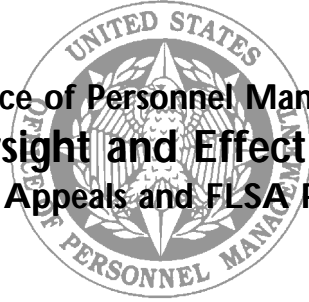


U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness
Classification Appeals and FLSA Programs



San Francisco Oversight Division
120 Howard Street, Room 760
San Francisco, CA 94105

Classification Appeal Decision
Under Section 5112 of Title 5, United States Code

Appellant: [The appellant]

Agency classification: Supervisory Visitor Information Specialist
GS-1001-09

Organization: [The appellant's installation]
U.S. Forest Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture

OPM decision: Supervisory Park Ranger
GS-025-9

OPM decision number: C-0025-09-01

Carlos A. Torrico
Classification Appeals Officer

August 10, 1999
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).

Since this decision changes the classification of the appealed position, it is to be effective no later than the beginning of the fourth pay period after the date of this decision (5 CFR 511.702). The servicing personnel office must submit a compliance report containing the corrected position description and a Standard Form 50 showing the personnel action taken. The report must be submitted within 30 days from the effective date of the personnel action.

Decision sent to:

[The appellant's address]

[The appellant's representatives]

[The appellant's servicing personnel office]

Personnel Director
U.S. Forest Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
P.O. Box 96090
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Mr. Roger L. Bensey
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Introduction

On January 28, 1999, the San Francisco Oversight Division of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) received from [the appellant] an appeal of the classification of his position. His position is currently classified as Supervisory Visitor Information Specialist, GS-1001-9. However, he believes that the series and grade level are incorrect, the complexity of his position was not interpreted correctly by his agency, and though the position description is accurate it does not convey a true picture of his position. The appellant is the Director for the [appellant's installation]. These three centers are within one to two hours travel time of each other. The three centers fall under the purview of the [the appellant's higher level organization]. We have accepted and decided this appeal under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

General issues

This appeal decision is based on a review of all information submitted by the appellant and his agency, as well as telephone interviews with the appellant and his supervisor. The appellant's supervisor has certified that [the appellant's] official position description (number 6804503) is accurate. The appellant has stated that his position description is a good general description of his duties, but does not fully convey the critical grade determining aspects of his work. He believes that in evaluating the grade level of his position, his agency has not addressed the scope, complexity and increasing responsibility of his work and the interpretive program which he carries out. Moreover, he questions his agency's use of the classification references for the General Arts and Information Series, GS-1001, and the Public Affairs Series, GS-1035, to evaluate his job. The appellant also makes various other statements about his agency and its evaluation of his position. 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 current 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.

Position information

The record indicates that the appellant is a Supervisory Visitor Information Specialist at the [appellant's installation]. He directly supervises three GS-7 Supervisory Visual Information Assistants, and indirectly supervises four full time permanent GS-5 Visitor Information Assistants, 17 full time term GS-5 Visitor Information Assistants, and a number of volunteers and senior citizen special appointees. As the Director of the three centers, the appellant is responsible for supervising staff and planning, directing, and administering the centers' interpretive programs.

The [appellant's installation] operates three visitor centers. The mission of these visitor centers is to provide the following:

- Orientation to and information on the Monument's and the Forest's recreational and interpretive programs and facilities so that visitors can have a safe, enjoyable, educational experience.
- Interpretation of the events leading up to and following the historic [event] including the geology, ecology, cultural history, etc. of the Monument.
- Visitor services including information desks, restrooms, phones, interpretive association sales areas, concession operated food service and gift shop, self-guiding interpretive trails, picnicking, etc.
- Resource protection for the Monument's unique volcanic resources through interpretive exhibits, live programs, and roving patrols of the trails and areas adjacent to the centers.
- Outlets for the sale of monument passes as part of the National Recreation Fee Demonstration Program.

The appellant plans, directs, and administers the ongoing interpretive programs for the Monument's three visitor centers and related facilities to meet the needs of a wide range of resident and non-resident visitors from a variety of national and international backgrounds. The Monument in comparison to other national monuments and parks is relatively new. The volcanic event happened in [date]. Many of the national monuments and parks have been established for 50-100 years. Many of the interpretive efforts had to be generated by the staff. The appellant and his supervisor have implemented a new map and have upgraded and improved exhibits, publications, and video presentations. This position is complicated by the following situations:

Visitor Center differences:

Each center is different in that they tell different parts of the [event's] story. The staff members at each site must become familiar with their unique part of the story. At [one center], staff focus on the geological story of the eruption of [the event], what they have learned from the geological studies and how geologists continue to monitor the active volcano. At [one center], the focus is on the biological story of how life survived the eruption and how other forms of life have colonized the area since the eruption. Finally, at the [one center] the story is much broader, with background on the cultural history of the area, how volcanoes form, plus all the information on the events, from the earliest rumbles beneath the mountain to the eruptions that followed after the main eruption on [date of event]. It is the appellant's responsibility to be sure that the different stories are all told accurately and in a way that compliments the information told at the other sites.

