NATURAL SCIENCE CURATOR I

This is professional curatorial work in developing, coordinating, and conducting educational programs about natural science topics for the general public. Employees may develop, coordinate, and conduct lectures, workshops, or field trips; and may plan, procure, and maintain systematic collection in a natural science specialty. Work may include managing a docent or school services program and developing teaching materials for docents, teachers, and students, to aid in interpreting natural science. Technical judgments are necessary in developing educational programs representative of the agency mission and patron needs, along with the curation of a limited systematic collection. This class is used at the N. C. Museum of Natural History, the Hampton Mariners Museum, and the N. C. Botanical Garden.

I. DIFFICULTY OF WORK:

Variety and Scope - Work involves developing educational programs and systematic collection from the planning stage to implementation. Work assignments range from maintaining systematics collection, evaluating the needs/interests of the community served in scheduling programs, contacting speakers, developing program content, writing publicity releases, to evaluating program effectiveness. Employees may design and prepare supportive teaching materials, such as an herbarium, an ecological display of a N. C. region, or nature trails. Variety of work is somewhat limited by the fact that certain types of programs may be given without change on a recurring basis. However, program sophistication must be adapted to the individual client groups.

Intricacy - Variations in types of courses offered and in the general public served require some analysis about the most effective means of presentation. An area of particular interest or expertise may require increased detail and literature searches in developing new programs, teaching materials, and limited collection of flora or fauna.

Subject Matter Complexity - Work requires considerable depth of knowledge in one area to interpret a natural science specialty for the general public and still serve the agency's program and objectives.

Guidelines - Employees are guided by agency goals and objectives, the discipline of scientific specialty, teaching principles and practices, and specific needs of the clients. General guidelines and priorities are usually established by an administrative superior.

II. RESPONSIBILITY:

Nature of Instructions - Instructions received from the supervisor are general in nature, regarding broad objectives and goals of the program. There may be closer consultation with the supervisor in developing new or unusual programs, evaluating effectiveness of prior programs, or resolving administrative problems.

Nature of Review - Work is reviewed while in progress and upon completion for achievement of goals and objectives. Supervisor reviews both technical and administrative aspects of work in terms of effectiveness of collections, programs presented, and client feedback. In cases where the curator has an area of specialization used in teaching or preparing teaching materials, the supervisor would provide minimal technical supervision.

Scope of Decisions - Responsibility for affecting the agency's total program is specifically defined. Employees have the opportunity to commit the organization only with regard to specific responsibility for programs and collections administered by the employees, such as extension programs for the general public, school services program, or training programs presented to teachers and docents.

Consequence of Decisions - Decisions made by these employees impact on and influence the accuracy, character, quality, and completeness of the educational programs, exchange of technical information, systematic collections, and creditability of the function. This, in turn, can affect the program's financial support and continuity.

III. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Scope of Contacts - There is extensive contact with the general public, at a variety of age and interest levels, as well as contact with employees in other areas of the agency program, technical experts, and peers from other similar organizations. Communication is maintained with the scientific and other community resources in developing educational programs.

Nature and Purpose - Employees explain and interpret natural science facts for the general public whose sophistication in the subject matter will vary. Contacts with technical peers and experts may involve exchange of information or technical consultations.

IV. OTHER WORK DEMANDS:

Work Conditions - Work conditions range from generally agreeable, as with the work in the classroom, to exposure to climatic elements in field trips and collecting missions.

Hazards - There is little chance of danger in the classroom, but employees may encounter adverse weather, poisonous plant and animal life, and operate potentially dangerous tools and equipment.

V. RECRUITMENT STANDARDS:

Knowledges, Skills, and Abilities - Considerable knowledge of a natural science area and related teaching methods. Ability to conduct field trips, including handling, care, and preservation of live specimens. Ability to plan, prepare, and present informational lectures and workshops. Ability to adapt communications effectively to various levels of sophistication of the general public. Ability to plan and develop natural science educational materials. Ability to train and supervise others. Ability to develop and maintain systematic collections of specimens for public display and maintain scientific documentation. Skill in the use of power tools and equipment.

Minimum Education and Experience - Graduation from a four-year college or university with a major in biology, zoology, botany, or other natural science curriculum related to the area of assignment and one year of experience in a natural science field; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

Minimum Education and Experience for a Trainee Appointment - Graduation from a four-year college or university with a major in biology, zoology, botany, or other natural science curriculum related to the area of assignment.