

U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness
Classification Appeals and ELSA Programs



San Francisco Oversight Division
120 Howard Street, Room 760
San Francisco, CA 94105

Classification Appeal Decision
Under Section 5112 of Title 5, United States Code

Appellant: [Appellant's name]

Agency classification: Forester
GS-460-9

Organization: [Appellant's organization]
Department of the Interior

OPM decision: Forester
GS-460-9

OPM decision number: C- 0460-09-01

Signed by Denis J. Whitebook
Denis J. Whitebook
Classification Appeals Officer

February 19, 1998
Date

As provided in section 511.612 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, this decision constitutes a certificate that is mandatory and binding on all administrative, certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting officials of the government. The agency is responsible for reviewing its classification decisions for identical, similar, or related positions to ensure consistency with this decision. There is no right of further appeal. This decision is subject to discretionary review only under conditions and time limits specified in the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards, appendix 4, section G (address provided in appendix 4, section H).

Decision sent to:

[Appellant's name and address]

[Appellant's servicing personnel office]

Director of Personnel
U.S. Department of Interior
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Introduction

On July 22, 1997, the San Francisco Oversight Division of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) received a classification appeal from [the appellant]. His position is currently classified as Forester, GS-460-9. However, he believes its classification should be Forester, GS-460-11. He works in [his organization], Department of the Interior, [in his city and state]. We have accepted and decided his appeal under section 5112 of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.).

General issues

The appellant makes various statements about his efforts to have his position description updated, and about his agency's evaluation of his position. He does not agree with his agency's evaluation of his position. In adjudicating this appeal, our main concern is to make our own independent decision on the proper classification of his position. By law, we must make that decision solely by comparing his current duties and responsibilities to OPM standards and guidelines (5 U.S.C. 5106, 5107, and 5112). Therefore, we have considered the appellant's statements only insofar as they are relevant to making that comparison.

The appellant believes that his official position description number [appellant's position description number] is not complete and accurate. This could affect our adjudication of his appeal only if it indicated that the material of record considered as a whole did not provide enough reliable information to allow us to make a sound classification decision. In this case, we find that the record does furnish enough such information. In reaching our decision, we have carefully reviewed all information furnished by the appellant, his supervisor, and his agency.

Position information

The appellant serves as a Forester at [his district]. The primary purpose of the appellant's work is to develop biologically and economically sound silvicultural prescriptions consistent with current policy direction. The prescriptions are prepared through on-the-ground inspection and other analysis. If needed, he coordinates with other resource specialists in developing prescriptions that address specific problems or circumstances in the area(s) assessed. He develops pre-project documents, collecting and summarizing data such as on a field exam form and for input into a computerized tracking system and for other resource specialists. The appellant presents the proposed prescription(s) to the [name of tribe] tribal council for its approval or input and may make adjustments, as appropriate. He assists in the implementation of silvicultural plans with staff to ensure the prescribed approach is followed. He keeps his supervisor informed on treatments to especially sensitive or controversial areas. He monitors implementation of the approved treatment and makes clarifications or offers as appropriate, so the intent of the prescription will be accurately reflected in on-the-ground application. If further changes in treatment are needed, he first obtains tribal council approval.

The material of record furnishes much more information about the appellant's duties and responsibilities and how they are performed.

Series, title, and standard determination

We find that the appellant's position is covered by the Forestry Series, GS-0460, is properly titled Forester, and is graded by Part I of the Forestry standard. Neither the agency nor the appellant disagrees.

Grade determination

Part I of the Forestry standard uses the Factor Evaluation System (FES), which employs nine factors. Under the FES, each factor level description in a standard or guide describes the minimum characteristics needed to receive credit for the described level. Therefore, if a position fails to meet the criteria in a factor level description in any significant aspect, it must be credited at a lower level. Conversely, the position may exceed those criteria in some aspects and still not be credited at a higher level.

In his appeal, the appellant has general agreement with his agency's evaluation of factors 2, 7, 8 and 9. We therefore discuss those factors very briefly, while discussing factors 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 more thoroughly. Our evaluation with respect to the nine FES factors follows.

