

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Title: Conservation Technician

Class Code: 81142
Pay Grade: GF

A. Purpose:

Implements a variety of wildlife resources management projects such as planting crops and trees, taking care of fish from spawning through stocking, preventing wildlife depredation, harvesting timber, and spraying weeds to comply with management plans designed to maintain and enhance wildlife habitat areas owned, leased, and managed by the department. Maintains park facilities, grounds, campgrounds, roads and trails, and vehicles and equipment; and prepares and maintains records and reports of work accomplished to ensure the quality of the park infrastructure is sound, presentation of the park is accessible and inviting, and maximum customer service is provided.

B. Distinguishing Feature:

Conservation Technicians implement wildlife and land management projects as assigned; maintain park facilities, grounds, and equipment as assigned; and may act as a project leader over seasonal employees and trusties.

Conservation Foremen participate in management planning, prioritize annual projects, delegate projects to project leaders and function as their team leader, and monitor project completion.

C. Functions:

(These are examples only; any one position may not include all of the listed examples nor do the listed examples include all functions which may be found in positions of this class.)

1. Participates in habitat development on state-owned, -leased, and -managed land to provide feed for wildlife, enhance habitat, and reduce or prevent wildlife depredation on privately owned land.
 - a. Prepares plots for planting; and plants, maintains, and harvests crops.
 - b. Participates in site selection, prepares tree-planting sites, plants trees, and provides follow up care such as trimming, removing weeds, and replanting.
 - c. Tracks known weed problem sites on habitat areas, sprays noxious weeds to prevent them from spreading, and completes field reports.
 - d. Harvests timber to enhance wildlife forage and cover, and to provide building material for department needs.
 - e. Transports machinery to and from job sites, and troubleshoots and makes repairs in the field.
 - f. Trains seasonal crews and trusties in equipment operation and maintenance, and work methods and procedures.
2. Cares for fish from spawning through stocking to support propagation and distribution.
 - a. Sets nets to monitor fish for spawning, spawns ripe fish, and tempers and transports eggs.
 - b. Incubates eggs, checks daily for fungus and disease, treats and removes eggs as needed, and prepares eggs for transport to other locations.
 - c. Feeds fish; and cleans tanks, rearing units, raceways, and ponds.
 - d. Monitors, collects data, and records fish health, water quality, growth rates, and feed use.

- e. Collects fry, fingerlings, and adults for stocking.
 - f. Collects data by netting and electrofishing fish in lakes and streams; weighing, measuring, and aging fish; and keeping records.
 - g. Tags fish for tracking purposes.
 - h. Maintains water levels in tanks, ponds, and raceways; and monitors and ensures appropriate oxygen levels.
 - i. Performs laboratory activities such as preparing specimens and staining slides to assist with fish health inspections.
 - j. Stocks fish in designated locations statewide.
3. Maintains department facilities and grounds to keep them in the best possible condition for the safety and convenience of visitors and staff.
- a. Instructs and monitors cleaning crews, making sure they know how to use and handle chemicals and follow cleaning procedures; and performs follow-up inspections.
 - b. Performs preventive maintenance on buildings such as painting, repair and replacement of electrical switches and fixtures, replacing plumbing fixtures, and rough to finish carpentry.
 - c. Does concrete work by preparing sites, building forms, and mixing and finishing concrete.
 - d. Builds, repairs, and removes fences by marking boundaries, preparing areas for fencing, installing fences according to specifications, and posting and replacing signs.
 - e. Prepares facilities for winter by draining water and sewer lines, pouring anti-freeze in drain traps, and covering windows and vents; and reverses the process in the spring.
 - f. Maintains grounds, campgrounds, roads, beaches, and trails by operating specialized equipment and performing related maintenance procedures.
 - g. Prunes and trims trees and removes those that may present hazards.
 - h. Assists in laying out and building new trails by cutting trees, clearing rocks, adding surfacing such as rocks and chips, and putting up signs.
 - i. Participates in landscaping projects, e.g., seeding, tilling, leveling ground; applying fertilizer and herbicides; planting ornamental shrubbery and trees, etc.
4. Maintains and repairs vehicles and equipment to make sure they are operational, safe for the operator, and efficient to run.
- a. Performs regular preventive maintenance such as changing oil, rotating tires, lubrication, cleaning equipment, etc.
 - b. Troubleshoots equipment for major repairs and preventive maintenance during the off-season; makes repairs or schedules repairs locally.
 - c. Repairs broken machinery and fabricates parts using a variety of welders and welding materials.
 - d. Recommends replacement of equipment and assists in writing specifications.
 - e. Modifies and fabricates equipment to fit the needs of the division.
 - f. Installs and repairs radios, sirens, and other emergency equipment.
5. Performs operational and administrative support functions to assist department managers.
- a. Provides orientation, on-the-job training, and work direction to assigned seasonal staff and trustees.
 - b. Maintains required records and reports such as work progress reports for assigned projects, and vehicle use reports.
 - c. Assists in depredation management by hauling feed for wildlife, providing stack yard materials to landowners, building fences, installing scare devices, covering feed with plastic, designing and building traps, etc.

d. Inspects dams and writes comprehensive reports of condition and recommendations for repairs.

6. Performs other work as assigned.

D. Reporting Relationships:

Reports to a Regional Supervisor, a Wildlife Program Administrator, a District Park Supervisor, a Park Superintendent, a Physical Plant Manager, or a Regional Park Supervisor; does not supervise but provides work direction to assigned seasonal staff, trustees, and volunteers.

