

MEMORANDUM

State of Alaska
Department of Administration
Division of Personnel

To: Mila Cosgrove, Director

Date: February 28, 2005

Thru: Lee Powelson
Classification Manager

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Subject: Park Ranger Study

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR) requested a classification review of the professional Park Ranger I-II and Park Superintendent job class series. The department identified three primary issues to be reviewed during the study:

- 1) distinguish between Park Rangers commissioned as peace officers under AS 41.21.955 and non commissioned rangers;
- 2) consider the creation of additional class levels based upon the differences in duties and scope of work between natural resource technicians, non-commissioned rangers, commissioned rangers, supervisory rangers, managers and superintendents; and
- 3) review the minimum qualifications and salary range assignments to ensure proper alignment within the classification and pay plans.

A meeting between Division of Personnel and DNR executives to discuss the issues resulted in the initiation of a classification study, determination of study scope, development of a study plan and establishment of general study timeframes. New job class specifications were developed and implemented on February 16, 2005. This memo documents the findings of the classification study.

History

The Park Ranger series was originally established in 1969 and consisted of two levels. In 1970 the series was revised to broaden the experience substitution for college education, include the requirement for eligibility to obtain a special peace officer commission, and add a statement regarding a non-standard workweek. A Park Ranger III level was added to the series in 1974; this title was changed to Park Superintendent in 1994.

Scope

The job classes studied are unique to the DPOR. The department felt the existing specifications were out of date and did not describe the work currently performed nor reflect the current organizational structure and reporting relationships. The DPOR's objective was to distinguish levels of work, encourage career progression, update minimum qualifications, review the salary range assignment for internal alignment with other job classes and consider additional levels to the class series.

All positions in the Natural Resource Technician series were not included within the scope of the study; however, certain individual Natural Resource Technician positions established in the DPOR were submitted by management to determine if substantial overlap in duties existed between the positions and those of the subject classes.

The DPOR is a division of 120 classified permanent positions; 42 permanent positions were included in the study. Other DPOR positions, such as executive, administrative management, and support positions, and positions assigned to the Alaska Conservation Corps, were not reviewed during the study.

The information gathered and reviewed in the study included existing State of Alaska job class specifications and historical class study files, as well as relevant Alaska Statutes and DNR policies and procedures. Existing position descriptions (PDs) were updated and submitted by the agency in May 2004. Following a change in DPOR management, some PDs were revised and resubmitted in January 2005. Benchmark positions were chosen for review and analysis. Selected employees, supervisors and managers were interviewed about their duties.

DPOR staff provided technical expertise and information. Gary Morrison, Division Director, and Pete Panarese and Chris Degernes (former and current Natural Resource Manager IV) acted as career information providers and liaison for the DPOR. Margaret Brodie, Administrative Manager III, also provided information and assistance throughout the study.

Analysis

The positions under study are responsible for the preservation and protection of Alaska State parks, including program, service and operation planning, administration, management, supervision, development and/or implementation.

Class specifications at all levels were reviewed and revised. Minimum qualifications were updated for all classes. A new job class, Park Specialist (P6708), was established as the entry professional level for noncommissioned staff. The Park Ranger I specification (P6705) was also updated and distinguished from the noncommissioned positions. The Park Ranger II specification (P6706) was revised and defined as the supervisory level of the series. The Park Superintendent was updated. A review of salary assignment for internal alignment was conducted for all classes under study. Position allocations (indicated on the attached allocation worksheet) were effective the same date as the class specifications. Study findings resulted in establishment of the following job classes.

<u>Former Title</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>SR</u>	<u>New Title</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>SR</u>
-	-	-	Park Specialist	P6708	14
Park Ranger I	P6705	14	Park Ranger I	P6705	16
Park Ranger II	P6706	16	Park Ranger II	P6706	18
Park Superintendent	P6707	20	Park Superintendent	P6707	20

Park Rangers are commissioned “peace officers” designated by the Commissioner of the DNR as provided in Alaska Statute 41.21.955 to enforce laws and regulations within park areas, and are

authorized by the Commissioner of the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to enforce fish and game laws outside of park areas.

