

National Park Service

U.S. Department of the Interior



Briefing Statement

Bureau: National Park Service
Issue: Career Academy for Natural Resources
Date: December 2012

Background:

The Career Academy for Natural Resources (CA-NR) is a developmental pathway for employees to acquire and refine their skills in meeting job requirements, position and career field competencies, the NPS mission and personal development goals. The NPS Director's "A Call to Action" specifically identifies the academy program as a process to enhance professional and organizational excellence. The CA-NR is being designed to address the seven essential natural resource competencies of employees from entry through journey level, and it will incorporate a wide variety of instructional methods.

In September 2011, the CA-NR steering committee and NPS Learning and Development staff finalized the academy draft framework and eighteen-month implementation strategy. In subsequent months work group leads and team participants were selected to develop entry level competency-based key tasks, job performance criteria, learning objectives and recommended training modules for the NRC Foundational Natural Resource Management Series. Participants were chosen based on the individual's area of professional expertise and experience, ability to contribute to development of training modules for the competencies defined, and to provide a diverse representation from across the NPS including parks, regions, partners and WASO offices. Throughout the winter of 2011-12, these teams collaborated diligently via numerous webinars, conference calls, video conferences and small meetings.

From February through April, 2011, the teams combined similar and complementary learning objectives to create and sequence seven recommended modules for the Foundational Natural Resource Management Series. The foundational series is intended to provide course objectives and content based on defined competencies, prioritize and sequence learning opportunities for a defined career pathway, and use a wide variety of delivery methods. Course objectives will be tied to key tasks and performance criteria for use in a competency calculator. Employees will be able to use this tool to determine where to enter the CA-NR and to develop an IDP. Work is also underway to evaluate existing learning opportunities to incorporate into the CA-NR. Work groups will plan for the intermediate and advanced series after completion of the foundational series.

Current Status:

Two interactive e-learning units that make up the first module of the Foundational Series are being designed for on-line delivery. The first unit, *Introduction to the Foundational Natural Resource Series*, orients students to a natural resource management and science career path. Students will address their professional development by exploring ways to design and implement Individual Development Plans (IDPs). The course explains the role of the natural resource professional within the NPS, and introduces the concepts of ethical conduct, scientific integrity, interdisciplinary networks, and building and maintaining professional credibility. Development of this unit is almost complete, and it should be ready for pilot testing in early 2013.

The second unit, *Orientation to NPS Natural Resource Management* provides an overview of the evolution of natural resource management in the NPS and introduces foundational concepts of natural resource management. Additional 20-minute on-line units, to be developed starting in FY 13, will provide an overview of major natural resources and describe management guidance and interrelationships between laws, policies, and NPS program management for that resource type. Anyone interested in additional information should go to the "Academy tab" at the website for the Natural Resource Training Program:
<http://www.nps.gov/training/nrs/>

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