

U.S. Office of Personnel Management  
Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness  
Classification Appeal and FLSA Programs

Dallas Oversight Division  
1100 Commerce Street, Room 4C22  
Dallas, TX 75242-9968

**Classification Appeal Decision**  
**Under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code**

**Appellant:** [appellant's name]

**Agency classification:** Park Ranger  
GS-025-7

**Organization:** [appellant's activity]  
Bureau of Land Management  
Department of the Interior  
[geographic location]

**OPM decision:** Park Ranger  
GS-025-7

**OPM decision number:** C-0025-07-01

/s/ Bonnie J. Brandon

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Bonnie J. Brandon  
Classification Appeals Officer

5/22/00

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Date

As provided in section 511.612 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, this decision constitutes a certificate that 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).

## Decision sent to:

### Appellant:

[appellant's name and address]

### Agency:

[servicing personnel office]

Director  
National Human Resources Management Center  
Bureau of Land Management  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 25047  
Denver, CO 80225-0047

Director of Personnel  
Department of the Interior  
Mail Stop 5221  
1849 C Street, NW.  
Washington, DC 20240

## **Introduction**

On January 28, 2000, the Dallas Oversight Division of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) accepted an appeal from [the appellant]. The appealed position is assigned to the [appellant's activity], Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Department of the Interior, [geographic location]. The agency has classified the position as Park Ranger, GS-025-7. The appellant believes his position should be classified as Park Ranger, GS-025-9, and has filed an appeal with this office under the provisions of section 5112 of title 5, United States Code.

The appellant certified to the accuracy of the duties described in his current position description (PD), [number], dated November 3, 1999. The appellant's supervisor certified that this PD accurately reflects the duties performed by the appellant. We find this PD is adequate for position classification purposes.

In reaching our classification decision, we considered information submitted in writing by the appellant and his agency and information obtained by telephone from the appellant and his supervisor. As required by law, we classified the position based upon the duties, responsibilities, and qualification requirements as compared to the criteria specified in the appropriate OPM classification standards and guidelines (sections 5106, 5107, and 5112 of title 5, United States Code).

## **Position information**

The purpose of the appellant's position is to provide recreation planning and visitor service expertise in the inventory, study, development, protection, and management of the [appellant's activity] recreational resources areas that are subject to multiple uses. The appellant is the only Park Ranger on the Resources Staff which includes 15 nonsupervisory employees who are supervised by a GS-12 Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist.

The appellant's position requires knowledge of recreation management within a multiple-use setting to carry out the planning, coordination, and execution of area recreation programs for the protection, orderly development, and management of recreation sites, facilities, and concession operations. The work also requires familiarity with related programs of local, county, State, and Federal jurisdictions and understanding of coordination techniques available to ensure compatibility of recreation management goals and procedures. A summary of the appellant's major duties and responsibilities follows.

- Coordinate the planning, operation, and maintenance of trails and campsites for three developed campgrounds in and around [a specific recreational area].
- Provide direction to seasonal and temporary employees and volunteers involved in campground and trail maintenance.
- Maintain collaborative relationships with the public and special interest groups who assist the agency in locating, constructing, and maintaining trails and campgrounds for public use.

- Recommend actions to the Field Manager concerning BLM's Wilderness Study Area monitoring program.
- Serve as the Field Office sign coordinator, including responsibility for installation and maintenance of signs.
- Monitor trespass and misuse of various recreational activities by issuing Special Recreation Use Permits.

### **Series, title, and standard determination**

The appellant does not question the series or title of his position. We concur with the agency's determination that the duties performed by the appellant and the knowledge required for the position are best covered by the Park Ranger Series, GS-025. This series includes positions that supervise, manage, and/or perform work in the conservation and use of Federal park resources. This involves functions such as park conservation; natural, historical, and cultural resource management; and the development and operation of interpretive and recreational programs for the benefit of the visiting public. The duties of these positions characteristically include assignments such as the protection of property from natural or visitor related depredation; dissemination to visitors of general, historical, or scientific information; control of traffic and visitor use of facilities; enforcement of laws and regulations; investigation of violations, complaints, trespass, and accidents; search and rescue missions; and management activities related to various resources.