The former Park Ranger I class contained a mix of non-commissioned and commissioned positions. Non-commissioned positions were removed from the class and assigned to Park Specialist. Park Specialist includes entry level professional positions responsible for coordinating the daily operations of assigned park units. Park Specialists perform and lead technical support workers in activities to preserve and protect the natural, historical and cultural resources of the park, provide a safe environment for users of the park, and enhance the park visitor's recreational and educational experience. Assigned duties do not require incumbents to be commissioned peace officers.

Park Ranger I was defined to include non-supervisory positions that require a commission as a peace officer. A primary duty of the Park Ranger I is enforcement of laws and regulations within State park areas including carrying a weapon and making arrests. Positions are responsible for investigation of criminal activity, interviewing and interrogating witnesses or suspects, issuing citations and collecting evidence. They are authorized to enforce traffic laws outside of park areas. Duties also include coordinating the daily activities of assigned park units and performing and leading technical support workers in activities to preserve and protect the natural, historical and cultural resources of the park, provide a safe environment for users of the park, and enhance the park visitor's recreational and educational experience.

Park Ranger II is the supervisory level Park Ranger. Incumbents perform law enforcement activities and supervise subordinate commissioned Park Rangers and other park staff in the performance of their duties. Park Rangers II are responsible for training subordinate Park Rangers and ensuring that other park employees receive proper training and orientation to park rules and regulations. They manage the implementation of programs, services and operations for multiple park units including responsibility for budget, administration, interpretive services, facility development, commercial use, operations and maintenance. Park Rangers II may lead or provide support services on special project assignments such as law enforcement training, search and rescue or land management coordination. A Park Ranger II typically reports to a Park Superintendent.

DPOR requested that an additional, higher level class (a proposed Park Ranger III) be added to the Park Ranger series to distinguish the duties of PCNs 105013 and 105218 as distinct from other supervisory positions in the series.

PCN 105013 manages the Wood-Tikchik State Park (the largest unit in the state park system), spends a significant portion of time on land management issues, and reports to the Natural Resource Manager IV rather than a Park Superintendent. The park covers an extensive geographic area and includes a number of privately owned inholdings which require negotiation to acquire title or establish conservation easements; however, the primary responsibilities of the position are similar to other Park Rangers II. The position focuses more on land management functions, however other Park Ranger II positions are responsible for more extensive operation activities, greater density of visitors, more interface with urban areas (that also requires negotiation), and more staff and supervisory management concerns. The variation in actual type or level of duties do not warrant creation of a separate level in the Park Ranger series.

PCN 105218 manages the Kodiak geographical area (containing six State Park units) and also reports to the Natural Resource Manager IV. This position also has less oversight over administration, planning and budget activities than is typical of a Park Ranger II. The majority of time is spent performing park protection and preservation management duties typical of the Park Ranger II level. Again, administrative duties are offset by other factors such as lesser degree of visitor density, urban interface situations and fewer staff, indicating that a higher level Park Ranger classification is unnecessary.

When the Natural Resource Manager study was conducted in 2002, Park Superintendents were excluded from that series with the understanding that consolidation would be considered during the Park Ranger study. Park Superintendents administer park program development and implementation for one of five major geographical areas in the park system, are responsible for area wide budget policy and procedure development, and oversight of law enforcement activities. The level of responsibility and authority are similar to Natural Resource Managers and higher levels of the Natural Resource Specialist series. However, the focus of Park Superintendents on oversight and administration specifically of park areas having a law enforcement component, diverse operational requirements, and visitor safety and education issues and concerns (not present in the comparison classes) indicates a separate job class for Park Superintendent is warranted.

