

# MEMORANDUM

## STATE OF ALASKA

Department of Administration  
Division of Personnel

**To:** Pam Day, Human Resources Manager  
Department of Natural Resources

**Date:** Nov. 16, 2002

Nicki Neal, Human Resource Manager  
Department of Community & Economic Development

Lynn Ate, Human Resource Manager  
Department of Fish and Game

**Thru:** Dianne Corso  
Personnel Manager

**Phone:** 465-4075

**From:** Connie Preecs  
Human Resource Specialist

**Subject:** Natural Resource Manager  
Classification Study

### HISTORY

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requested a full study of all job classes in the Natural Resource Technician (NRT), Officer (NRO) and Manager (NRM) series. Several areas of concern identified by the department were addressed in a February 7, 2002 memorandum from Judy Kidd to Dianne Corso:

- The existing class specifications for the NRO series do not reflect all the levels of current work assignments.
- DNR managers prefer a two-track career path, one professional and the other managerial.
- DNR is concerned about employee retention and wants to determine if the existing salary ranges should be changed.
- Classification parity within and between the job series should be verified.
- Apart from the retention issue, a perception exists that the current salaries are too low for the work assigned.
- The minimum qualifications for the series need to be updated to better fit the current needs in the individual job classes.

A planning meeting for the Natural Resource Study was held on October 17, 2001. The study plan included the following job classes:

Natural Resource Technician I – II  
Natural Resource Officer I – II  
Natural Resource Manager I - IV

Subject matter experts were identified at the planning meeting: Nancy Welch, Division of Mining, Land and Water; Jim Hansen and Jim Hayes, Division of Oil and Gas; and Judy Kidd DNR Human Resource Office. Connie Preecs was assigned to the project as the Division of Personnel (DOP) representative. The Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) had one position in the natural resource series; DCED designated Carolyn Edelman as its representative. The Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) also had a position in the series but the department did not designate a representative. Lee Powelson served as the Human Resource Manager of DNR and began the study in that department before becoming the DOP Classification Manager; consequently, Lee was designated as an in-house resource and Dianne Corso was designated as the person responsible for final approval of the study. DNR agreed to transmit representative position descriptions (PDs) to DOP. The target completion date for the project was set at February 1, 2002, which was advanced as the study unfolded.

Key milestones during the study included:

- On October 17, 2001, the study planning meeting was held.
- Beginning in November 2001, meetings between DNR and DOP occurred regularly.
- On February 7, 2002, a memo outlining DNR's concerns, providing background information about the work done by positions in the three series, and recommending levels and salary ranges was received by DOP.
- On April 26, 2002, DNR made a presentation expanding upon the information included in the February 7, 2002 memorandum. The presenters were Marty Rutherford, Deputy Commissioner (by telephone), Bob Loeffler, Director of the Division of Mining, Land and Water, and Mark Myers, Director of the Division of Oil and Gas.
- In May 2002, Connie Preecs traveled to Anchorage to interview incumbents of a variety of positions.
- On June 14, 2002, draft class specifications for NRT I-II and Natural Resource Specialist I-V (previously titled NRO) were sent to the departments for comments.
- On July 24, 2002, draft class specifications for the new Appraiser I-III series were sent to DNR for review and comment.
- On August 30, 2002, draft class specifications for the NRMs were sent to DNR for review and comment.
- On October 4, 2002, the Appraiser I-III class specifications were finalized and implemented.
- On October 15 and 16, 2002, test allocations for the NRT, NRS and NRM series were held; Nancy Welch served as the Subject Matter Expert.

- On October 17, 2002, DOP sent the draft salary recommendations for NRT, NRS, and NRM to DNR for review and comment.
- On October 28, 2002, DNR sent draft position allocations to DOP.
- On October 29, 2002, DNR managers made a presentation to the DOP study team regarding salary recommendations. The presenters were Marty Rutherford, Deputy Commissioner; Bob Loeffler, Director of Mining, Land and Water; Nancy Welch, Deputy Director of Mining, Land and Water; and Mark Myers, Director of Oil and Gas.

