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of **ALASKA**
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Department of Administration

DIVISION OF PERSONNEL AND LABOR RELATIONS

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Memorandum

To: Nicki Neal
Director

Thru: Pam Day
Classification Manager

From: 
Keith Murry
Class Studies Supervisor

Date: July 25, 2012

Subject: Biologists Classification Study

Preamble:

Commissioner Denby Lloyd, Department of Fish and Game, submitted a request for a classification study of his agency's biologist positions to Commissioner Annette Kreitzer, Department of Administration, on February 3, 2009. The request was the result of high turnover in Fish and Game, extended periods of vacancy owing to retirement or advancement, and uncertainty as to whether the classes were aligned properly with other resource job classes. The alignment concern had arisen from increased complexity, volume, and variety of work performed by the agency's biologists, compared to 15 years ago, along with the increased demands placed on them due to changes in technology, management plans, policies, and a heightened desire by the public for information.

The Division of Personnel and Labor Relations identified this study as a priority, but at the time was focused on other high priority projects. The division worked with the Department of Fish and Game to identify short-term solutions to immediate issues and the study was scheduled to begin when staff became available.

Study Scope:

The study included all positions in the Fish and Game Regional Supervisor, Fishery Biologist I-IV, Wildlife Biologist I-IV, and Habitat Biologist I-IV job classes. The positions are in the Department of Fish and Game, in the Divisions of Commercial Fisheries, Sport Fish, Wildlife Conservation, and Habitat.

Study Contacts:

Candice Bressler, Program Coordinator, served as the primary study contact for the Department of Fish and Game.

History of Job Classes:

Fish and Game Regional Supervisor, Fishery Biologist I-IV, Game Biologist I-IV, and Habitat Biologist I-IV were established between 1969 and 1974.

The Fish and Game Regional Supervisor was last studied in 1981. The definition and distinguishing characteristics in the class specification were changed in 1983, 2004, and 2008 to add, remove, and re-add the Habitat Division as the division was created, moved to the Department of Natural Resources, and moved back to the Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G).

The Game Biologist series was retitled to Wildlife Biologist in January, 1989.

A classification study of the Fishery Biologist III and IV, Wildlife Biologist III and IV, and Habitat Biologist III and IV was conducted in 2005. The study was requested by ADF&G with the goal of adding a nonsupervisory "staff assistant" option to the Fishery Biologist IV and Wildlife Biologist IV classes. The project expanded into revising and making consistent the definitions, distinguishing characteristics, and minimum qualifications across the three series. The study results also included updating the minimum qualifications of Fishery Biologist I and II, Wildlife Biologist I and II, and Habitat Biologist I and II.

Study Process:

For this classification study ADF&G began updating position descriptions for the study positions in February, 2010. While the descriptions were being written the Division of Personnel & Labor Relations (DOPLR) met with the executive management of ADF&G and separately with each Division's management team to gather information on the work of biologists; how the class structure and specifications were working; what personnel management issues the divisions were experiencing; and what study outcomes were desired.

The management meetings reiterated previously provided information regarding the changes to the work of biologists, including:

- Increased complexity from new and revised regulations and changes in the federal government's role;
- Changes in technology and their impact on the types and methods of data collection and analysis;
- Increased interactions with the Boards of Fish and Game, federal agencies, and non-governmental agencies;
- Increased administrative duties;
- Increased number of issues resulting in legal action;
- Increased interaction with, and scrutiny by, media and the general public;

- Increased need to prove validity of science; and
- Increased consequence of error.

The management teams provided the following information on the existing classification structure and class specifications:

- The current structure and levels work effectively;
- The examples of duties need to be updated to reflect new technologies;
- There is uncertainty on how and at what level project management work should be classified;
- There is a possible need for specialty classes (such as oceanographer or bio-engineer);
- There is a potential need for a level between the III and IV levels;
- There is a potential need for a new fifth level;
- There is a need to recognize GIS duties.

Other issues identified by the management teams included:

- Insufficient incentive to take promotions at higher levels;
- Biologists IV and Regional Supervisors are location-limited and promotion to those levels typically requires moving;
- Difficulty retaining candidates with advanced degrees;
- Difficulty acquiring candidates that meet minimum qualifications;
- Lack of compensation that is competitive with federal agencies; and
- Biologists doing work that does not require biological expertise.

The desired outcomes identified by management included:

- Ability to hire from outside Alaska;
- Ability to consider professional certification when hiring;
- Flexibility in hiring special skill-sets; and
- Ability to consider candidates from a broader pool of educational areas.