Factor 1, Knowledge required by the position

This factor measures the nature and extent of information or facts required to do acceptable work and the nature and extent of skill necessary to apply this knowledge. To be used as a basis for selecting a level under this factor, knowledge must be required and applied.

The agency evaluated this factor at Level 1-6.

The criteria for Level 1-6, as described in the Forestry standard, require a professional knowledge of established methods and techniques of the science of forestry which would enable the forester to perform recurring assignments of moderate difficulty, i.e., the methods and techniques are well established, apply to most situations encountered, and do not require significant deviation from the established methods. The assignments are limited by such characteristics as: unusual or difficult problems are screened out or discussed with the supervisor before carrying out the assignment; the forest area affected is amenable to a variety of standard treatments and proven techniques; or the forest areas assigned are relatively noncontroversial in terms of past and future use, or resource depletion, protection, or rehabilitation problems.

Further, at this level, the work requires a general knowledge and understanding of agency and/or tribal policies, procedures and appropriate statutes affecting the use of forest resources sufficient to utilize such knowledge in the execution of forest resource programs. It requires a limited knowledge of related disciplines such as soil science and hydrology sufficient to utilize such knowledge in activities such as onsite inspection of timber sales for resource protection purposes or the identification of incipient erosion control or watershed problems.

The knowledge and skill required by the appellant's assigned duties and responsibilities best meet Level 1-6. As described at Level 1-6 the appellant's position requires knowledge and skill sufficient to perform recurring assignments of moderate difficulty. For example, the appellant is responsible for analyzing assigned forest areas, determining conditions and, if needed, preparing silviculture prescriptions for stands in the area, to include logging areas and methods. While areas and stands assessed may not all be identical and may have varying combinations of conditions, the examples of situations encountered do not show that they are so unique that they require *significant* deviation from established practices versus consideration and selection from different approaches or alternative actions in recommending treatment for conditions that have been previously encountered. Examples of actions taken or treatments recommended such as determining stand boundaries, location and use of timber roads, and harvest methods, and inspecting areas for following prescription and resource protection, such as for timber skidding practices and erosion control reflect knowledge requirements at this level.

We do note that the appellant's work exceeds Level 1-6 in some respects. For instance, his assignments are not screened to remove those that may become relatively more unusual or difficult, and in some instances there may be controversy in terms of past and future use, or resource depletion, protection, or rehabilitation.

The three illustrations provided at Level 1-6 further show the types of assignments envisioned at this level. While the appellant's assignments have some similarities to each of the illustrations, they are most like the second illustration, i.e., knowledge and skill sufficient to review elements commonly included in his prescriptions, such as recommending and reviewing implementation of skidding practices, road location and use, and protection of resources.

The knowledge required by the appellant's assignments does not meet Level 1-7. One of the criteria for meeting Level 1-7, as described in the Forestry standard, requires professional knowledge of forestry science applicable to a wide range of duties in an intensive forestry resource or subject matter program or program activity, and the skill to solve problems covering diverse forestry situations and assignments. The assignments require sound professional knowledges and skills sufficient to modify or adapt standard forestry techniques and procedures, and to assess, select, and make use of precedents in devising strategies and plans to overcome significant resource problems.

The appellant's assignments and responsibilities do not fully meet this first criterion for Level 1-7. The typical types of problems encountered by the appellant reflected in the information of record are not equivalent to diverse forestry situations and assignments that require the need to modify and adapt standard forestry techniques and procedures, *and* to assess, select, and make use of precedents in devising strategies and plans to overcome *significant* resource problems, as are envisioned in the standard. Assignments at this level would typically involve a range of situations, such as variations in climatic factors, soil types and conditions, terrain, and vegetation on varied forest units that require changing and modifying standard techniques, including the use of precedents, to develop plans or prescriptions to overcome *significant* resource problems, like extreme fire dangers, or severe or widespread attacks of pests, insects or diseases, or equivalent types of situations that pose major