## **SCOPE**

The study was limited to positions in the NRT, NRO, and NRM series. All class specifications for these job classes were reviewed and revised. An advanced level was added to the NRT series. The NRO series was retitled to Natural Resource Specialist (NRS) and three levels added. Positions doing appraisal work were removed from the NRS series and a separate Appraiser series was established. Minimum qualifications were broadened across the three class series. An internal alignment analysis was conducted for all job classes in the three series. Class concepts and the rationale for salary assignment are discussed in the memorandum specific to each series.

At the time the study was requested the NRT series consisted of two levels, the NRO series consisted of two levels, and the NRM series consisted of four levels. The NRM levels ranged from working supervisor to the deputy director of a division. DNR did not recommend the creation of additional levels for the NRM series but did ask that the work of these positions be evaluated for proper salary range assignment. The study concluded that no change to the number of levels or salary ranges was warranted but redefined the work of the series through the new class specifications.

## **ANALYSIS**

Several fundamental issues arose during the study that influenced the ultimate outcome of the class specifications and the salary range assignments. They included:

### **1. Levels in the Series**

The Natural Resource Manager series consists of four levels; the department did not request a change to that structure. The Natural Resource Officer series historically has had two levels, the entry NRO I and the journey NRO II. DNR requested the addition of three levels to the new Natural Resource Specialist series to reflect additional levels of advanced work, and to provide a professional career track to complement the supervisory/ managerial Natural Resource Manager I-IV series. The study team concurred that sufficient advanced work exists to warrant establishment of an advanced professional level NRS III. Work supporting the next two levels, a second level of advanced professional (NRS IV) and a chief policy analyst (NRS V), was confirmed only in the DO&G at this time.

Note: DMLW asserts that the professional work related to large mine projects that is currently assigned and will be assigned in the immediate future is at a level above the NRS III. During the week preceding implementation of the study, DMLW submitted additional information to the DNR Human Resource Office pertaining to this issue. This information could not be evaluated by DOP within the study implementation time frames. A review will be scheduled and may result in revisions of the specifications.

## 2. Clear Separation between Supervisory and Non-supervisory Job Classes

The study group began its work with the assumption that all fully supervisory positions should be placed in the NRM series, reflecting DNR's desire to create separate but parallel professional and supervisory/managerial career tracks. This assumption ultimately proved unworkable given a variety of factors including: 1) units within DNR, particularly DO&G, organize work and employees on a project team basis, the changing composition and leadership of which means that professional track positions have lead or supervisory responsibilities that vary with assignments; and 2) a number of professional track positions throughout the department have permanent lead or supervisory duties as an ancillary rather than primary assignment. Consequently, class specifications for the professional track NRS series reference lead and supervisory duties, but the presence or absence of such duties is not class controlling at any level. Where supervisory duties are a primary function of a position, that position is properly placed in the NRM series.

## 3. Breadth of Work

Both the Natural Resource Officer series and the Natural Resource Manager series included such a wide variety of discrete types of work that any individual position typically performed only a portion of the work covered by a class specification. DOP representatives questioned the utility and appropriateness of continuing this approach in the new specifications and suggested breaking the two series into several more specific series. DNR management stated its belief that business operations required the ability to move people easily and quickly between assignments while maintaining parity, best achieved by maintaining broad job classes. This principle was ultimately adopted with the exception of the appraisal work. The study group determined that work in the appraisal section was sufficiently different with respect to the type of work and the minimum qualifications required that a separate series was necessary. The Appraiser I – III series was established and positions reallocated from the NRO series effective October 4, 2002.

The NRM series performs supervisory and administrative tasks associated with the stewardship and management of state-owned land, water, oil, gas and other natural resources except fish and wildlife. Position in this series perform professional work in the development, administration, analysis or implementation of programs to manage the land, water, mineral, forest, oil, gas, agricultural, natural and cultural history, parks and related surface and subsurface resources of the state.

The NRM series is distinguished from the NRS series by the NRM's dual primary purposes: 1) permanent supervisory responsibilities and management of the work of the organizational unit as well as 2) the performance of professional work.