After the position descriptions were submitted, ADF&G recommended benchmark and specialty positions for desk audits. Other positions were also selected for audit to provide a reasonable cross-section of the work. The audits were conducted in August and September of 2010. The information provided in the position descriptions and desk audits was analyzed and the positions grouped based on the standard tests of similarity.

When reviewing how other states grouped their biologists we found some combine the separate biologist specialties into a single class series. We proposed such a structure to the department. A single-series class structure could improve the ability of employees to move between divisions and simplify the agency's personnel administration. We met with agency management several times to discuss how such a structure would work and answer their questions. After considering the organization's culture and the interests of the employees the agency requested we retain separate biologist series for Fisheries, Wildlife, and Habitat.

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We crafted class specifications that maintained the separate specialties and provided them to the department for review.

When the department received the draft class specifications they requested we re-examine the highest level biologists to see if a fifth level, between the proposed Biologist IV classes and the Fish and Game Regional Supervisor, could be created to cover positions whose work was higher than other Biologists IV. We conducted a second review and did not find positions that were sufficiently different that the tests of similarity for duties, title, qualifications, compensation, or layoff and recall would support creating a new class. The department reiterated the request and provided a spreadsheet showing classification factors for a five-level series. After further discussion the department identified positions in the Divisions of Commercial Fisheries, Sport Fish, and Wildlife Conservation that they felt were working at the higher level. We examined those positions and determined that a fifth level job class would have too much overlap with both the lower and higher levels to allow us to draw reliable boundaries between the classes. As an alternative we proposed altering the boundary between the highest biologist levels and the F&G Regional Supervisor to allow the few positions doing significantly higher work to be allocated to F&G Regional Supervisor.

After the boundary between the highest level biologists and the F&G Regional Supervisor was drafted the department provided comments on the draft class specifications for the other levels. We worked with the department to address the concerns and make appropriate changes to the class specifications and the modified specifications were distributed for another review.

Once the class specifications were close to being completed, and remaining edits would not alter the characteristics of the classes or their boundaries, we reviewed and tentatively allocated the study positions. Of the 501 positions, 48 were tentatively allocated to a new class or level. The department requested reconsideration of 28 of the tentative allocations and provided additional information for review. After reviewing the additional information the allocation of 15 of the reconsidered positions were changed.

The reconsideration examination did not alter the tentative allocation of five positions in the Division of Wildlife Conservation the department believed should be allocated to the Regional Supervisor level, based on the revised boundary. The department requested another review and provided additional information. Our review of the additional information did not find sufficient cause to alter the tentative allocations. The Division of Wildlife Conservation submitted additional information on the differences between the regions, their respective complexities, their competing interests, their contentious issues, and the role of each position in division policy and resource allocation decisions. Analysis of this information revealed two positions whose duties and responsibilities exhibited elements of complexity that supported allocation to the higher job class and their final allocations were changed accordingly.

After the final allocations were determined we examined the alignment of the study classes and determined their salary ranges.

Class Analysis:

Fishery and Wildlife Biologists have two areas of career emphasis: management and research. Fishery and wildlife management is primarily focused on enhancing and maintaining the animal resource and enforcing harvest regulations for sustained yields. Fishery and Wildlife research is focused on obtaining and analyzing information on animals and their habitats to inform and support management decisions.

Fishery and Wildlife Biologists have previously been placed in a four-level class series with entry, full-proficiency, advanced, and program management duties. The positions' duties and responsibilities also had a geographic element that fit well into the different levels with the advanced level also responsible for either management or research in a designated area and the program management level responsible for management or research in a designated region.

Habitat Biologists have an emphasis on studying and regulating land use and development to mitigate the impact on fish and wildlife resources. The geographic separation has less influence in the levels of this series with the positions separated based on the scope and level of complexity of their projects and permitting and organizational control responsibilities.

The F & G Regional Supervisor was distinguished by the organizational responsibilities for both research and resource management activities within a region or management of the land use and development work in a region.

The State's classification plan provides for the grouping of positions into job classes when they are sufficiently similar with respect to duties and responsibilities, degree of supervision exercised and received, and entrance requirements so that: 1) the same title can be used to clearly identify each position; 2) the same minimum qualifications for initial appointment can be established for all positions; 3) the same rate of basic pay can be fairly applied to all positions; and 4) employees in a particular class are considered an appropriate group for purposes of layoff and recall. Job classes are constructed as broadly as is feasible as long as the tests of similarity are met.

