

Water-Resources Division Handbook for Employees

By Jack H. Green

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Scope of this Handbook

This handbook is intended to acquaint new employees with most of the information needed to guide them through the initial phases of becoming a public servant and a productive, respected member of the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) Water Resources Division (WRD). It also is intended to serve veteran employees as a ready reference to the workings of the WRD.

This handbook provides employees with uniform information about the structure, responsibilities, expectations, policies, regulations, restrictions, and benefits of the WRD. The material in this handbook has been extracted from numerous sources. Additional information can be provided by the local Administrative Officer or the Servicing Personnel Office.

The Federal Employer

The following sections describe the legal authorities from which our organization developed and the mission of the Department, the USGS, and the WRD.

U.S. Department of the Interior

The U.S. Department of the Interior was established by Congress on March 3, 1849. It is part of the Executive Branch of Government with a Secretary who is appointed by the President and serves as a member of the Cabinet. The Department of the Interior has stewardship responsibility for most of the nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of the land and water

resources, protecting the fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of the national parks and historic places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. It also assesses the Nation's energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of the people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

U.S. Geological Survey

The Congress established the Geological Survey (as part of the Department of the Interior) on March 3, 1879 to provide for "...the classification of public lands, the examination of the geological structure, mineral resources, and products of the national domain." At that time, the law did not specifically mention water, except as relevant to land classification. Under that law, the Survey is clearly forbidden from doing work for individuals and non-governmental organizations. The law states: "The Director and members of the Geological Survey shall have no personal and private interests in the lands or mineral wealth of the region under survey, and shall execute no surveys or examinations for private parties or corporations." The Director of the Survey is appointed by the President and confirmed by the U.S. Senate.

Another Congressional Act (October 2, 1888) authorized the Survey to identify irrigable lands in arid regions, and "...selection of sites for reservoirs and other hydraulic works necessary for the storage and utilization of water for irrigation and the prevention of floods...."

Until 1992, the U.S. Geological Survey operated under an assumed name. The official name was just "Geological Survey." With the President's approval of the 1992 budget, the "U.S." became an official part of the Bureau's name.

The U.S. Geological Survey consists of the Director's office, three program Divisions--Geologic, National Mapping, and Water Resources--, and two support Divisions,--Administrative and Information Systems,--shown on the diagram.

U.S. Geological Survey



Water Resources Division

On August 18, 1894, Congress specifically appropriated money for the study of water resources. The law provided for "...gauging of the streams and determining the water supply of the United States, including the investigation of underground currents and artesian wells in arid and semiarid sections...." Additionally, on June 11, 1896, Congress provided that "...hereafter the reports of the Geological Survey in relation to the gauging of streams and to the methods of utilizing the water resources may be printed in octavo form...." A resolution on May 16, 1902, provided that "...hereafter the publications of the Geological Survey shall consist of...water-supply papers and irrigation papers...." Appropriations have continued annually since the initial funding began. Appropriations in 1989 for the first time included the words "...to perform surveys, investigations, and research covering topography, geology, hydrology, and the mineral and water resources of the United States, its territories and possessions...." The Chief of the WRD (Chief Hydrologist) is in the Civil Service System and is selected under a competitive process (Merit Promotion Plan) by the Director.

After more than 100 years, and considerably more than "the gauging of the streams," the general mission of the WRD is to appraise the Nation's water resources and to provide the hydrologic information needed for managing these resources. The WRD accomplishes this mission by:

- Systematically collecting data needed for the continuing determination and evaluation of the quantity, quality, and use of the Nation's water resources.
- Conducting analytical and interpretive water-resources appraisals to describe the occurrence; availability; and physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of surface and ground water and their interrelation.
- Conducting supportive basic and problem-oriented research in hydraulics, hydrology, and related fields of science and engineering to improve the basis for field investigations and measurement techniques and to understand hydrologic systems sufficiently well to predict quantitatively their response to stress, either natural or manmade.
- Disseminating water data and the results of investigations and research through reports, maps, computerized information services, and other forms of public releases.
- Coordinating the activities of all Federal agencies in the acquisition of certain water data.
- Providing scientific and technical assistance in hydrologic fields to State, local, and other Federal agencies, to the U.S. Supreme Court, to licensees of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and (on behalf of the U.S. Department of State) to international agencies.
- Acquiring, developing, and disseminating information on water-related natural hazards such as droughts, floods, landslides, land subsidence, mud flows, and volcanoes.
- Administrating the provisions of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 which include the State Water Resources Research Institutes and the Research Grants Programs.
- Supporting the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and managing USGS conduct of natural-resources surveys in response to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (Superfund Act) of 1980.

RESPONSIBILITIES

This part of the Handbook is devoted to brief discussions of basic responsibilities - those of the employee to the Government, and those of the Government to the employee.

Employees

Employees of the WRD are members of a team whose mission is to collect, interpret, and report water-related information for the use of resource managers and the general public. The mission is accomplished through personal contacts, traditional publications, and dissemination of information and data through electronic and other media.

Employees are expected to maintain high standards of honesty, integrity, impartiality, and conduct to ensure the proper performance of government business and the continual trust and confidence of citizens in their government. Employees are expected to comply with all Federal statutes, Executive Orders, Office of Personnel Management regulations, and Department of the Interior regulations. The conduct of employees should reflect the qualities of courtesy, consideration, and loyalty to the United States; a deep sense of responsibility for the public trust; promptness in dealing with and serving the public; and a standard of personal behavior that will be a credit to the individual.

These principles apply to official conduct and to private conduct that affects in any way the ability of the employee or the Department to accomplish the work of the Department effectively. Employees should consult with their supervisors and personnel officers on all questions they may have regarding the applicability of any regulations.

Employees are required to carry out the announced policies and programs of the Department and to obey proper requests and directions of supervisors. An employee is subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including removal from office, if he/she fails to:

- Comply with any lawful regulations, orders, or policies.
- Obey the proper requests of supervisors having responsibility for his/her performance. If policies related to one's work are under consideration, an employee may (and is expected to) express professional opinions and points of view. Once a decision has been

rendered concerning those policies by those in authority, each employee is expected to comply with the decision and work to ensure the success of programs or issues affected by the decision.

Employees are expected to be careful in dealing with the public and with representatives of private industry so as not to give an opinion or decision contrary to expressed official policy. Employees must avoid expressing personal opinions or making unauthorized decisions about work situations where those opinions or decisions may be mistakenly taken to be the opinion or decision of their employer.

Employees are expected to avoid any actions, whether on or off duty, that would reflect adversely on the government service or which would jeopardize the employee's fitness for duty or effectiveness in dealing with other employees or with the public. Specifically, employees must refrain from the following:

- Using public office for private gain;
- Giving preferential treatment to any person, except as authorized or required by law;
- Impeding Government efficiency or economy;
- Losing independence or impartiality;
- Making a Government decision outside official channels;
- Affecting adversely the confidence of the public in the integrity of the Government.

Government

Government responsibility to employees lies mainly in the following general areas:

- Provide equal opportunity to all persons regardless of age, sex, race, creed, or disability for advancement based on knowledge, skills, and abilities as they relate to the mission;
- Provide safe and adequate working conditions and tools;
- Live up to employment "contract" - pay on time and reimburse for reasonable expenses incurred while on official duty;
- Provide training.

The immediate supervisor is responsible for ensuring that each employee is accorded all rights and responsibilities of his/her employment with the USGS.

A Government "Privacy Act" establishes controls over the way that agencies of the Executive Branch gather, maintain, and disseminate information about individuals. The Act requires that agencies implement the provisions of the Act with guidance and oversight from the Office of Management and Budget. The Act guarantees the employee's right to see records concerning himself/herself, subject to the Privacy Act's exceptions, and the right to request amendment if the record is believed to be inaccurate, irrelevant, untimely, or incomplete.

The Act requires Federal agencies to collect only such information about individuals as is relevant and necessary to accomplish their authorized functions and that the information about individuals is used only for purposes authorized by law. The Act requires that information maintained on individuals be current and accurate, and that safeguards are provided to prevent misuse of the information.

ETHICS AND CONDUCT

"Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch," August 1992, contains guidelines for all Executive Branch employees. "Employee Conduct Handbook--Legal, Regulatory, and Policy Guidelines, U.S. Geological Survey," 1993, provides specific instructions and examples of ethics matters directly related to the USGS. The contents of the books should be familiar to all WRD employees, and are summarized below beginning in the outside-work/non-official expression paragraphs.

Political Activity

Federal employees are prohibited from using their official authority or influence to interfere with or affect the results of an election, and may not take active part in **partisan** political management or in **partisan** political campaigns. These prohibitions are in effect for all full-time and part-time employees, whether they are permanent or temporary. The prohibitions apply whether employees are on duty or off duty, including when the employees are on leave. Following are specific examples of prohibited political activity:

- Being a candidate for nomination or election to a National or State office;
- Being a partisan candidate for nomination or election to public office or political party office;
- Serving as an officer of a political party, a member of a National, State, or local committee of a political party, an officer or member of a committee of a partisan political club, or be a candidate for any of these positions;
- Participation in the organizing of a political party, organization, or club;
- Soliciting, receiving, collecting, handling, disbursing, or accounting for assessments, contributions, or other funds for a partisan political purpose or in connection with a partisan election;
- Soliciting for political contributions from other Federal employees, and no person may solicit or receive political contributions in buildings where Federal employees work;
- Making a political contribution to any officer or employee of the United States who is your employer or employing authority;

- Selling tickets for, or otherwise actively promoting, such activities as political dinners;
- Taking an active part in managing the political campaign of a candidate in a partisan election for public office or political party office;
- Working at the polls on behalf of a partisan candidate or political party by acting as a checker, challenger, watcher, or in a similar partisan position;
- Distributing campaign material;
- Serving as a delegate, alternate, or proxy to a political party convention;
- Addressing a convention, rally, caucus, or similar gathering of a political party in support of, or in opposition to, a candidate for public office or political party office, or on a partisan political question;
- Endorsing or opposing a candidate in a partisan election through a political advertisement, broadcast, campaign literature, or similar material;
- Using your automobile to drive voters to the polls on behalf of a political party or candidate in a partisan election.

Restrictions of political activity do not relieve Federal employees of their obligations as citizens to inform themselves of the issues and to register and vote. Some of the permissible political activities are:

- Registering and voting as you chose in any election;
- Expressing your opinions as an individual, privately or publicly, on all political subjects and candidates as long as you do not take an active part in partisan political management or partisan political campaigns;
- Wearing a political badge or button or displaying a political sticker on your private automobile, subject to work-related limitations;
- Making a voluntary campaign contribution to a political party or organization;
- Accepting a partisan **appointment** to public office, provided service in the office will not conflict with the efficient discharge of your Federal duties, however, you may not run for election or re-election to that office;
- Participating in a non-partisan election either as a candidate or in support of (or in opposition to) a candidate, and you may, if elected,

serve in the office if such service will not conflict or interfere with your Federal duties;

- Serving as an election clerk or judge, or in a similar position, to perform non-partisan duties as prescribed by State or local law;
- Being politically active in connection with an issue not specifically identified with a political party, such as a constitutional amendment, referendum, approval of a municipal ordinance, or similar issue;
- Participating in the non-partisan activities of a civic, community, social, labor, professional, or similar organization;
- Attending a political convention, rally, fund-raising function, or other political gathering, but you may not take an active part in conducting or managing such gatherings;
- Signing petitions, including nominating petitions, but you may not initiate or canvas for signature on nominating petitions for candidates in partisan elections;
- Petitioning Congress or any member of Congress by writing or telephoning your Representatives or Senators to express your opinion on a particular issue.

