

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Title: Service Forester

Class Code: 90132
Pay Grade: GH

A. Purpose:

Implements, coordinates, and administers forestry activities and programs with individual landowners, city or county governments or agencies, and conservation districts; provides technical assistance; writes forestry resource management plans; and provides educational information to ensure effective conservation practices related to trees and forests and the protection of the state's resources.

B. Distinguishing Feature:

Service Foresters are professional foresters and administer, oversee, and implement state forestry and resource conservation activities with individual landowners, city and county governments and agencies, and conservation districts to ensure the enhancement of forestry related resources.

Staff Foresters maintain statewide staff level responsibility for forestry programs and projects providing technical assistance to Service Foresters, administration, and other state and federal agencies on forestry related programs for the state.

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. Provides technical and field assistance in forestry management and stewardship plans, practices, and programs to facilitate conservation of existing resources and ensure sound forestry practices.
 - a. Designs, determines, and recommends the best site locations of field windbreaks for reducing soil erosion; shelterbelts for protection of feedlots, calving areas, buildings, and farm sites; wildlife plantings for habitat enhancement; and living snow fences to stop drifting snow on roadways.
 - b. Assists landowners and communities with understanding local, state, and federal programs and grants that provide them with financial assistance for tree planting.
 - c. Assists in the completion of eligibility forms, applications, and assorted forms; checks area cultural resources; writes management/stewardship plans; makes maps; oversees contract completion; checks billing statements; and spot checks completed projects.
 - d. Provides landowners with advice on tree pruning, mulching, watering, species identification, and species selection questions in relation to the landowner's goals.
 - e. Provides assistance to the American Forest Foundation's Tree Farm Program by inspecting, certifying, and decertifying windbreak tree farms based upon standards established by the American Tree Farm System (ATFS) and encourages membership in ATFS.
2. Plans and implements forest management and stewardship projects and plans to ensure adherence to required methods, procedures, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
 - a. Prepares individual plans for landowners identifying landowner objectives.

- i. Surveys properties for existing vegetation, soils, topography, watersheds, accessibility, and fire risk; roads, structures, fences, wells, and power lines; wildlife and threatened or endangered species; cultural resources; recreation and aesthetics; land use history; and forest insects and disease.
 - ii. Determines and describes resource values.
 - b. Recommends management practices taking into account state and federal laws.
 - c. Assists private landowners with non-commercial thinning of forestland by surveying the property to determine suitable areas for thinning, identifying any available cost-share programs or grants that may assist the landowner, ensuring contractors follow their project contract, and performing spot checks on completed projects.
 - d. Provides timber sale advice to private landowners, corporations, and state agencies when necessary.
 - e. Assists, when requested, with post fire rehabilitation by serving on Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation and Recovery Assistance Teams, offers management and rehabilitation advice to landowners, directs and assists with fire rehabilitation efforts, and implements related grants.
- 3. Provides technical assistance to city governments, city tree boards, communities, tribal governments, and other groups on urban and community forestry issues.
 - a. Certifies and re-certifies Tree City (TC) USA communities, presents awards, and encourages communities to participate in the program.
 - b. Works with city governments, city tree boards, communities, tribal governments, and agencies in establishing tree ordinances; develops community forestry plans; develops street tree inventories; provides information on urban forestry grants; and provides assistance in times of disaster through mitigation, planning, rehabilitation, and recovery.
 - c. Conducts tree insect and disease surveys, participates in tree care workshops and Arbor Day presentations, conducts hazard tree evaluations, and provides assistance with community beautification programs.
 - d. Works with urban homeowners to determine the best species of trees and shrubs to plant in their area, provides advice on maintenance and pruning of trees and shrubs, and conducts hazard tree evaluations.
 - e. Applies Firewise techniques in communities and urban areas to plan fire breaks, and makes survivable space recommendations, fire-safe plant selection, and fire-safe building material selection.
- 4. Maintains Forest Health programs and activities in the field to identify, offer treatments, and/or respond to instances of insects and diseases affecting trees.
 - a. Responds to requests for information on insects and diseases affecting trees, may do on-site visits to examine trees.
 - b. Reviews information on registered pesticides that can be used on affected trees.
 - c. Works with federal agencies and/or conducts surveys on and collects insect and disease samples for testing.
 - d. Provides area agencies and individuals with information concerning local outbreaks of tree insects, tree diseases, and invasive species.
- 5. Performs other work as assigned.

