

# MEMORANDUM

## STATE OF ALASKA

Department of Administration  
Division of Personnel

**To:** Pam Day, Human Resource 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 Specialist  
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 2, 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.

## ANALYSIS

### 1. Addition of Levels

The Natural Resource Specialist (previously Natural Resource Officer) series historically has had two levels, the entry NRS I and journey NRS II. DNR requested that three levels be added to the 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 group has 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 with the working 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; 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. Comparability of PIC Positions

Significant questions arose concerning the nature and level of the work performed in the PIC offices. Positions historically allocated to the NRO I in the PICs do not normally perform analytical and evaluative work leading to a recommendation for action or decision as is typical of entry professional level classes. After additional research and discussion with DNR managers and position incumbents, the study group concluded that the type of research performed and the knowledge, skills and abilities required were sufficiently similar to the typical NRO I to warrant inclusion in the class.

### 4. Breadth of Work

The Natural Resource Officer 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 NRS 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 continuing 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 different enough 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.

## **CLASS CONCEPTS**

Natural Resource Specialists (NRS) perform a broad range of tasks associated with the stewardship and management of all state owned land, water and other natural resources except fish and wildlife. Under general supervision, Natural Resource Specialists I perform entry level professional work in the development, administration, analysis or implementation of programs to manage land, water, mineral, forest, oil, gas, agricultural, natural and cultural history, parks and related surface and subsurface resources of the state.

While most positions are generalists, others perform work primarily or exclusively in one functional area. NRSs I typically work under one of three options: 1) perform adjudication or title work requiring analysis where decisions are made within established guidelines; 2)

participate as a team member in complex research, planning and administrative projects; or 3) complete small planning projects that become part of a land use or resource management plan such as a site-specific plan, the issues of which invoke little public comment or controversy.

NRSs I collect and evaluate comments from parties potentially affected by an action, including the public and other state and federal agencies. Preliminary recommendations and decisions are reviewed, approved and signed by higher level staff. Stipulations attached to permits and leases are based on plain language in regulation or selected from a standard list. NRSs I perform work involving research and analysis where the impact of the work product is of short duration with little permanent impact on state land use or ownership; for example, permits issued are typically to individuals or small companies allowing them to engage in activities that do not permanently change the state's title to the land and have minimal impact on the resources. Positions may be working leaders over technicians who perform routine title work, case file adjudications or public information work. May lead or supervise lower levels but these duties are not class controlling.

Under general supervision, Natural Resource Specialists II perform journey level 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.

While most NRSs II are generalists, others perform work primarily or exclusively in one functional area. NRSs II use independent judgment to perform research and analysis that includes evaluating the ramifications of alternative uses of land and resources in situations in which decisions have long term effects or may be irrevocable. Most NRS II positions are located in regional land management offices where incumbents perform a wide range of professional tasks; others perform similar tasks within organizational units with a narrower focus such as title research, land use plans, pipeline authorizations or oil and gas permits and leases. NRSs II typically work under one of three options: 1) prepare land management plans of moderate complexity and sensitivity; 2) adjudicate authorizations for resource use, which may include research and drafting best interest findings and coastal management analyses, approving complex permit applications, recommending mitigation measures to be placed on permits, scheduling and conducting field inspections, administering contracts for goods and services, issuing permits to individuals or companies to use state land, leasing or selling state land; or 3) conduct professional research related to the management of natural resources such as difficult title verifications. When performing lease and permit work, the NRS II develops stipulations for permits and leases that address issues raised during the public process. Preliminary decisions are reviewed and approved by higher level staff. NRSs II may serve as supervisors or working leaders of project teams consisting of professional and technical employees but these duties are not class controlling.

Under general direction, the NRS III performs advanced journey level 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, park and related surface and subsurface resources of the state.

The body of work at the NRS III level is characterized by a combination of the following factors:

- 1) High probability of litigation
- 2) Significant public scrutiny involving multiple or highly visible conflicting interests
- 3) Requirement for innovation to develop solutions that meet the needs of multiple disciplines and organizations
- 4) Advanced expertise in a specific natural resource area
- 5) Substantial statewide economic impact

NRSs III exercise independent judgment based upon in-depth knowledge of policies, regulations, statutes, resources, and surface and subsurface land management principles. Positions may manage or coordinate the work of a team of multi-disciplinary technical and professional staff or may lead or supervise lower level positions, but these duties are not class controlling.