Each center is located in a unique site with distinct challenges and opportunities. The [one center] is located near the small town of [local town]. The center is situated in a stand of old growth Douglas Fir trees and on the marsh lined shore of Silver Lake, where a new boardwalk interpretive trail will soon open. There is a theater and a large exhibit hall along with a bookstore. Built at a cost of five million dollars, the building won a Presidential Design Award. The site is always a hazard during wind storms due to the

potential for falling trees. Located on State Park lands, the center nurtures a partner relationship with [the local state].

The [another center] is located 38 miles to the east of the [one center]. This twelve million dollar center features many computer operated displays and an orientation theater along with an interpretive trail and picnic area. A concessionaire operates a restaurant and gift shop inside the visitor center. The Northwest Interpretive Association operates a bookstore here. At 3,200 feet it is located near [a lake] in a spot where strong winds frequently funnel from the east. Government housing is provided here with spaces for up to 25 people. A large warehouse and work center at this location also houses a generator which provides power for [the center] complex and [another center] during times of lengthy power outages at this remote location. At the lake, there is a picnic area, interpretive lakeside trail, and a boat launch.

Nine miles further east, and located at the end of State Highway 504, is the [a center]. At 4,200 feet [the center] receives a large amount of snow in the winter. Winds are a problem as well, especially during violent winter storms. Keeping the walkways and plazas clear of snow and safe for visitors is a challenge during the winter. Inside the ten and a half million dollar center are high-tech displays and a theater program which ends with the screen and curtains rising to reveal a spectacular view of [the mountain] only six miles away. A small book store is located in the lobby and an interpretive trail winds up the ridge from the central plaza.

The appellant is responsible for coordinating the work and programs at these three sites. This is challenging because the sites are spread over a wide geographic area.

Other complicating factors:

All the facilities and programs are relatively new and are high profile facilities for the media. The [one center] opened in 1986, [another center] opened in 1992, and the [another center] opened in 1997. Because they are still so new, it is a demanding task to continue to develop the operation, management, and emergency plans for each facility.

The remoteness of the [two centers] sites creates a requirement for handling of emergencies. With response time for emergency vehicles being about one hour, it means the staff must be ready to handle emergencies of all kinds for an hour. This is very different from sites where a 911 call will result in an aid car being on site within 5-10 minutes. The appellant must ensure that adequate staff training is provided so that employees are ready for whatever may arise.

Numerous trail heads and two environmental education sites are located in the [area of two centers]. The appellant's responsibility is to manage the environmental education sites for use by school groups (10,000 school students visit the center each year) and for use by

regular visitors to [the installation]. The staff must be knowledgeable of trail conditions and use policies in the adjacent [mountain] Backcountry. With a new Backcountry Management Plan for the area being implemented July 1, 1999, this creates yet another package of information and policies for the appellant's staff to become knowledgeable of. Backcountry permits will be sold by the appellant's staff members at the [one of the centers].

The appellant's program operates seven days per week requiring him to set up varying schedules to cover the three sites including coverages for holidays. He has some employees off on Mondays and Tuesdays; others are off on Wednesdays and Thursdays, and others are off Fridays and Saturdays, etc. Some of the employees work five eight hour days while others may work alternative 5-4-9 schedules or 4-10s. Covering three different locations nearly 50 miles apart where weather and road conditions can vary widely, makes managing this workforce difficult. He only sees his subordinate supervisors once or twice a week, so information must be shared quickly and creatively. There are no formal shifts.

The appellant's position description, results of our interviews, and other material of record furnish more information about his duties and responsibilities and how they are performed.

Series, title and standard determination

The agency has classified the appellant's position in the General Arts and Information Series, GS-1001, and graded the position by cross reference to the grading criteria in the standard for the Public Affairs Series, GS-1035. Both the appellant and his supervisor disagree with the agency on the assignment of the GS-1001 series, and selection of the GS-1035 standard to grade the position. The GS-1001 series includes all position the duties of which are to administer, supervise, or perform: (1) any combination of work characteristic of two or more series in this group where; (a) no one type of work is series controlling; (b) the paramount qualification requirements are not characteristic of another series in the group; and (c) the combination of work is not specifically provided for in another series, or (2) other work typical of this group for which no other series has been established. Although there are some limited aspects of the appellant's work which could partially meet (2) of this definition, we find that overall none of the series described in the GS-1000 group closely match the type of work he performs.

