technician (Paleontology),
GS-1311

Hydrologic Technician, GS-1316

Cartographic Technician, GS-1371

Library Technician, GS-1411

Archives Technician, GS-1421

Note: When advertising an interdisciplinary position, it is strongly recommended that a maximum of four (4) series be selected.

***For recruitment purposes select no more than two (2) Cultural Resources disciplines and at least one (1) Natural Resources discipline.**

POSITION MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE

Applicability

Through the development of Benchmark Position Descriptions, Resources Careers defines resources management professional and technician positions as they need to exist in the NPS today to deal with demands placed on both the resources and the people responsible for providing specialized advice about park natural and/or cultural resources. The PDs are designed to be used primarily in parks and equivalent units of the National Park System.

The Benchmark PDs for *professional* resources management positions at the GS-11 full-performance level describe positions in a variety of occupations. The occupations require a similar depth of knowledge and skill necessary to: contribute effectively to a changing organization; provide for staff advice on resource matters in the context of park programs within the incumbent's field (and related fields in some cases); and deal with multiple and complex resources management functions, problems, and issues. Professional positions already at or above the GS-11 level are *beyond* the career ladder and are not included in the Resources Careers initiative.

The Benchmark PDs for *technical* resources management positions are developed at a range of grade levels and each is described at the full-performance level. They do not cover all of the possible grades or series, however. They are developed as guidance for the most commonly used grades in the most commonly used technician series. They are not meant to imply that technicians graded higher than GS-7 do not exist, any more than the professional series PDs are meant to imply that grades higher than GS-11 do not exist.

The intent is to ensure that, to the greatest extent practicable, PDs for employees serving in resources management positions are uniformly described and classified throughout the Service. It is up to management to hold itself accountable and assure that these Benchmark PDs are used appropriately and consistently.

Fire Management

FIREPRO-funded positions are *not* covered by the Resources Careers initiative, since there are separate benchmark PDs for fire management personnel. Non-FIREPRO funded positions (e.g., Fire Ecologist) that have fire management responsibilities as part of a resources management program may be covered if they meet the criteria.

Grade and Series Coverage

Benchmark PDs cover employees in 24 selected professional individual series and interdisciplinary positions from GS-5 to GS-11 in a career ladder, as well as 9 technician series at the GS-5, GS-6, and GS-7 levels. See the *Occupational Series and Interdisciplinary Positions covered by Resources Careers* list on the previous page.

All professional resources management jobs are complex, and involve planning work, interpreting data, and refining methods and techniques. The full-performance level PDs at the GS-11 level reflect the normal degree of complexity found in most resources management

positions in the NPS. In contrast, GS-12 positions are distinguished by greater responsibility, a broader (or deeper) range of program activities or themes, and greater complexity and sensitivity. These positions exceed the GS-11 full-performance level, and are less common in the NPS. A more detailed comparison between the two grade levels, with examples, is provided in Appendix 1: Comparing the GS-11 and GS-12 Benchmark PDs.

Term and Temporary Positions

While the full-performance level (i.e., technician series PDs at grades 5, 6, and 7, and professional series PDs at grade 11) of any of the Benchmark PDs is targeted for permanent positions, it may be used for term or temporary positions, if appropriate. Developmental level (i.e., professional series at grades 5, 7, and 9) PDs as part of the career ladder may only be used for term or permanent positions. Temporary appointments confer no promotion eligibility so use of developmental PDs is not appropriate for temporary appointments. Temporary professional positions can be established at any appropriate grade but local PDs must be developed if below the GS-11 level, since the professional Benchmark PDs at the 5, 7, and 9 levels are developmental.

Professional or Technician? One-Grade vs. Two-Grade Intervals

Forty-six fact-finding reviews by human resource specialists and subject matter experts of 125 positions in 19 classification series in 14 parks and one center in all 7 regions were conducted in 1995 and 1996. Those reviews examined the *type* of natural and cultural resources management work performed in NPS areas and the *grade level* of the work. Positions and parks were selected to get a broad representation of positions, park complexity, and regions. The results confirmed that professional resources management work exists in every park, whether or not it is recognized, and that the appropriate grade for full performance, at its lowest level, of that work is GS-11.

No professional Benchmark PDs were developed below GS-11 (except for generic GS-5 and 7 PDs and statement of differences GS-9 PD) because, as noted above, the appropriate grade for full performance resources management work, at its lowest level, was determined to be GS-11. Permanent resources management positions at the GS-5, 7, and 9 levels are developmental and are to be used as part of the career ladder that leads to the GS-11 full-performance level.

According to OPM's Introduction to the Position Classification Standards (TS-107, August 1991) professional work requires knowledge in a field of science or learning characteristically acquired through education or training equivalent to a bachelor's or higher degree with major study in, or pertinent to, the specialized field, as distinguished from general education. Work is professional when it requires the exercise of discretion, judgement, and personal responsibility for the application of an organized body of knowledge that is constantly studied to make new discoveries and interpretations, and to improve data, materials, and methods.

In contrast, technicians support professional work and carry out tasks, methods, procedures, and/or computations that are covered by established precedents or guidelines. Depending upon the level of difficulty of the work, these procedures often require a high degree of technical skill, care, and precision. A positive education requirement, however, does not apply to technician positions. Professional positions advance from grades GS-5 to GS-11 in two-grade intervals. Technician positions are one-grade interval jobs.

Currently, some parks have their only resources management positions in technician series, despite

the fact that the field reviews found that even the smallest parks have the analytical workload in resources management to warrant professional skills and positions. With implementation of Resources Careers, parks must review their resources management organizations. *Parks must have a full performance (GS-11 or higher) resources management subject-matter professional available to provide technical supervision to any technician position or professional position below GS-11.* The full-performance level professional providing the supervision may be either on-site or shared with another NPS unit.

Career Ladders

The career ladder for professional resources management positions in the identified series has been established as GS-5/7/9/11. In accordance with merit promotion principles, entry may occur at any level for which the applicant is qualified. After having entered a career ladder, employees may advance in grade up the ladder through successive noncompetitive promotions to the full performance level.

Currently, there are many professional resources management positions below GS-11 and not on a career ladder to the GS-11 level. In every case examined, it was found that those positions that were below GS-11 were undergraded for work described, or the PDs did not describe either the actual work performed or the work, which needed to be performed. *With implementation of Resources Careers, there is now a career ladder of GS-5/7/9/11 with benchmark GS-11 PDs for 24 professional resources management positions (including 5 interdisciplinary positions). This career ladder will now be the norm throughout the Service.*

Service-wide career ladders have not been established for technician positions. Technician positions, however, can be at full performance at a variety of grades, depending on local needs. Technician positions can be filled below the full-performance level through the use of "Statement of Differences" PDs developed locally. Use sound position management when reviewing technician positions for potential conversion into the professional career ladders because technical work is still likely to exist.

But Our Park Can't Support a GS-11!

Some parks will be faced with difficult choices. These choices should not be made without seriously examining the nature and scope of the resources management work that exists and needs to be done in the park. Extensive field reviews across all seven regions confirmed that professional resources management work exists in every park, whether or not it is currently recognized. The reviews also found that the appropriate grade for full performance, of the majority of that work is GS-11. If the existing park organizational structure does not seem to support GS-11 positions, review the position descriptions and then reexamine the work that should be part of a professional, comprehensive resources management function. Restructuring the workload or reorganizing the workforce should be considered.

So How Do We Proceed?

Review existing resources management positions against one or more Benchmarks. If the position is already in a series covered by a Benchmark, start your comparisons with that Benchmark. Other Benchmarks could be more applicable, however. Look carefully at positions that are doing a substantial amount of resources management work but are not currently classified in one of the identified occupational series (e.g., GS-0025).

If the 80% criterion (see below) is met, assign that position to one of the Benchmarks according to the detailed implementation instructions which follow. Assuming that the incumbent qualifies by OPM standards for that series, competitive or non-competitive conversion of the position into that series and, if applicable, career ladder may be appropriate. Subsequent promotions within the career ladder, as always, are contingent upon satisfactory performance, time-in-grade, and the meeting of any identified competencies.

What Does the 80% Criterion Mean?

The PDs describe 80-100% of the job. At least 80% of the non-supervisory duties described in a Benchmark PD must be performed at least 80% of the time over the course of a typical year in order for the Benchmark PD to apply. Therefore, up to 20% of an individual's time may be spent on non-supervisory responsibilities other than those in the PD -- these will not be grade-determining.

