

MEMORANDUM

State of Alaska
Department of Administration
Division of Personnel

To: Mila Cosgrove
Director

Date: May 10, 2005

Thru: Sarah Brinkley
Classification Study Manager

From: Keith Murry
Human Resource Specialist

Phone: 465-4074

Fax: 465-2576

Email: keith_murry@admin.state.ak.us

Subject: Wildlife Veterinarian Study

Preamble:

During study planning meetings between the Department of Fish and Game and the Division of Personnel the Division of Wildlife Conservation identified a position in the Wildlife Biologist series whose duties require the incumbent be a licensed veterinarian. This requirement raised questions of the proper classification of the position. The Division of Personnel initiated a classification study to determine the appropriate job class for the position.

Scope:

The study addressed PCN 112082, a single position in the Division of Wildlife Conservation performing duties which require the incumbent be licensed as a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine.

A long-term project nonpermanent position (PCN 11N186) was also evaluated for inclusion in the study. After discussing the position's responsibilities with management and the agency's planned changes, the position was not included in this study.

Study Method:

The Division of Wildlife Conservation provided an electronic Position Description for PCN 112082, Wildlife Biologist III, on March 22, 2005. This analyst examined the position description and interviewed the incumbent. Additional information on the role of veterinarians in wildlife research and management was researched, including information from other states, federal sources, and professional organizations. The duties and responsibilities of the position was evaluated for grouping into existing classes. As the position did not meet the criteria for inclusion in an existing class, a new job class was drafted. The draft class specification was submitted to the agency for review, the comments evaluated, and the specification revised.

On April 13, 2005, the hard-copy Position Description for PCN 112082 was received. Following additional discussion of the draft class specification the minimum qualifications were revised and provided to the agency for review on April 19, 2005. The internal alignment of the new class was

examined and the draft results provided to the agency for review and comment on May 4, 2005. In a meeting on May 6, 2005, the draft minimum qualifications were reviewed and finalized and the department's comments on the draft internal alignment provided. After reviewing the final comments the study documents were completed and the study implemented.

History:

This is a new class created to address duties which are not properly grouped into existing job classes. The position performing these duties has previously been allocated to Wildlife Biologist III.

Class Analysis:

The position in this study provides professional veterinary support for wildlife management and research programs. These programs are primarily in the Division of Wildlife Conservation but the incumbent also supports other divisions of the department and other state and federal agencies impacted by questions of wildlife diseases and their transmission, including public health agencies and the Office of the State Veterinarian. The incumbent designs and conducts research projects, experiments, and investigations to determine the health status of wildlife populations; diagnoses diseases; and develops and implements methods of treating diseases in free-ranging animals. The incumbent works extensively with biologists whose projects require the capture or handling of wildlife to provide guidance, training, and assistance in capture and immobilization methods. The incumbent provides information on potential contagious diseases, symptoms, and methods of transmission; performs surgical procedures such as implanting tracking devices; and diagnoses and treats diseases including new or emerging diseases that may be spread to or by wildlife.

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 should be constructed as broadly as is feasible as long as the tests of similarity are met.

The position under review is currently allocated to the Wildlife Biologist III job class. As the duties assigned require possession of a license as a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, and this requirement is not shared by other Wildlife Biologists III, the position does not meet the minimum qualifications or layoff and recall parts of the tests of similarity. Examination of the other levels of the Wildlife Biologist series reveals the same distinction. Leaving the position in the Wildlife Biologist series is not appropriate.

The state currently has two job classes responsible for the practice of veterinary medicine and requiring possession of a veterinary license: State Veterinarian and Assistant State Veterinarian. Examination of the nature of work of these classes reveals similar responsibilities in the practice of medicine but substantive differences in the scope of statewide program management and a focus on regulation of domestic and agricultural animals that is not found in the position under

review. The differences in duties and responsibilities indicate using the same title and establishing the same minimum qualifications is not appropriate. Placing the position into either of these classes is not appropriate.

The nature of the duties and responsibilities of the position under review and the minimum qualifications required for initial appointment indicate creating a new job class is appropriate.

