

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOREST SERVICE

0
Personnel

Washington, D. C.,
January 23, 1925.

District Forester.

Dear Sir:

As a result of the conference held here December 29 with representatives of the forest schools and the correspondence and discussions carried on within the Service during the last year we are now in a position to outline the policies and methods to be followed in the future in connection with employment of technically trained personnel.

The Junior Forester Examination

For the present at least we will recommend to the Civil Service Commission that this be continued as a two-day examination in its present form. A special effort will be made to eliminate avoidable duplications in questions.

Appointments from the Junior Forester and
Junior Range Examiner Registers

A limited number of men having requisite qualifications will be appointed directly from the registers as Junior Foresters or Range Examiners (\$1860-\$2400) for assignments to forest experiment stations, forest products research, and grazing investigations, or to take charge of timber or grazing surveys or to fill other specialized positions for which qualified men in the organization are not available. In all but these exceptional cases, men who pass the Junior examinations will be appointed as Rangers. If an eligible has by previous work in the Service demonstrated to his superior officers that he is the best available man to take charge of a ranger district allocated to grade 9 (\$1860-\$2400) he may be appointed directly to any such ranger vacancy. With these exceptions appointments will be made to ranger positions in grade 8 (\$1680-\$2040).

Duties and Advancement of Men Appointed as
Rangers from Junior Forester or Junior
Range Examiner Eligible Lists

The primary object in the appointment of such men as Rangers is to enable them to supplement their academic training by actual work and experience which will qualify them for the responsibility of managing a ranger district, a project timber sale, grazing administration, or other comparable work. In other words, the Service will annually appoint to training positions from 30 to 50 men from these registers of technically trained men. This will afford opportunities at the beginning of each man's career to become thoroughly grounded in the practical aspects of managing National Forest land.

Appointments of men from the ranger eligible list are normally made to training positions at \$1500, of which each District has a certain number. Appointment of technically trained men to training positions at \$1680 will be awkward to handle in certain respects but I believe you can make the necessary financial and other adjustments. Each district except District 8 will be expected to make from five to ten such appointments annually.

The length of time a technically trained man will need to spend in one of these training positions will depend on the man and his previous experience. The average forest school graduate should probably expect to spend from one to one and one-half years in the training position to which he is first assigned. Previous field training equivalent to that contemplated in one of these positions and which qualifies the new appointee for an immediate assignment to a higher grade will be recognized by such a higher assignment at once or as soon as a vacancy occurs. Previous training that only partially meets this requirement will not warrant a more advanced initial assignment but will be considered in determining when a trainee is qualified for advancement. The time of advancement will be governed by individual qualifications in all cases. Some men will be qualified within three months, some in six months, and so on. The period of from one to one and one-half years for the average man is suggested only for the information of the forest school students who want to know what they may expect.

When a trainee has shown his qualification for advancement he will be assigned to the first opening as District Ranger or as officer in charge of a project sale for which he is the best man available. Ordinarily this will be a Ranger district allocated to Grade 8 (\$1680-\$2040) but may be to a Grade 9 Ranger district (\$1860-\$2400) or to timber sale or other work in Grade 8 or 9.

Subsequent advancement in responsibility and salary grade will depend entirely on the individual man. It is an open field and the demand for men of superior technical and administrative capacity is always greater than the supply. The demand for Forest Supervisors who can meet both the technical and administrative requirements of the job is particularly keen.

Advancement in salary within grade will depend strictly on merit. The two year rule under which forest and grazing assistants have been held at the entrance salary for two years and then advanced \$300 if their work has been satisfactory will not be followed with men entering from this time on.

In assigning technical men as trainees, District Rangers, timber sale men, or elsewhere, please take special precautions to see that they are placed under supervision and given work which will best promote their all around development and knowledge of the varied duties of a forest officer. Assignments in which men will have opportunity to use their academic training should be sought for them. Such assignments and personal encouragement to these men to apply their technical knowledge will go far in building up a desire on the part of the best forest school graduates to enter the Service. This is one of the most vital parts of the whole program. There is too little recognition even in the Service of the abundant opportunities the average Ranger has to use his education. This does not mean that technically trained Rangers should not be expected to make good at the routine or hard physical work which goes with the forest officer's job. Quite the contrary. We have no place in the Service for the man who wishes to avoid plain work. Moreover, it is usually the case that a well trained mind can do important constructive work if applied to routine and hard physical labor which is a part of the normal work of every forest officer.

Qualification for Appointment as Supervisor

The management of National Forest land is emerging from the pioneer stage and technical knowledge is rapidly becoming a more important part of the equipment of a forest officer. It was recommended by the forest school representatives that this should be recognized by requiring every man to pass the junior forester examination in order to qualify for appointment as Supervisor. This may come in time. I am not sure that we are ready for it now. I should like your judgment on the following alternative plan:

Beginning in the winter of 1925-26 give annually a written test designed to aid in determining fitness for the work of a Supervisor. Beginning just after the first test require each year a stronger showing of reasons for the appointment as Supervisor of any man who had not passed the test. After January 1, 1929, appoint no Supervisor who had not passed the test. Since it is our recognized

policy, wherever possible, to select for positions of higher administrative responsibility only men who have served as Supervisor the test would in effect be prerequisite to all advancement in administrative work above the Ranger grade.

