

STATE OF WISCONSIN  
CLASSIFICATION SPECIFICATION

NATURAL RESOURCES RESEARCH SCIENTIST  
CLASSIFICATION SERIES

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of This Classification Specification

This classification specification is the basic authority under ER 2.04, Wis. Adm. Code for making classification decisions relative to present and future professional social, biological, and environmental science research positions located within the Department of Natural Resources. Positions allocated to this series function as natural resources research scientists. This classification specification will not specifically identify every eventuality or combination of duties and responsibilities of positions that currently exist, or those that result from changing program emphasis in the future. Rather, it is designed to serve as a framework for classification decision-making in this occupational area.

Classification decisions must be based on the “best fit” of the duties within the existing classification structure. The “best fit” is determined by the majority (i.e., more than 50%) of the work assigned to and performed by the position when compared to the class concepts and definitions of this specification or through other methods of position analysis. Position analysis defines the nature and character of the work through the use of any or all of the following: definition statements; listing of areas of specialization; representative examples of work performed; allocation patterns of representative positions; job evaluation guide charts, standards or factors; statements of inclusion and exclusion; licensure or certification requirements; and other such information necessary to facilitate the assignment of positions to the appropriate classification.

B. Inclusions

This series encompasses professional social, biological, and environmental science research positions in the central, regional, or field offices of the Department of Natural Resources. Positions are involved for a majority of the time in formal scientific research activities for one or more department-wide programs, providing science consultation services and administrative support to other bureaus, coordinating various facets of professional scientific research.

A position may be classified as a Natural Resources Research Scientist if the following criteria are satisfied: (1) the position must predominantly participate in systematic investigation of natural resource theory, experimentation, modeling, or simulation studies; (2) the position must apply scientific methodologies, including problem exploration and definitions, planning, step sequence, experimental design, or execution of experiments or social, biological, or environmental studies; and interpretation, documentation, or reporting of findings; (3) there is a critical requirement of creativity and judgment, the variation of which must significantly affect the end product; and/or (4) the position provides professional scientific support for research projects through expertise in such areas as information transfer, biometrics, program planning, and data management. Support positions are characterized by close collaboration with other research scientists, knowledge of and training in a specialized discipline(s) and thorough knowledge of research processes.

C. Exclusions

Excluded from this classification series are the following types of positions:

1. "Management" and "supervisor" positions as defined in s. 111.81(13) and (19), Wis. Stats., and as administered and interpreted by the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission.
2. All other positions which are more appropriately identified by other classification specifications.

D. Entrance Into and Progression Through This Series

Employees enter positions in this classification series by competition. Reclassification to the advanced level will be permitted only when it can be demonstrated the change in the duties and responsibilities justifying the class change are a logical and gradual outgrowth of the position's previous duties and responsibilities.

## II. DEFINITIONS

### **NATURAL RESOURCES RESEARCH SCIENTIST-SENIOR**

Natural Resources Research principles and practices must have been learned by the employee prior to entrance into this classification series. Positions at this classification level may participate in one or more of the following allocations: (1) conduct independent research on high-priority management problems with full responsibility for study design, data acquisition, statistical analysis, and report preparation with little or no specific direction or review; (2) coordinate multi-faceted and multi-disciplinary natural resource research projects which include the production of complex reports; (3) interact closely with scientists, research, faculty, post-doctoral and graduate students and department managers to analyze and interpret appropriate information sources in support of multi-disciplinary research projects, including the selective dissemination of information and sources; (4) provide independent experimental and monitoring design and/or statistical consulting with an increased emphasis on external bureau consultation and publications; or (5) coordinate the development of strategic and long-range research plans. Positions provide frequent consultation on management issues, help guide policy and procedure decision-making and/or make contributions to the scientific literature and public awareness (e.g. via popular articles or oral presentations).