However, if Attachment 1 documenting supervisory responsibilities is attached to the Benchmark Position Description (see below for more information on classification as a supervisor), this 80% rule must be modified. If a position is officially classified as a supervisor, then by definition the position is carrying out supervisory responsibilities for 25% or more of the time. It is typical for such positions supervising a small to medium-sized staff to spend a quarter to a third of the time on supervisory duties. For benchmark positions, this means that the incumbent will be performing the benchmark duties for less than 80% of the time. In the single instance where the incumbent is supervising work directly related to professional resources management disciplines, use of the Benchmark Position Description (with Attachment 1 affixed) is appropriate as long as at least 80% of the non-supervisory duties are performed (for less than 80% of the time).

But the Benchmark Isn't a Precise Fit for the Job!

It rarely will be. Remember that PDs do not need to describe all duties, just the major duties. Attachment 2: Amendment to Benchmark Position Description--Other Duties (in the *Implementing Instructions*) is used with the Benchmark PD to list park-specific, non-grade-determining duties. If after management review and position restructuring (if any), duties still do not meet the 80% criterion, do not use the Benchmarks. Parks should examine those positions to ensure that the grade and series are in accordance with the appropriate OPM classification standard.

Filling Vacant Career Ladder Positions

Supervisors and managers may fill a vacancy by promotion, change to lower grade, noncompetitive conversion, reassignment, transfer, reinstatement, appointment from a delegated examining unit or Office of Personnel Management (OPM) list of candidates, or other appropriate sources of applicants. Applicants may be considered concurrently or consecutively from any recruitment sources. Regardless of how you choose to fill a position, you must follow appropriate merit staffing rules and procedures.

Supervisors and human resources staff are encouraged to use the *Essential Competencies* from the NPS Employee Training and Development Career Planning and Tracking Kit¹ when developing knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) and crediting plans for advertised positions. Positions responsible for managing *both* natural and cultural resources should generally be classified and advertised as interdisciplinary positions. *When advertising an interdisciplinary position, a maximum of 4 series can be selected (see instructions under Remarks on the Optional Form 8: Position Description coversheet for Interdisciplinary positions). A review of the position should be made to determine which occupational series would be most appropriate to include based upon the nature and extent of the resources in that park.*

Supervisory Duties

The grade of the Benchmark GS-11 PDs are based on the knowledges and other classification factors required to do the professional work of the jobs. To be classified in these Benchmark PDs, an employee does not need to be a supervisor. This initiative may impact the grade of existing supervisory positions in the identified resources management series. Each first-level supervisory position in these series must be reviewed against the OPM General Schedule Supervisory Guide (TS-123, April 1993) and Attachment 1: Amendment to GS-11 Benchmark Position Description-- Supervisory Duties and Evaluation Factors (in the *Implementing Instructions*). Decisions will need to be made regarding administrative vs. technical supervision² for all technicians and less-than-full-performance level professional positions.

Implementation of Resources Careers will result in a number of supervisory positions being upgraded as a result of upgrades to sufficient numbers of subordinate staff. In addition, a number of supervisory positions may be eliminated as the workforce and workload are reorganized. In order to ensure equity and consistency during this transition period, proper merit promotion procedures must be applied. Most promotions should be carried out competitively. This is particularly true when the position to be filled would provide upward mobility opportunity for staff who would otherwise not have such an opportunity. Use of the authority to carry out noncompetitive promotions must be balanced with the general requirement for fair and open competition.

Law Enforcement and Resources Management Positions

The primary purpose of the professional Benchmark PDs is to accomplish resources management duties that require specialized expertise. It is recommended that only in rare cases should Superintendents seek to accomplish law enforcement with resources management personnel, however, benchmark PDs *must not* be used for law enforcement. A hybrid position combining professional resources management duties and a law enforcement commission has inherent conflicts and is strongly discouraged. However, if a park seeks to pursue that course a PD must be written and locally classified in consultation with the servicing personnel staff, using the Benchmark PD as a basis but adding the appropriate language about law enforcement. This should *only* be considered in cases where an employee already holds a law enforcement commission and is being considered,

¹ Also available on the Internet at <http://www.nps.gov/training/npsonly/npsescm.htm>.

² The definition of technical supervision is in Attachment 3: Amendment to Benchmark Position Description – Technical Supervision Agreement (in the *Implementing Instructions*).

by nature of the required duties, for conversion into one of the Benchmark resources management PDs.

The decision to continue or recall an existing law enforcement commission held by an employee converting into a resources management career ladder must be made by the Superintendent and be consistent with NPS law enforcement policy and guidelines. The Superintendent must consult with the appropriate regional office and WASO Ranger Activities Staff to discuss the park's law enforcement needs assessment and to obtain concurrence necessary for a "Type 2" commission.

Position Management Opportunity

This may be an opportunity for the park to restructure its resources management workload and positions. If the park chooses to establish new positions with the Benchmark PDs and/or career ladders, or significantly change responsibilities of existing staff, the existing staff may have to compete for the new positions. (See *Implementation Instructions* for further guidance.) In order to use the Benchmark PDs, remember that the position must meet the 80% criterion. Just as in Ranger Careers, it may be appropriate to restructure work so that one position does resources management $\geq 80\%$ of the time and another does the different work not described in the Benchmarks.

In keeping with the National Performance Review recommendations and Departmental and NPS streamlining initiatives, we must seriously attempt to reduce the number of supervisory positions. In conducting your position management reviews, look closely at your supervisory positions. Because there are no adverse actions or appeal rights associated with the elimination of supervisory duties when it does not adversely affect the position's grade, you may never have a better opportunity to organize the distribution of work more effectively.

Equal Opportunity Impact Analysis

The Washington EO Office has reviewed impact of the Resources Careers initiative on the current workforce and no negative impacts are anticipated. To the contrary, implementation is expected to result in promotions and entry into career ladders for the women and minorities who, in many series, have a higher representation in the lower graded resources management positions in the Service. Establishment of career ladders should make entry into National Park Service resources management careers more attractive to a wider, more diverse applicant pool.

IMPLEMENTING INSTRUCTIONS

Part I. Instructions for Supervisors and Managers

Getting Started.....Read the Instructions!

As with any other multi-step process, it is a good idea to start by reading the instructions. You should first carefully read through this section, and familiarize yourself with all supporting materials contained in this Resources Careers Manual, including the Professional Development Program. The time you spend doing so will help you to make appropriate determinations, in consultation with your Servicing Personnel Office (SPO), both about the proper description and classification of resources management positions in your unit, and about the means by which personnel actions will be processed to implement Resources Careers.

Labor-Management Relations

If there is a bargaining unit at your park, be mindful of management's obligation to inform the union *before* implementing this policy for using Benchmark Position Descriptions and the defined career ladder for professional resources management positions. In doing so, you should afford the union sufficient time to review and comment on changes that will occur in bargaining unit employees' working conditions as a result of the implementation of this policy. If you receive a request from the union to bargain on implementation, contact the Personnel Officer in your SPO immediately for appropriate guidance and assistance.

Position Classification

After any labor-management relations obligations are fulfilled, you should work towards determining the appropriate classification of each resources management position currently classified at or below the GS-11 level.

Review your positions to determine the appropriate PD to use.

You should start by doing a position-by-position review of the Benchmark PDs, including the interdisciplinary PDs, for the most likely correct series for each position in your unit. You should do so in constant reference to employees' current PDs, awareness of the work that needs to be done, and these instructions. Once you have tentatively identified the series, read all the relevant Benchmark PDs in their entirety.

Take a very close look at the Factor Evaluation System (FES) factors (and the evaluation statement) that follow the major duties in the Benchmark PD. Look at, and carefully compare those factor descriptions with those for the Benchmark PDs at both the next lower and next higher grades (if there are Benchmark PDs written for higher and/or lower grades in that series). This comparison will allow you to distinguish more readily the differences between the various grade levels in a particular series, and thus to determine which Benchmark PD *most accurately* describes the *actual* work and level of responsibility of the position.

Determine whether the Benchmark PD meets the *80% criterion* found on page 6 of the *Position Management Guidance* section. The Benchmark PDs should be used *as long as the 80% criterion is met and the primary purpose of the position is resources management.*

The classification determinations on the Benchmark PDs have been certified and approved by the Washington Office (WASO). However, you will need to complete certain of the remaining blocks on the accompanying Optional Form-8 (OF-8) Position Description coversheet. Specifically, you should complete items 1, 4, 5, 15 (as applicable for Interdisciplinary Positions), 16 (optional), 18.b-e (as applicable, depending upon how many organizational levels the position is below the bureau level), 20.a, and 20.b (optional according to local classification practice). Sign the supervisory certification below item 20.a, confirming the accuracy of the PD. If the Benchmark PD is adequate for use without any further supplementation, you should submit it "as is" (including use of the WASO-certified OF-8) to the Servicing Personnel Office for implementation of the position and staffing actions necessary to establish and fill the position.