Based on our fact-finding, we have determined that the appellant's work is appropriately assigned to the Park Ranger Series, GS-025. As described in the standard for the GS-025 series (dated November 1985), that series includes positions the duties of which are to 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 classification standard for the GS-025 series specifically addresses on pages 4-5 typical duties found in this occupation. One of the three broad functional areas described

involves interpretation of the natural, historical, archeological, or other features of the particular resource and area to enrich the visitors' experience through activities such as talks, guided or self-guided walks, demonstrations, and environmental education programs both in the park and community centers, schools, or other related "nonpark" locations. For the appellant's position we find that the interpretive knowledge and skills are paramount for planning, directing, and administering the ongoing interpretive programs for the Monument's three visitor centers. In addition, the main reason for the position is to direct the full range of visitor center services, including environmental education programs for schools, and the ongoing interpretive operations and programs at the Monument's three visitor centers and the [installation's] Recreation Complex. The function of the organization is to provide orientation to and information on the Monument's and the Forest's recreational and interpretive programs and facilities so that visitors can have a safe, enjoyable, educational experience. Visitors receive an interpretation of the events leading up to and following the historic [event] including the geology, ecology, cultural history, etc. of the Monument. Our interviews disclosed that the primary knowledges required for the position involve the development and operation of interpretive programs, and recruitment sources would include those individuals possessing those knowledges. For all the preceding reasons, we believe that the most appropriate series for this position is GS-025 Park Ranger. Supporting this determination is the fact that when interviewed, both the Monument Manager and the appellant's immediate supervisor explained that since the definition of work classified in the GS-1001 series was so generalized, it negatively impacted the quality of the candidates that applied for the vacancies. They have attempted to tailor vacancy announcements to get the interpretive knowledges and skills required by the position, but individuals looking for GS-025 positions would not necessarily know that this position, presently classified in the GS-1001 series, required interpretation skills, nor would the candidates know to look for the GS-1001 series if they were interested in interpretive positions.

As an explanation as to why the agency chose the GS-1001 series, the agency classification specialist indicated that they had considered the GS-025 series because the duties performed resembled the series definition. However, they believed that they were precluded from using the GS-025 standard because of the definition of "park" on page 4 which they interpreted to mean that the standard was a single agency standard for the Department of Interior and the Department of the Army. The definition is restated on the following page.

"The term *park* is used in this standard to include national monuments; seashores; parkways; historical, military, natural, and urban parks; lakes; and other related areas administered by the Departments of the Army and the Interior."

The GS-025 standard was written in 1985. The newly published Handbook of Occupational Groups and Families (dated January 1999), states on page 2: "All agencies may use any occupational series in this handbook since restrictions on use of standards originally developed for a single agency have been removed." The [appellant's installation] is a national monument with related recreation areas (camping, trails, visitors centers, etc.). The agency also indicated that this position was placed in the GS-1001 series because it was believed that positions in the GS-025

series were mainly concerned with conservation, and this position is not. However, the GS-025 standard indicates that there is a range of conservation functions performed in Park Ranger positions depending on factors such as the subject matter knowledge required by the work, and the nature of the park or resource(s) involved. The standard notes that Park Rangers perform duties which vary from one park or resource to another because of operating requirements, differing types of parks or resources, etc. Thus classification of such positions is not limited to those solely devoted to the conservation of natural resources.

This position is properly classified in the GS-025 series. Park Ranger is the basic title authorized for all positions (except Park Managers) in this series regardless of functions performed. However, because the appellant's position meets the criteria of the General Schedule Supervisory Guide (GSSG) for evaluation as a supervisor, the term "supervisory" is added to the basic title.

Our fact-finding revealed that the appellant spends approximately 30% of his work time performing supervisory duties, and the remaining 70% carrying out non-supervisory technical work. We have graded his supervisory duties by application of the grading criteria contained in the GSSG dated April 1998. His non-supervisory technical duties are evaluated by reference to the grading criteria in the standard for the Park Ranger Series, GS-025. Our grade evaluation of the appellant's position by application of the criteria in the GS-025 standard and GSSG follows.

Grade determination

Evaluation of Nonsupervisory Technical Duties

The standard for the Park Ranger Series, GS-025, is divided into two grading criteria: Nature of assignment and Level of responsibility. The first element measures the complexity/difficulty and scope of the assignment and the knowledge and skills required to carry out the assignment. The second element takes into account the judgment exercised, the supervision and guidance received, and the review of the work--either during the course of the work or upon completion.

Nature of assignment

The appellant's responsibilities meet the GS-9 criteria as described on pages 15-17 of the standard. At that level the work involves applying 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 operating programs or type of use; the planning and execution of management analyses concerning effectiveness and visitor appeal of the interpretive programs and literature; and the development of necessary program improvements, including the selection of new media or techniques. Some of the key work areas in the appellant's position include interpretation, environmental education, resource protection, various areas of law enforcement and visitor compliance with policies, selection of new media and

techniques to illustrate the [installation's] story, etc. This variety of responsibilities requires resourcefulness, judgment, ingenuity, organizing and planning skills, and strong knowledge and skills in all of the appellant's programs.

