

120 Howard Street, Room 760  
San Francisco, CA 94105



**Classification Appeal Decision  
Under Section 5112 of Title 5, U.S. Code**

<b>Appellant:</b>	[Appellant]
<b>Position:</b>	Natural Resource Specialist GS-401-9
<b>Organization:</b>	U.S. Department of the Interior [Installation] [city state]
<b>Decision:</b>	GS-401-9; title at agency discretion
<b>OPM decision number:</b>	C- 0401-09-01

Signed by Denis J. Whitebook  
DENIS J. WHITEBOOK  
CLASSIFICATION APPEALS OFFICER

August 6, 1997  
DATE

As provided in section 511.612 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, this decision is mandatory and binding on all administrative, certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting officials of the government. The agency is responsible for reviewing its classification decisions for identical, similar, or related positions to ensure consistency with this decision. There is no right of further appeal. This decision is subject to discretionary review only under conditions and time limits specified in the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards, appendix 4, section G (address provided in appendix 4, section H).

### **Introduction**

On May 1, 1997, the San Francisco Oversight Division of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) received a classification appeal from [appellant], whose position is classified as Natural Resource Specialist, GS-401-9. However, he believes that his position is inaccurately titled and objects to the fact that it is classified in the GS-401 series. The appellant works in the U.S. Department of the Interior, [installation]. We have accepted and decided his appeal under 5 U.S. Code 5112.

### **General issues**

This appeal decision is based on a careful review of all information submitted by the appellant and his agency. In addition, a telephone interview was conducted with the appellant's immediate supervisor to gather more information about the duties and responsibilities of the position. The supervisor has certified to the accuracy of the appellant's official position description (number R1013). However, the appellant is unable to state that his position description is accurate because he was recently reassigned (June 8, 1997) to the position, and therefore has not had the opportunity to perform the full range of duties described in the position description. In the case file the appellant makes various statements about his agency, and how it handled his reassignment to his current position and a grievance he filed on that issue. In adjudicating this appeal, our only concern is to make our own independent decision on the proper classification of his position. By law, we must make that decision solely by comparing his duties and responsibilities to OPM standards and guidelines (5 U.S. Code 5106, 5107, and 5112). Therefore, we have considered the appellant's statements only insofar as they are relevant to making that comparison.

Ordinarily, positions are classified based on duties actually performed (Introduction to the Position Classification Standards, page 16). However, as indicated above, the appellant was recently reassigned to his current position, has been on leave for some of the time since then, and so has not performed the full range of duties described in the position description. Page 16 of the standards introduction indicates that we must therefore classify his position based not just on duties he has already performed in his new position, but also on projected duties he is likely to perform if he stays in the position. In trying to determine these projected duties, we have carefully considered the appellant's official PD, the other material of record, and the findings from our interview with his supervisor. Thus, in the following pages, when we speak loosely of work the appellant is performing, we are referring to work he is likely to perform if he remains in his new position as well as to duties

performed since June 8. Since classification of the appellant's position is based partly on projected duties, the agency should review the position within a reasonable time, such as six months after the appellant returns to work full time, to see if he is actually performing those duties (standards introduction, page 16).

### **Position information**

The appellant performs a variety of duties related to natural resource management within the [installation]. Assignments and projects cover work encompassing a variety of biological sciences including wildlife and fisheries biology, forestry, botany, soil science, and water activities. His primary duties include the following:

(1) Plans, organizes and conducts field inventories of threatened and endangered species, which include certain plants, animals and fish and their associated communities. Performs implementation monitoring of the District's Resource Management Plan (RMP) to determine the impact of the agency's land management activities (e.g., timber harvesting) on the ecosystem. This includes collecting, analyzing and summarizing field data. The appellant provides wildlife, fisheries, botany, soil, water, and forestry input to plans proposed by other resource activities. This includes working with interdisciplinary teams of resource specialists who analyze ecosystem management objectives. Our fact-finding disclosed that the preceding tasks take up to 60% of the appellant's work time.

