

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Title: Bison Herd Manager

Class Code: 90577

Pay Grade: GI

A. Purpose:

Manages the bison in Custer State Park by monitoring and maintaining their health and nutritional needs, collecting and recording genetic and performance data; and assisting in the selection of stock for herd replacement, sale, and removal to ensure the integrity of the herd in a natural state, and achieve maximum benefit from the herd as a revenue resource.

B. Distinguishing Feature:

Bison Herd Managers are responsible for the daily care and management of the bison herd and participate in long- and short-term planning for the resource.

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. Develops and implements health management plans and procedures to ensure consistent health of the herd.
 - a. Visually checks the herd via horseback, all-terrain vehicles, and pickups to monitor their general condition, and look for external parasites and injuries.
 - b. Collects fecal samples to determine whether internal parasites are present.
 - c. Applies appropriate treatment for identified parasites.
 - d. Participates in determining a vaccination schedule for the herd, and amounts of vaccines and medications required.
 - e. Develops medicated mineral combinations to address specific health problems.
 - f. Monitors the herd for problems during calving time, and collects dead calves for postmortem examination.
2. Manages the production of feed and feed supplements to meet the health and nutritional needs of the herd as economically as possible.
 - a. Formulates mineral and vitamin combinations to enhance conception rates and ensure a healthy gestation.
 - b. Negotiates with feed company representatives to produce feed supplements.
 - c. Formulates feed rations for weaned calves, and monitors their health and condition during confinement.
 - d. Collects soil samples from hay ground to determine fertilizer needs and fertilizes accordingly to maximize hay production and increase protein content in the hay.
 - e. Plans and coordinates hay harvest activities by determining schedules, directing daily work activities, and maintaining equipment in working condition.
 - f. Negotiates haying contracts with private landowners; and coordinates hay purchases from other parks and recreation areas in the department.
 - g. Participates in budget planning discussions for feed and supplements.
3. Develops and maintains database records of genetic and performance data to enable effective selection of breeding stock that meets the division's goals for herd bull selection, and to provide supporting data for sale stock.
 - a. Records ten lanes of blood-type information.

- b. Records initial weights of calves at weaning time, and weight gains at regular intervals.
 - c. Records fertility test results and scrotal data.
 - d. Creates graphs and reports showing genetic and performance data for sale bulls.
 - e. Prepares reports from statistics for use in the planning process.
4. Coordinates a variety of activities that relate to managing the herd in order to control herd size and movement, and marketing herd surplus.
 - a. Selects replacement herd bulls and breeding bulls for sale.
 - b. Markets sale stock by meeting with buyers to provide information and assistance.
 - c. Supervises handling and care of sale animals while they are confined.
 - d. Prepares the video for the auction at the Denver Stock Show.
 - e. Selects a pen of calves to show at the Black Hills Stock Show.
 - f. Gathers the herd into a holding pasture in preparation for the roundup.
 - g. Participates in selecting working riders for the roundup and assists with a safety briefing.
 - h. Coordinates the trophy bull hunt and guides hunters.
 5. Coordinates maintenance and upkeep of the corral complex and division fences to make as safe a working environment as possible for employees and animals, and an attractive viewing area for the public.
 6. Performs other work as assigned.

D. Reporting Relationships:

Reports to a Division Staff Specialist. Does not supervise.

E. Challenges and Problems:

Challenged to provide nutritional and health management to a herd of wild animals without altering their natural tendencies. This is challenging because it requires knowledge of a broad array of components that must be considered first separately and then together, e.g., the animal, animal nutrition, feed and feed supplements and their impact on the animal; vaccines and other medications and their impact on the animal; and procedures to apply management without interfering with the herd's natural state. Further challenged to compile genetic data, which is difficult because of the large numbers of animals involved, the complexity of blood-typing markers, and the time it takes to computerize the data.

Problems include monitoring the herd for sickness and parasites as they move through the park, determining the mineral mixture that best meets the needs of the animals, keeping mineral available throughout the park, coordinating hay harvest around work schedules and weather conditions, coordinating corral and fence repairs with limited crew availability, scheduling work time over seven days a week during weaning time while still accomplishing other tasks, and guiding trophy hunters to acceptable specimens in accessible areas.

F. Decision-making Authority:

Decisions include determination of parasites and application of medication; combinations of feed and supplements that meet the nutritional needs of the animals at all stages of life; amounts of feed and supplements required; delivery dates of bulk feed; which hay ground to collect soil samples from in order to determine fertilizer needs; amounts of fertilizer needed to increase hay production and protein, amounts to be purchased, and the application rate; when to harvest hay; which working riders to select for the roundup; the content of the auction video; choice of show calves; trophy bull selection; corral and fencing repairs and enhancements; format and content

of reports of genetic and performance data; recommendations for replacement and sale stock, and culls; and recommendations for budget amounts for vaccine, medical supplies, fencing supplies, and haying equipment.

Decisions referred include final approval of budget recommendations; feed orders; sale and replacement stock; culls; parasite control efforts; and major modifications to corrals and fences.

G. Contact with Others:

Frequent contact with veterinarians regarding herd health; with potential buyers to participate in marketing efforts; with feed companies to discuss feed production and delivery; with Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) regarding soil sample analyses; with landowners to negotiate haying contracts; and with other parks and recreation areas regarding hay purchases.

H. Working Conditions:

Works continuously around a herd of, and with individual, volatile, large, wild animals; is exposed to parasites and disease; handles hazardous materials such as vaccines, pesticides, and fertilizers; operates a variety of farm equipment; lifts heavy items routinely; rides horses and drives all terrain vehicles over rough terrain; and walks outdoors in all weather conditions and over rough terrain.

I. Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

- animal science;
- bison husbandry;
- forage crops, their harvesting times and nutritional values;
- farm equipment and its operation and maintenance;
- big game hunting;
- the basic principles and terminology of computers.

Ability to:

- stay calm in dangerous situations;
- administer vaccinations and oral medications to large animals;
- confine and handle large animals;
- ride a horse;
- operate and maintain farm equipment;
- use a computer;
- communicate information clearly and concisely.