Illustrative assignments at the GS-9 level include coordinating, developing and implementing a variety of history projects which include subject areas such as ethnic history, local folklore, historical sites and buildings, possible demonstration projects, and interpretive efforts regarding park history. At this level the ranger prepares portions of the interpretive planning and budgeting program documents; identifies local cultural or historical sites and structures; recommends preservation, restoration, and/or maintenance needs; develops portions of a cultural history resource management plan; develops training materials and programs and provides direction and training to rangers in the implementation and utilization of interpretive materials; monitors walks, talks, and cultural history demonstrations conducted by lower graded rangers, critiques these activities, and recommends individual or program improvements.

The appellant's duties favorably compare with the above GS-9 level representative assignment. He develops new interpretive exhibits for use at the Monument visitor centers highlighting recent scientific discoveries, current eruption activity, plant and animal succession, and the availability of new recreation opportunities within the Monument. He identifies key themes and concepts to be conveyed, researches content, tailors messages to reach target audiences, and works with technical and subject matter experts to review and refine work. He also designs, writes, and produces a variety of interpretive media including exhibits, displays, talks, signs, brochures, publications, and audio-visual programs. The appellant updates interpretive tools and references. He takes publication quality photographs and maintains interpretive photo files and equipment. He has worked with contractors on larger scope programs. He is also responsible for developing and conducting summer seasonal interpretive training seminars and on-going in-service training sessions for visitor center staff. In this capacity, he audits interpretive talks and walks to ensure accuracy, quality and continued development of the programs and his staff. He hosts familiarization and other administrative trips conducted by Forest Service units, local and regional tourism organizations, resources management review groups, and special interest groups. This position fully meets the GS-9 level for this factor.

Although the appellant's position partially meets certain aspects of the GS-11 level criteria (pages 18-19), the assignments do not meet the full scope of work at that level. As previously discussed under the "Position Information" section of this evaluation, we recognize that the appellant carries out a variety of technical and administrative assignments, some of which can be complicated. Because the centers are relatively new, he sometimes must select from alternative approaches, and adapt standardized guides and criteria. However, the work situation is not so diverse and complex that development and planning are typically only partially completed, or if completed, require substantial modification to accommodate different characteristics than previously anticipated as outlined at the GS-11 level. In addition, the appellant's duties do not reflect the complexity of the illustrative assignments at the higher level. He is not involved to the extent described at the higher level in the planning, developing, coordinating and directing of programs related to visitor

services *and* resource management. The appellant's program and related activities is limited to interpretive work concerning the [the installation], rather than the diversity of programs addressed in the first illustrative example which includes search and rescue, recreation, hunting, trespass and traffic control, soil erosion control, fire management, etc. He does not draft the annual budget for the program, and does not perform many of the related tasks concerning cost projections characteristic of the GS-11 level. The position is also unlike the second illustrative assignment where the employee operates as a staff specialist (which is similar to the appellant in his nonsupervisory role), planning, organizing, or overseeing studies and surveys on administrative, visitor, interpretive, *and* resource management problems. Our interviews disclosed that it is the appellant's supervisor who would perform those functions, and who would review proposals impacting on the center's resources. The supervisor would also prepare or coordinate the preparation of environmental assessments or environmental impact statements.

The appellant's assignments overall meet the GS-9 level, thus that level is assigned for this factor.

Level of responsibility

The appellant's position meets the GS-9 level (page 17), and in some aspects approaches the GS-11 level (pages 19-20). As at the GS-9 level, the supervisor outlines the major assignment objectives based on application of the unit's work plan. The appellant independently plans the detailed steps necessary to complete assignments, including recommending changes in operating plans when necessary. Similarly, when unexpected and unusual conditions or work situations are encountered which might engender significant controversy, he discusses proposed actions with the supervisor before implementation. Completed work is reviewed for overall adequacy, consistency, and correlation with related activities, programs, and objectives. However, the position exceeds the GS-9 criteria where the guides are generally applicable but not specific to onsite conditions or problems. At times he has developed guides (in collaboration with the supervisor) covering both routine and nonroutine operations, and may modify existing guidelines to carry out a particular assignment. Like the higher level, he also is expected to recognize critical trends in the operation of the centers, evaluate their significance, and implement changes as necessary. Unlike the GS-11 level the appellant does not have considerable contacts with community officials, various interest groups, and other groups and individuals regarding matters such as the negotiation of agreements, investigation and resolution of complaints, and reconciliation of conflicting viewpoints. Most of the appellant's contacts have to do with education programs (e.g., groups of school students), interpretive programs, etc.