The results of the job analysis and grouping under the tests of similarity produced sets of positions that significantly matched the existing class structure and level characteristics. While the analysis found some evolution in the assigned duties from technological developments, increasing regulations, and growth of government we did not find sufficient change in the duties and responsibilities of positions to alter the characteristics of the existing class levels or the relationships between the levels.

The nature of the changes we found in the work is preponderantly what we identify as Moderate Change. This level of change is characterized by:

- Work flow, processes, and staffing changes to spread the work among fewer/more positions;
- The workload changes due to more people/businesses being served or staffing changes;

- Work changes due to changes in technology (e.g., web-based forms and processes, computer accessible information, remote access and entry of information);
- Work changes due to changes in regulations (e.g., new steps required in process, additional criteria must be applied, reports must be made to additional regulatory bodies); or,
- Reporting relationships changes due to increased/decreased levels in the organizational hierarchy.

Moderate changes in duties and responsibilities could cause positions to change levels within a class structure, but are not typically sufficient to alter the defining characteristics of a job class, dictate changing the boundaries between levels in a class series, or mandate creating a new job class for a previously unrecognized body of work.

As the job analysis did not reveal changes that would alter the characteristics of the job classes we focused on updating the examples of duties to reflect the tasks and equipment currently in use. We also updated the definitions and distinguishing characteristics to incorporate the addendum to the class specifications that had been created in the 2005 study to clarify indicators of complexity at each level of the higher level classes. The sole change in the classification structure was the shifting of the boundary between IV-level biologist classes and the Fish and Game Coordinator, discussed in the Study Process section.

Class Title:

A class title should be the best descriptive title for the work. It is intended to concisely and accurately convey the kind and level of work performed and should be brief, easily recognized, gender neutral, and understood by potential applicants.

The Fishery Biologist, Wildlife Biologist, and Habitat Biologist class titles continue to be professionally recognized and traditionally used. The titles are retained without modification.

The Fish & Game Regional Supervisor we proposed retitling to Fish and Wildlife Manager to clarify the responsibility of the positions for managing the ADF&G's line functions. The department requested we not use "manager" in the class title because of potential confusion due to their traditional use of it in working titles for positions performing resource management. After discussing alternatives with agency management we selected Fish and Game Coordinator as the class title.

Minimum Qualifications:

The minimum qualifications established for a job class must relate to the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform the work and must not create an artificial barrier to employment of individuals in protected classes. Required training should be limited to the basic formal training that customarily prepares individuals for work in the field. Experience requirements are intended to ensure new employees can successfully perform the work after a period of orientation or familiarization. Required experience should be directly related to the actual duties of positions in the class and should not be equivalent to the work of the class.

We also proposed new minimum qualifications that would broaden the candidate pools and ease movement between career paths for the biologists. The proposed qualifications included allowing post-secondary education equivalent to an associate's degree and journey or higher paraprofessional experience to substitute for the required bachelor's degree; allowing advanced education to substitute for professional experience; and allowing professional certification to substitute for professional experience.

The proposed minimum qualifications were met with concern in the department. Some believed we had set the bar too low and that candidates with less than a bachelor's degree could not be reasonably expected to succeed in the profession. Others believed the proposed qualifications could work for the lower levels but that such candidates could not credibly be viable promotional candidates for the higher level professional and managerial positions. After discussing required knowledge and skills, management expectations, and the potential workforce we agreed to retain the requirement for a bachelor's degree at the journey professional level and higher. The substitution of 60 semester hours of post-secondary education plus experience was retained for the entry professional level. While this leads to candidates qualifying for the first level who cannot be promoted to a higher level without additional education, it should improve the ability to fill remote entry biologist positions and will enable the department, and the Division of Personnel and Labor Relations, to examine the usefulness of the substitution. Once there is reasonable experience with the substitution we will be able to determine its ongoing usefulness.

The fact that the post-secondary education and experience substitution does not carry forward to the higher level biologist positions places an additional burden on the agency and the Classification Section when classifying positions. When a request is submitted to reclassify a filled biologist position from the first level to a higher level the agency must verify, and the classification analyst confirm, that the incumbent meets the minimum qualifications for the higher level. An incumbent that does not meet the minimum qualifications will not be eligible for certification to the reclassified position. This requirement was discussed with the agency and we will work with them to ensure a process is established to meet this need.