Ordinary written examinations are not very reliable in testing men's capacity but a test could be designed which would avoid the usual weakness. The proposed Supervisor test would require that each applicant prepare in advance and submit as a part of his test, a brief paper embodying constructive thinking he has done or describing some project or work he has carried out in which application has been made of technical knowledge. Such descriptions of work done would be certified as to correctness by some qualified superior officer. Such papers embodying constructive thinking, observations, or experiments made, or describing work done, would be required in such subjects as forest management, silviculture, range management, fire control, management of personnel, financial management, and forest improvements. In addition there would be technical questions on forest and range management, fire control, etc., based on the grasp of these subjects needed by an efficient Supervisor, to be answered in the usual way at the time of the test. Suitable weights for different questions and subjects would need to be arranged. Such papers and written answers would be expected to show whether the man possessed technical knowledge and what effort he had made to use it and to keep up with the literature of each subject.

Since little training in some of the subjects a Supervisor needs to know is given in forest schools and the Junior Forester and Junior Range Examiner examinations necessarily cannot disclose a man's ability to fill this position effectively, it would follow that men entering the service by these routes would be required to qualify for appointment as Supervisor by passing the test, as well as men entering as Rangers.

It would probably be best not to use the test as a regular civil service examination but it would be handled as systematically and with the same safeguards as if it were. Men not caring to qualify for Supervisor or higher administrative positions would be under no obligation to take the examination in order to advance in their other chosen fields. The test would be open to any man in the Service of a certain length of service--perhaps 3 or 5 years.

The adoption of any such plan will depend on the concurrence of a majority of District Foresters. Comments are also requested from heads of forest schools to whom copies of this letter are being sent. The proposed plan has been changed somewhat from that discussed at the December conference.

Perhaps the outstanding benefit from such a plan would be that it would stimulate reading, study, training, and the utilization of opportunities for constructive work, with both technical and nontechnical men, more effectively than any other step open to us at this time.

Student Employment and Contact with Forest Schools

The representatives of forest schools urged closer contact between the Service and the schools and particularly favored such systems of student employment as have been developed in District 1. In all this I heartily concur as indicated in the established policy of the Service set forth in the administrative manual. While conditions vary greatly between Districts there should be no failure to use every reasonable effort to cooperate actively with the forest schools and particular attention should be given to student employment.

Our experience indicates clearly certain essentials which I will depend on each District Forester to embody in the policy and system he develops for his District. These are as follows:

1. On the part of the Service, leadership and control will be centralized in the District Offices and in Washington for the Experiment Stations. Too much should not be left to Supervisors although initiative and active participation on their part is of course indispensable.

2. A list of jobs in which forest school students can be used will be made up annually in consultation with Supervisors.

3. This list will be referred to heads of forest schools and their cooperation asked in fitting the right man in the right place. Each school may be asked to fill a certain number of places and will be asked to assume responsibility for seeing that obviously unfit men are not assigned and that the places are filled by the school after it has been agreed that this will be done.

4. Every reasonable effort should be made to see that the natural desire of students to get a variety of work and experience is fulfilled.

5. As far as practicable, the Supervisor or District Forester should give the head of the forest school a brief report at the end of the season on the quality of the work done by each student and his strong or weak points, special bents, etc.

Salary Adjustment on Account of Quarters

For the benefit of students and forest school faculties a table is attached to this letter showing the adjustments we now make on account of quarters. All salaries referred to in this letter are subject to adjustment on account of quarters as indicated in this table. This shows for example that a ranger employed in a grade 8 position will be paid \$1680-\$1920 if he is furnished ordinary quarters in an isolated location; \$1740-\$1980 if he is furnished the single room or shack type of quarters ordinarily found on timber sale jobs; and \$1800-\$2040 if he is assigned where he has to furnish his own quarters.

Apparently some adjustments have not been made in salaries of Junior Foresters now under appointment in Grade 9. Please check this point in your District and make recommendations you find are called for.

W B Healy

Forester.

SALARY ADJUSTMENTS ON ACCOUNT OF QUARTERS FURNISHED

BY FOREST SERVICE

<u>Grade</u>	<u>No Quarters</u>	<u>Quarters \$60</u>	<u>Quarters \$120</u>	<u>Quarters \$240</u>
7 \$1500-1860	7 c-g 1620-1860	7 b-f 1560-1800	7 a-e 1500-1740	6 b-f 1380-1620
8 \$1680-2040	8 c-g 1800-2040	8 b-f 1740-1980	8 a-e 1680-1920	7 b-f 1560-1800
9 \$1860-2400	9 c-g 2000-2400	9 b-f 1920-2300	9 a-f 1860-2300	9 a-d 1860-2100
10 \$2100-2700	10 2100-2700		9 c-g 2000-2400	9 b-g 1920-2400
11 \$2400-3000	11 2400-3000		10 c-g 2300-2700	10 b-g 2200-2700
12 \$2700-3300	12 2700-3300		11 c-g 2600-3000	11 b-g 2500-3000
13 \$3000-3600	13 3000-3600		12 c-g 2900-3300	12 b-g 2800-3300
14 \$3300-3900	14 3300-3900		13 c-g 3200-3600	13 b-g 3100-3600

\$60 quarters are of the single room bunkhouse or shack type.

\$120 quarters are ordinary quarters located in isolated places.

\$240 quarters are quarters in towns including small towns.