Although the appellant's responsibilities reflect some elements of the GS-11 level, as indicated above the position does not fully meet the higher level criteria, and therefore the GS-9 level is assigned for this factor.

By application of the two grading factors in the GS-025 standard (Nature of assignment and Level of responsibility) we have found that the appellant's nonsupervisory technical work equates to the GS-9 level. Therefore, that element of his work is graded at GS-9.

Evaluation of Supervisory Duties

The GSSG employs a factor-point evaluation method that assesses six factors common to all supervisory positions. To grade a position, each factor is evaluated by comparing the position to the factor level definitions for that factor and crediting the points designated for the highest factor level which is met in accordance with the instructions specified to the factor being evaluated. The total points accumulated under all factors are then converted to a grade by using the point-to-grade conversion chart in the GSSG. Each factor is evaluated as follows for the appellant's position.

Factor 1, Program Scope and Effect - Level 1-2 - 350 points

This factor addresses the general complexity, breadth, and impact of the program areas and work directed, including the organizational and geographic coverage. It also assesses the impact of the work both within and outside the immediate organization. To credit a particular factor level, the criteria for both Scope and Effect must be met.

a. Scope - This element addresses the general complexity and breadth of (a) the program or program segment directed; and (b) the work directed, the products produced, or the services delivered.

The appellant's position meets Factor Level 1-2 (page 13) where the work directed is administrative, technical, complex clerical, or comparable in nature. The functions, activities, or services provided have limited geographic coverage and support most of the activities comprising a typical agency field office, an area office, a small to medium military installation, or comparable activities within agency program segments. For this position, the work directed is technical in nature providing services to three visitor centers and outlying field areas. The visitor centers are isolated in a specific geographic area removed from the main forest.

The appellant's program does not meet Level 1-3 (page 14) for scope where the function or services directed typically have coverage which encompasses a major metropolitan area, a State, or a small region of several States; or, when most of an area's taxpayers or businesses are covered, coverage comparable to a small city. The three visitor centers do not meet the description of a major metropolitan area.

b. Effect - This element addresses the impact of the work, the products, and/or the programs described under "Scope" on the mission, and programs of the customer(s), the activity, other activities in or out of the government, the agency, other agencies, the general public, or others.

The appellant's position meets Level 1-2 (page 13) for effect. Like that level, the services significantly affect field office operations and objectives, and provide services to a limited population of clients or users comparable to a major portion of a small city or rural county. The three visitor centers service thousands of visitors per year, providing information, interpretive

programs, and tours and lectures comparable to a field office operation with like services provided.

This position does not meet Level 1-3 (page 14) where at the field activity level (involving large, complex, multi mission organizations and/or very large serviced populations) the work directly involves or substantially impacts the provision of essential support operations to numerous, varied, and complex technical, professional, and administrative functions.

In summary, we find that both Scope and Effect are evaluated at Level 1-2. Thus the correct overall evaluation of Factor 1 is 1-2 and 350 points are assigned.

Factor 2, Organizational Setting - Level 2-1 - 100 points

This factor considers the organizational situation of the supervisory position in relation to higher level management.

The appellant's position meets Level 2-1 (page 18) where the position is accountable to a position that is two or more levels below the first SES, flag, or general officer, equivalent or higher level position in the direct supervisory chain. The appellant is subordinate to another Supervisory Information Specialist (GS-11). That Supervisory Information Specialist answers directly to the Monument Manager (GS-13). The Monument Manager is supervised by the Forest Supervisor (GM-15), who reports to the Regional Forester who is the first SES employee in the supervisory chain.

Factor 2 is assigned Level 2-1 and 100 points are credited.

Factor 3, Supervisory and Managerial Authority Exercised - Level 3-2 - 450 points

This factor covers the delegated supervisory and managerial authorities which are exercised on a recurring basis. To be credited with a level under this factor, a position must meet the authorities and responsibilities to the extent described for the specific level.

In order to meet Level 3-2 (pages 18-20), a position must meet any one of the conditions described in paragraphs a, b, or c under Factor Level 3-2. This position meets Level 3-2c. Supervisors at that level must carry out at least three of the first four, and a total of six or more of the 10 responsibilities listed on pages 19-20 of the GSSG. The appellant meets all ten of the responsibilities. For example, he meets numbers 1 and 3 in that he plans work to be accomplished by subordinates, setting and adjusting short-term priorities, and evaluates the work performance of subordinates.