Class Code:

A Class Code is assigned based on the placement of the job class in the classification schematic of Occupational Groups and Job Families. Occupational Groups are made up of related Job Families and encompass relatively broad occupations, professions, or activities. Job Families are groups of job classes and class series that are related as to the nature of the work performed and typically have similar initial preparation for employment and career progression.

The classes have traditionally been aggregated to the Fish and Wildlife job family (PH01) in the Biological Sciences occupational group. This family includes classes defined by biological work in the research, development, conservation, and management of aquatic and wildlife resources. The Fishery Biologist, Wildlife Biologist, and Habitat Biologist class series are the benchmark for the job

family's biological work and the Fish and Game Coordinator is properly aggregated with them. The classes retain their respective Class Codes and AKPAY Codes.

Fair Labor Standards Act

Employees in positions in this study are covered by the minimum wage and maximum hour provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as Amended (FLSA). While exemption from the provisions of the Act are determined based on the specific circumstances of an individual employee on a work-week basis, there are general aspects of the classes and their influence on the exemptions for employees in bona fide executive, professional, or administrative positions that can be addressed in general.

Employees in positions appropriately classified as Fishery Biologist, Wildlife Biologist, Habitat Biologist, and Fish and Game Coordinator, when compensated on a salary basis, meet the salary criteria for exemption as administrative, professional, or executive employees. Their primary duty is work requiring advanced knowledge in biology, which is customarily acquired through post-secondary education and is demonstrated through possession of a bachelor's degree in a particular biological field. Employees above the first level in a biologist series perform work requiring the consistent exercise of discretion and judgment in predominantly intellectual duties. Salaried employees in the Fishery Biologist II-IV, Wildlife Biologist II-IV, Habitat Biologist II-IV, and Fish and Game Coordinator job classes are exempt from the FLSA requirements as professional employees and are not compensated for overtime.

The work of employees at the first level of each biologist series is too controlled by the immediate supervisor, established guides and manuals, and department policies and procedures to be considered as requiring the consistent exercise of discretion and judgment. Employees in the Fishery Biologist I, Wildlife Biologist I, and Habitat Biologist I job classes are not exempt from the FLSA requirements as professional employees and must be compensated for overtime.

Employees in the Fishery Biologist III-IV, Wildlife Biologist III-IV, Habitat Biologist III-IV, and Fish and Game Coordinator job classes may have the primary duty of managing a recognized subunit of the agency. Such salaried employees are also exempt from the FLSA as executives when they are assigned full supervisory authority over the subunit and their subunit includes two or more full-time subordinates.

Employees in the Fishery Biologist I-II, Wildlife Biologist I-II, and Habitat Biologist I-II job classes may supervise other employees on a project or in completing a function; however, their supervisory role does not typically include the primary duty of managing a customarily recognized subdivision of the agency and such employees would not meet the criteria for exemption from the FLSA as executive employees.

Employees in the Fishery Biologist I-IV, Wildlife Biologist I-IV, Habitat Biologist I-IV, and Fish and Game Coordinator job classes are typically performing work that is the line function of

ADF&G and would not meet the criteria for exemption from the FLSA as administrative employees.

Salary Analysis:

The salary range of a job class is determined based on internal consistency within the state’s pay plans, in accordance with merit principles, with the goal of providing fair and reasonable compensation for services rendered and maintaining the principle of like pay for like work. In evaluating internal consistency, the difficulty, responsibility, knowledge, skills, and other characteristics of a job are compared with job classes of a similar nature, kind, and level in the same occupational group and job family or related job families.

The levels of the three biologist series were initially aligned at the same salary ranges and previous studies maintained that relationship. As shown in the following table, the characteristics of the levels in each series continue to support assigning them to the same salary ranges.

Job Class	Description	Alignment Characteristics
Fishery Biologist I	Conduct, or assist in, professional fishery management and/or research projects. Perform, and guide technicians in, the collection of biological and resource management data and provide analysis and assessment using established scientific principles and techniques that are common or have been developed or modified by higher level biologists.	Professional analysis and assessment in a scientific field; performed independently within established guides and direction; assist with work of greater complexity and scope.
Wildlife Biologist I	Conduct, or assist in, professional biological studies and wildlife management projects. Perform, and guide technicians in, the collection of biological and resource management data and provide analysis and assessment using established scientific principles and techniques that are common or have been developed or modified by higher level biologists.	
Habitat Biologist I	Conduct, or assist in, professional biological studies and development plan review. Perform, and guide technicians in, the collection of biological and resource management data and provide analysis and assessment using established scientific principles and techniques that are common or have been developed or modified by higher level biologists.	
Fishery Biologist II	Conduct fishery management or research projects in the field or laboratory as an assistant area management or research biologist; or a biologist responsible for species-complex projects of average complexity for a defined geographic area; or a biologist responsible for a part or segment of a complex project of broad geographic scope.	Professional analysis and assessment in a scientific field; the spectrum of common work is performed
Wildlife Biologist II	Conduct wildlife management or research as an assistant area management or research biologist; or a biologist responsible for projects that are specific to one species, of	