Senior level Natural Resources Research Scientists assume a major component of inter-agency multidisciplinary research endeavors, and may provide expert testimony; serve as a scientific training educator; direct information transfer for the most complex and highly visible research studies; and guide the work of contractors and other natural resource staff via cross-discipline print and non-print materials, databases, inter- and intra-agency programs and professional organizations. They are expected to maintain contacts throughout other states and federal and international agencies; provide seminars and training in information sources for other scientists, managers, other agencies and other information professionals; publish papers in the professional literature; and provide leadership in professional organizations. Positions also provide short-term statistical consulting to internal and external customers, and may also use computer simulation techniques to handle nonstandard analyses and evaluations. Positions oversee the administration of lower-level research grants, assist in writing grant proposals, and locate sources of scientific research funding.

### **NATURAL RESOURCES RESEARCH SCIENTIST-ADVANCED**

In addition to the work described at the Senior level, positions allocated to the Advanced level function extremely independently, with their work subject to broad administrative review. Scientists at this level have extensive authority to deal with top officials both within and outside the department, especially regarding highly complex areas and sensitive issues. These advanced level positions: (1) function at the level of a Principal Investigator (PI) on a team responsible for the scientific conduct of several complex natural resources research management-level investigations and programs, collaborative inter-agency and multidisciplinary projects with other research staff, faculty members, post-doctoral and graduate students; or (2) provide

statistical consulting on a variety of complex experimental, methodological and analytical scientific issues faced by the department. These research problems may require the development, adaptation and evaluation of new methodological, analytical, or statistical techniques and/or provide consultation on a wide variety of complex research issues where the Scientist must design and direct the natural resources methodology and advanced statistical analyses using advanced software packages to produce or display advanced analytic statistics.

Natural Resources Research Scientists at this level organize research teams to solve complex ecosystem problems, coordinate and write research proposals for outside funding, and administer research grants and contracts. They design protocols for the collection and review of information, literature and/or records on their field of research, contribute to natural resource research program activities by serving as lead or first author of peer-reviewed manuscripts and departmental reports, prepare detailed scientific, natural resource reports for publication in peer-reviewed professional journals, and respond to non-routine requests for natural resource research requiring the use of professional judgment in the evaluation of inconclusive or incomplete data, as well as integrate information to evaluate and implement research results. Independently, or collectively with peers, they regularly provide consultation on high-priority management issues and objectives which result in improved decision-making on department natural resources policies and procedures. Scientists at this level also provide consultation to other state and federal agencies, universities, local non-profit natural resource agencies (e.g. U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, etc.), other state natural resource management agencies, universities, regional and local non-profit natural resource agencies (e.g. The Nature Conservancy, American Forest Federation, The River Alliance, Wisconsin Lakes, etc.), regional and local units of government, and other Departmental programs or area(s) of specialization, and serve as principal contact with regulatory agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in enlisting federal assistance with issues relating to natural resources research.

### **III. QUALIFICATIONS**

The qualifications required for these positions will be determined at the time of recruitment. Such determinations will be made based on an analysis of the goals and worker activities performed and by an identification of the education, training, work, or other life experience which would provide reasonable assurance that the knowledge and skills required upon appointment have been acquired.

### **IV. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

This classification series was created effective October 12, 1997, and announced in Bulletin CC/SC-74 to describe positions which perform research scientist work at the Departments of Natural Resources. The creation of this classification series resulted from the Governor's Human Resource Reform Commission recommendation to simplify the classification system. This action resulted in the abolishment of the Natural Resources Research Scientist classification series (class codes 56001 through 56005) and the Natural Resources Research Scientist Senior-Management and Advanced-Management classifications (class codes 56006 and 56007).

Effective June 30, 2013 and announced in Bulletin OSER-0327-MRS/SC, the Natural Resources Research Scientist level classification, which was not used for permanent positions, was abolished and the Natural Resources Research Scientist–Senior and –Advanced levels were modified as a result of the Natural Resources Research Scientist Personnel Management Survey to better describe the duties and responsibilities of the positions.