(2) In association with other resource specialists (e.g., engineers, hydrologists) carries out data collection and analysis of natural resources for posting to the computerized Geographic Information System (GIS). The appellant is currently working on setting up a data base reflecting the presence, location and condition of culverts and streams. These assignments take up to 30% of his work time.

(3) Assists the [activity's] silvicultural work group as needed in updating the tree seed inventory and stand exams. These duties take 10% of his work time.

The appellant's position description and results of our phone interview furnish much more information about his duties and responsibilities and how they are carried out.

### **Series, title, and appropriate standards**

The appellant was recently reassigned to his current position from his previous job which was classified as Wildlife Biologist, GS-486-9. Although he does not directly discuss in the case file his agency's classification rationale for his current position, he feels he should still be assigned to a Wildlife Biologist position, and objects to the title and series of his present position. Because the reasons for his reassignment (which he has grieved with his agency) go beyond the scope of the classification appeals process, we can only address the question of whether or not his current position is properly classified.

Based on our review of the record and discussion with the appellant's supervisor, we find that the position is properly classified in the General Biological Science Series, GS-401. As discussed in the Handbook of Occupational Groups and Series (dated January 1997), that series includes positions which involve professional work in biology, agriculture, or related natural resource management when there is no other more appropriate series. Thus included in this series are positions that involve (1) a combination of several professional fields with none predominant, or (2) a specialized professional field not readily identified with other existing series.

The appellant performs work in gathering and analyzing data related to natural resources to provide information needed for managing the resources present in the [installation]. The position description indicates, and the supervisor confirmed, that the natural resources monitored by the appellant include wildlife, fish, plants, timber, soil and water. The supervisor indicated that the incumbent of this position must have a strong knowledge of the preceding natural resources (especially wildlife, fish, plants and trees), and their habitat and living conditions, in order to successfully perform the duties of the position. Were the position to become vacant, the supervisor noted that the primary knowledge and skills needed would be professional background, education and experience in a variety of biological sciences including wildlife and fisheries biology, botany, forestry and soil science. He mentioned that to perform the duties of this position, particularly the inventorying and monitoring of plants and animals, and measuring the impact of the agency's land management practices on those resources, knowledge of the above fields of biological study are essential, with no single one being paramount. He noted that applicants possessing knowledge of only one biological field would be unable to perform the full range of tasks required in the position. Because the appellant's position requires knowledge and skill in a combination of several biological fields of study covering a number of specialized series of the Biological Sciences Group, GS-0400, including Wildlife and Fishery Biology (GS-486/482), Forestry (GS-460), Botany (GS-430), and Soil Science (GS-470), with none predominant, the position is properly classified in the General Biological Science Series, GS-401.

The appellant expressed concern in the record that the duties of his current position do not appear to be "professional" as opposed to those performed in positions classified in the Wildlife Biology Series, GS-486. Although there is no other more appropriate series for this position, nevertheless those classified in the GS-401 series are considered "professional." Professional work is defined on page 11 of the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards (dated August 1991), as work that "requires knowledge in a field of science or learning characteristically acquired through education or training equivalent to a bachelor's or higher degree with major study in or pertinent to the specialized field, as distinguished from general education." The difference in the appellant's case between work performed in a specialized professional series (e.g., GS-486) and that performed in the General Biological Science Series, GS-401, is that his duties involve work in a combination of several professional fields with none predominant.

For the preceding reasons the appellant's position is best classified in the General Biological Science Series, GS-401. OPM has prescribed no titles for positions in that series. Therefore, according to page 18 of the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards, the appellant's agency may

choose the official title for this position. In doing so, his agency should follow the titling guidance on that page.