	average complexity and for a defined geographic area; or a biologist responsible for a portion of a complex project of regional or statewide scope.	independently with more experienced and supervisory assistance available for dealing with uncommon issues;
Habitat Biologist II	Conduct review of private and public agency development plans for impacts to fish and wildlife resources, habitats, and public use of, and access to, fish and wildlife; and apply 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.	
Fishery Biologist III	Plan, develop, direct, conduct, and evaluate fisheries management and research projects and activities as an area management biologist or area research biologist, or research, analyze, and consult on specific fishery issues or species as a technology or program specialist.	
Wildlife Biologist III	Plan, develop, conduct and evaluate wildlife management and research projects and activities as an area management biologist or area research biologist or research, analyze, and consult on specific wildlife issues or species as a program or species specialist.	Advanced professional work guiding the scientific analysis, assessment, and decision-making of other professionals to complete large, multi-faceted projects guided by long-term goals and strategies.
Habitat Biologist III	Perform advanced professional level biological work, either planning, evaluating and recommending substantial changes to major development projects and land use permitting, project reviews, or land transfer decisions; or researching, analyzing, and consulting on specific habitat issues impacting divisional operations and position statements.	
Fishery Biologist IV	Oversee and control fisheries management activities or research programs as regional management or regional research biologists; or are program managers of a statewide programs; or are staff assistants to a member of division management, with significant influence on fisheries management or research policy; or are technical experts and consultants for particular program spheres, providing guidance on controversial, interagency, and external issues.	Manage a program's professional scientific work to meet long-term goals and strategies; determine effective use of personnel, materiel, and finances; provide expert guidance on program and/or scientific field.
Wildlife Biologist IV	Oversee and control wildlife management activities or research programs as regional management or regional research biologists; or are program managers of statewide programs; or are staff assistants to a member of division management, with significant influence on wildlife management or research policy; or are technical experts and consultants for particular program spheres, providing guidance on controversial, interagency, and external issues.	
Habitat Biologist IV	Plan, develop, coordinate, implement, and evaluate multiple, complex and controversial habitat programs and projects; or are staff assistants to a member of division management, with significant influence on habitat-related	

	management or research policy; or are technical experts and consultants for particular program spheres, providing guidance on controversial, interagency and external issues.	
Fish and Game Coordinator	Manage all of a division's fisheries, wildlife, or habitat management and research activities within a geographic region of the State; or manage the research or management of major fisheries or wildlife programs that include multiple species, single species with federal or international involvement, or whose scope exceeds regional boundaries; or provide technical expertise to policy level executives for resource management with federal or international implications.	Manage a multi-faceted program through subordinate managers; guide the use of personnel, materiel, and finances; work with executive management to set strategic goals and policies.

To ensure internal integrity within the Fish and Wildlife job family (PH01) the other professional/managerial classes were examined. The following table shows the classes and the characteristics that distinguish their placement in the salary range structure.

Range	Job Class	Description	Range Characteristics
14	Fish Culturist I	Perform a variety of manual and equipment operation tasks with record keeping and condition analysis responsibilities. The tasks require advanced knowledge to ensure conditions are within biological requirements and correct information is documented. Independently initiate or implement projects, processes and schedules. May supervise technical personnel.	Professional analysis and assessment with significant high level technical tasks; performed independently within established guides; control of assistive workers.
16	Fish Culturist II	Serves as full assistant to a higher level manager in the operation of a fish hatchery requiring management level decision making capability on a 24-hour basis or as assistant in a headquarters or regional office.	Professional analysis and assessment in a scientific field; independence in performing the typical work of the field; control over the work of others, including other professionals; assistance available for uncommon situations.
	Fish Pathologist I	Diagnose and prescribe treatment for diseases of fish reared in supplemental production systems and participate in fish pathology studies.	
17	Biometrician I	Design, plan, and perform biometric research, analysis and problem solving for fish and wildlife research and management programs. First working level professional where duties are designed toward the development and application of statistical and mathematical methodology to management and research operations. Work under moderate supervision and is responsible for a single biometric project or group of projects of limited scope which are incorporated into effective resource management programs	Professional analysis and assessment in a specialized field requiring advanced education; independence in work once mastery is demonstrated; progressive assignments to build practical experience in the specialization.