What if there are other duties that are not described in the Benchmark PD that should be included?

Obviously, no single PD can cover every conceivable work situation. However, Attachment 2: Amendment to Benchmark Position Description--Other Duties, may be used, as needed, for inclusion of other duties that you consider important enough to be documented in the employee's PD. Remember, however, that the "other duties" cannot account for more than 20% of the incumbent's work.

When used, Attachment 2 is to be appended to the selected Benchmark PD, and submitted to the SPO for final classification review. However, either separately or in combination, the "other duties" that you list on Attachment 2 *must not* affect the title, series or grade of the selected Benchmark PD. If the additional duties would affect the title, series, and/or grade, the position does not fit the Benchmark PD, and the position must be specifically described in its entirety and submitted to the SPO for individual classification review.

What about situations in which it is determined that a professional position will not go beyond the GS-9 level at our park?

It is recognized that, in *rare* cases, a position in one of the covered professional series will not go beyond the GS-9 level in a specific location. In these rare cases, the following statement must be added to the "Remarks" section on the OF-8:

"The full performance level for this position is GS-9. Technical supervision is provided by a resources management subject-matter professional (GS-11 or higher) located on-site or at another NPS unit."

What if none of the Benchmark PDs meets the 80% criterion?

The existing PD may be used in such situations provided it accurately describes the actual duties and responsibilities assigned. The PD used (whether an existing PD or a newly written non-Benchmark PD) must state the full-performance level of the position. In such cases, the following statement must be included in the "Remarks" section of the OF-8:

"The full-performance level for professional positions in this series is (*Insert appropriate grade level, e.g., GS-9, GS-11, GS-12*)."

(Note: The establishment of the career ladder GS-5/7/9/11 for professional Resources Careers positions establish a normal line of progression and a normal pattern of advancement.)

What about positions involving supervisory work?

Some positions may supervise paid or unpaid employees. If supervisory duties occupy 25% or more of the employee's time, his or her PD must be evaluated under the OPM General Schedule Supervisory Guide (GSSG). We have attempted, in Attachment 1: Amendment to GS-11 Benchmark Position Description--Supervisory Duties and Evaluation Factors, to develop a form which should serve as the GSSG evaluation for most professional positions involving both technical and administrative first-level supervision of multiple full-performance level professional positions. This form, when completed, will reflect the number and kind of employees supervised by the incumbent, the percentage of time spent supervising such employees, and other factors that may affect the title and/or grade of the position.

If Attachment 1 is appropriate for use, and you are the supervisor of the supervisory position, you must prepare and sign a new OF-8. (Note: Although you may use the applicable Benchmark PD for the description of the position's technical duties and responsibilities, you should not use the WASO-certified OF-8 in this instance because a further classification review at the Servicing Personnel Office level is required to determine the final title and grade of the position under these circumstances. Several other items on the form, including the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) coverage, supervisory/managerial/neither position type, financial disclosure requirements, etc., may also change as a result.)

Once you have completed the new OF-8, attach the applicable Benchmark PD, a completed Attachment 1, and a current organization chart, and forward the entire package to the SPO. SPO staff will then need to review all these materials for completeness and accuracy, and confirm the evaluation of the position with reference to the GSSG and this Manual.

In the event that a supervisory position does not fit *all* of the conditions described in Attachment 1 or if the position is higher than a first-level supervisor, Attachment 1 is not appropriate for use. You will, in that case, need to work closely with the Servicing Personnel Office staff in developing an appropriate non-Benchmark supervisory PD, including accurately described GSSG evaluation factors.

Regardless of whether using a Benchmark PD supplemented by Attachment 1 or using an individually described supervisory PD, for any position for which at least 25% of the incumbent's time is spent on supervisory duties, an appropriate supervisory title will be assigned by the Classifier in the SPO.

The Classifier will also review Fair Labor Standards Act status, make an appropriate FLSA determination, and document the appropriate FLSA code on the OF-8. The Classifier will do the same for the supervisory code item and the item reflecting the position classification standards used in the evaluation of the position. The Classifier will sign and date item 23 on the OF-8 to certify as to the accuracy of the final classification.

(Note: The implementation of Resources Careers offers an opportunity for improved position management, particularly with respect to the potential for reducing the layers of supervision without adversely affecting incumbents' current grades. You should carefully consider the ratio of supervisors to non-supervisory employees, and determine whether the number of supervisors might

be reduced by withdrawing supervisory duties from some existing GS-11 positions and reassigning the incumbents non-competitively to appropriate GS-11 non-supervisory Benchmark PDs. If in reducing the number of supervisory positions at a park, one or more upgraded (and likely interdisciplinary) supervisory positions will be established and other affected supervisory positions will be converted to non-supervisory GS-11 professional positions, the filling of the upgraded supervisory position must be done competitively. On the other hand, it may be that first-level supervisory duties included in positions currently classified at the GS-11 level could readily be absorbed by existing GS-12 or higher graded supervisors at the same location without necessitating any supervisory position upgrades.)

How do I arrange technical supervision for my resources management positions if there is no GS-11 professional position of an appropriate specialty established at this park?

In such a case, the Superintendent must arrange for *technical* supervision for the resources management staff to be provided by a professional employee of appropriate specialty at or above the GS-11 level in another park or in another division within the same park. Such "dotted line" supervisory relationships should be established through partnering activities between the responsible Superintendents/Division Chiefs. When such agreements involve inter-park relationships, they shall be confirmed by having both Superintendents sign the organization charts reflecting the "dotted line" technical supervision relationship. This relationship must also be documented with Attachment 3: Amendment to Benchmark Position Description--Technical Supervision Agreement, which should be appended to the PD of the employee receiving such supervision.

What about career ladders for technician positions?

No Servicewide career ladder has been defined for technician positions, and the technician Benchmark PDs that have been provided for your optional use have all been written at a variety of full-performance grade levels. No "developmental" Benchmark PDs were developed for the technician occupations. However, this does not preclude you from establishing local career ladders for such positions through the development and use of "Statement of Differences" PDs. If for any reason you wish to use a technician Benchmark PD, but need or want to fill the position at a level below the full-performance level, you will need to prepare a "Statement of Differences" PD for the proposed level of entry, and for each intervening grade level between the entry and full-performance levels, in accordance with your region's classification practices. Consult with your Servicing Personnel Office for specific instructions about preparation of "Statement of Differences" PDs.

Staffing

After making the appropriate PD and classification decisions in consultation with your SPO, you will need to consider what personnel actions will be necessary to effect the implementation of the classification decisions.

Look at the qualifications of current staff in comparison to the applicable qualification standard from U.S. Office of Personnel Management Operating Manual: Qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions.

Consult with your SPO staff to determine whether affected employees meet the basic qualification and time-in-grade requirements for the positions, and, in the case of professional positions, whether they meet the positive education requirements for the series. Work with the Servicing Personnel Office staff to determine whether the incumbent's movement into the new PD may be processed

non-competitively or will require use of competitive merit promotion procedures.

Are there circumstances in which promotion or reassignment to a position with higher promotion potential will be done non-competitively?

Yes! Employees may move between professional series covered by Resources Careers non-competitively (either by promotion or reassignment) when the series they are moving to has the same full performance level and they meet all qualification requirements for the new series. Employees must compete when moving into a different series with a higher career ladder (i.e., higher full performance level) or when moving from a one-grade interval technician position to a two-grade interval professional position. Such positions should be processed either competitively or, when appropriate, on the basis of gradual assumption of duties.

An employee who encumbers a technician position that is already classified with a full-performance level of GS-11 may be non-competitively reassigned into a professional career ladder if otherwise qualified (i.e., if he or she meets the experience and education requirements).

Movement from an existing technician PD to a Benchmark or individually written and classified technician PD of higher grade/promotion potential *may* be done non-competitively *only* if the circumstances meet one of the identified exceptions to the Merit Promotion Plan. These include correction of a classification error, and in some cases, assignment of higher grade duties.

Be aware, however, that movement of employees from technician positions with a full-performance level of less than GS-11 into professional career ladder positions *must* be done under competitive merit promotion procedures. Furthermore, if additional duties and responsibilities are added to, and result in the upgrading of one (or more), but not all, positions in the normal line of progression in the same unit (i.e., under the direction of the same immediate supervisor), competitive merit promotion procedures *must* be applied to the assignment of employees to the new PD(s).