NRS III is distinguished from the NRS II by the regular and recurring complexity of the work and the higher consequence of error at the NRS III level. Occasional performance of higher level duties or the performance of these duties for skill development or under close supervision does not meet the intent of the NRS III job class.

Under general direction, NRS IV perform the second advanced level professional work in the development, administration, analysis or implementation of programs to develop and manage the state's oil and gas resources.

NRS IV is required to balance the stewardship and management of resources with the state's interest in encouraging new exploration and commercial development of oil and gas resources. NRS IV positions may coordinate the work of a multi-disciplinary team of technical and professional staff. Supervisory or lead responsibilities may be assigned but are not required and, if present, are not class controlling.

NRS IV acts as division or departmental lead on oil and gas projects with a high degree of political, social or legal complexity resulting from dense urban populations and complex ownership patterns where private property rights and the state's subsurface rights are commingled and the rights of the parties are not well settled. NRS IV must creatively address environmental and legal issues for which there is little precedent for resolution and for which the regulatory and legal framework has not been well developed. Work products are of statewide importance and decisions have significant economic consequences to the state.

Under general administrative direction, the NRS V is the chief policy analyst for the Division of Oil and Gas in regard to royalty-in-kind contracts and regulations, environmental policy and legislation related to oil and gas.

The NRS V is a single position job class responsible to the Director, Division of Oil and Gas, for policy analyses, recommendations and decisions regarding highly complex, politically, environmentally and economically sensitive matters pertaining to oil and gas exploration and development. Work products are subject to significant scrutiny from the legislature, other governmental agencies and oil companies as well as national and international advocacy groups.

The NRS V frequently leads or coordinates the work of multidisciplinary teams composed of high level scientific and technical experts; however, the NRS V is not required to be an administrative manager or supervisor, and the presence or absence of such duties is not class controlling.

## **SALARY ANALYSIS**

### **Overview**

As discussed above, the NRS specifications include an unusually wide range of duties. While some positions are generalists and perform a variety of duties, the discrete types of work are typically performed by positions in purpose-specific work units or sections. This complicates the salary analysis process because 1) there are few classes or series with a similar mix of duties with which to make a direct comparison and 2) the variety of duties within each class level reflects a wider variation than is typical within classes with respect to classification factors such as complexity. Consequently, a range of classes performing work similar to the various types of work performed by NRSs had to be considered for possible alignment. Specific comparisons will carry more weight in regard to one level than another. The emphasis for internal alignment is on the regular, recurring work performed by positions typical of the class rather than the highest (or lowest) level work performed by some positions in the class, or work performed occasionally or for developmental purposes. The bulk of work at the NRS I/II is in adjudication, for example; therefore, comparisons with other classes which perform work similar to adjudication will have more effect on the final NRS I/II salary range assignment than comparisons with classes that perform public information or formal planning work similar to the work of some NRS I/II positions.

### Job Classes Considered

Job classes in the same family (66XX – Forestry and Natural Resource Management) as the NRS series have been scheduled for study, except the Trust Resources series which has been moved to the exempt service. Job classes in the Geologist and Park Ranger series are also under study. It is not appropriate to use these classes to compare for salary range designation at this time since questions have already been raised about whether current pay rates are correct.

DNR has argued strongly that the Local Government Specialist (LGS) series should be used to determine internal alignment. DNR asserts that the job series are comparable because both are generalist series, positions in both job classes deal with a broad range of issues and have a public outreach role. As DNR indicated in the presentation on October 29, 2002, however, “that is where the similarities cease.” The differences between the two series are substantial regarding such factors as subject matter (natural resource management vs. government operations and administration); roles (regulatory vs. consultative), and type of competing interests (e.g. commercial development vs. political). The LGS series contains two training levels as compared with one for the NRS series, indicating management’s determination that more on-the-job training is required to prepare an entry level employee for full journey assignments in the LGS series as compared to the NRS. The class specifications for journey LGS positions indicate that these positions operate with greater independence than do journey NRSs I, with fewer guides and less immediate supervision. In short, these series are not sufficiently comparable to be used

for salary analysis purposes particularly where there are better matches available, as there are in this instance.