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 role and responsibility of the position under review has been communicated to the general public by use of the working title "Wildlife Veterinarian." This working title accurately identifies the nature and scope of duties assigned and performed and follows the titling practices in other jurisdictions and in the profession. Adopting the working title as the official title of the job class is appropriate.

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 to be performed.

The practice of veterinary medicine requires licensure by the state as a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine. To obtain the license an applicant must provide evidence of successful completion of advanced education in the field. Establishing possession of a license as the training part of the minimum qualification will ensure candidates have the appropriate training and meet the statutory requirement.

The level of independence and authority assigned and the role of the incumbent as an expert consultant in veterinary medicine to professional biologists indicates requiring some prior experience is appropriate. As the work is focused on wildlife and predominantly on big game, requiring prior experience with this type of animal is appropriate. Requiring that the experience be the practice of veterinary medicine for wildlife would be equivalent to the work of the class and thus an inappropriate minimum qualification. Requiring experience conducting wildlife management, research, or similar projects on big game or marine mammals which included field work and animal handling will ensure candidates have knowledge of working with dangerous animals in the wild. Adding the possibility of qualifying with veterinary experience dealing with the same animal species in more controlled situations (such as game ranches or zoos) will provide a broader pool of candidates.

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 that 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.

In evaluating the Wildlife Veterinarian's placement in the classification schematic, this analyst considered families in both the Biological Sciences Group (6XXX) and the Medical, Public Health and Related Group (5XXX). Veterinarians are medical professionals and this class could be placed in the Medical Professional family (52XX), which includes medical doctors, dentists, and physician assistants; however, the focus of the job class on wildlife management and research indicates this would not be the most appropriate family. The state's other veterinary job classes are in the Agriculture family (64XX), which includes classes whose work is related to agriculture activities including crop and livestock production, inspection, management and development, and animal husbandry. The Wildlife Veterinarian's focus on research and management of the state's free ranging animals indicates inclusion in the Agriculture family is not appropriate.

The creation of a separate family for classes performing, advising on, or supervising professional or paraprofessional veterinary medicine was considered. However, given the limited number of positions and classes that would be placed in the resulting family, this was determined to be an unnecessary segmentation.

Based on the role and responsibility of the Wildlife Veterinarian, the class is properly included in the Fish and Wildlife Research and Development family (61XX). This family includes classes that advise on, administer, supervise, or perform professional and technical biological work in the research, development, conservation, and management of aquatic and wildlife resources. Assigning class code P6149 will place the class alongside other classes with a wildlife focus.

Internal Alignment:

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.

In analyzing the internal alignment of the Wildlife Veterinarian job class the scope and level of duties and responsibilities; project and program authority and independence; and type and level of required knowledge, skills and abilities were compared to the following classes in the Fish and Wildlife Research and Development job family: Wildlife Biologist II (R16), Fisheries Geneticist I (R17), Wildlife Biologist III (R18), Fish Pathologist II (R18), Biometrician II (R19), Fisheries Geneticist II (R19), Biometrician III (R20), Wildlife Biologist IV (R20), Biometrician IV (R21), Fisheries Geneticist III (R21), Fish Pathologist III (R21), Wildlife Scientist I (R22), and Wildlife

Scientist II (R24). The scope and level of veterinary medical responsibilities and the role and responsibility for public health and welfare were compared to the following classes in the Medical Professional and Agriculture job families: Assistant State Veterinarian (R21), Dentist (R23), State Veterinarian (R23), Health Practitioner I (R23), Health Practitioner II (R24), and Medical Officer (R27).

The Wildlife Veterinarian's responsibility for multiple species research and management projects; required innovation; and responsibility for dealing with complex, controversial, and unusual problems are characteristics similar to the Wildlife Biologist III, Fisheries Geneticist II, Fish Pathologist II, and Biometrician II. The class lacks the program administration responsibilities of the Wildlife Biologist IV, but has similar responsibility as a staff advisor providing expert technical guidance with significant impact on public policy and long term effects on resources and management. The Wildlife Veterinarian lacks the scope and level of supervisory and program administration responsibilities that characterize the Fisheries Geneticist III, Fish Pathologist III, Biometrician III, and Wildlife Scientist II. The Wildlife Veterinarian exhibits some similarity to the Wildlife Scientist I in the national and international implications of research; recommendations made with limited interim review; and publication of findings in peer-reviewed journals; but lacks the Wildlife Scientist's requirement for expertise in multiple disciplines. The Wildlife Veterinarian's required advanced education in a specific field is greater than that required of the Wildlife Biologists, Fish Pathologists, Biometricians, or Fisheries Geneticists and similar to that required of the Wildlife Scientist I.