The proper title for the appealed position is Park Ranger. We used the GS-025 standard to determine the grade of the appellant's position.

### **Grade determination**

The grade level criteria in the GS-025 standard are presented in terms of two main classification factors: Nature of assignment and Level of responsibility.

#### *Nature of assignment*

This factor measures the complexity and scope of the ranger's assignments and the knowledge and skills required to carry out the assignment. At lower grade levels, the ranger may assist other rangers and may be assigned work primarily for developmental purposes. At grades GS-9 and above, assignments typically include some administrative and planning work.

At the GS-7 level, Park Rangers receive assignments of substantial variety for which established precedents are not fully applicable. GS-7 rangers select appropriate guidelines and references to solve operational problems or to facilitate details of the work planning process. Some rangers at this grade level develop revisions to standard work methods and procedures and take actions or make recommendations based on their preliminary interpretation of data. GS-7 rangers typically apply a thorough, specific knowledge of agency policies, objectives, and operating methods

related to the functional areas of assignments. They also have a good general knowledge of agency policies, objectives, and operating methods as they relate to the total activities in the park.

Typical assignments at the GS-7 level include acting as liaison with community organizations and interest groups to provide orientation to park programs and services, stimulating interest in such programs and services, and discovering ways to facilitate visitation to and use of the park's recreational and educational facilities. At this level the ranger plans daily activities and recommends measures to improve administration or use of facilities. GS-7 rangers typically provide information to park visitors and make presentations in public interest groups. A ranger at this level may advise adjacent landowners, users, and lessees on problems such as encroachment, violations of lease agreements, and noncompliance with permits or licenses.

Similar to the GS-7 level, the appellant coordinates the implementation of [a specific area's] recreation and resource management plans. The recreational activities in these areas include camping, hiking, off-highway vehicle use, river rafting, and mountain biking. The appellant directs both seasonal and temporary work crews to construct and maintain recreation area trails and campgrounds. He recruits volunteer workers and develops training programs for them to assist in constructing and maintaining area trails. The appellant is also responsible for developing and implementing programs for visitor groups promoting effective use of park resources. He develops a variety of interpretive projects including brochures, trailhead maps, and signs. The appellant completes periodic inspections of area facilities and gathers information through site condition surveys that he uses to make recommendations for facility improvements. The knowledge of agency policies and principles regarding outdoor recreation areas and the organizing and planning skills required to perform this work are indicative of the GS-7 level. The appellant's position fully meets the GS-7 level.

At the GS-9 level, the ranger applies resourcefulness, judgment, and ingenuity in the accomplishment of tasks such as the formulation and execution of park resource and interpretive plans and programs; the promotion of environmental, conservation, and public use programs; the planning and execution of resource management analyses concerning the level and types of uses of resources, deterioration in resources, and changes needed in the operating programs; the planning and execution of management analyses concerning the effectiveness and visitor appeal of the interpretive programs and literature; and the development of necessary program improvements. A ranger at this level may be responsible for overseeing the development and execution of programs, including the coordination of the work of other rangers, or may serve as staff specialist providing advice and guidance agencywide.

Illustrative assignments at the GS-9 level include drafting plans for operations, including resource management and seasonal staffing priorities. At this level the ranger compiles evaluation reports and makes recommendations on specific management problems, including scenic easement, special use permits, and visitor use and safety. GS-9 rangers typically develop training programs and prepare new or revised guidelines and operating procedures that deal with matters such as regulatory or law enforcement activities, wildland and structural fire control, and search and rescue problems. A ranger at this level may be responsible for making periodic inspections of campgrounds, picnic areas, Government buildings, trails, roads, lakeshores, and

parking areas to determine quality of operations and services. The ranger uses this information to develop improvements in diverse areas such as added employee training, requests for new facilities, and changes in concessionaire operation.