Minimum Qualifications

The minimum qualifications for all classes were revised. The specifications were updated to reflect current requirements for education, experience and conditions of work, and distinguish between qualifications required at the time of application from those required at the time of appointment or immediately thereafter. In addition, the minimum qualifications for the Park Ranger classes now note Park Rangers are required to acquire and maintain a Department of Natural Resources Peace Officer Commission, an Alaska Fish and Game Peace Officer Commission and carry a firearm, and identify the requirements to do so. All levels require an Alaska driver's license. The education requirements for Park Specialist allow a degree in any subject area to qualify. The requirements for Park Ranger I were broadened in this manner also. These classes represent separate entry paths for applicants seeking professional level positions; Park Specialist for applicants pursuing non-commissioned positions, Park Ranger I for applicants competing for commissioned positions.

College education provides the writing, analytical and critical thinking skills that prepares employees to succeed and progress in professional park management, a career area having such diverse components as resource preservation and use, law enforcement and investigation, and park education program development. A degree in park management or other resource area is desirable; however, any baccalaureate degree will provide these critical skills. The skills can also be developed on the job; therefore both classes allow journey level technical experience to substitute for the college education.

The minimum qualifications for Park Ranger II include the same degree requirement and substitution. Park Ranger II also requires a year of experience as a commissioned peace officer.

The minimum qualifications for Park Superintendent require four years of advanced professional or supervisory level experience in natural resource management. There is no specific degree requirement. At this level emphasis is placed on advanced knowledge of resource management and supervisory skills. Candidates for Park Superintendent typically acquire qualifying experience at lower levels of professional resource career areas where a degree is required, but generally an experience substitution exists. Following this model ensures career progression from the entry level Natural Resource Specialist, Park Specialist, Park Ranger and specialized natural resource management job classes (such as Forester, Geologist, and Archaeologist) to the management level of Park Superintendent and provides alignment with other professional resource related classes.

Salary Alignment

Salary range assignment is based on internal consistency within the state's pay plan, and in accordance with merit principles, 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 job group and family or related job families. In determining proper salary alignment for the DPOR classes a number of technical (paraprofessional) and professional level classes were reviewed.

Natural Resource Technicians I-III (SR 10, 12, 14) work in support of professional staff 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. They perform recurring assignments based on specific instructions or established statutes, regulations, policies and procedures. Tasks are usually repetitive and problems require standard solutions.

Forest Technician I-IV (SR 07, 09, 11, 13) provide technical level support to professional Foresters responsible for program management and implementation of State forest development, conservation and enhancement. They perform and/or lead others in assisting with fire prevention programs, issuing burn permits, assisting with fire suppression efforts and equipment checks, and using tools to perform a number of forest measurements. At the Forest Technician III level positions may perform as dispatchers. Forest Technicians IV supervise fire suppression crews.

Fish & Wildlife Technicians I-IV (SR 07, 09, 11, 13) perform tasks in any phase of fish and wildlife work such as fisheries, wildlife, habitat or subsistence research or management programs. Data gathering and other assignments are performed in support of professional biologists responsible for management or research projects planning and execution. Difficult questions are referred to the supervisor, with professional staff responsible for decision making.

Natural Resource Specialists I-V (SR 14, 16, 18, 21, 23) 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. While most positions are generalists, others perform work primarily or exclusively in one functional area. Natural Resource Specialists perform professional work in the development, administration, analysis and or implementation of programs to manage land, water, mineral, forest, oil and related forest or subsurface resources of

the state. They evaluate the ramifications of alternate uses of land and resources, perform title search, land use planning and evaluate oil and gas leases applications.

Natural Resource Managers I-IV (SR 18, 20, 21, 23) are responsible for managing 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. These job classes are defined by substantial supervisory authority. Levels are distinguished based on a combination of two job elements: 1) the management skills and activities required including general administrative tasks such as supervising staff, developing and managing budgets, and developing policies and procedures; and 2) the complexity of the function, program or projects managed through direct participation in the professional work or through subordinate staff. The mix of the particular elements varies by position.