What about conversions from technician positions to professional positions?

If the position review resulted in a determination that your park needs are for a professional position, but the current position is classified as a technician, the incumbent may be non-competitively reassigned to the new professional PD *only* if the full-performance level of the existing technician position was GS-11 or higher *and* he or she meets qualification requirements, including the positive education requirements, for the professional position.

If the affected technician does not meet qualification requirements (particularly the positive education requirements), you will have a number of options for addressing the situation. Please consult with your SPO before taking any action.

Options include, but may not be limited to:

- Establishing a "bridge" technician position and development program under "Upward Mobility" to prepare a technician for subsequent assignment into the professional career ladder, and announcing this developmental opportunity under competitive merit promotion procedures.
- Directing the reassignment of the affected technician employee into another vacant position for which he or she meets the qualification requirements, and which is of the same grade or

- promotion potential currently held.
- Delaying the conversion to, and filling of, a professional position until the technician position is vacated through normal attrition.

Submit your electronic Standard Form-52: Request for Personnel Action.

Regardless of the specific staffing/placement actions determined necessary through this consultation process, you must submit an appropriate electronic Standard Form-52 (SF-52) through the Federal Personnel Payroll System (FPPS) in order to set the position and staffing actions in motion. At the same time that you submit the electronic SF-52 through FPPS, send hard copies of the related PDs (including any required attachments), to your SPO to support the requested actions.

And, don't hesitate to contact your SPO for guidance or assistance if you are unsure of the procedures and/or documentation that are required in any given situation.

Employee Development

For each employee placed in a position below the full-performance level (regardless of whether the position is a professional or a technician), you should work with the employee to develop an Individual Development Plan and training strategy to assist him or her to reach the full-performance level with the requisite skills and knowledge. Training opportunities may include college-level course work, on-the-job experiences, structured rotational assignments or details, classroom training, shadow assignments, coaching and counseling, etc.

Performance Management

In all cases, you must develop, and discuss with the employee, critical results which reflect the duties in the new Benchmark or other applicable PD to which assigned as a result of Resources Careers.

In those instances involving performance deficiencies in the current position and grade level, you must address the unacceptable performance. If there is no other appropriate position to which the employee may be reassigned at the same grade, you must give the employee the opportunity to improve his or her performance before taking certain Resources Careers personnel actions. Inform the employee of the specific performance deficiencies, work with him or her to develop and implement a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP), and take appropriate remedial action if the performance is not improved to an acceptable level. Please consult your SPO before taking any action regarding performance deficiencies.

Part II. Instructions for Servicing Personnel Office Staff

Getting Started.....Read the Instructions!

As with any other multi-step process, it is a good idea to start by reading the instructions. You should first carefully read through this section, and familiarize yourself with all supporting materials contained in this Resources Careers Manual, including the Professional Development Program. We especially recommend that you carefully read the Implementing Instructions for Supervisors and Managers. The time you spend acquainting yourself with all these materials will help you to guide your serviced supervisors and managers in making appropriate determinations, both about the proper description and classification of resources management positions, and about the means by which personnel actions will be processed to implement Resources Careers.

Labor-Management Relations

If there is a bargaining unit at any of your serviced parks, be mindful of management's obligation to inform the union *before* implementing this policy for using Benchmark PDs and the defined career ladder for professional resources management positions. Consult with the appropriate Superintendent(s), and ensure that the Superintendent is aware of these responsibilities. Remind the Superintendent that the union should be given sufficient time to review and comment on changes that will occur in bargaining unit employees' working conditions as a result of the implementation of this policy. Provide appropriate guidance and assistance to any Superintendent who receives a request from the union to bargain on implementation.

Position Classification

After labor-management relations obligations, if any, are fulfilled, you should work with your serviced supervisors and managers towards determining the appropriate classification of each resources management position currently classified at or below the GS-11 level. At a minimum, you should assist supervisors and managers with any questions they may have as they attempt to determine the appropriate PD to use in a given situation. To be effective in providing such guidance, you will need to familiarize yourself with the various Benchmark PDs and related evaluations, and to develop a thorough familiarity with the guiding concepts of the Resources Careers program as documented in this Manual.

In most cases, it is anticipated that the supervisors and managers will find an appropriate Benchmark PD that can be utilized with little or no supplementation. Consequently, it is expected that most requested position actions will require only minimal or cursory review for classification purposes.

(Note: Special emphasis should be placed on the review of current GS-1016 Museum Specialists for possible inclusion in the GS-1015 Museum Curator Series. Museum curators are required to perform the full range of research and curatorial functions defined in the classification standard. The research function can include scholarly, technical or applied research. The GS-1015-11 benchmark position description defines the minimum scope of research duties for NPS positions. If these duties are not performed, positions should not be placed in the GS-1015 Museum Curator Series. Similar to other resource career occupations, a full performance (GS-11 or higher) resources management subject-matter professional must provide technical supervision to any museum technician/specialist position below GS-11. The full-performance level professional providing the supervision may be either on-site or shared with another NPS unit. This supervision

must be documented with Attachment 3: Amendment to Benchmark Position Description— Technical Supervision Agreement, which should be appended to the PD of the employee receiving such supervision.)

Are these benchmark positions exempt or nonexempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act?

The positions are described at the GS-5, GS-7, GS-9, and GS-11 levels. Under the criteria covering professional positions, all benchmarks were found to be nonexempt through the GS-9 level, and exempt at the GS-11 level. Supervisory positions are covered under the executive exemption criteria. Due to the trainee nature of the work assignment at the GS-5 through GS-9 levels, the position (whether nonsupervisory or supervisory) does not customarily and regularly exercise the discretion and independent judgement characteristic of exempt work assignments. See the classification evaluation for a complete discussion of the rationale behind these FLSA determinations.

How will "other duties" be addressed when using a Benchmark PD?

Obviously, no single PD can cover every conceivable work situation. A form, Attachment 2: Amendment to Benchmark Position Description--Other Duties, has been developed for the specific purpose of giving supervisors the flexibility to use a Benchmark PD which meets the *80% criterion* (see page 6 of *Position Management Guidance*), and yet supplement it with other non-grade-determining duties, as needed. The form provides some sample "collateral duties" that might commonly be assigned to employees working in resources management positions, and a space for the supervisor to indicate the percentage of the incumbent's time devoted to such other duties. It also provides an option for supervisors to include other unique, non-grade-determining duties, and indicate the percentage of time spent on each of them. (Note: The total time spent on such "other duties" *must not* total more than 20%, or the Benchmark PD will *not* meet the 80% criterion and so *cannot* be used.)

When used, Attachment 2 is to be appended to the selected Benchmark PD, and submitted to your office for final classification review. The "other duties" that supervisors list on Attachment 2 *must not* affect the title, series or grade of the selected Benchmark PD either separately or in combination. If the additional duties to be performed would affect the title, series, and/or grade, the position does not fit the Benchmark PD. In that case, work with the supervisor to determine another, more appropriate Benchmark PD, or to develop an appropriate non-Benchmark PD. Conduct and document an individual position evaluation to determine the correct position title, series, and grade of such non-Benchmark PDs.

What about situations in which it is determined that a professional position will not go beyond the GS-9 level at a particular park?

It is recognized that, in *rare* cases, a position in one of the covered professional series will not go beyond the GS-9 level in a specific location. In these rare cases, the following statement must be added to the "Remarks" section on the OF-8:

"The full performance level for this position is GS-9. Technical supervision is provided by a resources management subject-matter professional (GS-11 or higher) located on-site or at another NPS unit."

Again, if the supervisor has not included the above statement on the OF-8 for any such professional

PD, add the remark to the OF-8, and provide a copy to the requesting office.

What if none of the Benchmark PDs meets the 80% criterion?

The existing GS-11 PD may be used in such situations provided it accurately describes the actual duties and responsibilities assigned. The PD used (whether an existing PD or a newly written non-Benchmark PD) must state the full-performance level of the position. In such cases, the following statement must be included in the "Remarks" section of the OF-8:

"The full-performance level for professional positions in this series is (*Insert appropriate grade level, e.g., GS-9, GS-11, GS-12*)."

You must prepare an individual classification evaluation if a Benchmark PD is not used. If the existing PD is used in these circumstances, and the existing evaluation statement is still valid, you may document the position review by simply including the following statement at the end of the evaluation, along with your signature and the date of your review:

"This evaluation has been reviewed and remains valid."