In order to fully meet Factor Level 3-3 (pages 20-21) a position must meet the conditions described in either paragraph a or b under this factor level. The appellant's position does not meet level 3-3a because it does not have the managerial authority to set a series of annual, multi-year,

or similar types of long-range work plans and schedules for in-service or contracted work. This position is not closely involved with high level program officials (such as agency level staff personnel) in the development of overall goals and objectives for assigned staff functions, programs or program segments. This position does not meet any of the criteria for assignment of Level 3-3a.

To meet Level 3-3b, a position must exercise all or nearly all of the delegated supervisory authorities and responsibilities described at Level 3-2c of this factor and, in addition, at least eight of the fifteen authorities or responsibilities listed on pages 20-21 of the GSSG under Level 3-3b. We have indicated that the appellant's position meets all of the authorities and responsibilities under Level 3-2c. However, we find that the appellant's position meets only five of the responsibilities (1, 3, 5, 6, and 8) under Level 3-3b. The appellant's position does not meet element 2 where the supervisor exercises significant responsibilities dealing with officials of other units, or in advising management officials of higher rank. The centers are isolated from the Forest and the appellant primarily deals with his unit supervisor. The position does not meet element 4 as the three centers individually do not have significant annual resources equating to multimillion dollar levels of funding, and the appellant lacks direct control over the millions of dollars of funding for the centers. For element 7, only the Monument Manager or the Forest Supervisor has the authority to approve selections for vacancies. Element 9 cannot be credited because serious complaints must be resolved in collaboration with the supervisor and the Monument Manager. This position does not meet authorities 10,11, and 13 because the appellant is not delegated authority to approve serious disciplinary actions, make decisions on costly or controversial training for employees, or approve expenses comparable to within-grade increases, extensive overtime, and employee travel. Element 12 cannot be credited because the appellant does not determine whether contractor performed work meets standards of adequacy necessary for authorization of payment. For element 14, the appellant recommends awards and bonuses for nonsupervisory personnel. He also can recommend changes in classification, however, these changes are either pen-and-ink changes, new duties assignments, or deletions of duties no longer performed. These changes have been minor and have not changed the series or grade of those positions where changes were submitted. This element cannot be credited. Element 15 cannot be credited. The appellant's responsibility in this area would not exceed routine methods to improve production and increase the quality of work which has already been recognized in our evaluation under Factor Level 3-2c.9.

Because the appellant's position meets only five of the required eight authorities needed to credit Level 3-3b, Factor Level 3-2 is credited for Factor 3 and 450 points are assigned.

Factor 4, Personal Contacts - Levels 4A-2, 50 points/4B-2, 75 points

This is a two part factor which assesses the nature and purpose of personal contacts related to supervisory and managerial responsibilities. The nature of contacts, credited under Subfactor 4A, and the purpose of those contacts, credited under Subfactor 4B, must be based on the same contacts.

Subfactor 4A - Nature of Contacts

Factor 4A covers the organizational relationships, authority or influence level, setting, and difficulty of preparation associated with making personal contacts involved in supervisory and managerial work. To be credited, the level of contacts must contribute to the successful performance of the work, be a recurring requirement, have a demonstrable impact on the difficulty and responsibility of the position, and require direct contact.

The appellant's position meets Subfactor Level 4A-2 (page 24) where frequent contacts are made with members of the business community or the general public; higher ranking managers, supervisors, leaders and staff of program, administrative, and other work units and activities throughout the field activity, installation, command or major organizational level of the agency; case workers in congressional district offices; technical or operating level employees of State and local governments; and reporters for local and other limited media outlets. The appellants supervisory contacts include subordinates, the general public, visitors, maintenance crews, concessionaire coordinators, interpretation associations, State Highway Department, private industry (Weyerhaeuser Company), special interest groups, etc.

This position does not meet Subfactor Level 4A-3 (page 24) where frequent contacts include: high ranking military or civilian managers; key staff of public interest groups with significant political influence or media coverage; journalists representing influential city or county newspapers or comparable radio or television coverage; congressional committee and subcommittee staff assistants below staff director or chief counsel levels; contracting officials and high level technical staff of large industrial firms; local officers of regional or national trade associations, public action groups, or professional organizations; and/or State and local government managers doing business with the agency.

This subfactor is evaluated at Level 4A-2 and 50 points are credited.

Subfactor 4B - Purpose of Contacts

This subfactor covers the purpose of the personal contacts credited in Subfactor 4B, including the advisory, representational, negotiating, and commitment making responsibilities related to supervision and management.

The appellant's position meets Subfactor Level 4B-2 (page 26) where the purpose of contacts is to ensure that information provided to outside parties is accurate and consistent; to plan and coordinate the work directed with that of others outside the subordinate organization; and/or to resolve differences of opinions among managers, supervisors, leaders, employees, contractors or others.

This position does not meet Subfactor Level 4B-3 (page 26). The appellant does not need to justify, defend, or negotiate in representing the project, program segment(s), or organizational

unit(s) directed, in obtaining or committing resources, and in gaining compliance with established policies, regulations, or contacts.