	Fisheries Geneticist I	Journey professional where duties are directed toward the development and application of genetic research methodology for fish and shellfish research and management operations. Incumbents work under moderate supervision and are responsible for a single genetics research project of moderate complexity or a group of genetics research projects of limited scope which are incorporated into effective fish and shellfish research and management programs.	
	Wildlife Physiologist I	Perform journey professional physiologist work in designing, conducting, and implementing wildlife physiology research investigations, typically focused on specific projects, which are segments of a complex research program.	
18	Fish Culturist III	Serves as full-charge working manager of a fish hatchery or as senior fish culturist for a region, responsible for hatchery troubleshooting and problem resolution, training, quality control, egg takes, marking/tagging operations and logistics.	Advanced professional guiding the work of other professionals; includes significant managerial tasks and responsibility for resolving unusual problems and issues.
	Fish Pathologist II	Senior and work review level of the series, perform inspections of hatchery fish and certify stock for release, or is responsible for the fish disease control program throughout the state.	
19	Biometrician II	Responsible for major biometrics projects which are incorporated into effective resource management programs with a high level of independence, and may be assigned lead responsibility on a regular or project basis .	Advanced professional in a specialized field requiring advanced education; conduct major projects that include directing the work of other professionals; ensure projects support program strategies and goals.
	Fisheries Geneticist II	Advanced professional level of the series that functions with a high level of independence and may be assigned lead responsibility on a regular or project basis.	
	Wildlife Physiologist II	Provide advanced professional level expertise in designing, conducting and overseeing major field and lab wildlife physiology research projects including multiple sub projects. May supervise a collaborative physiology research laboratory and services, and wildlife professionals, technicians and graduate students.	
20	Biometrician III	Supervisory level biometrician responsible for all biometrics for a region, or principal biometrician responsible for policy review and technical expertise for biometrics related to a specialized technical area of research and management for a division.	Manage the work of a professional specialty requiring advanced education within a delimited geographic area; provide expertise in the specialty.
21	Biometrician IV	Supervisory level responsible for all information and research analysis or statistical reporting for an	

		information management and biometric technical services section of a division, or serves as the principal salmon biometrician providing policy review and technical expertise in statistical and biometric issues related to research and management of commercial and subsistence salmon fisheries.	Manage a statewide program to provide expertise and analysis in a specialized field requiring advanced education; provide technical expertise in the specialized field; guide and assist the professional development of others in the specialty.
	Fish Pathologist III	Principal State fish pathologist, providing leadership in all fish pathology research and services and the highest level of expertise in diseases affecting fish and shellfish. Plans and supervises the statewide fish health services program and provides research expertise to public and private aquaculture industries. Supervision is exercised over lower level fish pathologists and microbiologists at fish health services laboratories	
	Fisheries Geneticist III	Single-position unit supervisor class, providing leadership in fish and shellfish genetic research and related laboratory services. A high level of expertise in fisheries and shellfish genetics is required to direct genetics research projects and exercise supervision over lower level fish geneticists, technicians and biometricians at the department's Genetics Laboratory	
	Wildlife Physiologist III	Design, direct, supervise, and manage major physiology research programs and related scientific investigative projects; provide the highest level of professional expertise in wildlife physiology and biochemistry; and may supervise and manage a related laboratory unit and services in partnership with academia	
22	Fisheries Scientist I	Independently plan and manage expert original fisheries research; determine methodologies or disciplines in addressing complex fisheries problems and issues; direct statewide research projects and technical services, some of which have national or international implications;	As a senior scientist, conduct comprehensive scientific studies whose results influence the State's resource management policies and practices; or manage a major function of a division through subordinate managers.
	Wildlife Scientist I	Independently plan, manage and conduct original wildlife research and analysis requiring expertise in several disciplines with emphasis on their application to studying complex wildlife issues and problems with far-reaching or statewide implications	
	Asst Director, Dept of Fish and Game	Serves as a principal assistant to a division director in an administrative or program specific area.	
	Extended Jurisdiction Program Manager	One-position class responsible for developing the department's coordinated position for management of fisheries within the 200 mile extended jurisdiction fishery conservation zone and of anadromous species	