Legislative Analyst has also been proposed as a comparable job series. This is an exempt series in the Legislative Branch and not subject to the salary setting process employed for classified job classes. Exempt job classes are not appropriately used as direct internal alignment comparables for job classes in the classified service; rather, information about them constitutes supplementary information which serves the same function as information about jobs in the private sector or with other governmental entities (e.g., municipalities, other states or the federal government).

### **Natural Resource Specialist I**

Historically, State practice has been to assign entry level professional job classes to SR 14 if a degree in a specific field is required for entry into the class, and to SR 13 if a general degree would suffice. That distinction has not been consistently applied in recent years, with the result that the entry level for most professional series is SR 14. In nearly all cases, this is two salary ranges below the corresponding journey professional class. The minimum qualifications for NRS I are:

- a bachelor's degree in any field OR
- two years of journey technical level experience in natural resource management OR
- two year of experience as a Recorder II OR
- two years of college education and one year of journey technical experience in natural resource management OR
- two years of college education and one year as a Recorder II.

The duties assigned, level of authority, complexity of the work and degree of supervision at this level are consistent with entry/trainee levels in related professional series such as Habitat Biologist (HB) I, Environmental Specialist (ES) I, Microbiologist I and Leasing Officer I, all a salary range 14. Microbiologist I, HB I, Planner I at salary range 15, by contrast, has noticeably higher and minimum qualifications.

The minimum qualification for Planner I:

- a bachelor's degree from an accredited college and one year of work experience in planning or in performing planning functions OR
- five years of planning experience OR
- a bachelor's degree from an accredited college and one year of graduate study in urban, regional, transportation or landscape planning

Habitat Biologist I and Planner I also have higher knowledge, skills and abilities requirements than the Natural Resource Specialist I in that they both require working knowledge of their fields as well as working knowledge of the techniques and methodologies needed. The NRS I requires some knowledge of techniques and the ability to acquire knowledge of the field.

Assignment to SR 14 is therefore consistent with practice regarding minimum qualifications, is comparable to similar job classes and reflects the standard practice of a two salary range differential between entry/trainee and full journey professional classes. Deviation from standard

practice would require proof of an exceptional circumstance or requirement, which was not apparent in this case.

### **Natural Resource Specialist II**

The NRS II is the journey level professional job class. It includes positions performing a variety of assignments typical of natural resource management work including permitting, title research and planning. While the job class covers a broad scope of work, any one position typically does not perform the full spectrum of work described by the class specifications. The bulk of the work at the NRS II level is in adjudication, particularly in duties that cross division lines such as analyzing requests for and recommending approval/disapproval of permits for the use of state-owned natural resources (except fish and wildlife) and the mitigation measures attached to those permits. The analysis involves the consideration of statutes, regulations and case law, standard operating procedures and similar guides (e.g., compendiums of typical mitigation requirements for use with specific types of permits), as well as input from other agencies within and outside state government and from the public. A number of NRS II positions perform primarily title work, which requires research into the ownership history of lands and the status of any encumbrances on those lands, information which is necessary for conveyance decisions. Some positions perform primarily planning work to determine how state resources can best be utilized, either independently on site specific plans of average complexity, or on parts of a more complex site specific plan or an area management plan under direction of higher level staff or as part of a team.

The job classes most comparable for internal alignment are the HB II (SR 16), ES II (SR 16) and EA II (SR 17). Planner II (SR 17) is comparable to some positions within the class.

HBs II (SR 16) perform work directly comparable to NRSs II doing adjudication. HBs II review private and public agency development plans for impacts on fish and wildlife resources, habitats, and public use of, and access to, fish and wildlife; apply fish and wildlife resource and habitat data to permitting, project review, and land use planning and conveyance processes; identify, plan and develop protection or restoration strategies for fish and wildlife habitats in need of protection or restoration; and coordinate development of department position statements on resource development projects. Both NRS II and HB II monitor compliance with permit stipulations, investigate reports of violation, and initiate enforcement actions.

Environmental Specialist II (SR 16) is a journey level class with two options: 1) routine investigation, enforcement and assistance to the public as an environmental generalist or 2) serving as a team member assessing, evaluating and/or implementing environmental programs. Although work is primarily focused on environmental protection rather than overall management of a resource as with the NRS II and HB II, many of the duties and work processes are directly comparable; such as review and process routine permits, conduct on-site compliance reviews, conduct research and data collection, participate as a team member in long-range environmental planning efforts, recommend permit or plan requirements.

