

Refuge Operations Specialist, GS-485-11

A. Major Duties:

Serves as a Refuge Operations Specialist at a national wildlife refuge responsible for actions necessary to carry out specific programs and activities on the refuge. Typical duties include but are not limited to the following:

- Participates in planning, direction, and implementation of all station programs; plans and carries out refuge operations and development programs, including construction and maintenance of refuge facilities, coordination of all land use programs such as farming, haying, trapping, hunting and fishing, biological studies and a variety of other management activities.
- Participates in the development of long-range plans, work advice, guidance, and budgets. Develops work schedules. Coordinates with state and other Federal agencies and interest groups in the formulation of long-range plans for management of the station's natural resources.
- Plans, adapts and recommends land use or management techniques designed to improve wildlife habitat. Directs land use programs on refuge crop lands and grasslands involving cooperative farmers as well as refuge personnel and equipment, carrying out practices such as; crop rotations, erosion control, weed control, prescribed burning, grass seeding, haying and any other practices resulting in increased benefits to migratory birds and other wildlife using the refuge.
- Assists in directing, planning and administration of the public use program including off-refuge programs, interpretive and educational programs, auto and foot tour routes, hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and other recreational activities, and assists in enforcing refuge laws and regulations.
- Plans, implements programs and collects the technical data on specific habitat to monitor and evaluate effects of management programs. May plan and collect the technical data on species, age, growth and volume of timber stand improvement, timber removal, fire prevention, etc. Oversees the gathering of data. Insures proper records are kept.
- Directs and trains other biologists or technicians in planning and implementing water level manipulations to encourage control of aquatic vegetation for waterfowl food and cover
- Plans and implements programs for Federal and state species that are endangered or threatened or for species of special concern.
- Plans and oversees the conduct of and reporting results of wildlife surveys, recreational and educational public use as well as other outputs.

- May direct a timber disposal program including sale by bid or permit, selection of permittees, supervision of contract cutting operations, and slash disposal operations. Manages the forest management program primarily to benefit wildlife with timber production a secondary consideration.
- Manages fire control program, including prescribed burning and wildlife suppression operation.
- May coordinate Private Lands activity within the Management District including the review, negotiation and management of conservation easements and title-transferred lands; wetland restoration activities; and SCS/ASCS consultations. Plans and directs programs to improve fish and wildlife habitat with private landowners and other organizations or agencies within applicable conservation provisions of current Federal laws and policy pertaining to private lands or agricultural land administration.
- Assists with planning and implementation of a comprehensive public relations program including programs to acquaint the public or elected officials with the purpose of resource management programs.

B. Factors:

1. Knowledge Required by the Position

- Professional knowledge of the principles, concepts and theories in wildlife biology and refuge management that are applicable to a wide range of duties at a field station which may include endangered species, migratory birds, and indigenous wildlife/plant life.
- Professional knowledge and skill to modify or adapt standard refuge management techniques and procedures; or to establish departures from established management methods and techniques; and to assess, select, and make use of agency precedents in means and ways to recommend strategies and plans that resolve management problems.
- Skill in recognizing critical trends related to wildlife resource management, and its development, and in interpreting observations, drawing sound conclusions and determining remedial action to be taken.
- Skill and diplomacy in coordinating station activities with other agencies and organizations; ability to deal effectively with the general public; and ability to exercise tact and diplomacy in official association with Federal, state, and local agencies, and with private and national organizations.
- Skill in oral communication sufficient to present data and analyses.
- Skill in written communication sufficient to write objective reports that require a minimum of reviewing and editing.

2. Supervisory Controls

Incumbent is supervised by the Refuge Manager who establishes overall goals and resources available. The incumbent and supervisor, in consultation, develop general objectives, projects, and deadlines that accomplish wildlife refuge programs and operations to be executed. Incumbent is responsible for planning and executing assignments, selecting appropriate techniques and methodology, and determining the approach to be taken. Incumbent is expected to resolve most of the conflicts that arise and to coordinate the work with others as necessary. Incumbent interprets and applies program policy in terms of established program and/or operating objectives, and keeps the supervisor informed of progress, potentially controversial problems or concerns, or matters having far-reaching implications.

Work is occasionally reviewed through discussion, conference, or on-site observation for general adequacy, feasibility and adherence to programs, Service policies and directives; and for feasibility, recommendations and/or proposals.

3. Guidelines

Guidelines are available in the form of various manuals (Departmental and Service), Regional Refuge plans, CCPs, various memoranda from the Regional Office and Washington Office, Service objectives, and legislative policies. Guidelines are general in nature and do not provide specific instructions for each situation encountered by the incumbent. However, in managing the refuge, the guidelines provide sufficient information to allow the incumbent to formulate a course of action through interpretation of the intent of the guidelines. The incumbent must select, interpret, and adapt guidelines to fit each situation as it occurs.

4. Complexity

The duties involve different and unrelated biological processes and methods. Assignments usually consist of a full range of operational problems involving conventional aspects or features such as: (a) the inventory of a given species of migratory birds and its current conditions; (b) the drafting of conventional, short-range plans, or directions for resource management or protection; and (c) onsite inspection of work in progress for conformance to standards and instructions. The work involves analyses and evaluations of problem areas and program concerns which may involve considerations such as which of several alternatives to select and when to coordinate problems that may cause interferences or conflicts with other refuge management concerns. The incumbent must recognize the interrelationships between species and the differences between their biotic needs or requirements. The incumbent is required to maintain and provide suitable habitat for each species in a manner that does not conflict with other resource uses or functions.

5. Scope and Effect

The purpose of the work is the management and operation of a national wildlife refuge. The impact of the work is on the refuge's wildlife and its habitat and wildlife resource conservation, which is a major mission of the Service.

6. Personal Contacts

Contacts are with professional or technical subject matter specialists in the same or related disciplines, representatives of other levels of the Service, tribal representatives, the state agency responsible for fish and game, various local and State Conservation groups, special interest groups, and the general public.

7. Purpose of Contacts

Contacts are for exchanging information; obtaining information about new developments and techniques having application to programs and problems existing at the station; resolving immediate and long-range problems; assuring the effectiveness and currency of government effort and for affording opportunities for professional development and interchange of information and ideas; presenting controversial or special programs requiring considerable skill, professionalism, and knowledge of the subject. In some instances, contacts are made with violators of State or Federal laws in confrontational situations. Incumbent must deal with a variety of individuals, organizations, and agencies effectively. Contacts often involve the use of persuasive techniques to successfully negotiate, coordinate and obtain cooperation, understanding, and acceptance of the Service's policies from individuals who may hold opposing views or whose purpose and interests are different from those represented by the incumbent.

8. Physical Demands

The work requires some physical exertion such as walking over wet, rough, uneven or rocky surfaces; bending, crouching, stooping, stretching, reaching, climbing, or similar activities. Work requires average agility and dexterity. Prescribed burning and wildfire suppression require very strenuous effort in adverse, often dangerous conditions.

9. Work Environment

The work requires both office and outdoor work. The office is adequately lighted, heated, and ventilated. Temperature and weather extremes may be encountered in the performance of outdoor work. The incumbent is expected to conduct duties in a safe and orderly manner so as not to injure self, fellow workers, or property with which entrusted.