Outside Work/Non-Official Expression

Federal law states that employees "...shall execute no surveys or examinations for private parties or corporations...with or without remuneration." This means that an employee is not permitted to conduct a survey, such as preparation of a topographic, geologic, hydrologic, or other map, or examine a property's mineral, water, or petroleum potential, or conduct other activities related to USGS functions, either for a private party or an organization. Whether or not a fee is involved makes no difference. These restrictions apply to non-profit organizations as well as profit-oriented organizations. In addition, an employee cannot represent any individual or organization on a matter in which the Federal government has an interest.

Outside work is permitted to the extent that it does not prevent a regular employee from devoting primary interests, talents, and energies to the accomplishment of work for the government. The outside work, also, shall have no **apparent** conflict with regular government work. In addition, any outside work shall not reflect discredit on the United States or the WRD. Any regular employee engaged in outside work shall

report that work to his/her immediate supervisor if the work is to be performed frequently or on a standardized schedule. The approval of the USGS Personnel Officer must be obtained if an employee is to engage in outside work. Form 9-1510 is used for this purpose and must be sent through proper channels in the WRD.

Conflict of Interest

The USGS has very strict and definite rules that either forbid or limit an employee's (and family) financial interest in a large number of publicly traded stocks and bonds. These rules also extend to landholdings, mineral rights or royalties, trusts, grazing rights on public lands, and any other related financial matters. In general, the rules are designed to prevent an employee's **personal financial gain** from any knowledge that is the property of the USGS, or **personal financial gain** from ownership in any "property" that might benefit from the employee's position of influence.

The "Conflict of Interest" rules are very precise and detailed; they are treated here in only general terms. The USGS Ethics Coordinator in the Director's Office updates the "Guide to Financial Interests" each year. If an employee has ANY question regarding these rules, the Coordinator should be consulted for complete information.

Nepotism

An employee of the USGS shall not appoint, employ, promote, advance, or advocate such actions for a relative in any organizational component of the USGS. In no case may an employee serve in a supervisory capacity over a relative. Relatives may work in the same immediate organizational component only if an exception is approved by the Director or Associate Director.

Use of Government Property

As a general rule, employees shall be held accountable for all Government property and moneys entrusted to them in connection with their official duties. It is the employee's responsibility to protect and

conserve Government property and to use it economically and for official purposes only.

Vehicles

Employees shall not willfully use or authorize the use of a Government-owned or leased passenger motor vehicle for other than official use. **Violation of this provision shall automatically result in suspension from duty without compensation for not less than 1 month.**

Telephones

The purpose of Government telephone service is to **conduct official business**, except under specific circumstances. These excepted specific circumstances allow reasonable, but limited, use of the telephone system for necessary personal calls that are consistent with the following criteria:

- The call does not adversely affect the performance of official duties by the employee or the employee's organization;
- It is of reasonable duration and frequency;
- It reasonably could not have been made at another time.

All other personal calls made during work hours must be placed on a telephone that does not belong to the Government. Violations may result in reimbursement to the Government and possible administrative, civil, or criminal action.

Computers

Computer systems afford employees the means of accessing and analyzing certain authorized information, thereby enabling them to improve their own productivity and contribute to the overall mission of the USGS. However, control must be exercised to ensure the integrity and authorized further use of the information, and to control overall data-processing expenses. All reasonable steps will be taken to preserve the integrity of automated information and the programs that process it. Proprietary, personal, and mission-critical information must be protected from disclosure. **All employees must complete computer-security-awareness training as soon as possible after appointment.**

Employees are expected to notify their supervisors of all suspected security violations, and every occurrence of fire, water damage, or other incident which results in damage or potential damage to data-processing assets.

General policies regarding the responsibilities for computer use are summarized below:

- Managers are responsible for the operation and maintenance of computer systems used by employees and contractors;
- Managers must ensure that procedures to maintain and support their data-processing investments, both in technology and work hours, are established and enforced;
- Data-processing resources are to be used for **official business only**; any employee who intentionally misuses a computer will be subject to disciplinary action, must reimburse the Government for the cost of resources misused, and may face criminal prosecution;
- All employees are responsible to assure that computers and their contents are protected from damage; the user can be held responsible for damages resulting from accident or negligent use of computers.

Indebtedness

Employees are expected to pay their bills. Three general rules apply:

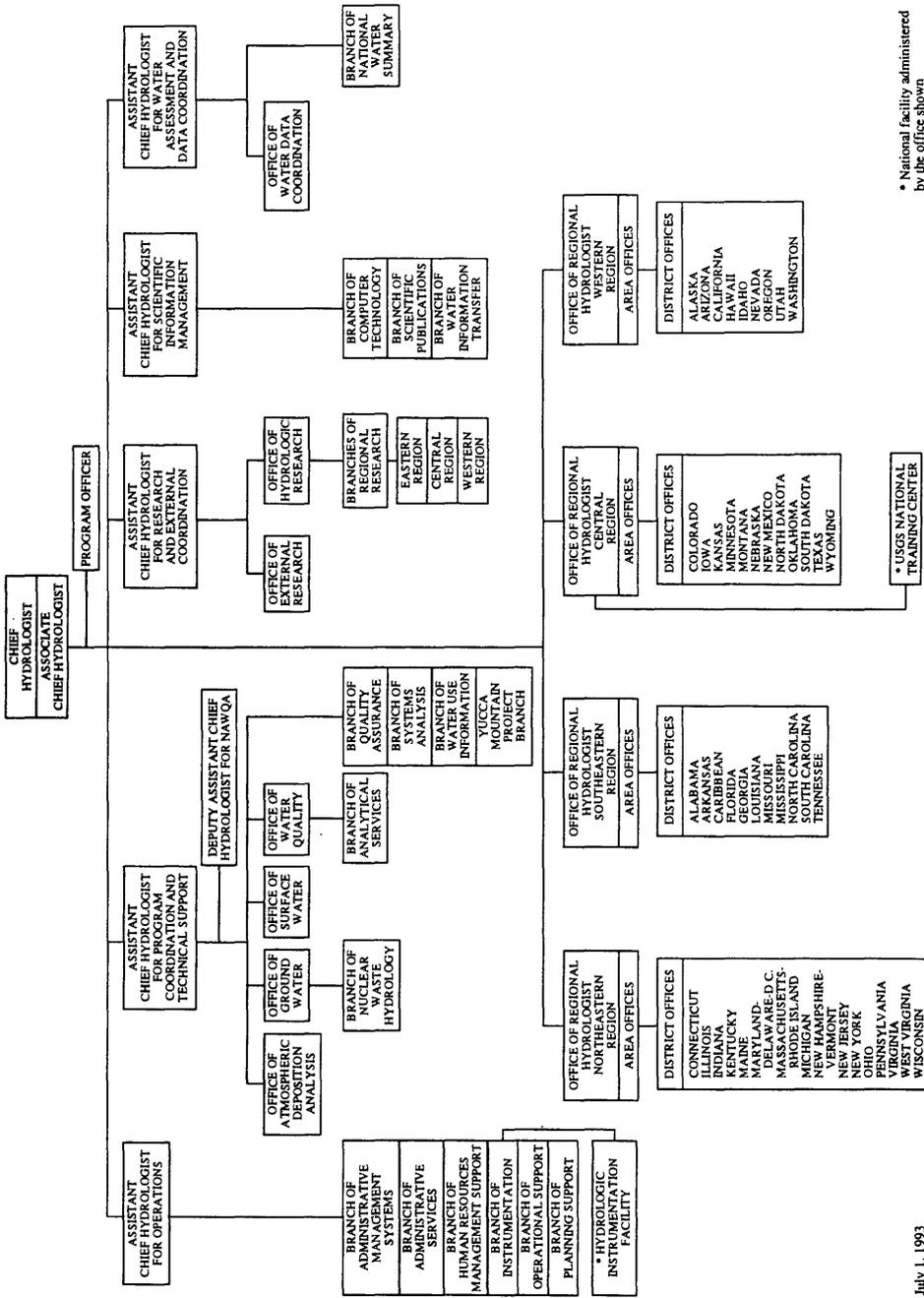
- Employees shall pay each just financial obligation - either acknowledged by the employee or by judgment of the court;
- They shall repay all amounts that they might have been overpaid by the Government;
- They shall pay all indebtedness for Federal, State, and local taxes.

The Government will not act as a collection agency except as required by law - and will not act to determine validity of the employee's disputed debts. Also, the Government will not allow creditors or collectors access to the employee (either by telephone or otherwise) during working hours on Government property. However, the employee may be subject to removal or other disciplinary action for failure to meet just financial obligations.

Sexual Harassment

Employees will not engage in deliberate or repeated unsolicited verbal comments, gestures, or physical contact of a sexual nature which are unwelcome. This type of activity constitutes sexual harassment and is a form of employee misconduct that may result in disciplinary action. Sexual harassment also constitutes sex discrimination, which is a prohibited personnel practice, when it affects continued employment, promotion potential, or any other issues related to the individual's employment.

ORGANIZATION OF THE WATER RESOURCES DIVISION



• National facility administered by the office shown

July 1, 1993

ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS OF PRINCIPAL UNITS

The functions of all the principal units of the WRD are described in the following section. The organization chart on the preceding page shows how these units relate to each other.

Chief Hydrologist and Associate Chief Hydrologist

The Chief Hydrologist, assisted by the Associate Chief Hydrologist, has the overall responsibility for planning and managing the water-resources programs of the USGS. A program officer, who is the WRD focus for Congressional budgets, reports directly to the Chief Hydrologist.

Assistant Chief Hydrologist for Operations

The Assistant Chief Hydrologist for Operations advises on the establishment of policy in budgetary, accounting, human resources, program status, and technical matters; provides administrative and technical services to operational offices in support of their programs; manages the Federal-State Cooperative Program and Technical Support Program budgets; and directs the Federal Data-Collection Program and instrument development, including satellite-data relay activities.

Branch of Administrative Management Systems

The Branch of Administrative Management Systems provides for the selection, development, adaptation and enhancement of all administrative systems software for the WRD including operating and telecommunications systems, compilers, assemblers, utilities, and data-management systems. The Branch has the overall responsibility for administrative system design projects requiring collaboration with the various offices within the Office of the Assistant Chief Hydrologist for Operations. It also provides consultation on administrative, operational software systems that need revision and modification, and conducts feasibility studies of current data-base applications.

Branch of Administrative Services

The Branch of Administrative Services provides advice and consultation to WRD management on administrative functions. The Branch integrates and disseminates administrative regulations, policies, and procedures to all personnel of the WRD. The Branch provides advice to the Assistant Chief in review and approval of financial plans, financial data, and supporting schedules for budget estimates; advice related to rate of expenditures and resultant adjustments needed in financial plans, both short and long range; budgetary effects of personnel requirements; and future budget needs to ensure stability of the WRD. The Branch provides technical advice to the Financial Operations and Reporting Section, and supervises the activities of the General Services Section.

Branch of Instrumentation

The Branch of Instrumentation provides support to WRD management in the development and provision of hydrologic instruments. Branch responsibilities are divided between two major activities: the Data Relay Project coordinates the development and operation of communications technology for the collection of hydrologic data through earth-orbiting satellites, and the provision of such data to the WRD automated data-processing systems; and the Hydrologic Instrumentation Facility (HIF). The Branch maintains liaison with other agencies and the private sector in the development of new data-collection instruments.

Hydrologic Instrumentation Facility

The Hydrologic Instrumentation Facility is responsible for identification of needs, development of technical specifications, design or development of specialized interfaces, contracts and procurement, testing and evaluation, specialized field applications, repair and calibration, quality control and assurance, and storage and distribution of hydrologic instruments.

