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Hydrologist Program Leader 14

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External Relations Hydrologic Program Leader, Office of Hydrology, NWS

INTRODUCTION

The National Weather Service (NWS) Modernization and Associated Restructuring (MAR) will bring unprecedented changes in the operations, products-lines, and services of the NWS Hydrologic Services Program. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)/NWS cooperators and clients must be prepared for these major changes to continue the information exchange and effective interaction which are critical to ongoing operations and essential to Total Quality Management. The External Relations Hydrologic Program Leader is a term position responsible for developing and implementing a change management plan/guide concerning the impact of RFCs' new capabilities on the delivery of new and advanced products and services to existing and new users including private sector hydrologists, local media, and cooperators among others.

The position is administratively attached to the Director, Office of Hydrology of the NWS, but is physically located in the Tulsa River Forecast Center (RFC) in Tulsa, Oklahoma. OH serves as the primary interface between Weather Service Headquarters (WSH) and the Regional Headquarters and associated field service programs on all operating matters and technical aspects and procedures of the Hydrologic Service Program. Functions and responsibilities of OH are described in the NOAA Organization Handbook.

BACKGROUND

This is a term position with an expected duration of four years, to coincide approximately with the expected start of fully modernized RFC operations at MAR Demonstration (MARD) sites. Extension of this term is unlikely, but might be required depending on schedules and progress in the overall modernization of the NWS Hydrologic Services Program. The term nature of the position derives from the need to develop and implement several critical external relations plans throughout the modernization and transition of the Hydrologic Services Program. This requires the focused attention of a highly qualified individual until this transition is complete.

The physical location of this position at the Tulsa RFC will facilitate development of these external relations plans even though the plans themselves are national in scope and effect. The Tulsa RFC is already the primary site for RFC risk-reduction activities, which make it not only the first recipient of modernized RFC technology but also the first RFC to contend with the impact of modernized RFC service on the variety of external cooperators/clients which interact with the RFC. Later, the Tulsa RFC will be part of the MARD which will continue its leadership role. Thus Tulsa RFC is the ideal test bed for planning external relations as they relate to RFC products and services through the transition to MARD and beyond. In addition, the nearby Norman Weather Forecast Office (WFO) is also the primary risk-reduction site for WFO modernization and later a MARD participant. The incumbent will develop and carry out external relations plans and activities for the Hydrologic Services Program initially as they affect the Norman WFO and Tulsa RFC; also, these plans and activities will be the model for nationwide transition of the NWS Hydrologic Services Program.

MAJOR DUTIES

The NWS Hydrologic Services Program is vitally dependant on cooperative relationships with numerous external groups which operate facilities that regulate/control river flows and reservoir levels; collect, analyze, and exchange observations with our RFCs, WSOS, WSFOS, and WFOS; use NWS forecasts and data to carry out their own missions ranging from water management to water use to flood control and emergency response to

planning; and carry out their activities over areas which may range in size from a small part of one community through county, multi-county, state, multi-state, and even international regions. The transition and modernization of the NWS will affect these groups profoundly, and the NWS is dependent on continued close cooperation and interaction with these groups for the ongoing success of the NWS Hydrologic Services Program. The incumbent is broadly responsible for developing and carrying out external relations plans and activities which ensure these continued good relations. Major duties are described below:

The incumbent develops a coordinated national plan for the hydrologic external relations and updates this plan as needed. This plan must be coordinated with the NWS Industrial Meteorology staff and NOAA Office of Public Affairs; NWS Headquarters Offices including primarily OH, the Transition Program Office, and the Office of Meteorology; and NWS Regional Headquarters to ensure that this national plan identifies responsibilities, activities, and schedules to effectively inform and interact with each external interest affected by transition and modernization of the NWS Hydrologic Services Program.

Consistent with the national plan and in cooperation with the appropriate NWS Region, Hydrologist-in-Charge (HIC) and Meteorologists-in-Charge (MIC), the incumbent develops and updates a specific Hydrologic External Relations Plan for each RFC area, beginning with the Tulsa RFC. This plan includes not only interests which cooperate directly with the RFC but also all interests throughout the RFC area of responsibility which are affected by the NWS Hydrologic Services Program. These interests will include state, Federal, local, and regional government bodies as well as the media, academic organizations, professional and trade groups, and private sector organizations. These interests will be identified and plans established to inform them of NWS transition plans especially as they affect the NWS Hydrologic Services Program.

The NWS intends to expand and improve the hydrologic service provided by the RFCs and WFOS. Especially during major widespread hydrologic events, i.e. floods or droughts affecting large areas, the RFCs will interact more directly with the media in the modernized NWS than is typical today. In parallel with the Hydrologic External Relations Plan for each RFC area (see above), the incumbent will develop a Hydrologic Media Response Plan for each RFC area describing interactions with the media by WSFOS, WFOS, and by the RFC itself both during regular operations and during major events. Again, the Tulsa RFC will be the first RFC area with such a plan.

