Master Record Number: FS3418

Title/Pay Plan/Series/Grade:  Biological Science Technician (Soils), GS-0404-05

FLSA Code: Non-Exempt

INTRODUCTION

This position is located on a Forest Service unit and is assigned a variety of moderately complex and recurring technical duties, individually or as a crew member or leader, in support of soil resources.

MAJOR DUTIES

Performs a variety of routine and moderately complex tasks involving techniques and practices relating to the soil resource. Assignments support field projects and program planning activities.

Evaluates soil physical and chemical conditions in the field based on established protocols. Conducts routine laboratory procedures in the processing of soil samples. Organizes and tracks field data and equipment. Drafts data summaries, and ensures quality control of entered data. Provides leadership to subordinate crew members and may assist with development of soil survey mapping.

Assists in layout of field experiments, pilot projects, and specific soils projects. Assists in determining validity of survey or evaluation techniques. Suggests improvements of methods and techniques.

Is fully responsible for compliance with safety rules and regulations.

FACTOR STATEMENTS

Factor 1. Knowledge Required by the Position Factor Level 1-4  550 Points

Practical knowledge of the basic principles of soil resources to assess readings and measurements taken, tests executed, observations made, work completed, and samples collected in order to understand and relate the significance of the results to the soil resource program objectives.

Knowledge of applicable processes, methods, and techniques associated with soil resources work in order to select from available alternatives and to adapt them to meet specific situations without seriously affecting the validity and reliability of collected data.

Knowledge and skill to use a variety of field instruments and equipment to collect soil resource data and information that can be used for further analysis.
Skill in oral and written communications and math, to analyze field data and prepare reports and records.

**Factor 2. Supervisory Controls**

Factor Level 2-2 125 Points

Supervisor assigns projects and provides general instructions on methods and procedures to be followed. Routine work is performed without specific instructions as to work methods.

Incumbent uses initiative in independently carrying out recurring assignments. Detailed instructions are provided for new assignments. Technical or controversial problems are referred to the supervisor.

Completed work is reviewed for technical adequacy, adherence to instructions, and overall quality of work products. Complex assignments may be reviewed in process.

**Factor 3. Guidelines**

Factor Level 3-2 125 Points

Guidelines include manuals, policies and practices, oral and written instructions and guides, and standard operating procedures. Guides may range from complex, standardized, codified regulations to maps, blueprints, oral instructions, equipment or instrument manuals, or standard scientific or technical texts.

Incumbent selects methodology from available guides, and uses judgment in applying them to field conditions. Guidelines contain criteria to resolve problems, however the applicability may not be readily apparent. The incumbent must recognize situations not covered by guides and bring them to the attention of the supervisor.

**Factor 4. Complexity**

Factor Level 4-2 75 Points

The work consists of a variety of tasks in the assigned functional area, including day-to-day planning, field work, and data review. Projects vary with such things as habitat types, visibility of areas, as well as available information relevant to specific projects and objectives of projects.

Assignments are generally in areas where incumbent is familiar with basic procedures and techniques.

Incumbent plans activities to accomplish daily tasks. Incumbent is not involved in setting new standards or precedents.

**Factor 5. Scope and Effect**

Factor Level 5-2 75 Points

The work involves applying techniques and carrying out procedures in conformance with established biological and soils guidelines.

The completed work has an effect upon the accuracy, reliability, and effectiveness of various projects underway.
Factor 6. Personal Contacts  

Level/Points (See Factor 7)

Personal contacts are with employees in the immediate organization, forest users, or cooperators in field assignments. Contacts are usually established on a routine basis, though the incumbent’s authority may not be initially clear to the person contacted.

Factor 7. Purpose of Contacts  

Factor Level 6/7-2a  45 Points

Contacts are for the purpose of obtaining, clarifying, or exchanging information and receiving instructions regarding work assignments.

Factor 8. Physical Demands  

Factor Level 8-2  20 Points

The work requires moderate to strenuous physical exertion such as long periods of standing, walking over rough, uneven, or rocky surfaces, recurring bending, or similar efforts.

Factor 9. Work Environment  

Factor Level 9-2  20 Points

Work is performed in a forest environment where terrain may be uneven, rocky, or covered with thick vegetation, and where there is exposure to extremes of weather and temperature. Protective clothing and gear may be required.

Total Points:  1035 Points
Point Range:  855 – 1100 = GS-05

References Used:

Position Classification Flysheet for Biological Science Technician, GS-0404, dated December 1991; Grade Level Guide for Aid and Technical Work in the Biological Sciences Series, GS-0400, dated December 1991

Source Document:

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Name of Classification Delegate: Joseph Farris
Date Classified: 8/01/2013