Additionally, if the supervisor has not included the remark about career ladders on the OF-8 for the affected non-Benchmark professional PD, add the remark to the OF-8, and provide a copy to the requesting office after you have signed it as the Classifier.

What about positions involving supervisory work?

Some positions may supervise paid or unpaid employees. If supervisory duties occupy 25% or more of the employee's time, his or her PD must be evaluated under the General Schedule Supervisory Guide. We have attempted, in Attachment 1: Amendment to GS-11 Benchmark Position Description--Supervisory Duties and Evaluation Factors, to develop a form which should serve as the GSSG evaluation for most professional positions involving both technical and administrative supervision of multiple full-performance level professional positions. This form, when completed, will reflect the number and kind of employees supervised by the incumbent, the percentage of time spent supervising such employees, and other factors that may affect the title and/or grade of the position.

If Attachment 1 is appropriate for use, the requesting second-level (or higher) supervisor must prepare and sign a new OF-8; attach the applicable Benchmark PD, a completed Attachment 1, and a current organization chart; and forward the entire package to your office. You will then need to review all these materials for completeness and accuracy, and confirm the evaluation of the position with reference to the GSSG and this Manual.

In the event that a supervisory position does not fit *all* of the conditions described in Attachment 1, the attachment is not appropriate for use. You will, in that case, need to work closely with the incumbent's supervisor to guide him or her in developing an appropriate non-Benchmark supervisory PD, including accurately described GSSG evaluation factors.

Regardless of whether using a Benchmark PD supplemented by Attachment 1 or using an individually described supervisory PD, for any position for which at least 25% of the incumbent's time is spent on supervisory duties, assign an appropriate supervisory title. Document the OF-8

with respect to the position classification standards used in your evaluation of the position. Sign and date the classifier's certification on the OF-8.

(Note: The implementation of Resources Careers offers an opportunity for improved position management, particularly with respect to the potential for reducing the layers of supervision without adversely affecting incumbents' current grades. You should carefully advise serviced Superintendents about the ratio of supervisors to non-supervisory employees, and help them to determine whether the number of supervisors might be reduced by withdrawing supervisory duties from some existing GS-11 positions and reassigning the incumbents non-competitively to appropriate GS-11 non-supervisory Benchmark PDs. Of course, if in reducing the number of supervisory positions at a park, one or more upgraded (and likely interdisciplinary) supervisory positions will be established, and incumbents of other affected supervisory positions will be converted to non-supervisory GS-11 professional positions, the filling of the upgraded supervisory position must be done competitively. On the other hand, it may be that first-level supervisory duties included in positions currently classified at the GS-11 level could readily be absorbed by existing GS-12 or higher graded supervisors at the same location without necessitating any supervisory position upgrades.)

How do we evaluate positions involving technical supervision that is provided from a source other than the employee's regular supervisor (e.g., in those situations in which there is no GS-11 professional position of an appropriate specialty at the park or in the employee's unit at the park)?

Management is responsible for arranging for technical supervision to be provided from a qualified professional in the same park or at another park. This arrangement will be documented through use of Attachment 3: Amendment to Benchmark Position Description--Technical Supervision Agreement, which supervisors and managers have been instructed to submit along with the employee's PD when this situation exists. In evaluating any supervisory position, you should review the PDs of the subordinate positions to ensure that you are crediting, in the calculation of the base level supervised (GSSG Evaluation Factor 5), only those positions over which the position exercises both administrative and technical supervision.

What about career ladders for technician positions?

No Servicewide career ladder has been defined for technician positions, and the technician Benchmark PDs that have been provided for optional use have all been written at a variety of full-performance grade levels. No "developmental" Benchmark PDs were developed for the technician occupations. This does not preclude supervisors and managers from establishing local career ladders for such positions through the development and use of "Statement of Differences" PDs. If supervisors wish to establish and fill "trainee" technician positions with promotion potential to one of the full-performance level technician Benchmark PDs, you should assist them to develop a "Statement of Differences" PD for the proposed level of entry, and for each intervening grade level between the entry-level and the full-performance level, in accordance with your region's classification practices.

Staffing

Supervisors and managers will request your assistance in determining the nature of personnel actions that will be necessary to implement the final classification decisions, incumbents' eligibility for placement into the new positions, and whether such placement may be done non-competitively or will require announcement and competition. In reaching such staffing determinations, you will be

guided by the DOI Merit Promotion Plan and the information contained in this Manual.

First, look at the qualifications of current staff in comparison to the applicable qualification standard from U.S. Office of Personnel Management Operating Manual: Qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions.

Determine whether affected employees meet the basic qualification and time-in-grade requirements for the positions, and, in the case of professional positions, whether they meet the positive education requirements for the series. Determine whether the incumbent's movement into the new PD may be processed non-competitively or will require the use of competitive merit promotion procedures.

Are there circumstances in which promotion or reassignment to a position with higher promotion potential will be done non-competitively?

Yes! An employee may move between professional positions covered by Resources Careers non-competitively (either by promotion or reassignment) when the position they are moving to has the same or lower full performance level and they meet all qualification requirements for the new position. An employee must compete when moving into a different position with a higher career ladder (i.e., higher full performance level) or when moving from a one-grade interval technician position to a two-grade interval professional position. Such positions should be processed either competitively or, when appropriate, on the basis of gradual assumption of duties.

Additionally, an employee who encumbers a technician position that is already classified with a full-performance level of GS-11 may be non-competitively reassigned into a professional career ladder if otherwise qualified (i.e., if he or she meets the experience and education requirements).

Movement from an existing technician PD to a technician Benchmark PD or individually written and classified technician PD of higher grade/promotion potential *may* be done non-competitively *only* if the circumstances meet one of the identified exceptions to the Merit Promotion Plan. These include correction of a classification error, and in some cases, assignment of higher grade duties.

Be aware, however, that movement of employees from technician positions with a full-performance level of less than GS-11 into professional career ladder positions *must* be done under competitive merit promotion procedures.

The existing organizational structure is often a factor in determining whether competition is required. For instance, if there are a number of similarly graded positions in the immediate work unit, and higher graded duties and responsibilities are being added to some, but not all, such positions, then competition will likely be required to determine which employee(s) will be assigned to the higher graded position(s), and which employees will remain at their present grade. On the other hand, if all similarly situated positions in the immediate work unit (i.e., reporting to the same immediate supervisor) were being upgraded, competition would generally not be required in order to promote the incumbent or to reassign him or her in a developmental-level PD.

What about conversions from technician positions to professional positions?

If the position review resulted in a determination that the park needs are for a professional position, but the current position is classified as a technician, the incumbent may be non-competitively reassigned to the new professional PD *only* if the full-performance level of the

existing technician position was GS-11 or higher *and* he or she meets qualification requirements, including the positive education requirements, for the professional position.

If the affected technician does not meet qualification requirements (particularly the positive education requirements), you will need to advise supervisors and managers about their options for addressing the situation. Options include, but may not be limited to:

- Establishing a "bridge" technician position and development program under "Upward Mobility" to prepare a technician for subsequent assignment into the professional career ladder, and announcing this developmental opportunity under competitive merit promotion procedures.
- Directing the reassignment of the affected technician employee into another vacant position for which he or she meets the qualification requirements, and which is of the same grade or promotion potential currently held.
- Delaying the conversion to, and filling of, a professional position until the technician position is vacated through normal attrition.

Consult with the serviced supervisor or manager to identify additional options and select the most appropriate action to take in specific cases.

Process electronic Standard Forms 52: Request for Personnel Action.

Regardless of the specific staffing/placement actions determined necessary through the consultation process, supervisors must submit appropriate electronic SF-52s through the Federal Personnel Payroll System (FPPS) in order to set the position and staffing actions in motion. At the same time that they submit the electronic SF-52s through FPPS, supervisors will send you hard copies of the related PDs (including any required attachments), to support the requested actions.

Are there standard instructions concerning the Natures of Action, Remarks, etc., that should be used in processing Resources Careers personnel actions?

Yes! Identified below are the Nature of Action Codes (NOAC), Natures of Action (NOA), Authority Codes, Authorities, and Required Remarks to be used in processing personnel actions to implement Resources Careers. We have tried to anticipate as many variables as possible in the process. In the event that you encounter a personnel action not specifically addressed below, first consult U.S. Office of Personnel Management Operating Manual: The Guide to Processing Personnel Actions, to locate the necessary information. If unable to find applicable guidance there, contact your Regional Human Resources Manager for advice and assistance.