The incumbent develops presentations and other training materials for use by HICS, MICS, and others in carrying out their external and media relations responsibilities. The incumbent also contributes to training and career development plans for the NWS as a whole to assure that external relations is considered.

The incumbent personally represents modernization plans for NWS Hydrologic Services in appropriate forums including meetings of scientific organizations, cooperating agencies, local organizations, river basin, and other interest groups at the local, state, regional, and/or National level.

The incumbent reviews, comments, and develops an OH position on various transition-related documents and policy papers.

The incumbent represents OH on inter- and intra-agency tasks groups and committees as appropriate.

The incumbent serves as a technical advisor to the Director, OH and to the Regional Director on matters related to external and/or media relations.

KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED BY THE JOB

The incumbent must have knowledge not only of the hydrologic operations of the NWS and the scientific principles upon which these operations are founded, but also the streamflow-related aspects of the operations of NWS cooperators in the water resources community and the scientific, economic, regulatory, and to some extent legal principles which affect these water resource managers. Specific knowledges required include:

Professional knowledge of hydrologic processes, including conceptual hydrologic modeling, river mechanics, river and flash flood forecast procedures, and data requirements for hydrologic operations.

Professional knowledge of hydraulic and hydrologic principles which are involved in the operation of complex multipurpose (navigation, hydropower, recreation, water supply, etc.) multi-facility water resource systems. This knowledge includes use of various RFC forecasts, observed data, and guidance products to optimize facility operations; regulatory activities of various government and quasi-governmental organizations; impacts of water resources decisions on various economic sectors; and certain aspects of the impact of environmental legislation and regulations on facility operations.

Thorough knowledge of the field hydrologic program of the NWS especially regarding information exchange with cooperators, disaster preparedness functions, the operations of NWS field offices and responsibilities of hydrologic personnel at these offices, and hydrologic operations in other agencies.

Knowledge of plans for transition and modernization of the Hydrologic Services Program and their impact on changes in RFC operations and services.

Knowledge of management principles, such as planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling hydrologic service functions within the organizational context of the NWS. Ability to develop and manage new approaches and plans concerning hydrologic services and cooperative efforts with external groups.

SUPERVISORY CONTROLS

Program objectives are given and the incumbent only receives broad administrative direction. Review is made after the fact for efficiency and impact on the National External Relations Program, Office of Hydrology programs and objectives and ultimately upon the National Transition and Modernization program for the RFCS.

GUIDELINES

Goals are stated in the broadest terms. Incumbent has a prime role in developing policies and means of attaining goals.

COMPLEXITY

The incumbent must interact with a broad range of highly complex issues and participate with NOAA offices, NWS Headquarters, Regional Headquarters, and field offices. Difficult organizational issues arise because problems of concern to the NWS hydrologic program cut across the lines of authority of many offices over which the incumbent has no direct control. The issues involved are often not well defined and must be handled with a high degree of professionalism. Work involves coordinating activities not only with other NOAA offices but with a wide variety of external parties. The incumbent must be able to anticipate conflicts that may arise between NWS and external interest as NWS adopts new field operating procedures and to resolve them prior to program implementation.

SCOPE AND EFFECT

The mission of the National Hydrologic Service Program is to save lives, protect property, and serve navigation, electric power generation, irrigation, recreational, and other water user needs by providing timely and accurate hydrologic information and forecasts. Decisions affect the performance and effectiveness of this program which has the potential of saving the economy billions of dollars annually. The incumbent constantly works with other NWS offices including the heads of NWS hydrologic offices in the field and with numerous external interests who use and support NWS Hydrologic Services.

PERSONAL CONTACTS

Incumbent in this position must frequently contact senior, high-level officials in NWS, state, and other national agencies involved with water resources. The incumbent also represents NWS at meetings with local, state, and regional Government organizations, professional and trade groups, media representatives, academic organizations, and private sector groups.

PURPOSE OF CONTACTS

Contacts are required with professional staff to provide advice, guidance, and support in resolving problems in planning and policies of the program and to develop national consensus on the resolution of these problems. Contacts with other agencies and office managers in Department of Commerce, NOAA, and NWS are to coordinate program activities and participate in joint projects. Contacts with external parties are to represent NWS plans for modernized hydrologic services.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

No special physical abilities are required; however, the incumbent works under mental stress in meeting work deadlines.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

Work is performed in an office setting. Travel to other NWS offices and to appropriate meetings of external groups is often necessary to develop and carry out external relations plans.

FLSA STATUS

This position is exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act in that it meets the exempting criteria as a professional and executive position as defined in FPM Letter 511-1.

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