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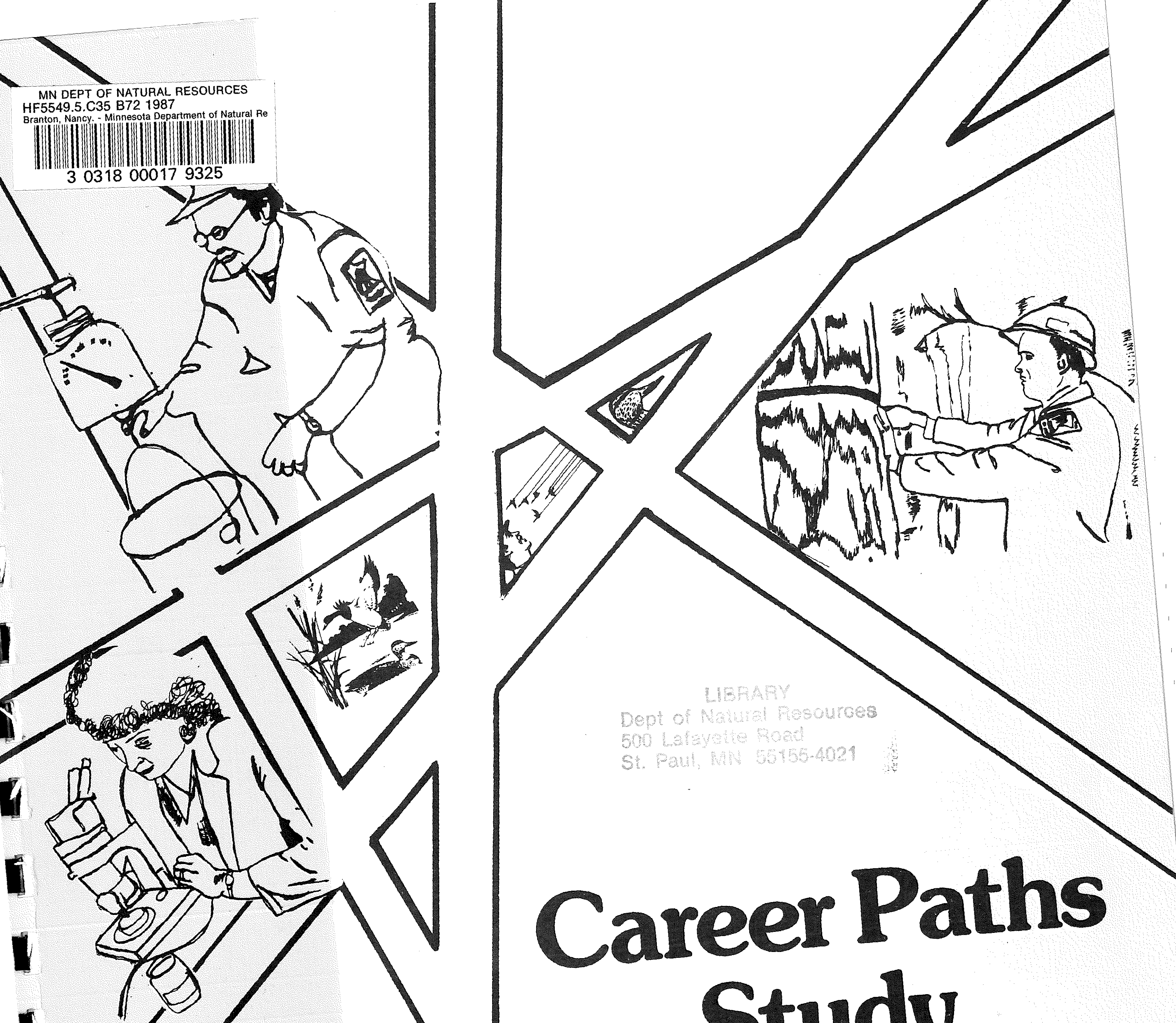

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Career Paths Study

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Commissioner's Statement

As Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources, I have always had a great concern for our employees. In today's changing workforce, both management and employees face career issues never before experienced in the work place.