dangers to continued use or existence of resources. The types of problems typically encountered by the appellant do involve making assessments of conditions, making decisions on methods to best accomplish various objectives for the assigned area, and developing prescriptions for stands in assigned projects. However, the examples of areas reviewed and problems encountered do not reflect the range envisioned at this level, and the recommended prescriptions do not reflect the need to address situations that require application of this level of knowledge to adapt or modify practices to deal with *significant* problems, as intended in the standard, versus consideration and selection of approaches for dealing with problems typically encountered by foresters. Information in the record from the appellant's supervisor reflects that modifications of conventional silviculture treatments typically used had already been done, and the appellant would be utilizing those existing modifications as possible silviculture treatments. The examples cited by the appellant, such as cable yarding versus tractor sledding on a slope, or clear cut with reserve versus clear cut, do not meet this criterion.

Also required at Level 1-7 is knowledge of the characteristics, conditions, and interrelationships of forest resources; and the knowledge independently to evaluate, project, and/or prepare studies and reports on the complementary or competitive impact of the development, modification, or change in the use or output of one resource on the other forest resources.

Information in the record does indicate that the appellant needs to consider the characteristics, conditions and interrelationships of the forest's resources in preparing prescriptions for stands. While he does not formally prepare studies or reports, the appellant must evaluate the impact of timber harvesting and the techniques used, as well as of other recommended actions, on future harvests and on other resources such as watershed, soil, and wildlife. However, he does this with the cooperation of other resource specialists, e.g, wildlife specialists.

Another criterion of Level 1-7 is a thorough knowledge of agency and/or tribal policies and procedures, and applicable statutes governing the use of forest resources, and familiarity with related disciplines such as entomology, hydrology, plant pathology, wildlife biology, and forest genetics sufficient to utilize such knowledge in the design and execution or oversight of forestry resource programs. The appellant states that he has a thorough knowledge of agency and tribal policies, as well as other applicable statutes and guidelines, and more than the general knowledge of related disciplines cited at Level 1-6. However, he is not required to use such knowledge in the design and execution, or oversight of forestry programs, as he is assigned various projects and conducts portions of the overall program within the district, and his supervisor is credited with responsibility for the program in the district. As noted above, a knowledge can only be credited if it is required and applied to the work assigned and performed, and he is not required to apply his level of knowledge in the design and execution or oversight of forestry resource programs.

Criteria for meeting Level 1-7 also require administrative and coordinative skills to (1) provide advisory, review, and training services to others engaged in the planning and management of Federal, State, or private forestry units, and/or (2) develop a variety of integrated annual work plans for complex projects which often extend over 3-6 years, including estimates of personnel, equipment, and materials, the detailed schedules necessary to carry out the plans, and the attendant skill to review and

critique the operational implementation of the plans; or intensive knowledge and competence in advanced techniques of a highly complex area of forest resource management or cooperative forestry sufficient to serve as a "troubleshooter," specialist, or coordinator.

The appellant's assignments and responsibilities do not meet this criterion. They do not involve advisory, review, and training to others engaged in the planning and management of Federal, State or private forestry units. Further, he is not involved in the types of integrated annual work plans for complex projects described at this level, or in serving as troubleshooter, specialist, or coordinator in the sense envisioned. The training cited in the record of technicians who may be working on his project areas or with contract workers in outlining boundaries of stand or marking trees, is not equivalent to this criterion.

The three illustrations provided for Level 1-7 give further information of what the standard envisions as meeting this criteria. The first two illustrations contemplate assignments that typically involve responsibilities to coordinate and/or develop and oversee a forest management program, i.e., timber or land management. As noted above, the appellant's supervisor is credited with program responsibilities for the district. The third illustration depicts an expert such as one providing *advanced* professional forestry advice, training, consulting and review services in a specialty field to other professionals or to State and private organizations. The appellant's duties and responsibilities do not include regular duties of serving as an expert providing such advanced professional advice in a specialty area, such as a consultant would.