Assignments in ES, HB and NRS journey classes are typically of average or moderate complexity. Incumbents perform the full range of tasks in the assigned area independently using standard methods and techniques, with some latitude to modify techniques or methods. Guides

are available in the form of statutes, regulations, case precedent and standard operating procedures, and assistance is generally available from higher level staff or supervisors. Matters which are or become highly sensitive or controversial or that involve complex issues are handled by higher level staff directly or with their assistance or direction. Whereas the NRS II class as a whole has direct authority over a wider variety of resources (e.g. permitting surface and subsurface natural resources other than fish and wildlife) than the HB II, the HB II applies a higher level of scientific expertise to make permitting decisions. After analyses of land use authorizations the NRS II will recommend approval and mitigation where the HB II can directly approve permits requests and has signature authority for mitigation. ES II has similar work processes to the HB II and NRS II within a specific related area.

Both the Environmental Analyst II (SR 17) and Planner II (SR 17) perform at a level higher than that of the typical journey NRS II. Planner II performs professional research, analysis and investigation to provide data and analyses necessary for comprehensive long range planning. The EA II independently researches and documents environmental assessments and forecasted impacts of proposed transportation projects on ecological, cultural and socioeconomic factors, and works directly with project managers and project engineers to complete projects by, for example, coordinating acquisition of permits, clearances, waivers and variances and conducting environmental field reviews.

NRS II positions perform some work similar to Planners I/ II in that it involves research and analysis conducted to provide data for problem identification and long range planning efforts dealing with physical, economic, human and governmental resources. Work products include best interest findings and similar documents. Close review of the PDs, reports and level analyses provided by DNR confirms that positions at the NRS II level generally complete this type of work with respect to natural resources (permitting, leasing, disposal, etc.) independently primarily in situations that are routine or have temporary impacts. With respect to complex or sensitive matters or those that have significant or permanent impacts, an NRS II typically prepares preliminary reports, recommendations or decisions that are referred to higher level staff for action. The differences in scope, level of responsibility and independence of action do not support a conclusion that the NRS II class as a whole is comparable to the Planner II.

NRS II positions involved in most adjudication activities initiate a public process to provide information and obtain input from the public concerning proposed actions. This process ranges from placing newspaper ads to planning for and conducting meetings on matters of moderate complexity and sensitivity. NRS II positions coordinate with other agencies in order complete the permitting or planning process, serve on inter and intra-agency work teams on complex projects, and interact with permittees as part of the compliance monitoring function. This is comparable to the types of contact found in the ES II, HB II, EA II and Planner II, particularly with respect to work on project teams. According to the PDs, the amount of NRS II time spent in meeting work is usually under 10%.

The NRS II, ES II and HB II operate under general supervision, where methods of performing the tasks are explained in general terms and work is reviewed by the supervisor upon completion. The EA II works more independently under direction, where the methods of performing the tasks are left to the judgement of the employee with the supervisor available for

assistance if needed and work is reviewed upon completion. The Planner II operates with still greater independence under general direction, with methods of performing tasks the responsibility of the employee so long as they are within established policies and procedures. Work is reviewed only periodically to assure conformance and to measure results. NRS II aligns closely with the HB II and ES II. NRS II is assigned to SR 16.

### **New Levels: Natural Resource Specialists III-V**

For some time professional positions that do not perform supervisory or managerial duties as a primary function in the NRM series have been placed as a “best fit” to recognize skills and responsibilities which exceeded the NRO II at SR 16. This study creates three new levels in the NRS series to accommodate such advanced, non-supervisory, non-managerial positions. This action satisfies one of DNR’s major objectives in undertaking the study, creation of an extended professional career track commensurate with the NRM series. It also complicates salary analysis. In most professional series, job classes above the advanced journey level include the requirement for supervisory/managerial responsibilities as a Distinguishing Characteristic; many do so at the advanced journey level as well. In this instance, the requirement for supervisory/managerial responsibilities is the Distinguishing Characteristic for the Natural Resource Manager series; the presence or absence of such duties is not class controlling in the NRS series. Of the high-level, non-supervisory/managerial classes, many are in professions which require an advanced or prolonged course of study or professional certification such as law, medicine or the sciences, for which there is no substitution and without which an individual cannot be hired into the job class or advance in the series. These requirements differ substantially from and exceed those of the NRS series. The creation of the NRS III-V levels to allow for career progression absent a requirement for supervisory/management responsibilities and without the types of study and certification described above means, therefore, that there are few direct comparables for the higher level NRS classes