I am pleased with the effort and the results of the career path study that the Bureau of Human Resources has undertaken. The report addresses issues relevant to the department and includes valid recommendations for innovative ideas and changes. I support the recommendations and have requested that an implementation plan be developed for the review and approval of senior managers.

While it may not be possible to implement all the recommendations immediately, we do want to determine priority recommendations. I am anxious to begin moving forward to improve the quality of the work experience for all Department of Natural Resources' employees.

Joseph N. Alexander

Joseph N. Alexander, Commissioner
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT
OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

CAREER PATHS STUDY

Nancy Branton-Project Leader
Thelma Olson
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BUREAU OF HUMAN RESOURCES

MAY 1987

Acknowledgements

This report is a comprehensive study examining the issues of career pathing. In the course of the study, we gathered information from many organizations and individuals on various career path issues. We are greatly indebted to those organizations and individuals that offered us advice and information.

We wish to express our sincere appreciation to the Department of Natural Resources' management and staff personnel for their interest and cooperation throughout this study. We are especially grateful to the department employees who completed and returned the Career Path Study Employee Questionnaire, which helped us determine our recommendations to management. Special mention must be made of help given by the Office of Planning's Resource Data Unit in developing the questionnaire to determine employee job and career growth satisfaction and to identify career advancement factors.

What follows is a list of the individuals, public agencies, employee associations, educational institutions, and private sector organizations that provided their professional services or resource materials on career management policies and procedures.

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APPENDIX A DNR Managers' Concerns about Career Paths
APPENDIX B Research Objectives and Highlights of the Employee Questionnaire
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Introduction

Background

In its 1984 Management Study of the DNR's regional and subregional structure, the Department of Administration (DOA) recommended that the DNR "create more career paths requiring employees to have both central office and field experience." The study recognized that changing the career path structure "may require restructuring of job classifications and financial incentives." Although the DOA study concentrated on enhancing movement between central office and field positions, in recent years job movement in general has been an increasingly important issue for DNR employees. For this reason, we in the study team decided to broaden the scope of the study to encompass several problems affecting the DNR employee careers.

With the DOA recommendations as a general guide, we discussed specific goals with the Commissioner's Office staff. We agreed to provide them with recommendations for increasing opportunities for career movement and enhancement and improving career satisfaction for DNR employees. We had also initially proposed including a pilot project in our study. As we began work on the study, however, it became increasingly apparent that we needed a broad base of information before beginning work on a pilot project. We, therefore, deferred work on the pilot and concentrated on obtaining enough information - and enough questions - to undertake a pilot study that would provide us with useful, specific information. We have included a pilot project as one of our recommendations.

Recognizing that the number of supervisory and management positions is not likely to increase substantially in the foreseeable future, we have focused our study on career paths rather than career ladders. The term "career ladder" suggests a prescribed route to one particular end point; in order to reach the top you have to have experience at particular steps in a particular order. This has not been true of many of our positions in the past and we believe it would be counterproductive to concentrate only on upward mobility now. We have focused instead on career paths - lateral and diagonal movements that increase employees' skills and knowledge in a variety of settings. These movements are as deliberate and planned as career ladder moves - they differ in having several goals rather than a single one. We have therefore considered career development as an integral part of our report.

The study was limited to natural resource occupations at the level of Natural Resources Technician and above because the career paths of these employees are usually limited to our agency; other occupations have greater possibilities for movement within other agencies in state government.

The Course of the Project

We gathered information for the project from varied sources. First, we met with the Bureau Administrators and their key staff, the Division Directors and their key staff, and the Regional Administrators. We also had a separate meeting with two of the Regional Administrators and their key

staff. Managers expressed concern about problems recruiting for central office positions, mobility between positions and classifications, and employee development and recognition. Most of their suggestions for improvement have been incorporated into the recommendations. (See Appendix A.)