There are no published grade evaluation criteria for positions classified in the GS-401 series. In such cases the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards explains (pages 20-21) that if there are no specific grade level criteria for the work, an appropriate general classification guide or criteria in a standard or standards for related kinds of work should be used. In using other standards, the criteria selected as the basis for comparison should be for a kind of work as similar as possible to the position to be evaluated with respect to the kind of work processes, functions, or subject matter of work performed; the qualifications required to do the work; the level of difficulty and responsibility; and the combination of classification factors which have the greatest influence on the grade level. We find that given the nature of the appellant's work his position is best evaluated by cross reference to the grade level criteria in the classification standard for the Fishery Biology Series/Wildlife Biology Series, GS-482/486, dated January 1991.

### **Grade determination**

The GS-482/486 standard uses the Factor Evaluation System (FES), which employs nine factors. Under the FES, each factor level description in a standard describes the minimum characteristics needed to receive credit for the described level. Therefore, if a position fails to meet the criteria in a factor level description in any significant aspect, it must be credited at a lower level. Conversely, the position may exceed those criteria in some aspects and still not be credited at a higher level. Our evaluation with respect to the nine FES factors follows.

#### *Factor 1, Knowledge required by the position, Level 1-6, 950 points*

This factor measures the nature and extent of information or facts that a worker must understand to do acceptable work. To be used as a basis for selecting a level under this factor, a knowledge must be required and applied.

At Level 1-6 (described on pages 10-12 of the standard), an employee must have professional knowledge of established scientific methods and techniques of fishery or wildlife biology to perform recurring assignments of moderate difficulty (i.e., the methods and techniques are well established, apply to most situations encountered, and do not require significant deviation from the established methods). At this level resource assignments are amenable to a variety of standard treatments and proven techniques. They are noncontroversial in terms of methodologies used, are associated with past and planned use, and support existing protection, avoidance, or mitigation efforts. At Level 1-6 the employee applies a general knowledge of agency and state procedures and statutes affecting conservation of a wildlife/fishery resource. Assignments consist of a variety of professional activities such as preparing resource planning reports involving conventional or straightforward biological concerns. Biologists at this level participate in interdisciplinary teams providing specialized review and recommendations on plans, policies and/or procedures affecting resource (wildlife/fishery) management. They also may do onsite inspections of activities performed by contractors to determine

the impact of the activities on fish/wildlife or the habitat, and recommend actions to be taken by other employees.

At Level 1-7 (pages 12-15) an employee must have professional knowledge of wildlife biology applicable to an intensive wildlife resource program, or a subject matter program, such as applied in a habitat evaluation program or a pervasive animal damage control program. At this level the employee applies professional knowledge and skill to modify or adapt standard techniques, processes, and procedures, and to assess, select, apply precedents, and devise strategies and plans to overcome significant resource problems related to species production, protection, habitat restoration, construction, or program management and evaluation. This includes intensive knowledge and competence in advanced techniques of a highly complex area of fish and/or wildlife biology sufficient to serve as a troubleshooter, specialist, or coordinator.

Employees at Level 1-7 apply knowledge of the biological characteristics, conditions, and interrelationships of aquatic and terrestrial biota, or of wildlife resources and ecological systems to establish production procedures independently, or to evaluate resource or water management projects. At this level they apply knowledge and skill to analyze data or to prepare studies and reports on the impact of various practices on a resource, or on the complementary or competitive impact of the development, modification, or change in the use of one resource on another.

The appellant's position meets Level 1-6, but falls short of Level 1-7. Like Level 1-6, he applies professional knowledge of established scientific methods and techniques of natural resources (e.g., wildlife/fishery biology, forestry) to perform recurring assignments of moderate difficulty. This is particularly relevant in conducting field inventories of plants, animals and fish, and in monitoring those aspects of the District's Resource Management Plan regarding timber harvesting, road building, and recreational activities. In performing this work he applies well established methods to gather and analyze data, and mitigation efforts encompass noncontroversial, standard treatments and proven methods. For example, in harvesting timber, certain types and numbers of trees are left standing as nesting areas for endangered birds, or a buffer area is left near streams to maintain water quality and temperature for fish. Similar to Level 1-6, the appellant prepares reports involving conventional natural resource concerns, including writing assigned sections of the annual resource management monitoring report addressing specific questions about his ecosystem management activities. He also participates with interdisciplinary teams in providing wildlife, fisheries, forestry and botany input and recommendations for their planned activities in meeting ecosystem management objectives. Like Level 1-6 the appellant regularly carries out monitoring inspections of timber harvest contractors to determine the impact of their logging on the natural resources of the [installation].