When the employee is promoted under competitive merit promotion procedures to a professional PD under Resources Careers, use:

NOAC: 702

NOA: PROMOTION

Authority Code: N3M

Authority: REG 335.102 COMP

Required Remark(s):

SELECTED FROM MPP CERT # *(Insert Number)*, DATED *(Insert Date)*.

RESULT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOURCES CAREERS WHICH HAS

ESTABLISHED A CAREER LADDER TO THE GS-11 LEVEL.

For those rare circumstances where a position has a park-specific full-performance level lower than GS-11, add the following remark:

FULL-PERFORMANCE LEVEL OF EMPLOYEE'S POSITION IS *(Insert Pay Plan and Grade)* AT THIS LOCATION.

Add any other standard remarks from Table 14-L of OPM Operating Manual as may be determined applicable.

When the employee is promoted under competitive merit promotion procedures to a technician PD under Resources Careers, use:

NOAC: 702
NOA: PROMOTION
Authority Code: N3M
Authority: REG 335.102 COMP
Required Remark(s):
SELECTED FROM MPP CERT #*(Insert Number)*, DATED*(Insert Date)*.

Add either of the following remarks, as applicable:

FULL-PERFORMANCE LEVEL OF EMPLOYEE'S POSITION IS *(Insert Pay Plan and Grade)*.

POSITION IS AT THE FULL-PERFORMANCE LEVEL.

Add any other standard remarks from Table 14-L of OPM Operating Manual as may be determined applicable.

When a GS-9 professional employee is promoted non-competitively based on the upgrading of the position as a result of a position review, use the following to document the personnel actions:

NOAC: 702
NOA: PROMOTION
Authority Code: N5M
Authority: REG 335.102 UPGRADING
Required Remarks:
RESULT OF POSITION REVIEW.

RESULT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOURCES CAREERS WHICH HAS ESTABLISHED A CAREER LADDER TO THE GS-11 LEVEL.

Add any other standard remarks from Table 14-L of OPM Operating Manual as may

be determined applicable.

For reassignment of professional employees not meeting time-in-grade and/or performance requirements for promotion, use the following to effect personnel actions:

NOAC: 721
NOA: REASSIGNMENT
Authority code: N7M
Authority: REG 335.102 RECLASS
Required Remarks:
RESULT OF POSITION REVIEW.

RESULT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOURCES CAREERS WHICH HAS ESTABLISHED A CAREER LADDER TO THE GS-11 LEVEL.

For those rare circumstances where a position has a park-specific full-performance level lower than GS-11, add the following remark:

FULL-PERFORMANCE LEVEL OF EMPLOYEE'S POSITION IS *(Insert Pay Plan and Grade)* AT THIS LOCATION.

Add any other standard remarks from Table 14-L of OPM Operating Manual as may be determined applicable.

When promotions result from accretion of duties (e.g., promotion of technician, etc.) use the following to document the personnel actions:

NOAC: 702
NOA: PROMOTION
Authority Code: N7M
Authority: REG 335.102 RECLASS
Required Remarks:
RESULT OF ADDITIONAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.
POSITION IS AT THE FULL-PERFORMANCE LEVEL.

For reassignments at the same grade level with no additional non-competitive promotion potential, use the following to document the personnel actions:

NOAC: 721
NOA: REASSIGNMENT
Authority Code: N7M
Authority: REG 335.102 RECLASS
Required Remarks:
RESULT OF POSITION REVIEW.

RESULT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOURCE CAREERS.

POSITION IS AT THE FULL-PERFORMANCE LEVEL.

Don't hesitate to contact your Regional Human Resources Manager for guidance or assistance if you are unsure of the procedures and/or documentation that are required in any given situation.

Position Numbers

A standard position description number has been assigned to each resources careers position description. This number appears on the OF-8 cover sheet in Block #14, "Agency Use". It should be entered into FPPS in the last three spaces of the position allocation number field which is on the Position SF-52/SF-50 Information Screen. The number will appear on the employee's SF-50 in Block #15.

Employee Development

For each employee placed in a position below the full-performance level (regardless of whether the position is a professional or a technician), you should assist the supervisor and employee with the development of an Individual Development Plan and training strategy to assist the employee to reach the full-performance level with the requisite skills and knowledge. Training opportunities may include college-level course work, on-the-job experiences, structured rotational assignments or details, classroom training, shadow assignments, coaching and counseling, etc.

Performance Management

Upon request, assist supervisors and managers with the development of performance standards which reflect the duties in the new Benchmark PD or other applicable PD to which an employee is assigned as a result of Resources Careers. In those instances involving performance deficiencies in the current position and grade level, assist supervisors and managers on how to address unacceptable performance.

Part III. Instructions for Employees

Q. What, If Any Responsibilities Do I Have as an Employee Affected by Resources Careers?

- A. As an employee, you must be performing at an acceptable level of performance before you may be promoted to the next higher-grade level or subsequent grade levels. You should continue to perform the duties of your current position in a manner indicating you are ready for advancement to the higher-grade level. You should continue to demonstrate and develop your knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal qualifications. You should become familiar with the NPS Employee Training and Development Career Planning and Tracking Kit (Essential Competencies) in order to establish a self-development plan. You and all other affected employees are encouraged to apply for positions for which qualified and in which interested.

If you are a professional employee who is restricted to less than the full-performance level of the career ladder (i.e., GS-11) at your current location due to the park organizational structure, you are encouraged to market yourself through networking and apply for promotional opportunities in other organizations consistent with your interest and geographic availability.

Q. Whom Should I Contact if I Have Questions about Resources Careers?

- A. You should first consult with your supervisor who will attempt to answer your questions and concerns. If he or she is unable to do so, you may contact your servicing personnel office for advice and assistance.

Part IV. Frequently Asked Questions

Q. The decision to establish a GS-11 full-performance level for the covered professional series seems arbitrary. Why don't we leave it to local discretion what the career ladder will be for each Resources Careers professional position?

- A. In February 1994, the Careers Council of the Vail Agenda created the Resources Careers initiative with the given purpose to define and implement a human resources development program for resources management careers that will meet the stewardship needs of the National Park Service and strengthen the profession.

In 1995 and 1996, 46 fact-finding reviews were conducted by personnel management specialists and subject matter experts. The reviews encompassed 125 positions, in 19 different series, duty stationed in 14 parks and one center dispersed across all 7 regions. Those reviews examined the *type* of natural and cultural resources management work performed in NPS areas and the *grade level* of the work. Positions and parks were selected to get a broad representation of positions, park complexity, and regions. The results confirmed that professional resources management work exists in every park, whether or not it is recognized, and that the appropriate grade for most full performance positions is GS-11.

Managers will still have the discretion locally to use a non-Benchmark Position Description to establish professional positions that will not have promotion potential beyond the GS-9 level *at that*

location.

Q. Why are we using the generic Benchmark PD approach to the classification of resources management positions?

A. There are a number of reasons for using the Benchmark PD approach in the classification of positions within a career field. Among them are (1) to establish a recognized career field and pattern of professional growth for employees who are charged with the protection and preservation of our cultural and natural resources for the education and enjoyment of this and future generations, (2) to ensure that similar jobs within the career field are similarly classified as to series and grade, and (3) to provide critical position management and classification services by the most effective and efficient means possible despite continuing reductions in staff available to perform such personnel services.

Q. Does the prohibition against adding "other duties" to a Benchmark PD that would affect the title, series, and/or grade of the position preclude assigning such "other duties" as would require the addition of a parenthetical title to a technician Benchmark PD?

A. The prohibition with respect to adding "other duties" that would affect the title, series, and/or grade to a Benchmark is primarily intended to avoid adding other duties that would so change the position as to make it no longer appropriately fit the designated series and grade. Adding "other duties" that would perhaps require the addition of a parenthetical title would not generally prohibit the use of the Benchmark PD. For example, "other duties" reflecting a concentration in a particular scientific field, such as wildlife biology, might appropriately be added to a biological science technician Benchmark PD that otherwise meets the 80% criterion in describing a technician's actual duties. If, as a result of adding this concentration in the "other duties" amendment, the Classifier found that a parenthetical title of Biological Science Technician (Wildlife) was warranted, it might be appropriate to use the Benchmark PD and simply add the parenthetical title. Servicing personnel office staff will make final classification determinations about the appropriate use of Benchmark PDs with the addition of a parenthetical title.

Q. I noticed that the technician Benchmark PDs are all written with full-performance levels of GS-5, GS-6 or GS-7. Will current GS-8 or higher technicians have to be downgraded and placed on one of these Benchmark PDs unless eligible for and promoted to a professional Benchmark position?