Branch of Human Resources Management Support

The Branch of Human Resources Management Support evaluates staffing patterns and needs for redistribution of human resources and recruitment of technical and support personnel; analyzes organizational structure and recommends changes to meet mission requirements more efficiently; inventories existing skills and training needs based on present and future programs; and develops training to meet program requirements. The Branch provides advice to supervisors on human resources management responsibilities and regulations, and develops and interprets policy on recruiting, staffing, position classification, incentive awards, pay management, disciplinary actions, troubled-employee counseling, performance appraisal, labor-management relations, and equal employment opportunity. The Branch manages the WRD automated Career Documentation Profile (CDP), and serves as a focal point in the WRD on matters of national security.

Branch of Operational Support

The Branch of Operational Support provides Regional, field, and project offices the assistance, guidance, and information on technical and administrative matters related to program execution; recommends and interprets policy concerning field operations; and provides guidance for operational improvement to meet WRD objectives more efficiently and effectively. The Branch is the principal advisor to WRD management in matters related to the execution of the Federal program of Collection of Basic Records (CBR), ensuring that WRD priorities for data collection are met within the Federal funds allotted. The Branch also provides special assistance to the Chief Hydrologist on WRD responsibilities relating to the International Joint Commissions (Canada and Mexico), and several Interstate Commissions and Compacts; and develops, and evaluates the application of, safety policies for the WRD.

Branch of Planning Support

The Branch of Planning Support provides advice and consultation to WRD officials on broad phases of planning of programs as they relate to the preparation of budget documents, including program descriptions and multi-year funding plans required in the annual budgeting sequence, and develops planning procedures and guidelines to assist in the detailed planning activities of WRD Headquarters staff members, Regional Hydrologists, and District and Project Chiefs.

Assistant Chief Hydrologist for Scientific Information Management

The Assistant Chief Hydrologist for Scientific Information Management advises on the development of policy and programs related to the production and dissemination of scientific and general-interest publications; the development of methods and procedures for processing, storing, retrieving, and disseminating water data collected by the WRD field organization, through the computerized Distributed Information System (DIS) and the National Water Information System (NWIS); and programs such as the National Water Data Exchange (NAWDEX) and the Water Resources Scientific Information Centers (WRSIC) that assist users in determining the availability of water data and related information from the Federal government. The Assistant Chief also manages programs that assist in both information and technology transfer, and programs that are related to compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Superfund surveys.

Branch of Scientific Publications

The Branch of Scientific Publications is responsible for reviewing and approving technical publications; providing guidance on preparing and processing technical reports; managing report printing and distribution; enunciating publications policy; responding to public inquiries; and preparing documents and graphics related to WRD activities for use by WRD management.

Branch of Computer Technology

The Branch of Computer Technology is responsible for the design, installation, maintenance, and operation of the national DIS; for providing technical guidance to the WRD operating programs in the use of computer technology; for managing the national water data bases in NWIS; and for developing new data-management methods and techniques.

Branch of Water Information Transfer

The Branch of Water Information Transfer is responsible for the development and operation of user-services programs for the transfer of water data and information from within and outside the USGS to the

user community, including management of the NAWDEX, WRSIC, and information transfer assistance throughout the WRD. The Branch is responsible for coordination and review of USGS activities related to compliance with NEPA.

Assistant Chief Hydrologist for Research and External Coordination

The Assistant Chief Hydrologist for Research and External Coordination exercises principal responsibility for the planning and development of National Research Programs, both in-house and those authorized by the provisions of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984. This office also directs the international aspects of research and investigative programs, and supports WRD activities related to global climate change.

Office of Hydrologic Research

The Office of Hydrologic Research develops policy governing the National Research Program (NRP) identifies priorities in ecology, geomorphology and sediment transport, ground-water hydrology, surface-water hydrology, ground-water chemistry, and surface-water chemistry discipline areas that should be included in programming and planning for WRD's research; oversees the execution of research in the NRP according to priorities; and evaluates the final products. The office also organizes the annual review cycle for all WRD employees evaluated under the Research Grade Evaluation Guide (RGEG). The Chiefs of the three Branches of Regional Research report to the Chief, Office of Hydrologic Research.

Branches of Regional Research

Each Chief, Branch of Regional Research, represents the Chief of the Office of Hydrologic Research in the technical direction of the NRP in the three regional Branches (Eastern, Central and Western). The Branches plan, develop, and conduct research to provide knowledge in areas of deficiency; and promote the incorporation of new findings and concepts into general WRD programs, interacting closely with the Regional Hydrologist and staff to assure effective linkage between the National Research Program and other WRD programs.

Office of External Research

The Office of External Research administers and coordinates research outside of the Federal Government authorized by the Water Resources Research Act of 1984. This includes the State Water Resources Research Institute Program which operates multi-disciplinary research, education, and information transfer programs within the university systems of 54 States and Territories.

Assistant Chief Hydrologist for Program Coordination and Technical Support

The Assistant Chief Hydrologist for Program Coordination and Technical Support exercises principal responsibility for the planning and development of integrated national programs of hydrologic investigations. This group provides technical advice and support to the WRD, including direction of quality-assurance efforts for scientific and data-collection activities; oversees the development of new approaches and methods; and provides oversight of hydrologic training programs.

Office of the Deputy Assistant Chief Hydrologist for National Water-Quality Assessment (NAWQA)

This Office plans and implements this Federal program. The NAWQA program's goals are to describe the status and trends in the quality of a large, representative part of the Nation's ground- and surface-water resources to provide a sound understanding of the natural and human factors that affect the quality of these resources. The Office provides guidance and technical leadership to Regional Hydrologists and District management on matters pertaining to the conduct of the NAWQA program; serves as a liaison with other Federal and non-Federal organizations for the purposes of coordinating related water-quality assessment activities; and furnishes Congress, policymakers, and resource managers with water-quality information needed to address National and regional issues.

Branch of Quality Assurance

The Branch of Quality Assurance develops recommendations and guidelines for the quality assurance (QA) of laboratory and field activities in the WRD. This includes the development of QA plans,

documentation, auditing and QA training for field-related activities, laboratory performance, and data handling and storage. The Branch also coordinates WRD activities related to the USGS Quality Improvement Concepts process and application of Total Quality Management principles.

Branch of Systems Analyses

The Branch of Systems Analysis provides leadership in the application of the techniques of systems analysis to hydrologic problems and in the inter-relations between hydrology and socioeconomics. It provides technical advice to Regional and District staffs on statistical and deterministic approaches to data interpretation, conducts independent evaluations of the efficiency of the WRD operations and the effectiveness of its products, and assists WRD management in the most efficient use of resources to achieve scientific goals.

Branch of Water-Use information

The Branch of Water-Use Information is responsible for leadership and direction of the National Water-Use Information Program of the USGS and develops and manages the Program in cooperation with municipal, State, and Federal agencies. In addition, the Branch provides technical guidance and support to about 50 hydrologists engaged in implementation of the Program in the 50 States and Puerto Rico.

Yucca Mountain Project Branch

The Yucca Mountain Project Branch provides broad technical direction and coordination of all USGS investigations aimed at determining the geologic and hydrologic characteristics and suitability of the Nation's only planned high-level nuclear-waste repository on the Nevada Test Site, near Mercury, Nevada. The branch also provides technical guidance to the Department of Energy (DOE) Nevada Operations Office and its contractors concerning geologic and hydrologic aspects of repository-site evaluation.

Office of Ground Water

The Office of Ground Water provides leadership in the development of techniques for the collection, analysis, and interpretation of ground-water data. This Office provides policy advice to the Chief Hydrologist and technical advice to the Regional Hydrologists and District supervisors on matters pertaining to the Nation's ground-water resources; maintains a system of quality control to assure the technical excellence of field programs and personnel with respect to ground water; is responsible for technology transfer from the National Research Program to WRD ground-water data and investigative activities throughout the Nation; and participates in the establishment of priorities for ground-water research.

Branch of Nuclear-Waste Hydrology

The Branch of Nuclear-Waste Hydrology reports to the Chief, Office of Ground Water, and provides technical direction and coordination to the handling and disposal of radioactive materials and their impact on the geohydrologic environment. Activities are nationwide in scope but exclude direct management of investigations relating to nuclear-waste disposal on or near the Nevada Test Site. The Branch provides specialized consulting services to the DOE, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency, and other Federal agencies on the hydrologic or geologic aspects of the use, development, and management of radioactive materials. It supports the USGS key role, in accordance with the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, in the national high-level nuclear waste repository program led by DOE. It also is responsible for providing earth-science information, and technical assistance to States and other Federal agencies in the management of low-level nuclear waste.

Office of Surface Water

The Office of Surface Water provides leadership in the development of techniques for the collection, analysis, and interpretation of surface-water data. The Office provides policy-level advice to the Chief Hydrologist, and technical advice to the Regional Hydrologists and District supervisors on matters pertaining to the Nation's surface-water resources; maintains a system of quality control to assure the technical excellence of field programs and personnel with respect to

surface water; is responsible for technology transfer from the Research Program to WRD surface-water data and investigative activities throughout the Nation; and participates in the establishment of priorities for surface-water research.

Office of Water Quality

The Office of Water Quality provides leadership in the development of techniques for the collection, analysis, and interpretation of water-quality data. This Office provides policy advice to the Chief Hydrologist, and technical advice to the Regional Hydrologists and District supervisors on matters pertaining to the quality of the Nation's water resources; maintains a system of control to assure the technical excellence of field programs and personnel with respect to quality of water; is responsible for technology transfer from the research program to the WRD water-quality data and investigative activities throughout the Nation; and participates in the establishment of priorities for water-quality research.

Branch of Analytical Services

The Branch of Analytical Services reports to the Chief, Office of Water Quality and is the focal point for water-quality laboratory analytical services within the WRD. It directs methods development and technology transfer activities; manages laboratory operations throughout the WRD; provides liaison with other commercial, private, and government laboratories; and develops, monitors, and evaluates laboratory analytical service contracts ensuring adherence to quality-control standards.

Branch of Toxic Substances Hydrology

The Branch of Toxic Substances Hydrology provides the hydrologic information necessary to improve waste-disposal practices and to help mitigate surface-water and ground-water problems. The Branch focuses on the occurrence, movement, and fate of toxic substances in the hydrologic system by studying the major types of contaminants in ground and surface waters, and by developing new methods to assess the extent of contamination.

Office of Atmospheric Deposition Analysis

The Office of Atmospheric Deposition Analysis carries out USGS responsibilities under the Energy Security Act of 1980. This Office manages the program related to wet and dry deposition monitoring, aquatic and terrestrial effects of acidification, the chemical analysis of acid precipitation, and the effects on materials; provides policy and technical guidance to bureau officials on matters pertaining to atmospheric deposition; serves as liaison with other government agencies and cooperators involved in acid-precipitation related programs; furnishes Congress, policymakers, and managers with scientific information in support of natural resource and environmental pollution policy formation; and serves (as requested) as departmental representative on interagency committees concerned with acid-rain issues.

Assistant Chief Hydrologist for Water Assessment and Data Coordination

The Assistant Chief Hydrologist for Water Assessment and Data Coordination exercises principal responsibility for facilitating the development and formulation of WRD long-range plans to meet emerging water problems. This group assists program managers in establishing program goals and objectives and coordinating program activities with other Federal agencies; manages and directs the USGS Water Resources Assessment Program; identifies existing and emerging National and regional issues related to the availability, quality, use, and management of water resources; develops and maintains information and statistics that quantify and describe national water conditions; prepares and publishes the National Water Summary; and oversees the coordination of national water-data acquisition activities, both Federal and non-Federal, through the Office of Water Data Coordination.