NRS III-V are most appropriately compared with other professional series (or options within the series) in which supervision and management are not distinguishing characteristics. The most important classification factors for these comparisons are:

1. Nature, variety and complexity of work
2. Initiative and originality required
3. Nature of supervision received by the incumbent
4. Purposes and nature of person-to-person work relationships
5. Nature and scope of recommendations, decisions, commitments and consequence of error
6. Qualifications required

### **Natural Resource Specialist III**

Natural Resource Specialist III is the advanced professional level. The job classes most comparable for internal alignment purposes at this level are Habitat Biologist III (SR 18) and Environmental Specialist III (SR 18) as discussed in detail below. The Planner II/III and Leasing Officer III are also comparable to certain work performed by NRS III positions. EA III (SR 19) is comparable in several respects with one critical distinction: EA III is a lead level class, whereas the NRS III is not. The defining characteristic of the EA III class is the requirement that, in addition to performing advanced level work, positions serve in a lead capacity over subordinate employees, as a project leader over interdisciplinary teams and as a

project manager for environmental activity consultants. Some NRS III positions perform similar duties occasionally or on a recurring basis, but doing so is not a distinguishing characteristic of the job class and therefore is not a requirement for allocation to NRS III. Given that supervisory duties are the distinguishing characteristic of the class, EA III is more appropriately compared to the NRM series.

NRS III is an advanced professional class, incumbents in which perform a broad range of tasks associated with the stewardship and management of state owned land, water, oil, gas and other related natural resources except fish and wildlife. These tasks include planning, permitting and project review, often accomplished through interdisciplinary, interagency teams. Decisions made have effects on the resource itself, on public access to the resource, and on the economic development of one or more industries; consequently, the work requires a high level of expertise, is subject to considerable public scrutiny and carries a significant risk of litigation. The work performed by HBs III is directly comparable with respect to the state's fish and wildlife resources. The ES III works in the same general field but with a more limited focus on environmental protection activities. All three job classes require incumbents to address difficult technical problems involving complex interactions of conditions, statutes and regulations, operating principles and practices, and competing interests. Resolution requires the exercise of independent judgment, innovation and creativity to develop new or unconventional methods and approaches, to make recommendations and decisions in areas where few guidelines exist, and to engage in extensive interaction with individuals and agencies within and outside the agency concerning matters with significant environmental, economic and political ramifications. The NRS III class is broader than either the HB III or the ES III in that it covers more types of resources and discrete bodies of work; however, the work performed by individual positions within that broad range is directly comparable to that of the HB III and, to a lesser extent, the ES III.

Those positions that prepare complex leases and permits for state-owned lands are also comparable in kind and level of work to Leasing Officer III (SR 18), the advanced/lead level in the series. Leasing Officers III perform the most complex, controversial leasing assignments involving deviation from or absence of established guidelines, conflicting or controversial land use, monetary, safety or political considerations, activities which require extensive knowledge of contract development and execution and the applicable laws and policies.

The ES III and HB III share some of the same clientele with the NRS III and may work together on project teams. Positions in these job classes are expected to plan and participate in meetings where the climate may be hostile, requiring negotiation and mediation of opposing viewpoints. They are expected to identify potential conflicts and resolve disputes.

NRSs III, HBs III and ESs III operate independently on a day-to-day basis, with considerable authority to commit the state to action. NRSs III operate under general direction. Methods of performing tasks are the responsibility of the employees so long as they are within established policies and procedures. Work is reviewed only periodically to assure conformance and to measure results. HBs III work under direction, a lower level of independence in which methods of performing tasks are usually left to the employee with the supervisor available for assistance if required and work reviewed upon completion. The ES III specification does not specifically

identify the level of independence; however, the Distinguishing Characteristics narrative indicates that incumbents “carry out assignments with relative independence,” especially in field situations in which supervision is often unavailable and decisions must be made on the spot that “may have public health or public relations repercussions.” This level of independence compares well with that of the HB III. Both the HB III and the ES III are described as somewhat less independent than the NRS III.