In summary, while the appellant's work does exceed some aspects of Level 1-6, such as assignments not being screened, it does not require the application of the same level of knowledge or skill to accomplish the type of assignments intended at Level 1-7, and so does not fully meet the criteria. As noted above, when a position exceeds the criteria for one level, but does not fully meet the criteria of the next higher level, the lower level must be awarded.

This factor is evaluated at Level 1-6.

Factor 2, Supervisory controls

This factor covers the nature and extent of direct or indirect controls exercised by the supervisor, the employee's responsibility, and the review of completed work.

The agency evaluated this factor at Level 2-4. The appellant only has a minor disagreement with a portion of the agency evaluation.

The appellant's supervisory controls meet Level 2-4. Similar to this level, the appellant receives assigned projects with only overall objectives and resources outlined. As described at this level, he independently conducts an analysis, constructs an action plan (a prescription), selecting the techniques and methods to meet objectives. Like Level 2-4, the appellant is responsible for coordinating work and plans with other resource specialists and, in most cases, resolves problems that occur directly

with interested parties. The appellant presents his plans to the tribal council and may make adjustments to his plan, based upon their input. As further described at this level, the appellant keeps his supervisor apprised of the status of his work, but it is only closely reviewed at the time his performance is formally appraised.

While evaluated at Level 2-4, we need to note that *The Classifier's Handbook* has a table on page 16 that illustrates typical FES factor level patterns for professional positions. A review of the table shows that Level 2-3 is typically assigned with Level 1-6 at the GS-9 level. Level 2-4 is not assigned until Level 1-7 at the GS-11 level. However, as summarized above, this position is not typical in that the appellant has more freedom of action and a greater degree of independence from supervisory direction than is typical at Level 1-6.

Factor 3, Guidelines

This factor covers the nature of guidelines and the judgment necessary to apply them.

The agency evaluated this factor at Level 3-3.

At Level 3-3, the standard describes guidelines that include action plans for related programs or activities, manuals of standard procedures and practices, textbooks, research reports, and other literature. At this level, most assignments have aspects which require the forester to select, adapt, or interpret existing methods, practices, and instructions or to generalize from several guidelines and techniques in carrying out the activities, ensuring coordination with other resources, and in solving the more complex problems. Some assignments require frequent departures from standardized procedures in order to establish tentative direction for completion of the assignments. The employee determines when problems require additional guidance.

The appellant's guidelines best meet Level 3-3. Similar to Level 3-3, guidelines include silviculture guidelines, Federal and agency regulations, and tribal resolutions and goals. As described at this level, the appellant's assignments have aspects that require him to select or interpret existing methods, practices, and instructions or to generalize from several guidelines and techniques in carrying out assignments, such as in developing specific silvicultural recommendations for individual stands. Comparable to Level 3-3, he also uses established procedures, techniques and precedents in forest analysis and preparation of prescriptions so they meet agency requirements and tribal objectives and resolutions, but he can exercise judgment in selecting from alternative approaches to achieve objectives. Also covered at this level are some assignments that may require departures from standardized procedures to make recommendations to establish tentative direction of plans, such as presenting proposed prescriptions to the tribal council. In addition, this level covers the appellant's assertion that he has deviated from following past local practice of only recommending straight logging and instead has recommended other actions in his prescriptions, such as leaving reserves.

At Level 3-4, guidelines are often inadequate to deal with the more complex or unusual problems, or problems concerned with novel, undeveloped, or controversial aspects of forestry. The precedents

or guides may point toward conflicting decisions; recent court decisions may appear to require a technical decision at variance with existing guides; there may be relatively few precedents or guides which are pertinent to the specific problems, or proven methods of treating the problem under varying conditions are lacking or incomplete, e.g., where dwarf mistletoe is abundant, fire may encourage or discourage the continued presence of the pathogen, depending on other environmental factors. Also, to meet Level 3-4, the forester is required to deviate from, or extend traditional forestry methods and practices, or to develop essentially new or vastly modified techniques and methods for obtaining effective results.

