

## The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

TITLE: Principal Park Naturalist

GRADE: 24

DATE: 6/22/21

SERIES: Natural Science

CODE: 2317

EEO: Professional

FLSA: Exempt

### Class Definition:

Under direction, develops, evaluates and presents a wide variety of interpretive, recreational, and educational programs in natural and cultural history that involves specialized knowledge of natural, life, and physical sciences and covers large or extensive areas containing many different elements. Plans and carries out special projects or events involving considerable coordination of other entities within or outside of the Commission. Utilizes the full range of methods and techniques in the development of programs of large scope, typically covering many different aspects of a subject. Provides leadership to other staff in developing and presenting programs, and in planning and coordinating events and activities with other Commission units and staff, with other governmental entities, and with community organizations. Workers receive assignments on a project basis, often of several months' duration, and proceed independently to complete all aspects of the assignment. Work is reviewed by facility or program managers on the basis of technical adequacy and achievement of program objectives. Work, as individual contributor, affects the Commission's compliance with requirements and the effectiveness of the park naturalist programs. Applies considerable knowledge of, and skill in, natural, life, and physical science, environmental science, principles and practices of interpreting natural and cultural history to the public, effective instructional methods and techniques, natural resource management, outdoor and water safety, cultural history of area, specialized animal care and education standards. Independently performs various types of research and analyses to solve difficult, complex and challenging problems. Interacts with people inside and outside the organization to exchange information, coordinate, instruct, guide, advise and obtain agreement or compliance or achieve other desired actions. Performs other duties, as assigned.

Work is assigned in terms of functions, priorities, requirements of specific assignments, known or suspected problems. The incumbent independently plans and carries out the work in conformance with these parameters, established policies, procedures and accepted practices of the field of work, and resolves commonly encountered problems by selecting and applying, or adapting and adjusting, the applicable guides. The incumbent is to keep the supervisor informed and to seek assistance only for highly complex or sensitive matters. Work is expected to meet objectives highly effectively – the incumbent is held responsible for results; work is evaluated in terms of quality, quantity, timeliness, teamwork, customer service and such other factors as use of skill and ingenuity in overcoming technical and non-technical problems.

### Essential Job Functions (Estimated Percentages):

#### 1. Core Functions (±70%) – assigned functions vary by position

- Develops specialized programs, events, or activities relating to natural and cultural history that are characterized by in-depth scientific knowledge of a subject or area, covers a large or extensive area that contains many different elements, or involve considerable coordination of other entities within or outside of the Commission. Develops, presents, and evaluates interpretive, recreational, and educational programs in natural and cultural history to the public and to groups with specialized interests, often of a highly technical nature. Prepares presentation materials, aids, and guides for such presentations, and responds to questions from groups and explains natural processes involved.

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- Provides knowledge of an area or subject by conducting original research and field studies; serves as technical resource on a subject matter area within a facility and provides such technical leadership and program direction to environmental, nature, wildlife, and similar groups within the community. Provides such expertise to other governmental organizations as requested; researches subjects for programs, collecting information, artifacts, and other items for use in programs. Obtains information from conferences, schools, specialists, professional organizations, and other sources for use in the development of interpretive programs.
- Provides leadership to other staff in developing and presenting programs, and in planning and coordinating events and activities with other Commission units and staffs, with other governmental entities, and with community organizations. Acts as lead naturalist on projects requiring specialized knowledge of large scope, making assignments, and reviewing the work of other naturalist staff participating in such projects; trains and leads the work of naturalist staff, making assignments and reviewing work products. Instructs staff in procedures and technical aspects of the work; supervises volunteers, interns, and other part-time or occasional staff at a facility or in the field, providing formal assessments of their work as requested. Works with management team to develop goals and plans for programs.
- Confirms customer service is provided and guests' inquiries are responded to via email, phone and in person regarding matters of natural and cultural history as well as general nature center operations questions. Ensures that visitors are greeted courteously, concerns are addressed appropriately, and guests are directed to correct persons for matters of greater concern.
- Oversees the planning, development and maintenance of interpretive displays and exhibits; confirms the preservation of cultural history objects and artifacts. Ensures the maintenance of live animals for display, exhibit, and use in various interpretive programs by providing daily care including cleaning, food preparation, and routine medical care. Ensures adherence to local, state and federal animal welfare regulations and standards.
- Confirms the preparation of natural and cultural history interpretive materials including interpretive handouts, trail guides, maps, and program promotional materials.