Office of Water Data Coordination

The Office of Water Data Coordination provides overall leadership for coordination of Federal activities in the acquisition of certain water data. The Office conducts special studies and interagency activities to identify water-data requirements; improve coordination procedures; and obtain information needed to evaluate, plan, and design

national water-data networks. The Office acquires, evaluates, and distributes information on existing and proposed legislation which relates to water-resources programs and plans. Responsibilities include providing the lead role in coordinating USGS water-related activities with other Federal and non-Federal organizations at the national level. The Office provides executive secretariat for water-data advisory committees and advises the WRD, USGS, Department of the Interior, and the Office of Management and Budget on water-data activities and plans.

Branch of the National Water Summary

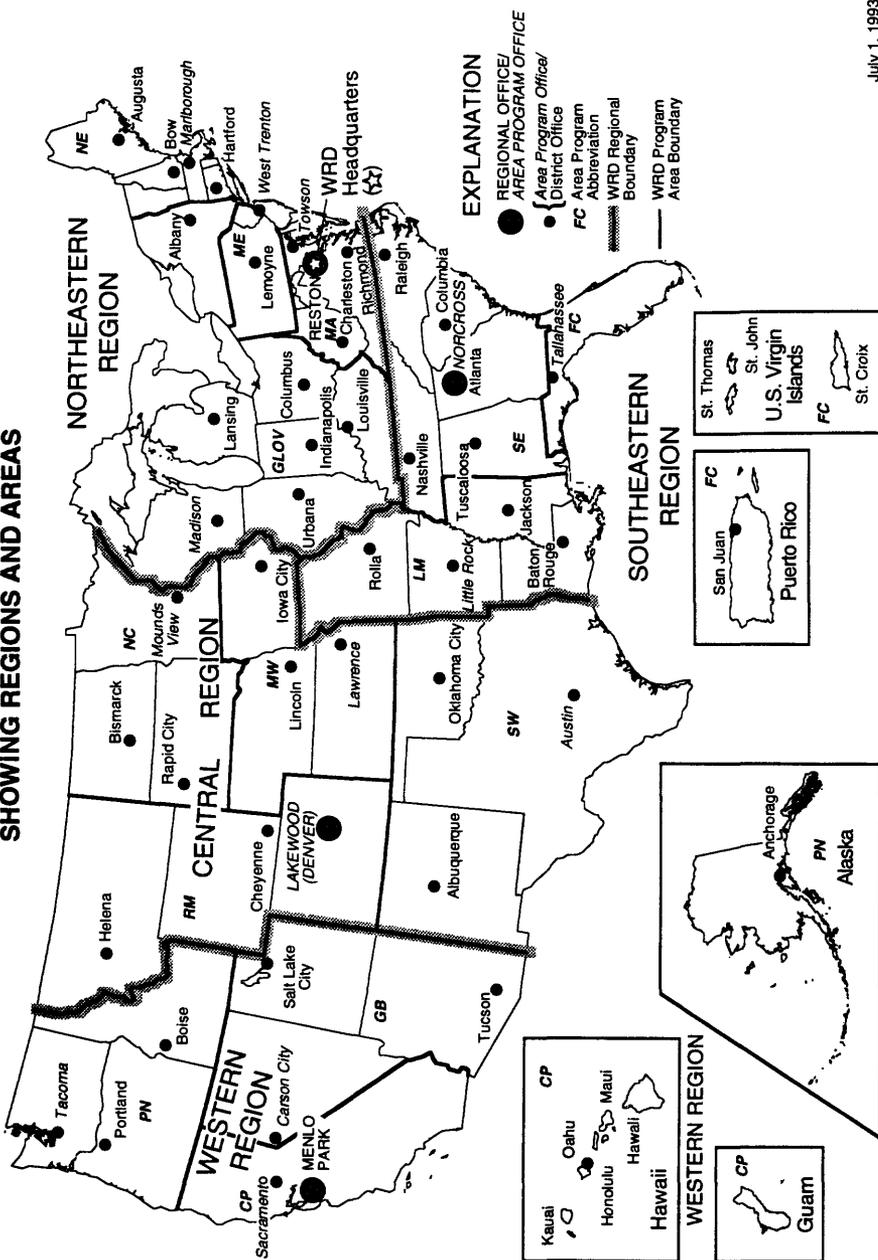
The Branch of the National Water Summary collects and interprets information about the availability, quantity, quality, and use of water resources and organizes it to describe the condition of the Nation's water resources for National, State, and local officials, and the general public. Publication of "National Water Summary" reports began in 1984. Other products of the program are maps, reports, and statistics to assist other Federal agencies in their assessments of water resources.

Regions

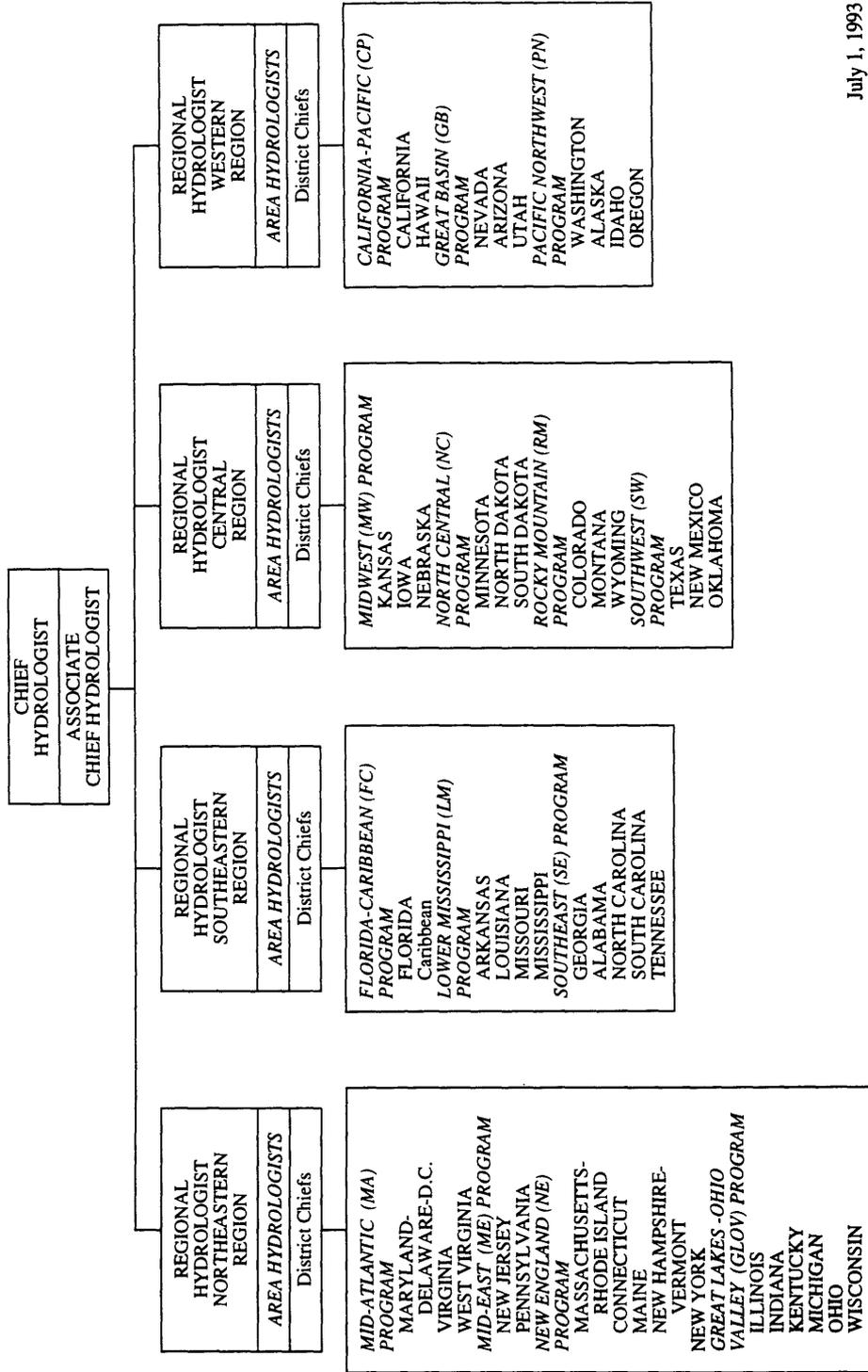
The field organization of the WRD consists of four Regions, each with several Program Areas that encompass the of States as shown on the accompanying map of the United States on page 28 and organization diagram on page 29. Each Regional Hydrologist, whose staff includes program managers, technical specialists, and administrative support personnel with line authority from the Chief Hydrologist, has the following responsibilities:

- Directs operational functions of Regional water-resources programs and projects, as well as administrative activities incident thereto, in accordance with programs, policies, objectives, and standards established by the Chief Hydrologist and staff;
- Serves as WRD representative on the USGS committee for the Region and acts as advisor to USGS representatives on Department of the Interior field committees and on interagency groups in the Region;
- Represents the Chief Hydrologist in negotiations and dealings with other organizations and committees within and outside the USGS on external matters of common concern to the WRD and, on such matters, has wide latitude for the exercise of independent judgment;

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY WATER RESOURCES DIVISION OFFICES SHOWING REGIONS AND AREAS



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- As a WRD line management official, reviews programs and project proposals originating within the Region and makes recommendations to the Chief Hydrologist;
- Acts as special liaison for the WRD with scientific and technical societies in the Region and with agency representatives to assure mutual understanding of objectives, policies, and programs.

Area Hydrologists

The Area Hydrologist is an extension of the Regional Hydrologist, with delegated authority for the management District Programs in their Area and have the delegated authority for the supervision of District Chiefs in their Areas. Each Area Hydrologist is responsible for between 2 and 6 States. Their principal focus is on the enhancement of technical capability and integration of programs in Districts under their direction. They are not involved in day-to-day operations and administrative issues. Area Hydrologists are located at an existing office in one of the Districts for which he/she has responsibility.

Districts

The Districts are single or multi-state units whose Chiefs are responsible for the planning, direction, and execution of data collection and hydrologic studies in their respective Districts. The District Chief maintains a staff of professional scientific and technical personnel who conduct these activities. Each District typically has one or more subdistrict and field offices that report to the District Chief. Both Headquarters and Regional offices provide support for the activities in the Districts.

National Training Center

The National Training Center reports administratively to the Regional Hydrologist, Central Region and is located in the Denver Federal Center at Lakewood, Colorado. The Training Center is used by the entire USGS to transfer earth-science information to its personnel and to update their skills. Training also is provided to personnel from other Federal, State, and local agencies, and to foreign scientists and water managers. The Training Center has classrooms, video-tape and closed-circuit television systems, and computer and laboratory equipment.