E. Challenges and Problems:

Challenged to make sure seasonal staff and trustees are adequately trained to safely operate required equipment and perform assigned tasks. This is difficult because training time is very limited, most of the people hired are unfamiliar with the work being done, and there is an element of risk in most of the work which makes training in safety practices essential. Further challenged to get assigned work done within appropriate time frames. This is challenging because of the diversity of work; the sizes of the geographical areas assigned; weather changes that interfere with work schedules; planting, spraying, and spawning times are short; and work in parks and recreation areas must be accomplished without interfering with public use of facilities.

Problems include dealing with turnover in crews, maintaining park facilities that are being used more extensively than ever, keeping numerous types and ages of equipment operational, adapting equipment to meet department needs, dealing with fluctuating priorities, expectations for short turn-around times on equipment repairs, handling chemicals, maintaining fish in a safe state during stocking procedures, resolving depredation complaints in poor weather conditions, resolving conflicts with landowners, and getting materials to job sites that are not easily accessible.

F. Decision-making Authority:

Decisions include whether seasonal employees and trustees are sufficiently trained to perform required work, and their daily work assignments; if weather and other significant conditions are right for the job at hand; extent and priority of daily facility maintenance and repairs; if equipment repairs can be made in the field; appropriate tractor speeds, implement settings, and calibrations to get proper field tillage and planting; whether conditions are right for planting trees; which chemicals and amounts to spray for each species of weed, and equipment needed for each spraying project; netting locations; whether eggs are water-hardened and ready to transport; whether fish are being under or over fed and how to adjust; whether fish have enough water and the water clarity and oxygen levels are acceptable; whether fish are in acceptable condition during transportation; whether water temperatures at fish stocking sites are acceptable; which trees to cut when thinning an area; where to install emergency equipment on vehicles; acceptable alternatives to fencing plans based on site conditions; getting on-site access to depredation areas and most efficient procedures to alleviate the problems; supplies and materials for projects; the content of daily records and reports; and recommendations for seasonal hires, additional developments, project cost estimates, and budget needs.

Decisions referred include final decisions on hires; project assignments and priorities; allocation of equipment to projects; repair procedures for breakdowns that cannot be repaired in the field; equipment repairs over an established dollar amount; equipment purchases; the rotation of crops to be planted in each location; selection of sites for shelter belts; site preparation and tree-

planting plans; tree purchases; types and amounts of chemical purchases; priority and order of habitat areas to spray; schedules for spawning and amounts of eggs needed; fish survey data to be collected; fish health issues; fish stocking times and locations; which timber areas to cut; where to make trails and roads in timber harvest areas; amount of saw logs and posts needed; priority of responses to depredation complaints; fencing plans and priorities; budgeted amounts for supplies and materials; and the format, coding, and deadlines for reports.

G. Contact with Others:

Daily contact with seasonal crew members and trustees to assign work, provide instructions, and coordinate activities; with the public to provide information about available services and opportunities, and to answer their questions about department procedures, programs, and facilities; and with other staff in the department to obtain specific information and direction about projects in their areas; weekly contact with landowners regarding fences, weed-spraying efforts, or depredation problems; and with vendors to purchase repair parts and maintenance supplies, and to request and schedule services on equipment; monthly contact with Fleet and Travel Management regarding repairs or service authorization on their vehicles; frequent contact with fish hatcheries to coordinate projects and exchange information; and annual contact with other departments to attend required classes for certification.

H. Working Conditions:

Works outdoors in all weather conditions; on a wide variety of terrain and water; operates a diversity of machinery, boats, equipment, and tools; handles hazardous chemicals; performs hard physical labor; repairs and maintains equipment and is required to lift heavy objects, sometimes in awkward positions, and work in confining spaces around wiring and power takeoffs; works with welders and welding materials; is exposed to fumes from exhausts, paints, chemicals, and petroleum products; fells hazardous trees; is exposed to smoke and fire while working on controlled burns; and may be exposed to bacteria and unpleasant conditions while maintaining department facilities and disposing of diseased or dead wildlife.

I. Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

- diagnostic and repair methods for a wide variety of vehicles and equipment;
- safe-operating guidelines for equipment;
- noxious weeds;
- chemicals for spraying weeds, methods and rates of application, safe use and handling practices, and spraying equipment;
- farming and harvesting practices;
- seed, fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides;
- farm tractors and implements and their functions;
- janitorial and sanitation procedures, chemicals, materials, and supplies;
- welding;
- timber harvesting equipment;
- fence-building;
- landscaping;
- carpentry, plumbing, painting, and electrical repair;
- record keeping and report writing;
- practices of human resources management sufficient to provide daily training and work direction to temporary employees and answer their questions.

Ability to:

- provide on-the-job training to assigned employees;
- assign tasks to others based on evaluation of their capabilities;
- organize and complete assigned projects;
- diagnose and repair vehicles and equipment;
- operate a variety of farm tractors and implements;
- use a variety of hand and power tools;
- weld;
- drive trucks;
- operate boats;
- identify tree and weed species by sight;
- handle and transport chemicals safely;
- recognize and spawn ripe fish;
- understand and follow instructions, and compose required reports;
- communicate sufficiently to convey instructions and information about assigned work.

J. Licenses and Certificates:

Valid driver's license; a commercial driver's license (CDL); certification as a chemical applicator.