D. Reporting Relationships:

The position reports to an Agriculture Program Administrator and/or may receive work direction from a Staff Forester. This position does not supervise but may provide work direction to seasonal, temporary, or contract employees.

E. Challenges and Problems:

Providing effective services in a timely manner is very challenging. This is challenging because of the need for establishing and maintaining priorities when dealing with major responsibilities and client demand, scheduling months in advance, staying current with rapidly changing technology, and providing quality services to all with many requests for assistance.

Problems include working with a diverse group of agencies and individuals with varying opinions and agendas; helping others to understand state and federal cost share programs, grants, and the procedures for contracts, forms, the application process, and required documentation; correctly identifying an insect, disease, or invasive species and the appropriate control measures; possible involvement in litigation; scheduling forest stewardship or management plan requests and responding to those requests in a timely manner; procuring cost-shares through the application process for landowners; finding contractors for projects; finding markets for the sale of raw forest materials; being involved in litigation; working with homeowners to make their homes more fire safe; convincing a community to become part of the Tree City USA Program; correctly identifying an insect, disease, or invasive species and the appropriate control measures; identifying hazardous trees in communities; and working with landowners on the cost benefit of herbicide and pesticide application and application rates.

F. Decision-making Authority:

Decisions made include local work schedules and priorities based on Division goals and interests; input to provide when reviewing technical plans developed by staff on cost-share programs and grants; identification of proper and ecologically sound control measures for diseases, insects, or invasive species; correct management practices that are sustainable and meet landowner's property goals; who is qualified for the cost-share program; how much cost-share a landowner should apply for; specific contract measures for landowners and when those requirements have been met; tree species selection and viability; how to assist communities with management plans; whether a tree is a hazard or not; proper control of tree problems be it chemical, cultural, or no control; and presentation topics for the public.

Decisions referred include division wide priority assignments; clarification of department policy; policy decisions related to political, sensitive, or legal issues: program guidelines; extensions of contract deadlines; and grant approvals and certification.

G. Contact with Others:

Daily contact with landowners to provide technical assistance; daily contact with SD Wildland Fire Suppression on cost-share programs and landowner requests; weekly and monthly contact with county conservation districts and administrators to give and receive information; weekly and monthly contact with other state and federal agencies to give and receive information and advice; semi-annual contact with various organizations to attend meetings and exchange information; and annual contact with schools and girl and boy scouts to give presentations.

H. Working Conditions:

The incumbent works in an office, alone outdoors with varying environmental and weather related conditions, and in remote locations; may be exposed to poisonous plants, disease transmitting insects, poisonous snakes, or other wild animals; and are required to traverse steep and uneven terrain.

I. Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

- dendrology, arboriculture; biology; biometrics, and botany;
- forest ecology, entomology, mensuration, operations, and pathology;
- geographic information systems (GIS);
- horticulture, hydrology, plant physiology, and silviculture;
- range and timber management;
- state and federal laws regulating the use of pesticides.

Ability to:

- use forestry tools for measuring purposes;
- conduct literature and technical reference searches;
- conduct soil survey research;
- use and interpret topographic maps;
- use Microsoft Office products to include Word, Outlook, Access, and Power Point;
- digital graphic software, mapping programs, and GPS information uploading and down loading;
- create professional and technical reports that can be understood by both professional and lay persons;
- deal tactfully with others;
- communicate effectively;
- maintain a South Dakota pesticide license.