The appellant's guidelines do not meet Level 3-4. The guidelines available for the appellant's use are generally adequate to address situations encountered. The examples of situations and problems the appellant has typically dealt with are not in the category of complex or unusual, or novel, undeveloped or controversial, as intended in the standard at this level, such that guidelines are often inadequate, i.e., few precedents or guides. While the appellant's guidelines may not specifically address in detail how to handle each individual circumstance in each stand being analyzed, the situations and concerns characteristically encountered usually involve decisions of selecting from possible combinations of alternative approaches, in some cases involving departure from established procedures and techniques, but do not reflect the type of problems where guidelines are often inadequate as envisioned at this level. The various examples of problems handled by the appellant, such as recommendations on type of regeneration treatment, or clear cut versus thinning, are the type of circumstances foresters would normally be expected to encounter. The examples of recommended actions do not reflect that the appellant is required to deviate from, or extend traditional forestry methods and practices, or to develop new or vastly modified techniques for obtaining effective results in the manner intended at this level for the types of problems envisioned. The fact that there may be several options in addressing a circumstance or problem, or that there may be gaps in silvicultural knowledge, such as in dealing with a specific species in a particular circumstance not having been fully documented, does not meet this level. The example of recommending cabling versus sledding of logs would not meet criteria at Level 3-4.

This factor is assigned Level 3-3.

Factor 4, Complexity

This factor covers the nature, number, variety, and intricacy of tasks, steps, processes, or methods in the work performed; the difficulty in identifying what needs to be done; and the difficulty and originality required to perform the work.

At Level 4-3, assignments consist of a variety of professional work operations in assigned activities such as (a) the inventory of a given resource and its current conditions, (b) the drafting of conventional, short-range plans or prescriptions of resource management or protection, and (c) the inspection of work on-the-ground for conformance to standards and instructions. This level of work is characterized by analyses and evaluations of environmental conditions, characteristics, and values, and the interrelationship of forest resources which may involve considerations such as (a) the need

to choose from among alternative locations, techniques, or solutions; or (b) coordination problems caused by interferences or conflicts with other resource uses or functions. The problems are similar to those previously encountered in the forest area, and the assignments are carried out without substantial adaptation or modification of precedents. At this level, the exercise of originality is less significant than the judgment required to apply a range of conventional approaches and solutions to precedent situations.

The appellant's work best meets Level 4-3. Comparable to this level, the appellant reviews an assigned forest area on a stand-by-stand basis through on-the-ground inspection and aerial photographs, determines conditions, identifies problems, and if needed prepares a silvicultural prescription (with input from other specialists) for improvement, and prepares logging plans or other appropriate action by considering and selecting from possible solutions or actions. As also similar to this level, he is involved with followup or inspection of ongoing work. As described at this level, the appellant's work is characterized by analyses and evaluations of environmental conditions and characteristics of the area reviewed, its relative values, and the interrelationship of forest resources, such as timber, watershed, and wildlife. His work may also be affected by persons or groups having particular interests in the uses of forest resources. While the appellant states that forest conditions change and that the problems he encounters are not similar to those previously encountered, the examples of problems typically encountered, such as the timing of treatment or alternatives in dealing with an overstocked stand along a road, do not reflect the need to substantially adapt or modify precedents versus consideration and selection of appropriate combination(s) of practices common to forestry.

At Level 4-4, foresters independently carry out a wide variety of assignments consisting of diverse and complex technical or administrative problems and considerations. They regularly encounter interdependent resource and socioeconomic problems requiring flexibility and judgment in approach to the problems and in the forestry practices applied, in order to obtain an optimum balance between available economic, staff, or natural resources and the demands of the various publics. These assignments typically involve land management problems requiring in-depth analysis and evaluation of alternatives due to such complicating factors as extensive programmed developmental activity and heavy resource use; environmental problems and conflicting requirements whose resolutions may have serious public or tribal impacts; or strong, conflicting public or tribal demands and pressures to redirect the land management strategies for the use, or the level of use, of different forest resources. These demands may result in appeals to higher level agency or tribal officials or formal legal action.