A. No! The technician Benchmark PDs at GS-5, GS-6, and GS-7 full-performance level were developed at those levels only because those were the most common grade levels for technician positions in most of the affected series. The lack of technician Benchmark PDs either below GS-5 or above GS-7 should in no way be construed to mean that all technician positions should have a full-performance level between GS-5 and GS-7. There are existing technician positions in the Service with legitimate full-performance levels as high as GS-11 in some series, and as low as GS-4 in others. If any of the technician Benchmark PDs meet the 80% criterion when compared to the actual work being performed by one or more of their employees, managers are encouraged to use the appropriate GS-5 or GS-6 or GS-7 level technician Benchmark PD. At other grade levels, the existing technician PD may very well be appropriate for continued use, or if it needs updating, a new PD will need to be developed locally and classified individually.

- Q. How do employees in the "rare" professional positions that will not have promotion potential to the GS-11 level locally be considered for promotion to GS-11 positions elsewhere?**
- A.** Such employees may apply in response to any individual vacancy announcement for a GS-11 position that may be issued through the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) vacancy announcement system, USAJOBS.
- Q. What happens when a GS-9 employee in one of these "rare situations" applies for a GS-11 elsewhere but is not selected? Is there a guarantee that these employees will be selected when referred for higher graded positions?**
- A.** There is no guarantee that an employee who is duty-stationed in a park that has established a non-Benchmark PD for a GS-9 professional resources management position will be selected when he or she applies for a GS-11 position elsewhere. Authority rests with the designated selecting official to determine whether an applicant best meets the particular staffing need.
- Q. May the Benchmark PDs be used for positions in regional offices and other central offices as well as parks?**
- A.** Yes. The Benchmark PDs have been developed primarily for parks but may be appropriate for other locations. FIREPRO positions, however, have their own Benchmark PDs that were developed through a separate initiative. However, FIREPRO positions in any of the professional series included in Resources Careers will also be covered by the Servicewide career ladder for such professional positions/series.
- Q. We have been told that Resources Careers will not be implemented because we are a small park, and our Superintendent says we cannot afford any upgrades. Is there anything that can be done about that?**
- A.** First and foremost, the implementation of the Resources Careers initiative is **mandatory** Servicewide for all professional positions at or below the GS-11 level in the covered series. The career ladder of GS-5/7/9/11 will now be the norm throughout the Service. Managers and supervisors will need to review the Benchmark PDs to determine which, if any, most closely match the actual work being performed or needing to be performed. In some cases, there may be no Benchmark PD which meets the 80% criterion for use. In that event, an existing local PD may be used or another locally-developed PD may be written. If the position is classified in a technician series, however, no Servicewide career ladder coverage will apply.
- Any employee who feels that his or her position has been improperly classified (i.e., that the duties and responsibilities assigned are not classified in the appropriate series and/or grade) may appeal the classification of the position at any time. Questions about the classification appeal process may be directed to your servicing personnel office.
- Q. Why can't developmental level professional Benchmark PDs be used for temporary appointments?**

- A. Both term and permanent employees can, under the conditions of their appointments, be promoted. Consequently, the developmental Benchmark PDs may appropriately be used when hiring term or permanent employees.

Temporary employees, however, generally *cannot* be promoted, thus making it impractical to use a developmental PD (whether a Benchmark or locally-developed PD) when hiring them. Any change in a temporary employee's grade can only be processed through the employee's being within reach for selection through "recompetition" for the position. This includes a requirement to announce the opportunity to, and consider, other external candidates who may have priority over the current temporary employee for such appointment. For instance, an application from a well-qualified displaced employee of another Federal agency in the local commuting area would block any consideration of a current temporary employee for the upgraded temporary position. If the temporary employee was a non-veteran, an application from a qualified veterans preference eligible could also block the employee's selection for an upgraded temporary position.

The inability to use developmental Benchmark PDs for temporary appointments should *not*, however, be construed as prohibiting in any way the hiring of temporary employees at full-performance grades below GS-11. Parks may certainly develop local, non-Benchmark professional PDs for temporary positions, including such positions with a GS-9 full-performance level. This is especially true and, in fact, represents sound position management when the park has a higher graded permanent or term professional employee on staff who can provide the necessary professional guidance and technical direction for such work.

Q. I'm confused! When does an employee have to compete for a promotion as a result of Resources Careers, and when is competition not required?

- A. Often, when a position is upgraded, the incumbent can be non-competitively promoted. This is especially true when the upgrading is due to the correction of a classification error or when a new classification standard or guideline is issued. Sometimes, even when a position is upgraded as a result of the assignment of additional duties and responsibilities, an incumbent *may* be eligible for non-competitive promotion. The final determination as to whether competition must be applied depends upon a number of variables.

Regardless of the circumstances surrounding a position upgrade, to be promoted, an employee must fully meet the qualification requirements (including positive education requirements, if any) and time-in-grade requirements for the higher grade position. If the employee does not yet meet the time-in-grade or length of specialized experience requirements, promotion cannot occur until such qualifications and other requirements are met. In such cases, reassignment into a developmental-level PD may be appropriate, but a determination would still need to be made about whether competition is required.

The existing organizational structure is often a factor in determining whether competition is required. For instance, if there are a number of similarly graded positions in the immediate work unit, and higher graded duties and responsibilities are being added to some, but not all, such positions, then competition will likely be required to determine which employee(s) will be assigned to the higher graded position(s), and which employees will remain at their present grade. On the

other hand, if all similarly situated positions in the immediate work unit (i.e., reporting to the same immediate supervisor) were being upgraded, competition would generally not be required in order to promote the incumbent or to reassign him or her in a developmental-level PD.

Requirements for merit promotion competition and exceptions to such requirements are spelled out in Governmentwide personnel regulations and the DOI Merit Promotion Plan. Servicing Personnel Office staff will assist in determining whether competition must be applied in a particular situation.

Q. When merit promotion procedures must be applied, can an incumbent's competitive promotion be blocked by a local displaced DOI employee eligible for special selection priority under the DOI Career Transition Assistance Plan?

- A.** Under changes to the DOI Career Transition Assistance Plan (CTAP) as revised on September 8, 1997, the receipt of an application from a well-qualified displaced *NPS* employee in the local commuting area with special selection priority (SSP) eligibility *would* block the incumbent's competitive promotion unless failing to promote the incumbent would cause an NPS employee to be separated by reduction in force. However, the receipt of an application from a well-qualified SSP eligible *from another DOI bureau* in the local commuting area *would not* block the incumbent's selection under competitive promotion procedures. For further information about the applicability of CTAP when filling competitive service vacancies, see Section A, Question 4, and Section C, Question 5, of the DOI CTAP dated September 8, 1997.

**Attachment 1: Amendment to GS-11 Benchmark
Position Description--Supervisory Duties and Evaluation Factors**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE OF THIS ATTACHMENT: *Some Resources Careers positions may be primarily non-supervisory but have some limited supervisory/leader responsibilities that are already described in the Benchmark Position Descriptions (PD). Other positions may include the full range of supervisory responsibilities that occupy 25% or more of the incumbent's time.*

If the incumbent spends less than 25% of his/her time on supervision, or if the positions supervised include only 1 or 2 professionals and mostly lower graded technicians, or if the position supervises professionals above the GS-11 level, this attachment should not be used. Consult with your servicing personnel office (SPO) staff to develop an appropriate supervisory PD for those circumstances.

This attachment is to be used only in situations in which the incumbent spends 25% or more of his/her time supervising multiple professional positions with a GS-11 full-performance level. In this circumstance, complete, and submit Attachment 1, along with an organization chart, the appropriate Benchmark PD, and a signed Optional Form 8: Position Description (coversheet) to the SPO for final classification determination. Contact your SPO for guidance.

(Note: If the position in question performs, for 25% or more of the time, ALL of the duties described under Supervisory Responsibility on the next page of this Attachment, then the position must also perform the Equal Opportunity, Safety, and Labor-Management Relations duties described immediately below that section.)