The Wildlife Veterinarian's mix of programmatic research and management duties with veterinary medical responsibilities is similar to the characteristics of the Assistant State Veterinarian. The level and scope of program management and administration with veterinary responsibilities that characterizes the State Veterinarian are not assigned the Wildlife Veterinarian. The Wildlife Veterinarian lacks the exclusive focus of duties on medical diagnosis and treatment of disease that characterizes the Health Practitioners and Medical Officers.

As the practice of veterinary medicine is the outstanding characteristic of the Wildlife Veterinarian job class; is not an infrequent, minor, or temporary duty; requires unquestionably higher qualifications; and forms the basis for recruiting and selecting employees for positions in the class, having this characteristic govern the salary range of the job class in the same way that it governs the allocation of positions into the class follows sound classification principles. The close similarity of the Wildlife Veterinarian's mix of veterinary and programmatic responsibilities with the Assistant State Veterinarian indicates assigning the same salary range (21) is appropriate. Assigning this salary range will place the class above the range of the Wildlife Biologist IV, and below the range of the Wildlife Scientist I. The specialized nature of the work, the level of responsibility and authority, and the specific qualifications further supports the Wildlife Veterinarian's placement at salary range 21.

Conclusions:

The position practicing veterinary medicine in support of the state's wildlife research and management programs is appropriately placed in a new job class. The new class is appropriately titled Wildlife Veterinarian, placed in the Fish and Wildlife Research and Development job family, and assigned class code P6149. The Wildlife Veterinarian class is appropriately assigned salary range 21.

Position Allocation:

Current Classification:

<u>PCN</u>	<u>Class Title</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>Rg</u>	<u>Loc</u>	<u>BU</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>FLSA</u>	<u>CDL</u>	<u>A/A</u>	<u>SC</u>
112082	Wildlife Biologist III	P6143	18	JBA	GG	FACL	Y	N	Y	3

Approved Classification:

<u>PCN</u>	<u>Class Title</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>Rg</u>	<u>Loc</u>	<u>BU</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>FLSA</u>	<u>CDL</u>	<u>A/A</u>	<u>SC</u>
112082	Wildlife Veterinarian	P6149	21	JBA	GG	FACL	Y	N	Y	3

Org Code: 11-01-20-40

Nature of Action: Reclassification to a higher range

Effective Date: May 16, 2005

Position Analysis:

PCN 112082 is in the Division of Wildlife Conservation and is supervised by PCN 112049, Deputy Director. PCN 112082 is responsible for providing professional support and expertise in the field of veterinary medicine for wildlife management and research programs. The position's responsibility for the practice of veterinary medicine is class controlling. The position is appropriately allocated to Wildlife Veterinarian. The position's supervisory responsibilities for a non-permanent position are not sufficient to meet the requirement for placement in the Supervisory Bargaining Unit. The position remains in the General Government Unit.

PCN 112082 requires the incumbent possess a valid license permitting the practice of medicine and perform duties which constitute the practice thereof; therefore, the position meets the professional exemption under the Fair Labor Standards Act. In accordance with §541.304(d) of the Act, the salary requirements do not apply to the employee in this position. The incumbent of this position is not eligible for overtime.

Attachment:

Final class specification

cc: Matt Robus, Director
Division of Wildlife Conservation
Department of Fish and Game

Kim Titus, Deputy Director
Division of Wildlife Conservation

Department of Fish and Game

Tom Lawson, Director
Division of Administrative Services
Department of Fish and Game

Joel Casto, Senior Management Consultant
Management Services – Resources Group

Technical Services – Resources Group

Employee Records