	migrating beyond this zone	
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All of the above classes were created after the biologist series were established. Their salary ranges were determined, in part, through alignment with the biologist levels. As work evolves the relationship between classes and their salary ranges can change; however, in cases of moderate change to a body of work such changes in relationship between classes is unusual. Assessing the changes in the duties and responsibilities of biologists in the department, their impact on the range characteristics of the biologist classes, and the range characteristics of other classes in the family revealed the biologist classes have not altered to an extent that would support altering the relationships within the job family. The three biologist class series remain appropriately aligned at ranges 14, 16, 18, and 20 with the Fish and Game Coordinator aligned at range 22. These ranges maintain the biologists' parity with the other professional and managerial classes and placement below those classes requiring advanced education in a particular specialty.

One area the department cited as a concern is the salary relationship of the biologist classes with job classes responsible for other natural resource management work. To examine this relationship we compared the biologist classes to the professional and managerial classes in the Natural Resources and Forestry job family (PH03). The characteristics of the classes and common characteristics of ranges within the family are shown in the following table.

Range	Job Class	Description	Range Characteristics
14	Natural Resource Spec 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. Collect and evaluate comments from parties potentially affected by an action; make preliminary recommendations and decisions that 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. Positions may be working leaders over technicians who perform routine title work, case file adjudications or public information work.	Professional work of limited scope and impact; performed independently within specific guidelines; assist with work of greater complexity and scope.
	Forester I	Is assigned specific duties, parts of a project, or may be responsible for implementing limited non-complex short-range projects or plans. Work is characterized by the professional knowledge and application of forest management concepts and practices; the close supervision and review of the work by higher level staff; the assignment of standard, common, less complex and frequently repetitive analyses; the assignment of segments of a project or program to assist higher level staff; the performance of work through the use of well established procedures, guidelines, regulations and	

		instructions; and limited judgment and decision making.	
16	Natural Resource Spec II	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. Prepare land management plans of moderate complexity and sensitivity; 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 conduct professional research related to the management of natural resources such as difficult title verifications. When performing lease and permit work develop stipulations for permits and leases that address issues raised during the public process. Preliminary decisions are reviewed and approved by higher level staff. May serve as supervisors or working leaders of project teams consisting of professional and technical employees.	Professional analysis and decision-making in a variety of assignments; work includes the full range of duties of moderate difficulty and sensitivity common to a program or function.
	Forester II	Perform work characterized by the full range of duties and delegated authority for a wide variety of assignments that are limited in size and complexity; scope of responsibility includes planning, organizing, and performing the full range of duties associated with operational functions or assignments; work independently but with minimal deviation from established guidelines, objectives, and approaches; focus is on short-term issues and concerns; limited political influence, media contact, or controversy; and lack of administrative duties such as budget and policy/procedure development. Positions are located in either the resource or fire management program, and work in support of overall program objectives or may be assigned small scale projects that are limited in scope, size, and complexity.	
18	Natural Resource Spec III	Work 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	Advanced professional analysis and decision-making; duties include unusual and sensitive issues and regularly require resolving matters outside standard guidelines and precedent; provide programmatic