Supervisory Duties

ORGANIZATIONAL LOCATION: _____ POSITION NO.: _____

TYPE OF SUPERVISION EXERCISED: ADMINISTRATIVE___ TECHNICAL___ BOTH___

PERCENTAGE OF TIME INCUMBENT SPENDS PERFORMING THE SUPERVISORY DUTIES DESCRIBED BELOW: _____%

SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES: Exercises the full range of supervisory duties for a supporting staff. Performs overall work planning, establishes work schedules and priorities, and assigns and reviews work. Personally discusses with subordinates their work progress and problem areas as they arise. Interviews and recommends the hiring of subordinate staff. Recommends promotions, reassignments, and other personnel changes. Approves leave. Develops performance standards and evaluates the performance of staff members. Recommends motivational awards for exceptional performance, and counsels employees whose performance falls short of expectations. Identifies training needed by subordinates, and ensures that training opportunities are provided. Carries out minor disciplinary measures such as counseling, written warnings, and reprimands, and recommends other, more severe discipline in more serious cases. Keeps employees informed of management policies and goals.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY: As a supervisor, incumbent is responsible for ensuring equal opportunity for all employees supervised, including equal opportunity in selection of employees for training, promotions, awards and recognition, and career development opportunities. Ensures fair and unprejudiced employment practices in the recruitment and selection of candidates for appointments to positions supervised. Is responsible for supporting programs relating to the training and the advancement of employees. Is responsible for actively supporting the equal opportunity program in day-to-day activities, and will be evaluated on personal performance in this area on a regular basis.

SAFETY: Is responsible for the on-the-job safety and health of all employees supervised. Initiates efforts conforming to established local and bureau safety programs to satisfy this responsibility. Responsibilities include identifying and correcting job safety and health hazards, instructing employees on safety requirements for job assignments, reviewing and reporting loss incidents in accordance with bureau and Office of Workers Compensation Program regulations, initiating corrective measures for violations of the Occupational Safety and Health Act standards, and directing the periodic inspection of all work places.

LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS: Regardless of the status of local employee organizations, is responsible for being knowledgeable about management's role and responsibilities in labor-management relations. Where a collective bargaining agreement is in effect at the park/office, is responsible for becoming completely knowledgeable of, and complying fully with, the terms of the agreement.

Supervisory Evaluation Factors

Include this Attachment with the Benchmark PD if the position's supervisory work and related managerial responsibilities:

- require accomplishment of work through combined technical and administrative direction of others, AND
- constitute a major duty occupying at least 25% of the position's time, AND
- are an accurate representation of this position's responsibilities, AND
- after the supervisor of this position has filled in the required information in Factors 3 and 5.

Classification Standard Used: General Schedule Supervisory Guide (TS-123, April 1993)

Factor 1. Program Scope and Effect Level 1-2; 350 points

Work directed is professional in nature and typically has limited geographic coverage (e.g., the park and local communities). Activities affect park operations and objectives, and may have some effect on local communities.

Factor 2. Organizational Setting Level 2-1; 100 points

This position reports to a position that is two or more levels below the *first* SES position in the direct supervisory chain. For example, this position may report to the Division Chief, who reports to the park Superintendent, who reports to the Regional Director, the first SES-level position.

(Note: Many positions may also meet Level 2-2 (250 points), where the position is only one reporting level below the first SES-level position in the direct supervisory chain. For example, such a position might report directly to a Superintendent, who reports to an SES position. Such positions credited with Level 2-2 will receive a higher point total, but the overall grade will not be affected.)

Factor 3. Supervisory And Managerial Authority Exercised Level 3-2; 450 points

This position carries out at least 3 of the first 4, and a total of 6 or more of the following 10 authorities and responsibilities:

Place an "X" next to all authorities and responsibilities that this position involves:

Plans work to be accomplished by subordinates, sets and adjusts short-term priorities, and prepares schedules for completion of work.

Assigns work to subordinates based on priorities, selective consideration of the difficulty and requirements of assignments, and capabilities of employees.

Develops performance standards.

Evaluates work performance of subordinates.

Gives advice, counsel or instruction to employees on both work and administrative matters.

Interviews candidates for positions in the unit; recommends appointment, promotion or reassignment to such positions.

- ___ Hears and resolves complaints from employees, referring group grievances and more serious unresolved complaints to a higher level supervisor or manager.
- ___ Effects minor disciplinary measures, such as warnings and reprimands, recommending other action in more serious cases.
- ___ Identifies developmental and training needs of employees, providing or arranging for needed developmental and training.
- ___ Finds ways to improve production or increase the quality of the work directed.

Factor 4. Personal Contacts

Factor 4A. Nature of Contacts **Level 4A-2; 50 points**

The incumbent has frequent contacts, related to supervisory and managerial responsibilities, with subordinates, peers, and other staff; the general public; technical employees of state and local governments; and reporters for local media. Contacts occasionally require non-routine or special preparation.

Factor 4B. Purpose of Contacts **Level 4B-2; 75 points**

The purpose of supervisory and management contacts is to exchange information, plan and coordinate the work directed with others, and resolve differences of opinion.

Factor 5. Difficulty of Typical Work Directed **Level 5-6; 800 points**

The base level of the work directed is GS-11. This means that 25% or more of the mission-oriented workload of the organization is at the GS-11 level and that the incumbent provides both administrative and technical supervision over these employees. Complete the following charts:

Permanent, term, and temporary (including seasonal) employees supervised:

Position Number	Position Title	Series and Grade	Number Hours Work/Week	Number Weeks Work/Year	FTE

If applicable, include unpaid and/or non-NPS personnel (volunteers, contractor staff, etc.) supervised:

Type of Position (SCA, VIP, etc.)	Number Hours Work/Week	Number Weeks Work/Year	FTE

Factor 6. Other Conditions Level 6-4; 1120 points

Supervision requires substantial coordination and integration of major professional projects at the GS-11 level. For example, the incumbent identifies and integrates internal and external program issues that affect the park(s); reviews and approves the substance of reports, decisions, and other action documents to assure that they accurately reflect the policies and position of the park and the NPS; integrates the work of the group and ensures compatibility and consistency of interpretation, judgment, logic, and application of policy; etc.

**Total Points = 2945
(GS-12 Point Range 2755 – 3150)**

Supervisory Responsibilities Certified by*:

			Name/Title
(Please print)	Signature	Date	

*Must be a supervisory official at least one level above the position being so certified.

Attachment 2: Amendment to Benchmark Position Description--Other Duties

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE OF THIS ATTACHMENT: *The incumbent may be responsible for other duties not specified in the applicable Benchmark Position Description (PD). List and/or check these additional duties, record the percentage of time spent on each, and staple this Attachment to the applicable Benchmark PD. The duties that you identify below will have no impact on the grade of the Benchmark PD since they should, in the aggregate, not occupy more than 20% of the incumbent's time and should be at the same or lower grade level as the duties described in the Benchmark PD. If the other duties are grade controlling, you must not use the Benchmark PD.*

ORGANIZATIONAL LOCATION: _____ POSITION NO.: _____

DUTIES NOT LISTED IN THE BENCHMARK PD: The incumbent is also responsible for performing the following duties for the percentage of time indicated:

___% Serves on the following local, regional, Servicewide or inter-agency task force(s) or committee(s):

___% Performs supervisory responsibilities less than 25% of the time (see Attachment 1: Amendment to GS-11 Benchmark Position Description--Supervisory Duties and Evaluation Factors).

___% Serves as collateral duty fire management officer.

___% Serves as collateral duty wilderness or backcountry coordinator.

___% Serves as collateral duty safety officer.

___% _____

___% _____

___% TOTAL

**Attachment 3: Amendment to Benchmark
Position Description--Technical Supervision Agreement**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE OF THIS ATTACHMENT: *Use this attachment when technical and administrative supervision are provided by different individuals.*

Position Title, Series, Grade

Organizational Location

(if position is occupied) Position Number

Employee's Name

To ensure the professional development of the incumbent and to fulfill the mission of the Resources Careers Professional Development Program, professional positions below the GS-11 level and technician positions at any grade are to receive full technical supervision from a GS-11 or higher level professional in the same or closely related field. The technical supervisor must possess knowledge of professional principles, practices, and methods in that field or a closely related professional field.

Technical supervision is defined as:

- Reviewing and evaluating work products and performance using knowledge of professional principles, practices, and methods on a substantial and recurring basis.
- Providing input to the administrative supervisor in: developing the employee's work goals, plans and assignments; setting priorities; and ensuring production and accuracy requirements are met;
- Providing input to performance standards and ratings;
- Identifying developmental and training needs of the employee.

Technical supervision will be provided by:

Technical Supervisor's Name

Position Title, Series, Grade

Organizational Location

Concurrence with the Agreement:

Signature of Administrative Supervisor Date

Signature of Technical Supervisor Date

Signature of Superintendent Date
Employee's Park

Signature of Superintendent Date
Technical Supervisor's Park