Further, at Level 4-4 the work requires the forester independently to identify the boundaries of the problems involved, the kinds of data needed to solve the problem, and the criteria and techniques to be applied in accomplishing the assignment. Typically, the work assignments require the forester to relate new work situations to precedent situations, extend or modify existing techniques, or develop compromises with standard forestry practice, to adequately solve the forestry problems. Occasionally, the assignments require substantial effort to overcome resistance to change when it is necessary to modify an accepted method or approach.

The appellant's work does not meet Level 4-4. His assignments do not typically involve land management problems requiring in-depth analysis and evaluation of alternatives due to such complicating factors as extensive programmed developmental activity and heavy resource use, such as when there is planned major development of resources for increased commercial purposes and already high use of existing recreational areas with rising demand; environmental problems and conflicting requirements whose resolutions may have serious public or tribal impacts, such as protection of endangered species like the spotted owl and preservation of tribal cultural areas, both coupled with extreme pressures for increased logging; or strong, organized conflicting public or tribal demands and pressures to redirect the land management strategies for the use, or the level of use, of different forest resources, such as from strong, well-developed commercial fishing, mining, and recreational business interests and wilderness preservation groups. Further, the work examples cited by the appellant did not reflect resultant appeals to higher agency or tribal officials or formal legal actions. In addition, the appellant's work does not typically require him to relate new work situations to precedents, extend or modify existing techniques, or develop compromises with standard forestry practices to solve problems to the extent envisioned at Level 4-4. While the appellant may need to consider various options, or in some cases, combinations of options, due to varying stand conditions and objectives, the examples he provides, such as whether or not to convert hardwood areas to conifers, or the extent and type of logging methods to recommend near streams do not meet Level 4-4.

This factor is evaluated at Level 4-3.

Factor 5, Scope and effect

This factor covers the relationship between the nature of the work and the effect of the work products or services.

At Level 5-3, the standard states that the purpose of the work is to investigate and analyze a variety of conventional resource problems and environmental conditions and to recommend and/or implement solutions to overcome them to meet resource management objectives. The work affects the efficient development, protection, and use of a particular resource, the public's impression of the adequacy of the management of the particular resource and the other resources it impacts upon, and the socio-economic welfare of dependent communities.

The appellant's work meets Level 5-3. As described at this level, the appellant has responsibility for forest analysis, development of a silviculture prescription for stands in the area analyzed, gathering and summarizing data, and presenting his plan(s) to the tribal council, and has involvement in implementation and inspection of ongoing work. Comparable to Level 5-3, his work affects the development and use of natural resources, such as timber, lands, and water, and the socio-economic welfare of the {name of tribe}.

While the appellant objects to his agency's use of terms such as "conventional" and "well-established" to his describe his work, these and similar terms are used in the Forestry standard to depict the range

of situations foresters are likely to confront and the practices that are likely to be used in resolving them. These terms are meant to differentiate from situations and problems that are unique, novel and not typically encountered by foresters, such as those especially problematic and not susceptible to resolution by general or past practice. These terms do recognize the variety of work and conditions in an area, and the need to consider and select appropriate practices and techniques applicable to problems usually encountered by foresters.

At Level 5-4, foresters develop essentially new or vastly improved techniques or solutions to specific problems in a resource or subject matter program or program area, and coordinate results with related resource activities. They furnish advisory, planning, or review services on specific problems, programs or functions. They are typically concerned with problems which occur at a number of locations within a broad geographic area, or affect the continued existence of a resource unique to a geographic area. The results of the work directly influence the effectiveness and acceptability of *agency* (Department of Interior) goals, programs and/or activities.

The appellant's work does not meet Level 5-4. The appellant's assignments do involve considering and selecting from among various possible alternatives, but have not typically involved development of new or vastly improved techniques or solutions. Examples of plans given, such as going beyond past local practice of logging to clear cutting with reserves, or cable yarding uphill versus tractor sledding of logs, do not meet this criterion. The appellant does not typically provide advisory, planning, or review services on specific problems, programs, or functions, as described at this level. Further, his assigned projects, which typically cover an average of 10,000 acres and are within [his district], are not equivalent to dealing with problems covering a number of locations within a *broad geographic area*, such as a State or States, as is envisioned at Level 5-4. Neither do the appellant's assignments characteristically involve the continued existence of a resource *unique* to a geographic area. The four major forest cover types of ponderosa pine, douglas fir, grand fir and subalpine pine do not meet this criterion. In addition, while his work influences district and/or [name of tribe] Agency goals, it does not directly influence the effectiveness and acceptability of the Department of Interior's goals, programs and/or activities, as described in the standard.