NRS III, HB III and ES III are all advanced professional classes requiring advanced expertise in a subject area as well as detailed knowledge of statutes, regulations and case precedent in order to develop and implement complex, often innovative solutions to issues and problems affecting the state’s natural resources. Incumbents in all three job classes regularly participate in interagency, interdisciplinary work teams. The work of these teams requires a general knowledge of the broad field and well developed analytical skills in order to understand and evaluate the wide variety of technical information applicable to the decisions and recommendations made by the teams. This team interaction as well as the nature and extent of public interest and involvement in the work performed and the existence of strong competing interests require strong communication skills, particularly in mediation and negotiations.

All three job classes require a bachelor’s degree in a field related to the work of the class. ES III and NRS III allow a fairly broad range of degrees to qualify, including law and public administration. HB III requirements are more stringent: a degree with a major in biology or a branch of biology, or a degree in any field providing that it includes 24 semester or 36 quarter hours in the specified areas. NRS III and ES III allow lower level work experience to substitute for the degree: HB III does not allow for work experience to substitute for the specific education and therefore has a noticeably more stringent knowledge requirement. NRS III requirements are lower than those for the HB III, but aligns closely with ES III.

Natural Resource Specialist III is assigned to SR 18.

#### **Natural Resource Specialist IV**

Natural Resource Specialist IV is the second advanced professional level. NRS IV acts as division or departmental lead on oil and gas project with a high degree of political, social or legal complexity where the rights of parties are not well settled. The NRS IV must exercise considerable creativity to address environmental and legal issues for which there is little precedent and for which the regulatory and legal framework has not been well developed. Certain interest groups are pre-existing and organized; conflict requiring mediation, negotiation and resort to third party adjudication is regular and recurring. Work products are of statewide importance and decisions have significant economic consequences for the state, resulting in a high consequence of error.

The closest comparisons are with the non-supervisory/managerial aspects of the HB IV (Option 2) and with the ES IV; there is no EA IV. Other non-supervisory/managerial classes with some limited areas and degree of comparability are Labor Relations Analyst (LRA) III (SR 21) and Petroleum Economist (PE) I (SR 22). Planners performing the most complex work are at the IV level (SR 22), which is a fully supervisory/managerial class comparable to the NRM series.

HB IV is the highest level in the HB series, incumbents in which provide expert technical guidance to others in particular program areas. Option 2 of the HB IV is a staff assistant to the Director with statewide responsibility for a specialized function. Work involves coordinating permitting and project review staff to ensure the process meets legal requirements and provides proper resource protection. Incumbents exercise considerable creativity and initiative to adapt and apply techniques to complex situations where issues are unprecedented and guidelines few. The work requires extensive interaction with individuals, interest groups and agencies within and outside the state system to resolve disputes on controversial issues regarding management and use of fish and wildlife resources of the state. Decisions and recommendations impact the long-term management of these resources, and have significant impact on important parts of the state's economy.

ESs IV are responsible for establishing and implementing the most complex statewide environmental programs and functioning as technical experts in their respective areas of concentration. Incumbents exercise creativity and initiative to develop and/or implement new approaches and concepts in pollution control. The level of controversy can be high, particularly with respect to enforcement actions. Incumbents interact with a variety of people, agencies and interest groups to resolve conflicts and to contract for, coordinate and implement environmental protection programs.

Other comparisons are less direct. The LRA III, for example, is comparable with respect to the requirement to negotiate, mediate and adjudicate complex, controversial issues that have substantial financial liability and political implications. Incumbents operate with substantial independence and authority to commit the state to action and to establish binding precedents, deal with organized interest groups, and venture into areas where the legal and regulatory environment is unclear. The consequence of error is high and can result in substantial operational and managerial difficulties in addition to significant financial liability for state government. The classes are substantially different, however, with respect to subject matter and area of influence and impact. PE I is a specialist/expert class, incumbents of which analyze and interpret economic data relating to determination of the economic value of known and potential petroleum resources, financial status of oil companies, oil revenue projections and oil tariffs. This class involves the same industry as the NRS IV, but performs work requiring a completely different, highly complex set of knowledge, skills and abilities.