### **2. Other (±30%)**

- Ensures facility operations are performed including opening and closing procedures, program participants are checked in, fees are collected and manages customer experiences; monitors building and grounds to ensure safety and security of facilities. Observes center cleanliness and makes changes as needed; responds to emergency situations and contacts police, fire or rescue personnel as appropriate.
- Ensures multimedia library is organized and maintained of naturalist research, program and interpretive materials; oversees collection, catalogs, and maintenance of natural artifacts such as insects, rocks, minerals, and skeletons for program and exhibit use.

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- Oversees research, planning, development and maintenance of outdoor natural history study areas, interpretive gardens, and trails; oversees conservation and resource management projects such as monitoring water quality, wetlands planting, and reforestation projects. Identifies and evaluates natural resources in parks (e.g., plants, wildlife, wetlands, and geological features).
- Monitors assigned parkland for encroachments such as unauthorized dumping, and illegal hunting and trapping; enforces Commission policies and rules as necessary and refers violations to appropriate Commission authorities.
- May design, write copy, edit and produce printed marketing materials, identifies target audiences, develops and manages social media content with website; may make appearances on television and radio. Develops activities, displays and participates in community outreach program and events.
- Completes and submits various reports including accident, injury, and equipment damage; collects attendance data. Completes all required forms; enters program information, processes program registrations, assists employees and customers with technical issues and collects fees using on-line registration system.
- Reads professional publications and attends conferences and training to identify trends in the field that would benefit the facility and programs and to maintain and enhance current knowledge of industry standards.

### Important Worker Characteristics:

- A. Considerable knowledge of, and skill in (1) natural, life, and physical sciences; (2) environmental science; (3) principles and practices of interpreting natural and cultural history to the public; (4) effective instructional methods and techniques; (5) natural resource management; (6) outdoor and water safety; (7) cultural history of area\*; (8) specialized animal care\*; (9) education standards and (10) Commission organization, policies, and procedures\*.

*\*Typically acquired or fully developed primarily after employment in this job class.*

- B. Knowledge of, and skill in assigning or reviewing tasks, setting the pace, and otherwise assisting the supervisor by leading a permanently formed work group or ability to rapidly acquire knowledge and skill set.
- C. Skill and ability to (1) provide expert knowledge of a subject matter or area in the development of interpretative programs; (2) provide technical resource and program leadership to environmental, nature, and wildlife groups within the community; (3) provide expertise in a subject matter or naturalist area to other governmental entities; (4) coordinate effectively with other entities, staffs, and units within the Commission and the community in planning and carrying out programs, events, and activities; (5) interpret technical natural and cultural history materials to patrons; (6) provide courteous service; (7) organize work efficiently; (8) develop program promotional advertising material; (9) lead staff; and (10) maintain operating knowledge with changing technologies; (11) and provide CPR and first aid.

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- D. Skill in problem solving to select, organize and logically process relevant information (verbal, numerical or abstract) to solve a problem.
- E. Skill in communication to understand verbal and written information (including facts, descriptions and ideas) and to express such information so that others will understand. Examples include writing clearly, effectively, and concisely; and planning, developing, leading, evaluating and presenting programs of large and extensive scope.
- F. Interpersonal skills to interact effectively with contacts in a businesslike, customer service-oriented manner; this includes skill in establishing and maintaining effective working relationships and working as a member of a team.
- G. Skill in operation of (1) audio-visual equipment; (2) field sampling equipment; (3) camera; (4) motorboat, canoe, kayak; and (5) computer software, web-based management tools. Drive a multi-passenger vehicle for camps and specialized programs, taking animals to the veterinarian, picking up supplies, and attending meetings and other needs.

### Minimum Qualifications (MQs):

- 1. Bachelor's Degree in Natural Science, Life Science, Physical Science, or any related field.
- 2. Two (2) years of progressively responsible park naturalist experience.
- 3. An equivalent combination of education and experience may be substituted, which together total six (6) years.
- 4. Valid driver's license in accordance with both State and Commission rules and regulations. Driver's license must be unencumbered by restrictions, revocations, suspensions, or points that could limit the employee's ability to drive Commission vehicles or perform driving duties required by the position of assignment.
- 5. Pass Commission medical examination.

### Working Conditions:

Works in indoor or outdoor settings. Works scheduled weekends, evenings, and holidays. Exposed to inclement weather and outdoor hazards. Incumbents in this class must frequently: remain in a stationary position, move about and position self to complete work, communicate and exchange information with internal staff and the public, distinguish between colors and lift objects and equipment weighting up to 49 pounds. Drives to attend various meetings and educational programs.