Positions in the series are differentiated based on a combination of two job elements: 1) the management skills and activities required, including general administrative tasks such as supervising staff, developing and managing budgets, and developing policies and procedures; and 2) the complexity of the function, program or projects managed through direct participation in the professional work or through subordinate staff. The mix of the particular elements varies by position. Assignment to a particular class within the series is determined by the overall level of the position's duties based on the analysis of duties within each of the two job elements.

Under direction, a Natural Resource Manager I is the working supervisor of an organizational unit(s). Incumbents of NRM I positions work in one of two ways: 1) supervise journey level positions and perform journey level work; or 2) supervise lower level technical or professional positions and perform advanced journey professional work as determined by the complexity factors of the Natural Resource Specialist (NRS) III. Whereas the NRM I is a working-supervisor class and the size of the organizational units are typically small, duties assigned to most positions will be balanced between the two job elements. Both job elements, however, are more restricted at the NRM I level than at higher levels in the series. The managerial element at the NRM I level is almost exclusively related to supervising employees, and the complexity of the function, program or project that is managed will necessarily include the professional work the incumbent does directly. Some positions with regular and recurring assignments of advanced professional duties may have less emphasis on the supervisory duties although the performance of these duties is still a primary function.

Under direction, Natural Resource Manager II is the supervisor and technical manager of organizational unit(s). Organizational units managed by NRMs II are regularly assigned natural resource management work at an advanced journey level as determined by the complexity factors of the Natural Resource Specialist (NRS) III. Staff supervised includes journey professional level positions. In addition, because most NRM II positions manage organizational units with subunits, the staff supervised by NRMs II typically includes lower level NRMs I and Natural Resource Specialists III in addition to the journey level positions. Incumbents of such positions have a heavier emphasis on the management job element, although incumbents become directly involved in the advanced professional work as needed or directed. Positions that manage organizational units without multiple subunits must demonstrate that the complexity of the programs managed exceeds the complexity generally found at the NRM I or NRS III level.

Under general direction, Natural Resource Manager III is the administrative and technical manager of an organizational unit(s). The organizational units managed by the NRM III typically are regional offices or staff support units providing services in a specialized aspect of natural resource management to an entire division and composed of several smaller organizational units headed by lower-level managers, often at the NRM II level. Responsibilities of the NRM III include the development and implementation of policy for managing the particular resource, program administration (personnel and budget), representing the department's activities in the particular area of resource management, and advising the division director or commissioner on

policy alternatives. Because NRM III positions typically are regional managers or section heads, the duties assigned to NRM III positions are usually balanced between both job elements; however, some positions may be somewhat less balanced but have unusual compensatory strengths in one of the job elements. For example, although an incumbent may supervise only a small unit, the incumbent may have high level, broad scope legislative or policy-making responsibilities.

Under general administrative direction, Natural Resource Managers IV are administrators of organizational units. Organizational units administered by NRMs IV typically are divisions or the majority of a division's programs, with the technical management of the programs accomplished through subordinate NRMs, usually at the NRM III level, or by senior professional staff. NRMs IV have line authority over all or a majority of the operations in a division and are heavily focused on administrative duties. Some positions may have unusual technical expertise and a high level of responsibility for specific wide-scale policy and program direction but less for administering operations.

## **SALARY ANALYSIS**

Job classes in the same family and group are typically used for comparison during classification and salary studies. However, the other job classes in the Forestry and Natural Resource Management family (66XX) have also been scheduled for study with the exception of the Trust Resources series, which was moved to the exempt service by the legislature effective July 1, 2002. The Park Ranger job classes in the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation are also scheduled for study. It is not appropriate to compare these classes for salary range designation at this time since questions have already been raised about the propriety of the salary ranges currently assigned to them.