The position does not meet Level 1-7. Although the appellant is concerned with evaluating the effect of the agency's land management activities on the habitat of various animals, fish, and plants, he does not modify or adapt standard techniques and processes to carry out his assessments. In addition, he is not faced with significant resource problems related to species production, protection or habitat restoration. His role is limited to gathering and analyzing specific habitat data which he shares with higher level resource area specialists on the staff. These personnel, such as the unit's environmental

coordinator, area Botanist, Forester, or Wildlife Biologist, would deal with significant resource issues, and serve as troubleshooters or specialists applying knowledge of advanced techniques to highly complex areas in their respective fields. Given the “mixed” nature of the appellant’s position, somewhat like one aspect of Level 1-7 he applies knowledge of the biological characteristics, conditions, and interrelationships of aquatic and terrestrial biota and their ecosystems; however this knowledge is not applied within the context of Level 1-7 assignments. In addition, he is not involved in establishing production procedures or evaluating resource or water management projects. Despite the fact that he applies his knowledge to analyze data on various natural resources and their habitats, he is not involved in the preparation of studies of various management practices to the degree specified at Level 1-7. Such studies as described at that level are performed by area resource specialists.

This factor is evaluated at Level 1-6 and 950 points are credited.

*Factor 2, Supervisory controls, Level 2-3, 275 points*

This factor covers (1) the nature and extent of direct or indirect controls exercised by the supervisor, (2) the employee’s responsibility, and (3) the review of completed work.

As described on page 17 of the standard, at Level 2-3 the objectives of the assignment, priority, and required deadlines are specified by the supervisor. The biologist is expected to plan and carry out the assignment independently in accordance with proven techniques, methods, practices, and previous experience. On assignments that involve, or may potentially involve, controversial use of approaches or modification of standard procedures, the biologist typically will discuss the issues and possible approaches with the supervisor before carrying out the assignment. Completed work is reviewed for adequacy, technical soundness, and accomplishment of specified objectives.

At Level 2-4 (page 17) the supervisor establishes overall goals and resources available. The biologist and supervisor confer on the development of general objectives, projects, work to be done, and deadlines. The biologist is responsible for planning and executing assignments, selecting appropriate techniques and methodology, and determining the approach to be taken. The biologist is expected to resolve most problems that arise and coordinate the work with others in the same or other resource areas or disciplines as necessary. The employee interprets and applies program policy in terms of established objectives, and keeps the supervisor informed of progress, potentially controversial problems, concerns, issues, or other matters having far-reaching implications. Completed work is reviewed for general adequacy in meeting program or project objectives, expected results, and compatibility with other work.

The appellant’s position meets Level 2-3, but falls short of Level 2-4. The supervisor indicated that either he, interdisciplinary team leaders, or resource area specialists outline the objectives of the appellant’s assignments, determine priorities, and establish project deadlines. The appellant carries out his work independently in accordance with established methods and practices. Assignments that potentially involve controversial issues (e.g., where there is broad public or business interest), or

those calling for modification of standard procedures and approaches, are discussed with the supervisor, team leader, or resource specialist before performing the assignment. The appellant's completed work is reviewed by the supervisor for technical adequacy and accomplishment of specified objectives, e.g., his responses to questions raised in the annual resource monitoring plan.

The position does not meet Level 2-4 where the supervisor establishes only the overall goals of projects and resources available. The appellant's work objectives, projects and deadlines are more closely specified than described at Level 2-4. Although the appellant is expected to coordinate his work, including discussing problems that occur, with members of various core teams and other resource management staff, he does not interpret and apply program policy. His completed work is more closely reviewed than that described at Level 2-4.

This factor is evaluated at Level 2-3 and 275 points are credited.

