

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Title: Conservation Officer Specialist

Class Code: 90313

Pay Grade: GJ

A. Purpose:

Conducts investigations involving illegal commercialization of wildlife or develops law enforcement program guidelines and procedures by interpreting state laws, rules, and regulations; developing content areas and resources for assigned program activities; providing technical assistance to staff and program participants and monitoring approved grants and funding to ensure effective management of conservation law enforcement programs.

B. Distinguishing Feature:

Conservation Officer Specialists provide direction and technical assistance for statewide conservation law enforcement programs to staff, other law enforcement agencies, and the public.

Conservation Officers manage wildlife, fisheries, water, and land resources; enforce wildlife, criminal, and water laws; and implement department programs in an assigned district.

Conservation Officer Supervisors supervise Conservation Officers assigned to a geographical region.

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 law enforcement program guidelines and procedures to ensure programs function within parameters of department goals and objectives and applicable federal and state laws, rules, and regulations.
 - a. Interprets federal and state laws, rules, and regulations.
 - b. Develops and reviews standards to implement program objectives and administrative processes while balancing regional priorities with law enforcement program priorities.
 - c. Acts as primary liaison to various agencies and other staff involved with program services to facilitate cooperation in implementing services.
 - d. Develops regional and statewide initiatives.
 - e. Plans and implements program services and recommends performance goals.
 - f. Develops program budgets and allocations of available resources.
 - g. Promotes program service through public presentations and appearances, media opportunities, personal contact, and by serving on committees and advisory boards.

2. Conducts overt and covert investigations involving illegal commercialization of wildlife and provides oversight and technical expertise to assisting law enforcement agencies.
 - a. Initiates and coordinates all investigative operations throughout each case such as managing evidence, interviewing witnesses, interrogating suspects, preparing for trial, testifying in court, and final disposition of cases.
 - b. Provides professional training advice and supervisory guidance to law enforcement agencies regarding aspects of such investigations.
 - c. Develops, maintains, and directs a network of informants.
 - d. Makes use of technical equipment required to conduct complex and sensitive investigations.
 - e. Maintains contacts with law enforcement agencies in other states in order to acquire

- suspect information and identity materials.
 - f. Maintains accountability of funds and keeps required documentation.
 - g. Ensures maintenance of security and confidentiality of all reports, files, and evidence associated with cases and criminal investigations.
3. Performs administrative duties to ensure law enforcement program operations function uniformly and efficiently statewide.
- a. Provides law enforcement work direction and technical assistance to conservation law agencies and other agencies involved.
 - b. Participates on interview teams and recommends selection and dismissal of law enforcement training instructors and trainee candidates.
 - c. Conducts background investigations on trainee candidates and examines their applications and follows up to confirm accuracy.
 - d. Coordinates, tests, acquires, and maintains technical equipment inventory; and provides direction to program participants on its use.
 - e. Compiles statistics, files, and maintains other records of activities occurring within assigned programs.
 - g. Monitors, analyzes and approves entries made into the department's criminal intelligence database to ensure the integrity of the comprehensive information.
 - i. Provides technical assistance to field officers and administrators regarding operation of the system and entry of data.
 - ii. Analyzes data for trends and patterns in wildlife trade or commerce to assist in apprehending criminals.
 - h. Works with other administrative law staff to oversee wildlife law enforcement operations in the state, make recommendations for law and rule changes, develop and maintain a case management system, and otherwise support law enforcement.
4. Performs other work as assigned.

D. Reporting Relationships:

Reports to a Wildlife Program Administrator. Typically does not supervise, but may provide technical expertise and work direction to other staff, other agencies, and the general public.

E. Challenges and Problems:

Challenged to organize and manage multiple criminal cases that involve multiple jurisdictions and venues. This is difficult because wildlife violators tend to be mobile which requires frequent involvement with law enforcement agencies in other states; many cases involve transportation of illegally taken game out of the state so incumbents must be familiar with laws and procedures of cooperating agencies; it requires incumbents to travel often to other states or countries to interview witnesses and maintain confidentiality throughout all operations. Further challenged to develop conservation law enforcement programs for staff and other agencies that enhance officer and public safety and ensuring training instructors receive appropriate levels of training and certification.

Problems include the need for extensive communication and coordinating work efforts with other agencies regarding the planning of major law enforcement events and providing the proper coverage; maintaining normal criminal investigations while conducting background investigations on trainee candidates; and securing funding for technical equipment.

F. Decision-making Authority:

Decisions include priority of daily work and work schedules based upon program needs; which direction investigations will take and the equipment and tools necessary; when to provide or request assistance from other law enforcement agencies; whether to involve officers from other states or federal agencies; whether intelligence collected on criminal activities meets state and federal guidelines and should be included in the criminal intelligence database; policy interpretations; recommendation of individuals eligible for law enforcement training and the selection of law enforcement training instructors; program goals and objectives; initial content of policies and procedures; whether the quality of law enforcement program services is meeting standards; purchase and recommendation of types of equipment, training supplies, and approved budget items; and when to contact law enforcement supervisors regarding subordinate performance.

Decisions referred include oversight of statewide conservation law enforcement program, final decisions involving personnel, final budget authority, proposed rules or legislation, and approval of initiatives or policy decisions that may affect or be affected by other agencies.

G. Contact with Others:

Daily contact with field staff and service users to interpret policy, answer questions and monitor problem areas and the general public to provide program information and resolve complaints; and frequent contact with professionals in the assigned field to provide technical assistance, obtain program information, interpret policies, and coordinate services.

H. Working Conditions:

Works in a typical office environment and in the field in all types of conditions as needed including inclement weather, various terrain, and after dark. Duties sometimes require long hours of travel and irregular hours.

I. Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

- federal and state wildlife laws and rules;
- department policies and program development and implementation;
- administration as it relates to program activities assigned;
- legislative processes and rules promulgation process;
- officer safety and survivor skills;
- computer equipment and programs;
- technical equipment as it applies to law enforcement.

Ability to:

- establish and maintain close working relationships with law enforcement staff, federal wildlife agents, local law enforcement agencies, and the public;
- maintain appropriate levels of security and confidentiality when maintaining reports, files, and evidence;
- favorably present and promote departmental priorities, services, and actions internally and externally;
- communicate information clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing;
- interpret and comprehend agency goals and objectives, policies, and procedures;
- gather, interpret, report, and use information concerning specified area of assignment;
- assess program effectiveness and recommend changes and alternatives;
- write grant proposals, preliminary budget requests, and related reports;

- train and provide guidance to staff and service users;
- establish and maintain proficiency in the use of firearms.

J. Licenses and Certifications:

Successful completion of the South Dakota Law Enforcement Officers Standards Testing; semi-annual qualification and training with department-issued firearms and semi-annual qualification in defensive tactics and other required law enforcement training. Valid driver's license required.