		Exercise independent judgment based upon in-depth knowledge of policies, regulations, statutes, resources, and surface and subsurface land management principles. May manage or coordinate the work of a team of multi-disciplinary technical and professional staff or may lead or supervise lower level positions.	expertise within organization and to other agencies; direct the work of other professionals.
	Forester III	Performs advanced level work to design, plan, and coordinate the implementation of long range forest management, forest fire prevention/suppression, forest insect/disease control, or forest stewardship programs and large projects. Duties are primarily complex and analytical in nature, involving difficult or exceptional matters that require advanced knowledge and substantial independent judgment and discretion to select and modify approaches, methods, or techniques. Serve as consultants to staff and outside agencies, and have substantial responsibility for determining, planning, and controlling resources.	
	Natural Resource Mgr I	Working supervisor of an organizational unit(s) performing 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. Supervise journey level positions and perform journey level work; or supervise lower level technical or professional positions and perform advanced journey professional work as determined by the complexity factors. The size of the organizational units are typically small. The managerial element 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.	
20	Forester IV	Second advanced level where the primary focus is program delivery, evaluation, and quality control. Manage complex programs, provide direction, leadership, and supervision to professional staff, and set program priorities. Serve as technical authority to staff and as land managers and regulatory enforcers to outside agencies. Participates in and assists senior program managers with strategic planning, policy and procedure development, and significant administrative and fiscal responsibilities.	Manage program operations that include advanced professional work; determine effective use of personnel, materiel, and finances; provide program and professional expertise to executive management in developing strategies, goals, and policies.
	Natural Resource Mgr II	Supervisor and technical manager of organizational units 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 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, though incumbents become directly involved in the advanced professional work as needed or directed.	
21	Natural Resource Spec IV	<p>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. 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.</p> <p>Also includes a single position that has a dual role for management of the state's coal regulatory program and serves as the coordinator and chief public contact for assigned large non-coal mining projects.</p>	Provide expertise and analysis in a complex, sensitive, and controversial program where statutes, regulations, and precedents do not provide definitive guidance.
22	Forester V	As senior managers of a large organization provide overall program direction and administration through the development and implementation of long term program goals and objectives, organizational structure, budget, personnel, and fiscal management. Work is characterized by the role as senior program manager and advisor to the Division Director and Deputy Director; the administrative responsibility of directing and controlling resources for program delivery which includes budget development, fiscal control, personnel administration, and procurement; the responsibility for formulating operational policies and procedures for implementing the program; and the technical and supervisory authority over all Resource and/or Fire Program Managers.	Manage a major line function of a division through subordinate managers; guide the use of personnel, materiel, and finances; work with executive management to set strategic goals and policies.
	Natural Resource Mgr III	Administrative and technical manager of organizational unit(s), typically 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 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 positions typically are regional managers or section heads, the duties assigned are usually balanced between both job elements, although 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.	
23	Natural Resource Spec V	Chief policy analyst for the Division of Oil and Gas in regard to royalty-in-kind contracts, and other oil and gas leases, licenses, contracts, regulations, environmental policy and legislation; or a single position that is the chief policy analyst for the Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline Coordinator's Office with respect to State and federal environmental policy, agency procedure, legislation, and regulation; or a single position that is the Division of Forestry's expert policy advisor on forest management and practices.	Provide technical expertise in a complex, sensitive, and controversial program; guide analysis and decision-making in an area where statutes, regulations, and precedents do not provide definitive guidance.

Comparing the range characteristics of the biologist series with the Natural Resource Management job family shows they follow the same pattern. Professional work is aligned at ranges 14, 16 and 18 for entry, full-proficiency, and advanced levels. Managerial work is aligned at ranges 20 and 22. The characteristics of the Natural Resource Management job family do not provide any support for altering ranges assigned similar characteristics in the Fish and Wildlife job family.

Conclusions:

The Department of Fish and Game requested this study to address their problems with high turnover and extended periods of vacancy and to examine alignment with other resource job classes. The Division of Personnel and Labor Relations worked with the agency prior to this study to address the turnover and vacancy issues that are outside the scope of position classification. This included providing information on using flex staffing to improve employee development, broadening job postings to "All Applicants" to enable consideration of candidates from outside Alaska, using acting status for knowledge transfer, and the training available for supervisory employees.

In this study we updated the class specifications to reflect changes in the duties, integrate complexity level indicators in the class specifications, and modified minimum qualifications to improve candidate pools. We also changed the class title of the Fish and Game Regional Supervisor to Fish and Game Coordinator.

Nicki Neal, Director

July 25, 2012

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The biologist job classes remain aligned at their previous salary ranges:

Fishery/Habitat/Wildlife Biologist I	Rg 14
Fishery/Habitat/Wildlife Biologist II	Rg 16
Fishery/Habitat/Wildlife Biologist III	Rg 18
Fishery/Habitat/Wildlife Biologist IV	Rg 20
Fish and Game Coordinator	Rg 22

The expected FLSA exemption status of employees in the biologist job classes is:

Fishery/Habitat/Wildlife Biologist I	N – Overtime Eligible
Fishery/Habitat/Wildlife Biologist II	Y – Overtime Ineligible
Fishery/Habitat/Wildlife Biologist III	Y – Overtime Ineligible
Fishery/Habitat/Wildlife Biologist IV	Y – Overtime Ineligible
Fish and Game Coordinator	Y – Overtime Ineligible

Correspondence on the allocation of study positions is being distributed through the OPD system.

The revised class specifications and position allocations are effective August 1, 2012.

Attachments:

Class Specifications

Allocation Spreadsheet

cc: Kevin Brooks, Director
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