PROGRAM FUNDING

Almost all funds to support the work of the WRD are derived from three principal sources:

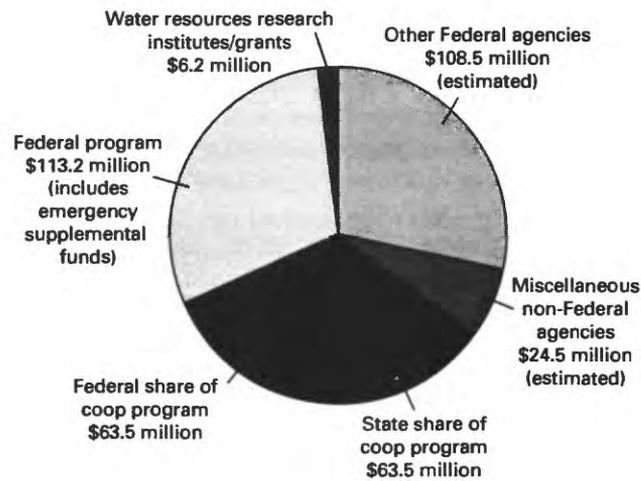
- **Federal Program** - Funds for the Federal Program are appropriated by the Congress, and are specifically identified in the annual USGS Budget. These funds are used to support research, data collection, high-priority topical programs, the coordination of all Federal programs related to collection of water data, and internal support services.
- **State Water Resources Research Institutes** - Federal funds are appropriated by Congress and used to match those from 54 State Water Resources Research Institutes. These funds are not used by the WRD, but pass through the WRD for use by others.
- **Federal-State Cooperative Program** - Federal funds are appropriated by the Congress and used for as much as half the costs of a variety of hydrologic data-collection activities and water-resources investigations in cooperation with State, Regional, and local agencies, the District of Columbia, and Indian Tribes. The WRD represents the National responsibilities and the cooperating agencies represent State and local interests. Under this Program, the WRD performs most of the work on behalf of the cooperating agencies. This leads to a more uniform and comparable National information base for the entire water community.
- **Other Federal Agencies Program** - In this program, the funds are transferred to the WRD as reimbursement for work performed at the request of another Federal agency.

Other sources of WRD funding are unmatched reimbursable funds from State and local government agencies, funds from Federal Energy Regulatory Commission licensees, and funds from miscellaneous non-Federal agencies. Funding from the various sources for fiscal year 1993 is shown on the pie chart.

**Fiscal year 1993 funding for the U.S. Geological Survey
water programs
\$379.4 million**

**Direct appropriations to
U.S. Geological Survey
\$182.9 million**

**Reimbursable from others
\$196.5 million**



PUBLICATION PROGRAM

The act of Congress that created the USGS also established the obligation to make public the results of its data collection, investigations, and research. These results almost always are compiled into reports that are conveyed to the public as books, articles, or maps. Thus, information is WRD's most important tangible product. Reports are expected to be of the highest technical and editorial quality, without bias, on time, and follow established policy guidelines.

Publication Policies

The integrity of the USGS was established, and continues to be maintained, because of its technical excellence and a policy of objectivity and impartiality. Some of the most important technical and policy guidelines are discussed below:

- We do not recommend anything; if possible, we present alternatives; although we may describe the probable response of a hydrologic system (to a real or hypothetical stress), we do not make management recommendations;
- We present only facts and unbiased interpretations of those facts;
- We maintain a neutral position regarding cooperators, consultants, sister agencies, and other scientists; neither praise nor criticize;;
- We restrict our investigations to the public domain and do not compete with the private sector; consulting-type investigations are avoided;
- We do not compete (or appear to compete) with sister agencies, state organizations, or the local/municipal sector;
- We release our reports simultaneously to all interested parties; release usually is announced by a notice in the press;
- We give proper credit for financial cooperation, technical assistance, and use of copyrighted material.

Publication Series

The WRD has a large number of publication series from which to choose. The choice of series almost always is determined by the anticipated audience of the report and the format of the technical material to be published. General features of each publication series are summarized below:

Formal Federal-Series Publications

- **Water-Supply Paper**--Significant interpretive results of hydrologic investigations that are considered to be of broad interest; book format; possible use of color; possible maps in pocket; priced for sale by the US Government Printing Office (GPO);
- **Professional Paper**--Comprehensive or topical report on any Earth-science subject of interest to multidiscipline scientific audiences; book format; possible use of color; possible maps in pocket; priced for sale by the GPO;
- **Bulletin**--Significant interpretive results of Earth-science investigations of broad interest, including computer applications; book format; possible use of color; priced for sale by the GPO;
- **Circular**--For timely publication of geohydrologic or programmatic information of national or international scope of ephemeral interest; book format; possible use of color; free;
- **Techniques of Water-Resources Investigations**--For description of hydrologic techniques; book format; priced for sale by the GPO;
- **Hydrologic Investigations Atlas**--For presentation of hydrologic and geohydrologic information; very flexible map format; color used as needed; sold by the USGS;
- **Miscellaneous Investigations Map**--For geohydrologic and Earth-science information; flexible format; sold by the USGS;
- **Miscellaneous Field Studies Map**--For presentation of geohydrologic and related information to geologically- oriented audiences; map format; limited distribution and availability; sold by the USGS;
- **Leaflets, booklets, brochures**--"General-interest" publication series - for simplified presentation of facts about WRD programs or findings of studies, and for education of the public; priced for sale in bulk by the GPO, 50 copies, or less, free.

- Annual State Water-Data Report--Water-year data on streamflow, ground-water levels, and quality of water for each State, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands, and Trust Territories; available at cost of printing from the National Technical Information Service;
- National Water Conditions--Monthly news release summarizing the water situation; free to requesters;
- USGS Yearbook--One chapter summarizes significant activities of the WRD for general audiences; priced for sale by the GPO.

Informal Federal-Series Publications

- Water-Resources Investigations Report--Comprehensive or topical reports and maps, mainly of local interest, or short-term interest; possible use of color; sold by the USGS;
- Open-file Reports--For data reports or interpretive reports that are awaiting publication in a formal series; book or map format; sold by the USGS.

Outside Publications

- State Series--Usually similar to USGS Circulars, Bulletins, Water-Resources Investigations Reports, and Hydrologic Atlases; usually sales items;
- Technical Journals--Usually short technical papers for peer audiences;
- Trade Journals--Usually short papers for general audiences;
- Administrative Reports to Other Federal Agencies(OFA)-- Property of the OFA, and possibly unavailable outside that agency.

Publication Availability

The Survey announces the availability of all reports to all interested individuals on equal terms. It does not make any report available to anyone until copies are in depositories and have been advertised by news releases or listed in "New Publications of the U.S. Geological Survey." Reports are available for purchase or inspection at:

- U.S. Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D.C.;
- Depositories specified by press releases or listed in "New Publications;"

- Books and Open-File Services Section at the Denver Federal Center, Lakewood, Colorado;
- National Technical Information Service Springfield, Virginia;
- GPO depository libraries Nationwide.

PERSONAL SAFETY/INJURIES

It is the policy of the USGS to provide safe and healthful working conditions, and to prevent injuries and work-related illnesses to its employees. It is the USGS policy also to protect its property from damage and to provide for the safety of the public when using USGS facilities. Employees are encouraged to express freely any reluctance or hesitation to participate in an activity they regard as hazardous.

Employees are expected to observe and follow all work procedures, oral and written, required for the safe performance of their assigned tasks so as to protect their own safety and that of their co-workers and the public. Employees are responsible for reporting all unsafe conditions to their supervisor for corrective action. They are responsible for prompt reporting of all the facts and circumstances surrounding any accident or incident that results in personal injury, illness, or property damage.

Willful failure to follow prescribed instructions and regulations or failure to use required safety clothing and equipment may result in disciplinary action. The decision to initiate disciplinary action is made by management in consultation with the Servicing Personnel Office. It is not the duty of the Safety Officer to recommend disciplinary action.

TRAVEL

Employees may be required to travel as a part of the performance of their assigned official duties. When travel is required, the following policies, responsibilities, and procedures will apply:

- Authorization for travel is limited to travel that is essential to the transaction of official business; travel must be authorized in advance by a designated official, usually a line supervisor who is acquainted with the employee's need to travel;
- Travel during non duty hours will not be required of an employee; however in some cases, it is recognized that no amount of planning or scheduling can prevent this; in such cases, the employee may be compensated;
- Mode of travel will be by the most expeditious means of transportation practicable and be commensurate with the nature and purpose of the duties of the employee requiring such travel;
- Employees traveling on official business are expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business;
- The Chief, Office of Financial Management, is responsible for developing and implementing policies and procedures relative to the management of travel by all USGS employees;
- Officials, to whom authority to authorize or approve travel is delegated, are responsible for exercising this delegation in compliance with all regulations;
- Per diem allowances will be paid for official travel except when it is determined that reimbursement should be on the basis of actual subsistence expenses; the per-diem allowance is intended to cover all lodging, meals, and normal personal-maintenance expenses incurred throughout the day; the rates differ according to geographic location, and are reviewed and revised regularly;
- All employee travel on official business is at the expense of the Government; travel may be by common carrier, Government-owned conveyance, privately owned conveyance, or commercially rented vehicle (or possible combination); the mode of travel will be at the discretion of the government; under very special circumstances, an individual may be allowed to travel on expenses from a non-Federal source.

Employees in travel status, or those expecting to be in travel status, two or more times during the fiscal year are encouraged to apply for the Diner's Club Government Charge Card. Those employees who receive Diner's Club cards are expected to use them to pay for all major expenses connected with official Government travel. Diner's Club cards are issued in the employee's name, and the employee is responsible for all charges incurred. Use of the card is for the convenience of both Government and traveler - the Government does not need to issue a cash advance for travel and the traveler does not need to carry large sums of cash.

In case of a change-of-headquarters move, the gaining office will be responsible for all aspects of the move. However, the WRD encourages cooperation between the losing and the gaining offices to facilitate a smooth transition for the employee involved in the move. The employee involved in the change-of-headquarters move should contact the gaining Administrative Officer upon arrival in the new city to report the actual date of arrival in the new location (not the first day of work). This ensures that the effective date is relayed to the servicing personnel office for completion of the personnel action.

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

This section of the handbook discusses the relation of the employee to his/her job and the means by which the Government ensures fair treatment of all employees. The employee is reminded at this point that rules and regulations can change, and sometimes rapidly. If questions arise, it always is advisable for the employee to consult the local Administrative Officer or the Servicing Personnel Office; those offices are located at Reston, Virginia; Atlanta, Georgia; Rolla, Missouri; Denver, Colorado; and Menlo Park, California.

Human Resources Management encompasses the full range of functions carried out by the Personnel and Equal Opportunity Offices. The WRD advocates a single, sound human resources program applied fairly and without discrimination to all its employees. The WRD emphasis on effective outreach and recruiting and on employee development is well known in the USGS.

The principal tool that influences many management decisions concerning the development and utilization of the WRD human resources is the WRD Career Documentation Profile (CDP). The CDP is a comprehensive, automated management tool that includes basic information on each employee, a history of assignments, education and training, awards and honors, an autobiography and bibliography, performance appraisal information, an evaluation of specialized knowledges and skills, and a plan for personal development. Employees are strongly encouraged to keep their CDP's current to ensure sufficient personal data to assist supervisors in their human-resources management responsibilities.

Position Classification and Pay Management

Position classification is the process of evaluating the relative worth or responsibility level of the work assigned by management to ensure that employees receive equal pay for substantially equal work. It is the policy of the USGS to observe formal classification principles, to promote the development of adequate position standards, and to maintain classification consistency and validity. This maintains equal rates of pay for substantially equal responsibility and performance.

Classification

Each employee is assigned to a position for which his/her education, skills, and experience are appropriate, and at a pay rate that equates to the level of responsibility needed and defined by management. A position classification specialist in one of the Servicing Personnel Offices evaluates the level of responsibility defined by management against classification standards issued by the Federal Office of Personnel Management to determine the appropriate title, series, and grade (pay rate) of the position.

Classification provides equal pay for substantially equal work by placing positions in their proper series and grade. Positions may be assigned to any one of more than 500 different series depending on the nature of the work and knowledge required to perform it. Positions in the General Schedule (GS) define difficulty and responsibility at 15 different grade levels.