*Factor 3, Guidelines, Level 3-3, 275 points*

This factor covers the nature of guidelines and the judgment needed to apply them.

At Level 3-3 (page 18) a number of general guidelines are available, and broad objectives have been established. Although guidelines that are available may not be completely applicable to the work situation, the biologist uses judgment in determining which appropriate alternatives should be used. The employee uses judgment in determining which appropriate alternatives should be used. The employee uses judgment interpreting and adapting guidelines for application to specific situations or problems. In cases where guidelines lack specificity, the employee makes generalizations from several guidelines in carrying out work efforts, analyzes results, and recommends changes. The employee determines when problems require additional guidance.

At Level 3-4 (page 18) guidelines are often inadequate to deal with the more complex or unusual problems, or with novel, undeveloped, or controversial aspects of wildlife resources and management. The precedents and guides may point toward conflicting decisions; recent court decisions may appear to require a technical decision at variance with existing guides; or there may be relatively few precedents or guides which are pertinent to specific problems, or proven methods are incomplete. The employee is required to deviate from or extend traditional methods and practices, or to develop essentially new or vastly modified techniques or methods for obtaining effective results, or propose new guidelines.

The appellant's guidelines meet Level 3-3. They include the District's Resource Management Plan, Federal and state laws (Endangered Species Act), agency manuals, the [installation area] Plan, annual work plans, precedents, standard scientific evaluation methods and techniques, established program objectives, etc. Unlike Level 3-4, we did not find that guidelines were often inadequate, or that the appellant had to deal with complex or unusual problems or novel, undeveloped, or controversial aspects of natural resources (wildlife/fisheries) and management. Like Level 3-3, the appellant uses his judgment in selecting, interpreting, and adapting the available guidelines to accomplish his work.



He does not have to develop new or vastly modified techniques, or propose new guidelines, in order to effectively carry out his projects.

This factor is evaluated at Level 3-3 and 275 points are credited.

*Factor 4, Complexity, Level 4-3, 150 points*

This factor covers the nature, number, variety, and intricacy of tasks, steps, processes, or methods in the work performed; the difficulty in identifying what needs to be done; and the difficulty and originality involved in performing the work.

At Level 4-3 (pages 19-20) work is characterized by the application of different and unrelated processes and methods. The work requires analyses and evaluations of environmental conditions, proposed management practices, ecological systems, critical habitat, impact of construction projects on the resources, and the value of fishery or wildlife resources. Employees at this level make decisions which include considerations about the interrelationships of fishery or wildlife resources. Information affecting decisions at Level 4-3 may include consideration of competing resource values, changing habitat conditions, and limited alternatives or conflicts with other resource uses or functions. Actions taken require the biologist to select and apply conventional approaches and precedent solutions according to specific conditions which exist in each assignment.

At Level 4-4 (page 20) biologists typically are involved in a full range of professional activities and in the application of many different and unrelated biological concepts. Biologists regularly encounter interdependent resource and socioeconomic problems. They apply flexibility and judgment in approaching problems and applying biological methodologies and practices to obtain an optimum balance between program requirements and policies, differences in the mission of agencies, and the demands of the various interest groups. Some assignments involve conflicting special interest groups or tribal demands that influence the redirection of management priorities, objectives, and agency policy. The demands may result in appeals to higher level authorities within the agency or other agencies that have a mutual interest.

Assignments at Level 4-4 typically involve administrative and resource problems which require in-depth analysis and evaluation of alternatives; environmental problems with conflicting requirements accompanied by resolutions which may have serious implications for industry, commercial concerns, or the general public. Assignments may require biologists to relate new work situations to precedent situations, extend or modify existing techniques, or develop compromises which require substantial effort to overcome resistance to change when it is necessary to modify an accepted method or approach.