This subfactor is evaluated at Level 4B-2 and 75 points are credited.

Factor 5, Difficulty of Typical Work Directed - Level 5-3 - 340 points

This factor measures the difficulty and complexity of the basic work most typical of the organization directed.

The appellant directly supervises three GS-7 Supervisory Visual Information Assistants, and indirectly supervises four full time permanent GS-5 Visitor Information Assistants, 17 full time term GS-5 Visitor Information Assistants, twelve volunteers and three senior citizen special appointees whose work is comparable to the GS-5 level. Based on our analysis of nonsupervisory duty hours of substantive, mission oriented work performed in the appellant's unit, we have determined that GS-5 work constitutes 25% or more of the nonsupervisory workload in the appellant's organization. Therefore, by application of the chart on page 28 of the GSSG, when the highest level of base work is GS-5 or 6, Factor Level 5-3 is assigned and 340 points are credited to the position.

Factor 6, Other Conditions - Level 6-2 - 575 points

This factor measures the extent to which various conditions contribute to the difficulty and complexity of carrying out supervisory duties, authorities, and responsibilities. To evaluate Factor 6, two steps are used. First the highest level that a position fully meets is initially credited. Then, if the level selected is either 6-1, 6-2, or 6-3, the Special Situations listed after the factor level definitions are considered. If a position meets three or more of the situations, then a single level is to be added to the level selected in Step 1. If the level selected under Step 1 is either 6-4, 6-5, or 6-6, the Special Situations are not considered and no additional levels are added to the level selected in Step 1.

The appellant's position meets Factor Level 6-2b (pages 30-31) where the position directs subordinate supervisors of work comparable to GS-6 or lower, where coordinating the work of the subordinate units requires a continuing effort to assure quality and service standards, limited to matters of timeliness, form, procedure, accuracy, and quantity. As previously mentioned under Factor 5, the appellant directly supervises three GS-7 Supervisory Visual Information Assistants, and indirectly supervises four full time permanent GS-5 Visitor Information Assistants, 17 full time term GS-5 Visitor Information Assistants, twelve volunteers, and three senior citizen special appointees. We have determined that in total the work of those positions directly reporting to the appellant's subordinate supervisors is comparable to the GS-5 level.

This position does not meet Factor Level 6-3 a or b (page 31) where supervision requires coordination, integration, or consolidation of administrative, technical, or complex technician or

other support work comparable to GS-9 or 10, or work at the GS-7 or 8 level where the supervisor has full and final technical authority over the work; or as with 6-3b the position directs subordinate supervisors over positions in grades GS-7 or 8 or the equivalent which requires consolidation or coordination within or among subordinate units or with outside units.

Special Situations

As explained in the GSSG, if the level selected is either 6-1, 6-2, or 6-3, the Special Situations listed after the factor levels (pages 34-35) are to be considered. There are eight special situations. If the position meets three or more of the situations, then a single level is added to the level selected. The special situations and/or conditions are addressed below.

Variety of Work: This situation is to be credited when more than one kind of work, each kind representing a requirement for a distinctly different additional body of knowledge on the part of the supervisor, is present in the work of the unit. A “kind of work” usually will be the equivalent of a classification series. We find that there is only one kind of work performed in the appellant’s organization, thus there is no additional kind of work that would require him to possess knowledge of a distinctly different type of work in order to supervise the subordinate staff. Therefore, no credit is given for this situation.

Shift Operations: This situation can be credited when the position supervises an operation carried out on at least two fully staffed shifts. This is not the case in the appellant’s position, thus no credit is given for this situation.

Fluctuating Work Force or Constantly Changing Deadlines: This situation can be credited when the workforce supervised has large fluctuations in size and these fluctuations impose on the supervisor a substantially greater responsibility for training, adjusting assignments, or maintaining a flow of work while absorbing and releasing employees. Constantly Changing Deadlines can be credited when there are frequent, abrupt, and unexpected changes in work assignments, goals, and deadlines which require the supervisor to constantly adjust operations under the pressure of continuously changing and unpredictable conditions.

The appellant supervises 3 GS-7 Supervisory Visitor Information Assistants, and indirectly supervises 4 GS-5 Visitor Information Assistants, and 17 full time term GS-5 Visitor Information Assistants (1-4 year appointments),. These 24 employees make up the full time regular employee work force. There are also presently five volunteers who work one day a week, two volunteers who work two days a week, three seniors who work three days a week, four volunteers who work four days a week, and one volunteer who works five days a week. These employees equate to approximately 8 full time employee staff years. Although the size of the appellant’s work force may vary from the permanent work force of 24, to up to 32 (full time staff years) when volunteers and seniors are added depending upon the season, we do not view this change as a “large” fluctuation in size and so significant as to impose on the appellant a substantially greater

responsibility for training, adjusting assignments, or maintaining a smooth flow of work while absorbing and releasing employees. Therefore this situation is not credited.