In addition to asking managers for their suggestions, we also asked employees in the natural resources occupations to complete a questionnaire about job experience, education, and sources of motivation. This questionnaire gave us information that was not available from other sources. We've included some questionnaire data in the narrative of the report; Appendix B has more detailed information about the responses.

To complement a thorough literature study of each of the issues identified by managers, we contacted several public and private organizations for information regarding their programs and practices in these areas. This information was extremely useful as background and has been integrated into the text of the report in several places. The companies who gave us information have been listed in the acknowledgements section.

Content of the Report

For easy reference, the recommendation section of the report has been placed first. Each recommendation includes a reference to pages of the text supporting the recommendation. The supporting material is divided into seven areas: Changes in the Work Force and Changes in Organizations; The Plateaued Employee; Increasing Specialization of Jobs; the Diminished Importance of Traditional Rewards; the Effects of Dual Career Families on Organizations; Employee Relocation; and Replacement of Older Workers. These sections are followed by a conclusion, notes, and a bibliography.

To avoid repetitious phrasing, we have frequently referred to DNR employees in the natural resources occupations simply as "DNR employees." This usage does not in any way diminish the importance of DNR employees who are in statewide job classifications; it is used here only as a convenient shortened phrase.

Recommendations

This section focuses on major career issues facing DNR employees. Our recommendations to resolve these issues are based on information obtained from DNR management, private and public organizations, and the DNR employee questionnaire.

The department's effectiveness in implementing many of these recommendations depends on obtaining additional financial resources. Many of these recommendations, or parts of them have been included in the department's proposed biennial budget.

Our recommendations are in ten areas: 1) career resource services, 2) non-monetary reward and recognition program for employees, 3) DNR mobility program, 4) career path pilot, 5) task force for interdisciplinary career movement, 6) relocation reimbursement, 7) career development, 8) human resource data, 9) training course on how to keep today's workers satisfied and motivated and 10) reconciling employees' work and home responsibilities.

1) Career Resource Services

Recommendation:

That the DNR Bureau of Human Resources develop and implement career resource services such as:

- A career resource reference center in the DNR library with educational information and other career-related reference materials
- Career assessment testing and career counseling services
- A formal mentor program
- A comprehensive pre-retirement program including counseling and a training course
- A comprehensive career planning program that includes training for employees on career plan development and classes for supervisors on helping their employees in career planning
- Information on DNR careers via brochures and DNR speakers.

Background:

The DNR does not currently provide formal career resource services. A comprehensive DNR career planning program would complement the courses in career renewal and retirement preparation currently available through the Department of Employee Relations. Employees now seem to rely on the advice of co-workers and supervisors in planning their careers. Although their advice does help, these individuals do not usually encourage employees to seek lateral transfers or apply for promotions in other divisions; they tend to emphasize promotion rather than opportunities for learning.

Rationale:

As it is now, employees seem to believe that management controls the course of their careers. Since the department does not routinely give employees sufficient information to plan their careers, this impression is in some respects accurate. A sizeable proportion of DNR employees indicated in the questionnaire that they would like to have a variety of career services; protected group members were especially interested in obtaining help in this area. Employees were also willing to obtain additional education and take other steps to advance their careers. Concentrating on enhancing employees' skills, not just on gaining promotions, career services would help employees find positions that fit their interests and abilities. We believe that the focus on promotion could be diffused if we could offer employees enough information and guidance to help them make informed decisions about their careers in the DNR.

Refer to pages 35-37 for
supporting information.

2) Non-Monetary Reward and Recognition Program for Employees

Recommendation:

That the DNR Bureau of Human Resources develop and implement a nonmonetary reward and recognition program to acknowledge outstanding individual and group accomplishments and innovations. This program should include recognition of important community or personal achievements by employees as well as their work accomplishments. Developmental criteria should include information from a department task force of managers and information from employees, possibly via questionnaire.

Background:

The DNR does not have the flexibility to independently implement a system of monetary recognition because of civil service regulations and bargaining unit contracts.