Occupational groups combine positions broadly by occupational fields or similar kinds of work. The first step in classification of positions is to segregate them into groups. The grades include all classes of positions which are sufficiently equivalent as to level of difficulty and responsibility, and required qualifications to warrant inclusion within one range of rates of the basic General Schedule, even though they may differ as to kinds of work. Pay is based on the position's place in the General Schedule - with the higher grades paying the higher salaries.

Position Description

Every employee has a position description - a written narrative of the general duties that the employee is expected to perform in that particular position. The position description defines the position title, series, and grade through the classification process described above.

◦ It is important to note that employees are hired to perform a specific set of duties for a specific amount of pay, and that the duties and the pay are a "package" deal. Changes in grade that drive changes in pay will come about only when the actual work performed in the position is of greater difficulty and increased responsibility than originally assigned.

At any time, any employee may appeal the group or grade of the position currently occupied. The USGS also may appeal any classification decision made by the Department or the Office of Personnel about a General Schedule position in the WRD.

Full-Performance Level

The Full Performance Level is the highest grade level to which an employee may be promoted through successive non-competitive promotions if: the employee is one of a group in which all employees are given grade-building experience; the employee demonstrates ability to perform at the next higher level; and if there is enough work at that grade level for all employees in the group to perform. This is commonly referred to as the "journeyman" level.

Position Management

Position management involves the structuring of positions, functions, and work groups in a manner that will achieve the best organizational goals of efficiency, productivity, and effectiveness within approved resource levels. The position-management program is designed to assist management officials to accomplish these goals through the identification, prevention, and elimination of: unnecessary organizational fragmentation, excessive layering or uses of deputies and assistants, poorly designed jobs, and inappropriate span of control.

It is USGS policy that: all positions are carefully planned, structured, and staffed to achieve the most economical expenditure levels; managers and supervisors are assigned specific roles in the operation of the position management system; and there is continual coordination among managers, the personnel and equal opportunity offices, management analysts, and budget staffs to assure efficient planning and utilization of resources, tailored to accomplishing the specific missions and programs of the USGS.

Within the USGS, the Director has the overall responsibility for an effective position-management program. Responsibility is explicitly delegated to key line managers - the Chief Hydrologist in the WRD. Immediate responsibility for the day-to-day conduct of position management is assigned to all line managers and supervisors.

By law, positions are reviewed each year, usually by the first level supervisor. Job structure, organization, staffing, management relationships, and related management considerations are reviewed as well.

Pay Systems

The principal pay systems used in the WRD are:

- Executive Schedule (ES) for the Senior Executive Service Members;
- Senior Level (SL or ST) for research scientists above grade 15;
- Performance Management and Recognition System (GM) for managers and supervisors at or above grade 13;
- General Schedule (GS) for professional, administrative, and support personnel;
- Federal Wage System (WG) for those employees in the trades and crafts.

The GS, GM, and WG systems are described more fully below.

General Schedule

The General Schedule has 15 grades with 10 steps in each grade. New appointments to the Federal Service will be made at the grade appropriate to the work that needs to be done, taking into consideration the qualifications of the candidate, the candidate's previous rate of pay, and special need for services. Grade levels may be adjusted annually (or sooner at the lower grades) up to full- performance level, if in the supervisor's opinion the employee is performing at the next higher grade. Employees should refer to the latest pay charts for exact pay-scale information.

Employees who are paid at a rate less than the maximum step of their grade (step 10) and who maintain an acceptable level of competence, certified by their immediate supervisor, are eligible for within-grade pay increases (also called step increases). These pay increases require a waiting period that differs according to time in the previous step. Step increases are in fact promotions within grade. Employees on temporary appointments are not eligible for within-grade increases.

Federal Wage System

The Federal Wage System (FWS) is divided into 3 categories:

- Non-supervisory has 15 grades with 5 steps;
- Leader has 15 grades with 5 steps;
- Supervisory has 19 grades with 5 steps.

The FWS covers positions occupied by employees in recognized trades or crafts, or other skilled mechanical crafts; and in unskilled, semiskilled, or manual labor occupations; and by other employees including foremen and supervisors where trade, craft, or work experience and knowledge are a paramount requirement. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) designates a lead agency in each wage area to review and establish wage schedules at approximately annual intervals. All FWS employees within that wage area are paid according to the lead-agency findings.

Performance Management and Recognition System

The Performance and Management Recognition System (PMRS) is a pay-for-performance system for managers and supervisors in the GM-13 through GM-15 grades. Under the PMRS, employees rated as "fully successful" and above receive the full General Schedule adjustment annually. Employees rated at "minimally successful" receive one-half of the GS adjustment. These adjustments are at the discretion of Congress and the President. Employees rated "unacceptable" receive no increase. The PMRS provides for increases to base pay in the form of Merit Increases, which are based on the level of performance and the position in the pay range.

Appeals

An employee may appeal at any time the title, series, or grade of his/her position, or the coverage of his/her position, by a pay plan. An appeal may be filed with the Headquarters Personnel Office of the USGS; the Office of the Secretary, Department of the Interior; or directly with the Office of Personnel Management.

Fair Labor Standards Act

The Fair Labor Standards Act was amended in 1974 to bring Federal employees under its coverage. The significant provisions of the

Act pertain to the minimum wage rate, compensation for overtime work, and restrictions on the use of child labor. Overtime compensation is of the most interest to the Federal employee.

Overtime is work that is officially ordered and approved in advance that exceeds 40 hours in pay status in a workweek, or exceeds 8 hours in pay status in a day. Overtime is ordered and authorized only in unusual situations where work cannot be completed during normal working hours. It is ordered only when it is in the best interest of the government and when funds are available to pay for this overtime work.

Not all Federal employees are covered under the Act. In general, employees in the middle and upper executive, administrative, support, and professional grades are exempt from provisions of the Act. Most other employees are covered. The Service Position Classification Specialist makes the exempt/non-exempt determination.

Hazard Pay Differential

The USGS has established a schedule of pay differentials for **irregular or intermittent** duty involving unusual physical hardship or hazard. When an employee believes that the duties performed meet the criteria for payment of hazard pay differential, the employee may initiate a claim for hazardous-duty pay. The Chief Hydrologist has the authority to approve payment of the requested differential. Hazardous duty pay is 25 percent more than the employee's basic pay.

Types of Appointments

Career Conditional and Career

A Career Conditional appointment - sometimes referred to as permanent - is limited to the first three years of employment. During the first year, the new employee is said to be "probationary," serving a trial and evaluation period, and is not subject to all the job-protection rights of other Civil Service System employees. At the end of 3 years of satisfactory, creditable, and substantially continuous service, the employee is converted to career tenure. Should the career conditional employee resign from Federal service, he/she has reinstatement eligibility for 3 years. Once career tenure is attained, the reinstatement

eligibility is unlimited. An employee with veteran's preference has reinstatement eligibility forever, regardless of the tenure held at the time of resignation.

Temporary

A Temporary position is one with a limited number of hours or with a specified expiration date (and lasting for less than a year). The appointment may be terminated by management (with a 2-week written notice) at any time.

Temporary limited appointments are used when management expects that there will be no permanent need for the position. Examples may include:

- Temporarily increasing the staff to meet a workload peak;
- Staffing continuing positions when future funding and workload levels are uncertain, or when it is anticipated that funding levels will be reduced or that the activity will be reorganized;
- Filling permanent jobs on a temporary basis to save them for eventual incumbency by permanent employees expected to be displaced from other parts of the organization or filling behind people on "temporary promotion," "temporary reassignment," "term promotion," etc.
- Filling vacancies under study for possible contracting out;
- Hiring to perform recurring seasonal work which is expected to last less than 6 months in a year.

Temporary limited appointments may be made from OPM registers (all grades), from vacancy announcements (GS-12 and below and all wage positions), by reinstatement, using noncompetitive appointment eligibility (Peace Corps, former legislative or judicial branch employees, etc.), or under provisions of the Veteran's Readjustment Act, handicapped authorities, etc. Individuals on temporary appointments are not eligible for promotion, reassignment, or transfer to other jobs.

Appointments can be extended in 1-year increments when the conditions under which the initial appointment were made still exist. Appointments may not extend beyond 4 years from the date of the initial appointment.

Term

A term appointment is a non-status appointment to a position in the competitive service for a specified period exceeding 1 year and lasting not more than 4 years. It is clearly not of a continuing nature and will terminate upon completion of the work. It has the following characteristics:

- Appointment is for carrying out special project work, staffing new programs for a limited duration, replacing permanent employees who have been temporarily assigned to another position, who are on extended leave, or who have temporarily entered military service, filling positions in activities undergoing contract review or which are in the process of being closed;
- Individuals on term appointments are eligible for promotion, detail, or reassignment to other positions which the agency determines appropriate for filling by term employment;
- Appointments must be made from OPM registers unless OPM has authorized the agency to make outside-the-register appointments.

Excepted

These positions are exempted from the competitive service by law or regulation. Some are limited to 1 year or less. Supervisory officials, as well as individual employees on these types of appointments need to be aware of the not-to-exceed dates and make plans accordingly. Some of these appointments may be renewed for an additional period, and those cases should be started through the personnel process at least a month in advance of the not-to-exceed date.

Limited Assignments

Temporary Promotion

This is the temporary change of an employee to a higher grade level. Temporary promotions may be made for a period of 120 days, non-competitive, or as long as 1 year competitive, and may be extended for an additional year with the approval of the bureau personnel officer. Temporary promotions beyond 2 years require OPM approval.

Term Promotion

Term promotions are those promotions that must not exceed 4 years and must be for a period more than 2 years. They may be for the following type of assignments:

- Positions of a project nature which will terminate upon completion of the project;
- Planned rotational assignments of experts in a specialized field to administrative or managerial positions.
- To fill temporarily a position that might be restructured due to reorganization.

Details and Temporary Reassignments

Details and temporary reassignments are assignments of an employee to a classified or unclassified position for a limited time. During this time, the employee continues to receive all salary and benefit entitlements as in his/her permanent position. At the end of the detail or temporary reassignment, the employee returns to the official position of record. Details and temporary reassignments are used to broaden employee experience as well as to maintain work continuity in critical positions when they are temporarily vacant, or extra work is required which is not expected to continue indefinitely. Some details may involve temporary promotions. In most cases details, temporary reassignments, or temporary promotions, may be made for as long as 120 days, without competitive procedures.

Merit Promotion

Every attempt is made to fill vacancies within the USGS by promotion of the best available candidate. Vacant positions that will be filled through competitive procedures are announced to eligible candidates through the Automated Vacancy Announcements Distribution System (AVADS). Employees qualified for the advertised position are urged to apply to fill the vacancy. Management officials also may nominate candidates for vacant positions. The Servicing Personnel Office screens all candidates to determine if they meet the basic qualifications for the job. Those candidates determined to be eligible for consideration are evaluated by a promotion committee against the advertised knowledges, abilities, skills, and other

characteristics (KASOCS) identified as mandatory or desirable by the supervisor of the position. Those candidates rated as best qualified are certified to the selecting official for personal interview. A selection to fill the vacant position is made from the list of best-qualified candidates.

Equal Employment Opportunity

The USGS broad aim is to provide equal opportunity in all phases of human-resources management including appointment, promotion, training, and job assignment for all qualified employees without regard to age, sex, race, creed, or physical or mental disability. The USGS is committed to:

- Foster human-resources policies and practices that will reward individual initiative in undertaking self-development;
- Endorse employee development through the recruitment and selection of employees with the motivation and potential for careers in the Federal service;
- Nurture career potential through training, skillful and understanding supervision, constructive performance evaluation, incentive awards, and objective selection of the "best qualified" for promotion or appointments;
- Create a workforce that is culturally diverse and a work environment that is in no way hostile to any group or class of individuals.