Regarding Constantly Changing Deadlines, we found no evidence that the appellant is subject to frequent, abrupt, and unexpected changes in work assignments, goals, and deadlines. Although changes in work assignments may normally occur during the work year, they do not require the type of operational adjustment characterized by this situation and thus it is not credited.

Physical Dispersion: This situation is credited when a substantial portion of the workload for which the supervisor is responsible is regularly carried out at one or more locations which are physically removed from the main unit, under conditions which make day-to-day supervision difficult to administer. The appellant's work is carried out in three locations approximately fifty miles apart which can only be reached on rural roads, and which present difficult driving conditions during the winter months. Adding to the complexity, there are different work schedules to cover the centers seven days a week. The appellant makes weekly visits to all sites, however, he can never have all his staff together for meetings or training because a large number of staff are needed to perform the work at the centers on a daily basis. This element is credited.

Special Staffing Situations: This situation is credited when: (1) a substantial portion of the work force is regularly involved in special employment programs; or in similar situations which require involvement with employee representatives to resolve difficult or complex human resources management issues and problems; (2) requirements for counseling and motivational activities are regular and recurring; and (3) job assignments, work tasks, working conditions, and/or training must be tailored to fit the special circumstances. This position does not meet any of the three criteria and is not credited.

Impact of Specialized Programs: This situation is credited when supervisors are responsible for a significant technical or administrative workload in grades above the level of work credited in Factor 5, provided the grades of this work are not based upon independence of action, freedom from supervision, or personal impact on the job. There is no significant technical or administrative workload in grades above the GS-5. This element is not credited.

Changing Technology: This situation is credited when work processes and procedures vary constantly because of the impact of changing technology, creating a requirement for extensive training and guidance of subordinate staff. Like other components of the Forest Service, the appellant's organization has experienced some changes in technology as the agency updates its automated and information management processes, requiring some training of staff to accommodate new procedures. However, this has not caused constant variations in work processes and procedures, and has not resulted in extensive staff training and guidance. This element is not credited.

Special Hazard and Safety Conditions: This situation is credited when the supervisory position is regularly made more difficult by the need to make provision for significant unsafe or hazardous

conditions occurring during performance of the work of the organization. Every year from November to April, the Monument experiences severe adverse weather at two of the visitors centers located high in the mountains near [the mountain]. The centers experience heavy snows and frequent blizzard conditions. They have frequent high wind situations, sometimes exceeding 100 mph and often lasting for days at a time. They frequently have very poor visibility due to ground fog, low clouds or drifting snow. The appellant must consider the safety of his staff and visitors to the centers. He has had to close the centers for hours, days, weeks, or even months at a time. In such cases he must determine what to do with the staff, what provisions need to be made for closure and reopening of the effected centers, and what other existing or new conditions may apply which may adversely affect the centers. Two of the three visitor centers are located in remote areas, approximately one hour away from emergency response vehicles. The appellant is responsible for training on the handling of emergency situations until help can arrive. He has written emergency plans to cover any situations that may occur, and is continually adding and upgrading the manuals to meet the centers' specific needs. Since the [mountain] is still active and two of the centers are located on an earthquake fault zone, he has developed plans of operations in both cases. During the balance of the year, the areas experience high winds and deer, elk, and other wildlife on the roadways. Accidents on the roadways incur the same types of delays encountered with emergency situations. This element is credited.

The appellant's position meets two of the special situations. To be credited for an extra level, the position would have to meet three of the special conditions. Special situations cannot be credited.

The following chart illustrates our evaluation of the appellant's supervisory duties by application of the factors in the GSSG:

EVALUATION FACTORS	FACTOR LEVEL	POINTS
1. Program Scope and Effect	1-2	350
2. Organizational Setting	2-1	100
3. Supervisory and Managerial Authority Exercised	3-2c	450
4. Personal Contacts		
Nature of contacts	4A-2	50
Purpose of contacts	4B-2	75
5. Difficulty of Typical Work Directed	5-3	340
6. Other Conditions	6-2	575
Special Situations	N/A	N/A
TOTAL		1940
Point-to-Grade Conversion Chart (page 36) shows range 1855-2100 equates to GS-9		

Summary

By application of the grading criteria in the standard for the Park Ranger Series, GS-025, we have evaluated the appellant's nonsupervisory technical duties at the GS-9 level. In addition, by application of the grading factors of the GSSG we have evaluated the appellant's supervisory duties also at the GS-9 level. Therefore, this position is graded at the GS-9 level.

Decision

This position is properly classified as Supervisory Park Ranger, GS-025-9.