This factor is evaluated at Level 5-3.

Factor 6, Personal contacts

Factor 6 covers the people and conditions or settings under which contacts are made. It includes face-to-face contacts and telephone and radio dialogue with persons not in the supervisory chain. At Level 6-2 personal contacts are with employees in the agency, inside and outside the immediate organization, e.g., foresters from higher level organizational units, or occasionally, resource persons from State or local forestry units; and with the general public, or special users, e. g., livestock owners or timber operators. The contacts are usually established on a routine basis, but the forester's authority may not be initially clear to the person contacted.

The appellant's personal contacts are evaluated at Level 6-2. As described at that level, contacts are with employees in the [name of tribe] Agency, both within and outside the immediate organizational unit, and loggers. Occasionally, the appellant may have contact with the Forest Service (once a year), landowners, or with a university professor.

The appellant's personal contacts do not meet Level 6-3. At this level, contacts are *regular and recurring* with professional subject matter specialists in forestry and related disciplines, within the agency, in other Federal agencies, in universities, private foundations and professional societies, and with influential local community leaders, tribal governing bodies, or state officials, with newspaper, radio and television reporters, with private forest landowners, representatives of organized livestock and conservationist groups, and prospective and current permittees. In many cases the contacts may be on an ad hoc basis and the "role" of each party is established and developed during the course of the contact. While the appellant does have contacts with the [name of tribe] tribal council, his regular and recurring contacts are not as broad as described at this level.

This factor is evaluated at Level 6-2.

Factor 7, Purpose of contacts

Factor 7 covers the reasons for the personal contacts described in Factor 6.

At Level 7-2, contacts are to inspect work and monitor activities of special users; to discuss technical requirements of contracts in order to resolve problems concerning contract stipulations and to reach agreement concerning differences as to appropriate or allowable practices; to coordinate work with other foresters, technical resource specialists, engineers, etc.; and to promote utilization and conservation principles and activities.

Factor 7 is evaluated at Level 7-2. As is comparable to this level, the primary purpose of the appellant's contacts are to discuss technical requirements of prescriptions in order to resolve differences concerning recommended actions and to reach agreement concerning differences as to appropriate or allowable practices; to coordinate work with other foresters, technical resource specialists, etc.; to promote utilization and conservation principles and activities, such as to inspect work for adherence to prescriptions and agreed upon treatments; and to monitor activities, such as those of loggers, for compliance with harvesting requirements.

Factor 8, Physical demands

The physical demands on the appellant meet Level 8-2. As is typical at this level, the appellant's assignments require regular and recurring work in a forest area where there is considerable walking, bending, or climbing, often over rough, uneven surfaces or mountainous terrain.

Factor 9, Work environment

The appellant's work environment is best evaluated at Level 9-2. As is characteristic at this level, there is regular and recurring exposure to moderate risks and discomforts such as very low temperatures, adverse weather conditions, falling limbs or trees, and similar situations. Employees usually must wear protective equipment in the forest area.

Summary

In summary, we have evaluated the appellant's position as follows:

Factor	Level	Points
1. Knowledge required by the position	1-6	950
2. Supervisory controls	2-4	450
3. Guidelines	3-3	275
4. Complexity	4-3	150
5. Scope and effect	5-3	150
6. Personal contacts	6-2	25
7. Purpose of contacts	7-2	50
8. Physical demands	8-2	20
9. Work environment	9-2	<u>20</u>
Total Points:		2090

The appellant's position warrants 2090 total points. Therefore, in accordance with the grade conversion table in the standard, his position is properly graded at GS-9.

Decision

The appellant's position is properly classified as Forester, GS-460-9.