ES IVs are not responsible for supervising or managing organizational units, but may lead and direct the technical work of others, as is the case with the NRS IV, PE I and LRA III. HB IV is distinguished from HB III by the greater emphasis of the HB IV on supervision and administrative duties, but less than the regional management duties of the Fish and Game Regional Supervisor. This appears to apply to Option 1 rather than the Option 2 used for comparison with the NRS IV.

The NRS IV, HB IV, PE I, and LRA III operate with considerable independence under general direction. This is typical of expert/advanced and advanced/lead professional classes throughout the classification system. Level of supervision is not specified for the ES IV, although it is apparent from the description that positions operate with considerable independence.

NRS IV, HB IV and ES IV, all require a bachelor's degree in a field related to the discipline and at least one year of experience at the advanced or advanced /lead level. HB IV requirements are somewhat higher in that it does not allow substitutions of work experience for the education requirement. The PE I requires a degree in a related field and three years experience, with graduate study substituting for two years of work experience, a reflection of the high degree of specialized knowledge required. Labor Relations Analyst III is somewhat lower than the NRS IV in this regard, with a bachelor's degree in any field considered qualifying. In short, qualifications required are substantially similar although not identical across the SR 20-22 classes considered closely or somewhat comparable.

It is clear from this discussion that assignment to SR 20 is well supported by comparison with other job classes charged with responsibility for the management, protection and development of the state's natural resources. What sets the NRS IV apart from the HB IV and the ES IV is: 1) the emphasis on exploration and commercial development as well as protection and management of the resources; 2) the potential impact of decisions with respect to state revenues and hence the increased consequence of error; and 3) the nature and degree of public scrutiny and controversy. On balance, these elements warrant an additional salary range.

Natural Resource Specialist IV is assigned to SR 21.

#### **Natural Resource Specialist V**

NRS V is a single position job class in which the incumbent is the chief policy analyst for the Division of Oil and Gas in regard to royalty-in-kind contracts and regulations, environmental policy and legislation related to oil and gas, as well as other complex and highly sensitive matters pertaining to oil and gas exploration and development. Work products are subject to significant scrutiny from the legislature, state and federal agencies and the oil industry, as well as national and international advocacy groups. Recommendations and decisions may have substantial impacts on long-term state revenues; the consequence of error is high and long standing. The incumbent is not required to supervise staff, but frequently leads the work of multidisciplinary, highly technical or scientific and expert-level staff.

There are few readily apparent comparables for this class. It shares some similarities with Labor Relations Manager (SR 23) in responsibility for providing policy analysis and recommendations to executives and for conducting negotiations which can commit the state to a course of action or establish precedent for future actions which can result in increased costs for state operations (vs. decreased revenue stream) or significant political damage to principals. However, the LRA Manager supervises a staff and actively manages the entire collective bargaining program for the State. Special Assistant to the Commissioner II (SR 23) fulfills a staff assistant role with substantial responsibility for policy analysis and recommendations on an executive level, although to the agency head rather than a division director. Petroleum Economists I/II (SR 21/22) are similar in that they provide expert level analysis requiring specialized knowledge of the petroleum industry. Deputy directors typically provide high level policy analysis specific to the division in which located as well as line supervision of most or all of the division and are assigned between SR 22 and SR 25. Natural Resource Manager IV, the deputy director level in the related series, performs both functions at SR 23.

On balance, the high consequence of error together with the intense public scrutiny unique to the oil and gas activities of this position are equivalent to the line responsibilities performed by other positions with a similar staff assistant/chief policy analyst role. Natural Resource Specialist is allocated to SR 23. This class should be reviewed for inclusion in the partially exempt service.

### **CONCLUSION**

The study identified five levels in the professional series. Three additional levels have been added to the Natural Resource Officer series; the series has been retitled Natural Resource Specialist. New class codes were required and salary ranges have been assigned.

<b>Title</b>	<b>Class Code</b>	<b>Salary Range</b>
Natural Resource Specialist I	P6641	14
Natural Resource Specialist II	P6642	16
Natural Resource Specialist III	P6643	18
Natural Resource Specialist IV	P6644	21
Natural Resource Specialist V	P6645	23

The new class specifications are effective November 16, 2002.