The Division of Personnel has throughout the years considered the upper levels of the Habitat, Fishery and Wildlife Biologist series (P61XX) with the Natural Resource Managers I and II for pay plan alignment. The management option at the Biologist III and IV level is similar to the Natural Resource Manager because of supervision of professional employees and the basing of decisions based on scientific and technical information. Because these similarities also exist in the Agronomist series (P645X), it too has been used for salary alignment. Work at the lower levels of the Agronomist series also fulfills the minimum qualifications for the Natural Resource Manager. These job classes continue to be appropriate comparisons for salary alignment. In addition, DNR requested that Environmental Analyst III be considered for comparison due to the lead responsibilities.

The NRM I is a working supervisor. Positions in this class perform at least journey professional level work, supervise professional or technical positions, and have some managerial duties. The Biologist III (Fishery, Wildlife and Habitat) job classes and the Agronomist II job class perform administrative management and supervise professionals who perform work where decisions are based on scientific work. The Biologist III (SR 18) and Agronomist II (SR 18) supervise at least journey level work and perform professional level work as well as spending time on management duties. These job classes have sufficient similarity in work and level to be used for internal alignment of the NRM I. The Environmental Analyst III (SR 19) is required to perform

lead duties as well as to perform advanced level work. The NRM I may lead or perform advanced professional duties, but the class also includes positions that perform professional work at the journey level. For this reason the NRM I class more closely compares with the Biologist, which likewise supervises and performs professional work but not necessarily above the journey level. The NRM I job class is allocated to salary range 18.

The NRM II is a supervisor and technical manager of an organizational unit. The NRM II also supervises journey, and usually advanced professional level work, and most typically manages organizational units with subunits. The Environmental Conservation Manager I (SR 21) is not comparable at this level because positions in this job class manage (1) a public service office, or (2) a program segment within a major statewide program, supervising the development of requirements and implementation of state and federal authorities for protection of public health and the environment; this is not similar to the authority of the NRM II. The Biologist IV (SR 20), and Agronomist III (SR 20) manage the work in a region; they supervise journey and advanced level professional work and make management determinations about the program to which they are assigned. The Agronomist III manages several projects of statewide and regional scope, supervises professionals and spends a significant amount of time on managerial duties. While there are structural differences in the organizations in which these job classes are found, the level of authority and the level of work supervised are similar. The NRM II is allocated to salary range 20.

The NRM III is an administrative and technical manager of several organizational units. Fish and Game Regional Supervisors (SR 22) supervise the work of Biologists IV and other professionals who have management authority, coordinate the development of policy positions on regions and statewide, and manage the regional budget. Environmental Conservation Managers II (SR 22) are full program managers responsible for a statewide departmental program including program policy development with line authority for statewide implementation, program administration (financial and personnel) and management of the program objective through subordinate supervisors. The Fish and Game Regional Supervisor and Geologist V provide the best alignment for the job class; NRMs III have substantial managerial authority and supervise the same level of people in a field where scientific information is used to make decisions. The NRM III also has the same level of budget involvement as the Fish and Game Supervisor. Due to the nature and scope of recommendations, decisions, and supervisory responsibilities, NRM III is allocated to salary range 22.

The NRM IV is typically the deputy director having line authority over all or the majority of a division. In reviewing the job classes with the title Deputy Director, all but two are at range 23. The Deputy Director, Division of Information Services was assigned to range 24 as part of a pilot project; salary assignments given as part of a pilot project are not used for internal comparison purposes. The other is the Deputy Director, Tax Division (SR 25). This single position job class recently received a salary range increase because the minimum qualifications now require education and experience similar to those of the Revenue Auditor Supervisor III (P1265, R 24); this position provides technical and administrative supervision of a subordinate (SR 24) and handles the appeals of the decisions of that subordinate. The NRM IV job class

includes positions with line authority over less than a division. The scope of work is, therefore, not beyond that typical of a Deputy Director. The NRM IV is established at salary range 23.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study identified four distinct levels appropriate to the Natural Resource Manager series. New class specifications were developed that better describe and distinguish the work of the series, allow for career progression, and establish minimum qualifications that will provide a broad pool of qualified applicants. Natural Resource Managers I, II, III, and IV are assigned to salary ranges 18, 20, 22, and 23. The new class specifications are effective November 16, 2002.