The appellant's position meets Level 4-3, but fails to meet the complexity described at Level 4-4. Similar to Level 4-3, in gathering and analyzing field data he applies different and unrelated processes to evaluate the impact of the District's projects and land management practices on the habitat of certain fauna and flora, and the ecosystem within the [installation]. In making recommendations and

decisions on the most appropriate practices to mitigate potentially negative effects of various timber and land management projects, he considers the effects on competing resources, how the habitats could change, etc. However, in taking actions he applies conventional approaches and precedents, particularly as they relate to timber harvesting, according to the specific conditions of each assignment.

The appellant's position does not meet Level 4-4. Unlike that level in monitoring resources and developing data concerning forest culverts for placement on the Geographic Information System (GIS), he does not apply many different and unrelated biological concepts. On the contrary, his assignments involve similar and related resource management concepts. We found no indication that the appellant regularly encounters interdependent resource and socioeconomic problems, including assignments that could involve conflicting special interest groups, that influence the redirection of management priorities and agency policies. Such issues would be addressed by higher level program specialists at the [installation] or District staff level. His assignments do not typically include in-depth analysis and evaluation of alternatives, or environmental problems whose resolutions have significant implications for industry, commercial users, or the general public. The appellant's work also does not meet Level 4-4 in that the record does not reflect that he regularly relates new work situations to precedent ones, or develops compromises needed to overcome resistance to change because of the need to modify an accepted method or approach.

This factor is evaluated at Level 4-3 and 150 points are credited.

*Factor 5, Scope and effect, Level 5-3, 150 points*

This factor covers the relationship between the nature of the work (i.e., the purpose, breadth, and depth of the assignment), and the effect of work products or services both within and outside the organization.

At Level 5-3 (page 22) the purpose of the work is to investigate and analyze conventional fishery and wildlife resources problems and/or environmental conditions to recommend or implement solutions that satisfy resources management objectives. Typically, the work requires the biologist to identify common problems, e.g., habitat conditions, or impact of construction projects. The work affects the adequacy of protection, management and use of wildlife resources by assessing conditions and notifying others about the need to study apparent problems.

At Level 5-4 (pages 22-23) the purpose of the work includes developing new or improved techniques or criteria for the conduct of projects. Assignments may involve advisory, planning or review services on specific problems. Work may involve unusual problems, development of new approaches or techniques, and validation of programs and plans associated with studies that are prepared for management and administrative use. Work situations at this level may be complicated by administrative problems, including the availability of funds and personnel resources, accuracy of databases, and information/exchange methodologies. The results of work at Level 5-4 affect the work of state and county officials, tribal organizations, and program managers or technical specialists

in outside agencies. The work also influences the effectiveness or acceptability of agency goals, projects, programs, and objectives. Activities typically involve problems which impact or affect the continued existence of a resource or resource area.

The appellant's position meets Level 5-3, but falls short of Level 5-4. Similar to Level 5-3, the purpose of his monitoring of field species and habitats is to investigate and analyze conventional natural resource problems and issues, examine environmental conditions, and assess alternatives and make recommendations on the best approach that satisfies resources management objectives. He identifies habitat conditions of various wildlife/fish and rare plants in the [installation], and identifies common problems affecting them resulting from logging, construction, and recreation activities. Problems would include such things as reduction in certain timber stands negatively affecting bird nesting and feeding areas, reducing tree cover and concealment for wild game, erosion of soil or pollution of streams, or destroying areas and surrounding environments where rare plants thrive. Like Level 5-3 his work affects the adequacy of protection and management of wildlife/fish and plant resources by assessing current ecosystem conditions, and advising others in specialized resource fields in the organization (e.g., forestry/fisheries staff) of the need to be aware of the impact of the land management program on plants, wildlife, fish, and waterways. His work in mapping culverts and streams to identify their geographic locations supports the District's resources management objectives.

The appellant's position does not meet Level 5-4. Unlike that level, his work does not involve developing new or improved techniques or criteria for the conduct of his assignments. The techniques he uses to inventory/monitor and analyze natural resources and their habitats are conventional, and he is not faced with unusual resources management problems. Unlike Level 5-4, the appellant's work does not affect that of state and county officials, tribal organizations, or technical specialists in outside agencies. The appellant's duties affect the adequacy of the organization's activities to protect natural resources while managing the land in the resource area, rather than the effectiveness or acceptability of agency goals, programs and objectives.