Although the department recognizes employees by granting length of service and achievement awards, there is no special effort to recognize outstanding or innovative individual and group work accomplishments or significant personal achievements.

The Division of Forestry has taken the initiative to devise and implement its own awards program to acknowledge accomplishments of its employees. With recognition programs left to individual units, however, there is no consistent approach in the department. The degree of praise or notice employees receive for their work currently varies from division to division.

Because there is not a statewide policy and procedure for employee recognition programs, other state agencies have developed their own programs. The Department of Administration, for example, has begun a recognition program that includes an awards ceremony. MNDOT gives awards for outstanding work to about 1 percent of their employees each year and selects "MNDOT Employees of the Year."

Rationale:

Recognition programs are more important now than in the past for a variety of reasons. With greater competition for promotional opportunities, the percentage of employees who can count on promotion as a means of recognition decreases. Employees also increasingly believe that their job satisfaction depends on acknowledgement of work performance as well as on adequate salary. This is especially true of employees, like those in the DNR, who are highly interested in their work and take satisfaction in their achievements. Even the most dedicated employees can become frustrated when their hard work goes unnoticed year after year. However basic they may be, awards also give employees something tangible to work toward.

Refer to pages 53-57 for
supporting information.

3) DNR Mobility Program

Recommendation:

That the DNR Bureau of Human Resources develop, implement and promote a mobility assignment program including:

- Developing policies and procedures for internal mobility assignments
- Setting up a computerized skills bank listing the names of employees who have special skills under broad categories such as computer work, editing, or statistics. These may or may not be skills that employees use in their present jobs. (See Recommendation #8)
- Conducting a pilot implementation which would include identification of goals, establishing and filling mobility assignments, and evaluating the program's success
- Promoting the use of the program to DNR supervisors, managers, and employees via brochures, announcements of opportunities, and Brown Bag lunches explaining the program.

Background:

Since the Department of Employee Relations established its employee mobility procedure, the number of employees participating in interagency mobility assignments has gradually increased. These procedures do not govern mobility assignments within agencies, however. Unlike some other agencies such as the Department of Transportation, the DNR has infrequently used internal mobility assignments.

Rationale:

Because we have no convenient way of determining the availability and skills of present employees, we have used mobility assignments very infrequently. Once we have determined employee interest in mobility assignments and set up a system for placing employees, the program would benefit the department in several ways. Short-term projects could be completed using existing staff rather than temporary or emergency employees, and mobility between disciplines and bureaus would increase. Participating employees will learn more about other work areas and their skills would in turn become more widely known. Mobility assignments could give plateaued employees a chance to tackle new projects and, by providing another opportunity for employees to gain a base of experience in several disciplines, enhance their chances for promotion. The employee questionnaire results indicate that there is a strong interest in such a program among natural resource employees.

Refer to page 34 for
supporting information.

4) Career Path Pilot

Recommendation:

That the Bureau of Human Resources conduct a career path pilot for one division or discipline, selected by the DNR Commissioner; the study pilot would include the following major components:

- Identification of current career paths
- Identification of problems or needs relating to career paths both from the employee perspective and the DNR's perspective
- Recommendations for resolution of problems (such as organizational improvements, specific career development activities, broader classifications).

We recommend that this pilot be directed by the DNR Bureau of Human Resources with technical advice and involvement from the DNR training and organizational analysis units, DOER's training unit, and DOA's organizational analysis unit.

Background:

In response to DOA's 1984 recommendation to create more DNR career paths, we recommended that a career path pilot be conducted. Upon discovering that considerable background information would be necessary to make the pilot effective, we deferred it until this report was complete. The DOA recommendation emphasized improving career paths so that employees could obtain both central office and field experience. Our recommendation expands this focus to include several other important career issues.

Rationale:

In the pilot study, we will investigate career movement in greater detail than was possible in this report. We will analyze current possibilities and obstacles for career movement, the specific problems involved in convincing employees to take central office positions, and possible career paths that may have been overlooked. In addition to providing information for employees to use in making career decisions, it will give managers and the Bureau of Human Resources a firm basis for making changes.