Foresters I-IV (SR 14, 16, 18, 22) manage and/or implement forest programs to protect forest land and resources, encourage timber and forest product industries, manage wild land fire programs, develop and promote appropriate forest practices, and administer the Forest Resources and Practices Act. Programs may have multiple technical, administrative and operational components. Positions may lead or supervise technical and professional staff.

Professional Fishery, Wildlife, and Habitat Biologists I-IV (SR 14, 16, 18, 20) manage and/or implement programs and projects, and perform professional scientific studies within their areas of specialty. Distinguishing characteristics between the levels are difficulty of projects, scope of geographical area, level of expertise and independence in decision making. Positions may lead or supervise technical and professional staff.

State Troopers perform law enforcement activities that include a broad scope and diversity of criminal activity as the primary duty, and require the possession and application of an extensive knowledge of statutes, rules and regulations to perform the work. They are commissioned police officers. Unlike State Troopers, Park Rangers focus on protection and preservation of State parks rather than protection of the public at large. Park Rangers have authority to enforce traffic violations outside of the park, however that is not their primary duty. The State Trooper classifications are not useful for salary comparison due to the difference in focus, broader scope of law enforcement activities, and differing working conditions and community of interest.

Park Specialist is an entry-level professional class. Park Specialists apply knowledge of a variety of park programs and services to independently provide visitor information and education, maintain park units and facilities, ensure public safety, lead park workers and volunteers, and assist Park Rangers in their efforts to enforce park laws and regulations. Park Specialists use judgement and discretion to coordinate daily park operations, assist with investigations, prepare reports and maintain records. They lead, monitor and evaluate the work of permanent and nonpermanent employees, student interns and volunteers, and assist with their training. The work of Park Specialists exceeds the level of duties and responsibilities typically assigned at the technical level, and the independence accorded the positions in overseeing daily operations is greater than commonly found at the technical levels. The basic level of duties and responsibilities, the knowledge required to perform the work, and the degree of independence

assigned compare favorably with other entry level professional classes responsible for resource protection and enhancement. Park Specialist is assigned to SR 14.

Park Ranger is a professional series responsible for park program and policy administration, management, development, implementation and operations. Park Rangers are responsible for the safety of visitors, park workers, commercial operators and other users of the park. Park Rangers are commissioned "peace officers" designated by the Commissioner of the DNR as provided in Alaska Statute 41.21.955 to enforce laws and regulations within park areas, and are authorized by the Commissioner of the DFG to enforce fish and game laws outside of park areas. Park Rangers use independent judgement and discretion to manage and coordinate the activities of park units that encompass fish and wildlife resources and habitat, cultural and historic sites, developed recreational facilities and information and education centers.

Park Ranger I is the journey level of the series. Incumbents are responsible for enforcement of state statutes and park regulations with authority to carry a firearm, investigate criminal activity, interview and interrogate witnesses or suspects, issue citations, collect evidence and make arrests. Incumbents may coordinate the daily operations of multiple park units. They lead the work of permanent, non-permanent and temporary staff, and park volunteers. Supervisory authority may be assigned but is not class controlling. Work is frequently performed outdoors, with occasional administrative assignments in an office setting.

The responsibility, authority and independence assigned the positions exceeds that of the Park Specialist as does the knowledge and training required to do the job. Natural Resource Specialists I, Foresters I, and entry level biologist positions (all SR 14) do not have the dual program implementation and enforcement role of the of the Park Ranger I, and are not required to either hold a commission or carry a weapon. (Although some positions may be authorized to carry a weapon for self-protection while working in the field, it is not a required function of the job class.) The duties and responsibilities of the Park Ranger I is commensurate with other journey level professional classes involved in the adjudication and/or protection and enhancement of natural resources. Park Ranger I is assigned to SR 16.