Certain aspects of the appellant's assignments meet the GS-9 level criteria. For example, the appellant periodically oversees the gathering and analyzing of recreation data on public use areas to help compile recreation trend reports and promote recreation opportunities to public groups. In addition, he occasionally provides advice to field office recreation and resource specialists and managers on the environmental impact of current or proposed BLM projects. Although the appellant's position partially meets the GS-9 level, the assignments do not meet the full scope of work at that level. The degree of park program planning and development of resource management plans and programs envisioned at the GS-9 level are not found in the appellant's assignments.

The nature of the appellant's assignments is best evaluated at the GS-7 level.

### *Level of Responsibility*

This factor takes into account the judgment exercised, the supervision and guidance received, and the review of the work either during its course or upon completion. At the lower grade levels, the ranger generally uses standard methods, techniques, and practices and receives detailed supervision. Numerous routine public contacts are also typical. At higher grade levels, the assignments require the ability to plan and lead or execute park program activities. At these levels, public contacts often involve situations where the use of resources generates high public interest regarding controversial management issues.

At the GS-7 level, Park Rangers perform operational assignments requiring initiative and resourcefulness in carrying out daily planning and execution, or to oversee the execution of operational assignments. Assignments typically involve locating and selecting the most appropriate guidelines and then determining which of several alternatives to use. Park rangers at this level adapt procedures to fit work situations and develop and recommend revisions to standard work methods. At this level, the supervisor makes the initial assignment by indicating the purpose and general direction of the program or project and any deadlines or similar constraints. Guidance is provided for new developments, changes in program or policies, and deviations in procedures that are required by the supervisor or higher level management. Completed work is reviewed for technical soundness, appropriateness, and accomplishment of objectives.

At the GS-9 level, the ranger's supervisor outlines the major assignment objectives, critical deadlines, and the overall nature of expected results. The ranger independently plans the detailed steps necessary to complete assignments, including recommending changes in operating plans when necessary. When unexpected and unusual conditions or work situations are encountered which might cause significant controversy, the ranger discusses proposed actions with the supervisor before implementation. Park Rangers at this level work with guides that are generally applicable but not specific to on-site conditions or problems. GS-9 rangers must select from alternative methods or approaches which appear to be appropriate to the existing situation. They

make or recommend compromises required to meet objectives. Completed work is reviewed for overall adequacy, consistency, and correlation with related activities, programs, and objectives.

The appellant receives assignments directly from his supervisor who provides general guidance in terms of the purpose and direction of the project. As at the GS-7 level, the appellant exercises considerable independence in preparing a scheduled work plan and determining which established alternatives to use in completing assignments. The appellant's recommendations are for specific operational work assignments or problems rather than for overall recreation program objectives as envisioned at the GS-9 level. The requirements of the recreation program are guided by specific public laws and BLM policy and procedures for Wilderness Study Area management, interim guidance, and Wilderness designation. When controversial situations or sensitive policy matters arise, the appellant's supervisor and other senior recreational staff provide direction and assistance. The appellant's supervisor reviews the work at completion to ensure adherence to program standards and proper application of guidelines.

The appellant establishes collaborative relationships with a variety of contacts both within and outside the Federal Government. Contacts include officials with the Bureau of Reclamation, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife and with State and local law enforcement and recreation planning officials and specialists. The appellant also has contacts with public groups who use the resources in the area. The appellant's contacts are for the purpose of coordinating current recreation efforts, determining the future needs and interests of user groups through workshop presentations, and recommending improved multiple-use recreation management plans. Some of the appellant's contacts involve dealing with private landowners to explain actions in gaining compliance with BLM policies and procedures.

In contrast to the GS-9 level, the appellant's responsibilities are carried out under closer review by the supervisor or higher grade staff and the guidelines are more specific.

### *Summary*

The nature of the appellant's assignments and level of his responsibility do not fully meet the GS-9 level. Therefore, the GS-7 level is assigned.

### **Decision**

The appellant's position is properly classified as Park Ranger, GS-025-7.