Equal opportunity in recruitment is promoted by wide public dissemination of Federal employment opportunities in the communities where hires are made - especially throughout the educational community. For professional and technical positions, affirmative-employment outreach has the long-term objective of motivating students to plan curricula around career opportunities in science, engineering, and mathematics.

Special Emphasis Programs

It is the policy of the Federal Government to afford equal opportunity in employment, promotion, and training to all qualified persons without regard to race, color, age, religion, sex, national origin, political preference, labor organization affiliation or non-affiliation, marital status, or non-disqualifying physical or mental disability. In

support of this policy, the USGS directs special efforts to particular groups such as women, minorities, the physically or mentally disabled, and the economically disadvantaged, in order to provide equal employment or advancement opportunities for members of these groups who might be unemployed or underemployed, and who are sometimes overlooked in our regular recruitment activities. The Federal Women's Program (FWP), the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) outreach effort, the Hispanic Employment Program (HEP), the Selective Placement Program for disabled persons, and the Veteran's Employment Program are examples of these formal Special Emphasis Programs.

Upward Mobility

Upward mobility is the systematic effort to provide specific career opportunities for employees in grades GS-9 and below (and equivalent levels) who have unused or underutilized skills in their present positions or occupations.

The Upward Mobility program provides opportunities for lower grade employees to advance and to perform at their potential. The program is designed to motivate employees and create an organizational climate conducive to high morale; contribute to the effective utilization of the work force; and provide a broader base for the selection of employees in technical, administrative, and professional positions. Management must evaluate all vacant positions for possible restructuring that might provide opportunities for employees with this potential to perform the duties of the position an opportunity to change career paths. Those positions are announced as competitive.

Employee Development

Training

It is the policy of the USGS to provide employees with needed training and development that will maintain or improve job performance and keep them abreast of scientific, technical, managerial, and administrative advances in their field. Training may be full-time or part-time, on or off duty. It may be given by the WRD, the USGS, the Department of the Interior, another Government agency, an educational

institution, a manufacturer, a professional association, or by individuals or groups in or out of the Government. It may be accomplished through correspondence, classroom work, conferences, workshops, or supervised practice.

The selection of an employee for training is made without discrimination for any reason such as race, religion, color, national origin, sex, politics, age, non-disqualifying physical or mental handicap, or other irrelevant factors. Factors such as the following are considered in the selection of an employee to be trained:

- The relative degree of the employee's need for training;
- The extent to which the employee's knowledge, strength, attitude, or performance are likely to be improved by the training;
- The relative ability of the employee to pass the training benefits on to others upon return to the job;
- Training opportunities previously afforded the employee.

Training may be authorized for skills development related to the current assignment, for skills development that is related to future assignments that are a logical extension of the employee's current job, or for career development. Supervisors may not provide training opportunities to an individual for the sole purpose of making him/her qualified for future promotions. Long-term training (in excess of 80 hours) must be advertised competitively.

By Federal regulations, all training and associated costs of training may be paid by the WRD, including but not limited to: an employee's salary (for training during duty hours), tuition, books and materials, and travel expenses.

In most cases, as many as 40 hours of training at any one time may be approved for an employee at the local level. Between 40 and 80 hours of training at any one time for an employee must be approved by the Regional Hydrologist or the Assistant Chief Hydrologist for Operations. Training in excess of 80 hours is considered long-term training and must be approved by the USGS Personnel Officer. These hours are actual time spent in the classroom, not quarter hours or semester hours of credit granted by an institution of higher learning or other training vendor. An employee may take as much as 1 full year of government-sponsored training for each 10 years of employment.

All employees will participate in a training-needs discussion with their supervisor, at least annually, in conjunction with the performance appraisal process. Although the determination of training needs is a joint effort between the employee and the supervisor, the supervisor makes the final decision on available support for individual training opportunities.

Reassignments and Change of Headquarters

To advance within the USGS, an employee sometimes must transfer to a different geographic location. Transfers can be initiated either by the employee or by management and only include promotion if the transfer is affected under the merit-promotion plan. The gaining office is responsible for all aspects of the employee's move, and usually pays the full costs.

Supervisory, Managerial, and Executive Development

Supervisors, managers, and executives in the USGS constitute the management team. Maintaining the quality and efficiency of USGS programs depends on the responsiveness of this team to achieve the bureau's objectives. In assuming this leadership role, the supervisors, managers, and executives enter a second profession, that of the professional manager. Achieving and sustaining management excellence within the management team requires that appropriate levels of management expertise be encouraged and supported through management development. In the pursuit of management excellence, the USGS will consider the support of whatever developmental opportunities that are necessary and appropriate. All persons who are eligible candidates will have equal consideration for developmental activities without regard to age, race, creed, color, handicap, national origin, politics, or sex.

All three levels of the management team have specific training requirements as follows:

- Supervisors must complete a minimum of 80 hours of appropriate training within 2 years of appointment to a supervisory position. Within the first 6 months of appointment, training related to performance management must be completed;

- All non-probationary supervisors must complete a minimum of 8 hours of supervisory training annually, on a fiscal-year basis;
- Both managers and supervisors must complete specific amounts of training in the areas of substance abuse and equal-opportunity training.

Performance Management

Employee Work Plan

The Employee Work Plan is a document that describes the performance elements and tasks and the **standards** that are expected of each employee. A work plan must be completed within the first 60 days after an employee enters on duty (or changes positions within the USGS). A new work plan must be signed at the beginning of each appraisal period.

Critical and required elements are those tasks that relate to overall accomplishment of the job. **Critical elements** in an employee work plan are those aspects of the job that are so important to the overall success in the job that failure to perform even one successfully would warrant an unsatisfactory performance rating. **Required elements** are those aspects of the job that do not meet the definition of a critical element, but that are important enough for the employee's performance to be evaluated.

Performance **standards** address the expectations or requirements for each required and critical element of the job. These standards address criteria such as quality, quantity, timeliness, and manner of performance. In the USGS, performance standards describe a **fully successful** level of performance.

Evaluation

The USGS recognizes performance appraisal as a key to effective human-resources management. Employees are evaluated annually, usually by their immediate supervisor, and their performance evaluation is reviewed by the next higher supervisory official.

The performance evaluation is a multi-step process that observes and evaluates an employee's performance in relation to previously

established performance standards. Purposes of the performance-management program are to give supervisors a framework to communicate performance standards to the employee, and a method to evaluate the employee in light of these standards, to allow employees to participate in setting meaningful performance standards, and to provide written evidence for making personnel and pay decisions.

Performance evaluations are used as a basis for personnel decisions regarding training, awards, reassignments, retention, promotion, demotion, and removal. In addition, the results of performance evaluation will be used for making pay determinations.

Employees who are dissatisfied with their annual performance appraisal may request a review by an ad hoc panel - but only after discussions with the rating and reviewing officials. The employee may contest any part of the evaluation, but may not contest the content of critical or required elements of the performance work plan.

Union Representation

Employees have the right to organize, join, or assist any labor union, or to refrain from any such activity. This freedom to assist any labor union extends to participation in the management of the union and acting as a union representative. However, these rights do not extend to USGS management and supervisory officials, personnel officers and specialists, or any employee whose union activity would result in a conflict or apparent conflict of interest with the employee's duty. It is unlawful for employees and labor unions to engage in a strike, work stoppage or slowdown, or picket activity against the Federal Government.

BENEFITS

Employees receive numerous benefits as a result of their service with the USGS. The major benefits include incentive awards, paid holidays, paid leave, life insurance, health insurance, and a retirement system. All these are discussed below.

Incentive Awards

The Incentive Awards Program is designed to:

- Encourage employee suggestions on ideas that contribute to an economical, efficient, and effective government;
- Recognize and reward employees for suggestions, inventions, and superior performance;
- Encourage employees to higher performance through public recognition and rewarding of superior performance,
- Use routine management review and performance appraisal processes as the bases for incentive awards.

Incentive Awards fall into several categories - each discussed briefly below:

- **Honor Awards** are given to individuals or groups for special achievements or other personal efforts that contribute to the efficiency, economy, or improvement of Government operations; or for clearly significant achievements in fostering conservation, scientific research, improved communications with the public, public service, equal employment opportunity, valor, heroism, etc. These awards usually take the form of medals, plaques, or certificates.
- **Monetary Awards** are given to individuals or former employees for individual performance which exceeded normal requirements that was sustained over a significant period of time, for suggestions and inventions, or for significant acts of an unrecurrent nature. These are cash awards - the amount normally being based on the GS grade, or equivalent, or on tangible or intangible benefits recognized by the Government.
- **Quality Increases** are given to General Schedule employees for high-quality performance, above that normally found in the type of position concerned, which has been sustained over at least a

6-month period of service in the job. This award is an additional within-grade increase, which indefinitely raises the employee's salary. An employee must receive a "fully successful performance" in all critical elements of his/her work plan and receive an "outstanding performance" rating to be eligible for a quality increase.

- **Other forms of recognition** also are available. Some of these, like the "On-the-Spot" Award, are monetary; others are strictly honorary; and still others are considered non-monetary, but include some tangible memento such as a certificate, a plaque, a nominal gift such as a belt buckle, pen and pencil set, sweatshirt, etc., or even official time off not charged to leave. Because available forms of employee recognition change from time to time, employees should consult their organization's Administrative Officer on questions about the Incentive Awards Program.

Holidays

Full-time and part-time employees receive their regular pay for any holiday occurring within their regular tour of duty. The following days are observed as legal holidays for Federal employees:

- New Year's Day, January 1;
- Martin Luther King's birthday, third Monday in January;
- Inauguration Day, January 20 (every fourth year). Applies only to very specific areas near the Nation's Capital;
- Washington's Birthday, third Monday in February;
- Memorial Day, last Monday in May;
- Independence Day, July 4;
- Labor Day, first Monday in September;
- Columbus Day, second Monday in October;
- Veteran's Day, November 11;
- Thanksgiving Day, fourth Thursday in November;
- Christmas Day, December 25.

When a legal holiday falls on Sunday, the following Monday is observed as the holiday. When a legal holiday falls on Saturday, the preceding Friday is observed as the holiday.

Annual Leave

Annual leave is a benefit that accrues to the employee automatically, but must be taken in accordance with the needs of the office. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to approve or disapprove the time when annual leave may be taken. This decision will be based on the workload of the office, rather than the desires of the employee.

Annual leave is provided to the Federal employee for two general purposes:

- To allow an annual vacation period of extended leave for rest and recreation;
- To provide periods of time off for personal and emergency purposes.

A Federal employee earns annual leave at the following rates:

- With less than 3 years of service - 13 days per year;
- With 3 to 15 years of service - 20 days per year;
- With 15 or more years of service - 26 days per year;
- Part-time with less than 3 years service - 1 hour for each 20 hours in pay status;
- Part-time with 3 to 15 years of service - 1 hour for each 13 hours in pay status;
- Part-time with 15 or more years of service - 1 hour for each 10 hours in pay status.

An employee must request annual leave in advance, except in emergencies. Absence from work without approval will be charged to absent without leave (AWOL) rather than leave without pay (LWOP).

A maximum accumulation of 240 hours annual leave may be carried forward from one leave year to the next leave year. When an employee leaves Federal service, all accumulated annual leave is paid for by lump sum.

Sick Leave

Sick leave is for use when an employee is physically unable to do the job, or for related reasons, such as:

- Exposure to a contagious disease that would endanger the health of co-workers;
- Presence of a contagious disease in an employee's immediate family which requires personal care;
- Dental, optical, or medical examination (to be requested in advance).