Park Ranger II is the supervisory level of the series. Positions perform law enforcement activities, and supervise subordinate commissioned Park Rangers and other park staff in the performance of their duties. They are responsible for training Park Rangers and ensuring that other park employees receive proper training and orientation to park rules and regulations. Park Rangers II manage the implementation of programs, services and operations for multiple park units including responsibility for budget, administration, interpretive services, facility development, commercial use, operations and maintenance. Park Ranger II positions may lead or provide support services on special project assignments such as law enforcement training, search and rescue or land management coordination.

Like the Natural Resource Manager I, Park Rangers II are working supervisors mixing managerial and programmatic responsibilities. Some positions are responsible for negotiating land exchanges, sales, acquisitions, and protective covenants in order to protect park lands and reduce the impact of private inholdings upon park units. The duties and responsibilities of Park

Rangers II are commensurate with other supervisory level professional classes with management responsibilities. Park Ranger II is assigned to SR 18.

Park Superintendents are responsible for the administration and management of a major geographical area having manifold uses, diverse operations and administrative complexity such as the Mat-Su, Kenai, Chugach, Northern, and Southeast areas. Park Superintendents manage a specific area requiring comprehensive area planning, development and administration of budgets with multiple components, analysis of area wide staff utilization and development of policies and procedures. Park Superintendents direct the operations of park management areas and oversee law enforcement activities through subordinates. This is a supervisory class with substantial responsibility for the exercise of independent judgement in employing, disciplining, or adjudicating grievances of subordinates.

The scope of work, and responsibility for administrative oversight, area wide budget, and policy and procedure development exceed that of the Park Ranger II, Natural Resource Specialist III, and Natural Resource Manager I. The complexity of issues, competing interests, degree of controversy, amount of public scrutiny and probability of litigation are not as great as is found at the highest levels of the Natural Resource Specialist and Natural Resource Manager series. Park Superintendents report to a Natural Resource Manager IV responsible for administering the State Park system, developing policy, advising the Division Director on policy alternatives and essentially functioning as comparable to a deputy director. A two-range salary difference between the supervisory Park Ranger II and the Park Superintendent is appropriate. Park Superintendent remains assigned to SR 20.

Overtime Eligibility

The positions included in this study have been reviewed for compliance with the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) on a position by position basis. Individual position results are indicated on the attached allocation worksheet.

Natural Resource Technicians provide technical level support to management activities such as program planning, management and implementation. These positions do not meet the criteria for exemption under the FLSA and are overtime eligible.

Park Specialists perform basic, entry level professional duties where some judgement is required, however law enforcement activities are restricted and independence is limited. These positions do not meet the criteria for exemption under the FLSA and are overtime eligible.

FLSA overtime exemptions do not apply to Park Rangers I. As "peace officers" they are overtime eligible.

Park Rangers II supervise subdivisions of the organization (park units) through subordinate employees and perform administrative duties in the course of managing the implementation of programs and services. Park Ranger II positions supervise Park Rangers I and technical level support staff in the performance of their duties. Park Rangers II have substantial authority to employ, discipline and adjudicate the grievances of subordinates. These positions meet the

criteria for either the executive or administrative exemptions under the FLSA. They are not overtime eligible.

Park Superintendents administer and supervise subdivisions of the organization (large geographic units) through subordinate supervisors. Incumbents have substantial authority to employ, discipline and adjudicate the grievances of subordinates. Exercise of judgement and authority is required to develop and administer programs, policy and procedures, budgets, supervise staff and oversee park operations. These positions meet the criteria for exemption for both the executive and administrative tests under the FLSA.

Conclusion

The classification study results in the creation of a new job class titled Park Specialist. The class specifications for Park Ranger I, Park Ranger II, and Park Superintendent, are substantially revised. The salary ranges of Park Ranger I and II are changed to SR 16 and SR 18, respectively. The new or revised class specifications are effective February 16, 2005.

Attachments

Position Allocation Worksheet

ecc: Gary Morrison, Director
Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation
Department of Natural Resources

Nicolaas Bus, Division Director
Division of Support Services
Department of Natural Resources

Management Services - Resources

Technical Services – Resources

Employee Records (Original PDs)