This factor is evaluated at Level 5-3 and 150 points are credited.

*Factors 6 and 7, Personal contacts and Purpose of contacts, Levels 6-2 & 7-b, 75 points*

*Factor 6, Personal contacts*

Factor 6 includes face-to-face contacts and telephone contacts with persons not in the supervisory chain.

Like Level 6-2 (page 24 of the standard), the appellant's contacts are primarily with individuals in his agency, but outside the immediate organization. These include persons working in other specialized fields in the resource area and individuals in higher level organizations (i.e., [activity] office) including soil scientists, hydrologists, foresters, fishery biologists, etc. The position does not meet Level 6-3 (page 24) where contacts are primarily with individuals or groups from outside the employing agency.

The record indicates that such contacts are infrequent and do not occur on a regular and recurring basis. This factor is evaluated at Level 6-2.

*Factor 7, Purpose of contacts*

Under Factor 7, the purpose of contacts ranges from factual exchanges of information to situations involving significant or controversial issues and differing viewpoints, goals, or objectives.

The purpose of the appellant's contacts meets Level 7-b (page 25). Similar to that level his contacts are made to plan, coordinate or advise on work efforts such as conducting natural resource monitoring studies or inventorying threatened or endangered species. He works with [installation] staff to solve operating problems and, like Level 7-b, all are cooperative and working toward the mutual goals of managing and protecting the area's natural resources.

The position does not meet Level 7-c (page 25) where the purpose is to influence, motivate, interrogate or control persons or groups who hold different opinions or interests, and may be skeptical, fearful, or uncooperative.

By application of the matrix table on page 25 of the standard, assignment of Levels 6-2 and 7-b for Factors 6 and 7 results in a total of 75 points credited to the position for those factors.

*Factor 8, Physical demands, Level 8-2, 20 points*

The appellant's position favorably compares to Level 8-2 (page 26), but does not meet Level 8-3 (page 26). He performs work in areas requiring considerable walking, bending, and climbing, often over rough, uneven surfaces or mountainous terrain. This meets Level 8-2 where the work requires some physical exertion such as long periods of walking over rough, muddy, uneven, swampy, or mountainous terrain. The position does not meet Level 8-3 where the work requires considerable strenuous physical exertion such as frequent crouching, or crawling over rough, uneven, swampy, or rocky terrain.

This factor is evaluated at Level 8-2 and 20 points are credited.

*Factor 9, Work environment, Level 9-2, 20 points*

The appellant's position meets Level 9-2 (page 26), but falls short of Level 9-3 (page 26). Like Level 9-2, his field work involves regular and recurring exposure to moderate discomforts such as exposure to wind, low or high temperatures, insects, etc. In hiking on steep, forested slopes and using cutting tools, special safety precautions are necessary, and protective clothing (e.g., hard hat) and equipment are required. The position does not meet Level 9-3 where work is performed under conditions of high risk and exposure to potentially dangerous situations or unusual environmental stress, e.g., extreme weather conditions, great heights.

This factor is evaluated at Level 9-2 and 20 points are credited.

*Summary*

The following factor levels and points have been awarded to the appellant’s position:

Factor	Level	Points
1. Knowledge required by the position	1-6	950
2. Supervisory controls	2-3	275
3. Guidelines	3-3	275
4. Complexity	4-3	150
5. Scope and effect	5-3	150
6. Personal contacts	6-2	
7. Purpose of contacts	7-b	75
8. Physical demands	8-2	20
9. Work environment	9-2	<u>20</u>
Total points:		1915

A total of 1915 points falls in the GS-9 range (1855-2100) as indicated in the Grade Conversion Table on page 9 of the GS-482/486 standard. Thus, this position is graded at the GS-9 level.

**Decision**

The appellant’s position is properly classified in the General Biological Science Series, GS-401, and graded at the GS-9 level. Assignment of an appropriate title is at the agency’s discretion.