Every employee earns sick leave at the rate of 13 days per year. This leave may be accumulated without limit. If conserved, sick leave is insurance against loss of income during prolonged illness. Upon retirement, an employee's accumulated sick leave is credited to length of service in computing the amount of annuity for retirement. However, it cannot be used to establish the years of service necessary to retire.

Supervisors may request evidence of illness in certain circumstances, particularly if sick leave is in excess of 3 days. This evidence may include a simple, or detailed, statement from a physician - whatever seems appropriate. Sick leave might not be approved where such documentation is not acceptable or is not provided. Absence from work without approval is charged as absent without leave (AWOL), rather than leave without pay (LWOP).

Other Leave

In addition to annual and sick leave, the Federal employee is eligible for several other types of less commonly used leave. These types are discussed briefly in the sections below.

Leave Without Pay

The granting of leave without pay (LWOP) is an administrative determination and cannot be demanded by employees as a matter of right. Any LWOP may be granted only when the absence will be of mutual benefit to the Government as well as to the employee. It will not be granted for private employment or for extended active military duty.

Leave without pay may be granted when an employee has annual leave to his/her credit. As a result of line-of-duty injury, an employee may elect LWOP instead of sick leave so as to receive disability compensation. Otherwise LWOP may not be granted in lieu of sick leave. As a general rule, an employee may not be placed on LWOP without his/her consent.

Additionally an employee absent without advance authorization may be charged, at the supervisor's discretion, with absence without leave (AWOL). A charge of AWOL may serve as the basis for disciplinary action against the employee.

The Federal Government does not have a special category of leave for maternity reasons. Sick leave is granted to cover the time required for physical examinations and the period the employee is incapacitated for duty. Any additional absence is charged to annual leave or leave without pay. An employee may be allowed as much as 6 months leave without pay for pregnancy or confinement.

Military Leave

As a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces or a member of the National Guard, nearly every full-time or part-time employee is entitled to military leave upon presentation of orders.

Court Leave

Court leave is granted for jury duty to full-time and part-time employees who are in pay status. It is a general policy that the USGS will not ask that an employee be excused from jury duty. Annual leave, including leave that otherwise would be forfeited, may not be substituted for court leave.

An employee is considered to be on official-duty status when summoned to testify in either official or nonofficial capacity, or produce records on behalf of the United States or the District of Columbia. An employee is granted court leave when summoned to serve as a witness in a judicial proceeding in a nonofficial capacity on behalf of a State or local government or on behalf of a private party when the United States, the District of Columbia, or when a State, or local government is a party. Court leave is not authorized when the employee is required to testify in a non-official capacity on behalf of a private party except as

indicated above. When court leave is not authorized, the period of witness service is charged to annual leave or leave without pay.

In most circumstances, fees and travel expenses paid by the court may not be retained by the employee. The Servicing Personnel Office will supply the applicable regulations if a question arises.

Flexitime

An employee of the USGS may use a gliding schedule of attendance each day. The employee must work a full 8 hours, but may flex working hours according to the following rules:

- Arrival may be between 6:30 and 9:00 am;
- Lunch may be taken between 11:00 am and 1:30 pm. The standard lunch break is 30 minutes;
- Departure may be between 3:00 and 6:00 pm.
- All employees must be present during core time, which is 9:00-11:00 am and 1:30-3:00 pm. Absence during core time must be covered by some type of leave.
- Except in offices where flexibility might not be practical, an employee is not required to consult his/her supervisor about his/her work schedule.

Credit Hours

With prior supervisory approval, an employee working the basic workweek of Monday through Friday is permitted to earn credit hours upon completing his/her daily basic work requirement. Credit hours are to be earned when work is available and circumstances support continuing the work - meeting deadlines, reducing backlogs, increasing productivity and efficiency, etc. A maximum of 2 credit hours can be earned on each regularly scheduled workday. A full-time employee can carry over a maximum of 24 hours earned credit hours from one biweekly pay period to the next. A part-time employee can carry over no more than one-fourth of the hours in his/her biweekly basic work requirement from one biweekly pay period to the next. Earning credit hours must be voluntary on the part of the employee. If the supervisor

requires the employee to work beyond the normal 8-hour workday, compensatory time or overtime must be granted.

Health Insurance

The Federal Employees' Health Benefits Program (FEHB) helps protect the employee and eligible family members from the expenses of illness and accident. It is a voluntary program. Every permanent and term employee with a full-time or part-time tour of duty is eligible to enroll in the FEHB program. An employee whose work schedule is intermittent is not eligible to enroll. The FEHB Program offers the following advantages to Federal employees:

- An opportunity to enroll, within 31 days of appointment, in a health-benefits plan with group-rated premiums and benefits;
- An opportunity, during annual open season, to change plans or enroll if you have not already done so;
- A choice of plans and options best suited to the needs of the employee and family;
- Guaranteed protection that can not be cancelled by the plan;
- Coverage without medical examination or restrictions because of age, current health, or pre-existing medical conditions;
- Coverage without waiting periods after effective date of enrollment. During open season in the fall, the effective date of enrollment usually is the first pay period in January;
- Catastrophic protection against unusually large medical bills;
- A Government contribution toward the cost of the plan;
- The payroll-deduction method of paying premiums;
- Temporary protection for 31 days after enrollment or coverage ends;
- Continued protection after retirement.

Disability

Any employee who becomes disabled during the course of his/her career may be entitled to a disability annuity, subject to the following:

- Must have completed 5 years of civilian service.

- Must have become disabled for "useful and efficient service" in both his/her current position and any other vacant position at the same grade or pay level for which he/she is qualified.

The Federal Employee's Compensation Act provides compensation benefits to a civilian employee for disability due to personal injury sustained while in the performance of duty or to employment-related disease. Compensation for loss of earning capacity may be paid if the employee is unable to resume regular work because of injury-related disability.

Life Insurance

The Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) Program offers the employee an opportunity to participate in a group plan that offers low rates and the convenience of payment through payroll deduction. In addition, the government pays one-third of the cost of the **basic life insurance**. Participation is entirely voluntary.

The **basic life-insurance** coverage is equal to actual rate of annual basic pay (rounded up to the next highest \$1,000 plus \$2,000), or \$10,000, whichever is greater. As an extra benefit, this plan pays double up to the age of 36. This "extra" decreases at the rate of 10 percent per year until age 45, when it ends.

Additional optional life-insurance coverage is available if the employee is enrolled in the basic plan. Available options are:

- Option A. Additional \$10,000 life insurance, and \$10,000 for accidental death and dismemberment;
- Option B. Choice of additional life insurance equal to one, two, three, four, or five times actual rate of base pay (rounded up to the nearest \$1,000);
- Option C. Life-insurance coverage for a spouse in the amount of \$5,000, and \$2,500 for each dependent child.

The costs for all coverage may increase or decrease from time to time. Any such changes would be made only after careful analysis of the FEGLI Program.

Retirement

Every Federal employee is covered by one of three types of retirement systems. Most employees that entered service before January 1, 1984 are covered by the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) unless he/she elected to transfer to the new Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) during the open season for enrollment or after a break in service. Anyone employed after January 1, 1984, who did not have at least 5 years of previous Federal Civilian service, is covered under FERS. Employees formerly covered under CSRS who return to service after a year or more break in service are required to be covered under CSRS Offset, which is a combination of CSRS and Social Security.

Every permanent employee eligible for retirement deductions also is eligible to contribute to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). A CSRS employee may contribute as much as 5 percent of his/her biweekly salary with no government match. A FERS employee may contribute as much as 10 percent of his/her biweekly salary, with the Government automatically contributing 1 percent and matching as much as 4 percent, for a possible total of 5 percent Government contribution. All contributions are before-tax deductions, and earnings are tax-deferred until the employee separates from Federal service.

Employees covered by FERS or CSRS are required to pay Social Security taxes and may be eligible for a Social Security benefit if they meet the required quarters count at age 62 or older.

Eligibility for retirement under both CSRS and FERS is determined by the employee's age and number of years of creditable Federal service. There are three categories of retirement benefits:

- Immediate - voluntary retirement:
- For CSRS participants only:
 - A. Age 55 with 30 years of service;
 - B. Age 60 with 20 years of service;
 - C. Age 62 with 5 years of service.
- For FERS participants: Minimum Retirement Age (MRA) with 10 years of service with a reduced benefit of 5 percent for each year under age 62.

- Discontinued service or Early Out - available in certain involuntary separation cases and in cases of voluntary separation during a major reorganization or reduction-in-force (RIF). To be eligible, an employee must meet the following requirements:
 - A. Age 50 with 20 years of service;
 - B. Any age with 25 years of service.
- Deferred - If an employee leaves Federal service after 5 years of civilian service, but does not meet the age and service requirements for retirement, the employee may receive benefits at age 62 by applying to the Office of Personnel Management. An employee covered by FERS has other possible eligibilities for deferred retirement based on age and years of service.

In addition to these 3 categories, an employee who becomes disabled and unable to perform the regular duties of the position for which he/she was hired, may be eligible for disability retirement.

Retirement systems are very complex. Any employee with questions regarding retirement should contact the Servicing Personnel Office for information that applies to the specific situation.

Severance Pay

An employee is eligible for severance pay (which is in addition to any lump-sum payment) provided a large number of requirements are met. These requirements are not listed here because of their complexity. Further information on severance pay may be obtained from the Servicing Personnel Officer.

FURTHER READING

Almost all of the information in this handbook is available in, and was compiled from, the *U.S. Geological Survey Manual*. The list below might provide additional specific information.

About Personal Safety, 1990, Federal Protective Service, Chicago, Illinois

Better Utilization Program, 1970, PERS-H-8, U.S. Geological Survey, Reston, Virginia

Employee Conduct Handbook, 1993, U.S. Geological Survey, Reston, Virginia

Employee Information Handbook, 1992, Geologic Division, U.S. Geological Survey, Reston, Virginia

Employee Responsibilities and Conduct, 1990, Federal Register, part 2, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

Federal Employees Group Life Insurance, 1987, SF 2817-A, U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Washington, D.C.

Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, 1987, SF 2808-A, U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Washington, D.C.

Federal Employees Retirement System, 1986, RI 90-1, U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Washington, D.C.

Goals of the U.S. Geological Survey, 1986, Circular 1010, U.S. Geological Survey, Reston, Virginia

Management and Use of Small Computer Systems, 1985, Handbook 500-16-H, U.S. Geological Survey, Reston, Virginia

Safety and Environmental Health Handbook, 1989, Handbook 445-1-H, U.S. Geological Survey, Reston, Virginia

Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch, 1992, United States Office of Government Ethics, Washington, D.C.

- The U.S. Geological Survey Federal-State Cooperative Water Resources Program*, 1981, Bruce K. Gilbert and Thomas J. Buchanan, Open-File Report 81-691, U.S. Geological Survey, Reston, Virginia
- U.S. Geological Survey A: Earth Science in the Public Service*, 1990, U.S. Geological Survey, Reston, Virginia
- Water Resources Division Information Guide*, 1992, U.S. Geological Survey, Reston, Virginia
- Water Resources Division in the 1980's*, 1986, Circular 1005, U.S. Geological Survey, Reston, Virginia
- When Injured at Work*, 1988, Pamphlet, CA-11, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, D.C.
- Working with the Geological Survey*, 1975, Pers-H-1, U.S. Geological Survey, Reston, Virginia
- WRD Project and Report Management Guide*, 1991, Jack H. Green, Open-File Report 91-224, U.S. Geological Survey, Reston, Virginia
- Your Position, Your Pay*, 1989, Pers-H-7, U.S. Geological Survey, Reston, Virginia