The pilot study will allow us to test several hypotheses and procedures on a small scale to determine how well they work before embarking on department-wide implementation. It will serve as a foundation for further career path studies and for developing policies and procedures.

Refer to pages 30, & 47-52 for
supporting information.

5) Task Force for Interdisciplinary Career Movement

Recommendation:

That the department create a task force of managers, assisted by Bureau of Human Resources staff, to examine career movement opportunities, determine a policy on interdisciplinary movement, and suggest possibilities for implementation.

Background:

Over the years increasing specialization of natural resource occupations has been accompanied by increasingly restrictive requirements for positions. Employees, including several managers, frequently complain that exam criteria for many positions are too narrow, allowing them few opportunities to compete for promotion. When exams are written, however, supervisors and managers usually wish to make criteria as specific to their vacant position as possible. The immediate concern of managers is the function of their unit, not opportunities for interdepartmental mobility. Although the criteria for many positions could be widened so that more employees could qualify, the Bureau of Human Resources needs a mandate from management to undertake such an action; the bureau should not decide unilaterally which positions should be considered opportunities for interdepartmental transfer and which should not.

Rationale:

Increasing the possibilities for promotion across divisional lines would help remedy two problems in the department: 1) employees would have a greater range of career opportunities and would perhaps feel that their careers were less circumscribed and limited, and 2) greater numbers of interdisciplinary transfers and promotions would also decrease the parochialism of divisions and bureaus and give the department a core group of employees with a broad base of departmental experience. This should help ensure the appointment of managers and supervisors whose actions reflect the needs of the department as a whole rather than those of a particular unit. At the same time, managers need to be assured that candidates on the lists have the background and skills they will need to complete their work.

Implementation might include broadening of classifications, elimination of some class options, or designation of specific positions to be used for interdisciplinary transfer. The particular actions would depend on what department management determines to be necessary and feasible.

Refer to pages 30, & 51-52 for supporting information.

6) Relocation Reimbursement

Recommendation:

That a DNR task force of managers, assisted by Bureau of Human Resources staff:

- Analyze departmental relocation expense concerns
- Recommend any needed improvements in current provisions for relocation expense reimbursements
- Develop a DNR relocation policy for managerial employees.

Background:

The DOA recommendation for creating more career paths, which cited the need to enhance movement between the central office and the field, suggested that financial incentives may be necessary. Union agreements, the Commissioner's Plan, and the Managerial Plan all have provisions for relocation expense reimbursement. The DNR does not have an overall relocation policy but operates within the constraints of these union agreements and plans. The Department of Transportation has, however, established a relocation policy of its own for managers that might be used as a guide for the DNR.

Although in the past employees have been willing to accept positions requiring a move from the central office to the field, there has been some difficulty persuading field employees to move to the Twin Cities for Central office positions. More recently, however, the DNR's work force seems increasingly reluctant to relocate to any position, whether in St. Paul or in the field. The reasons for this reluctance need to be explored further.

Rationale:

In general, employees in all organizations are less willing to relocate than they were in the past. This is partly because of the number of employees who have working spouses, which complicates the process of relocation, and partly because of changes in employee perceptions of what constitutes loyalty to their organizations.

In the DNR much of the increased resistance to relocation seems to be related to financial deterrents. Because of the small market for houses in outstate areas of the state, employees have in several instances been unable to sell their homes before moving to another area. Fifty-seven percent of field employees said in the questionnaire that the price of homes in the Twin Cities and the higher cost of living there would discourage a move; the problems involved in selling homes in outstate areas were also discouraging factors. It seems likely that increasing reimbursement of relocation expenses would make moving to the central office or to another field location a much more

attractive prospect for employees. In order for the DNR to meet its objectives, it is extremely important that more candidates are considered for positions in all locations.

Refer to pages 60-61 for supporting information.

7) Career Development

Recommendation:

That the department create a task force to enhance career development by amending training policy.

Revisions could include:

- Expanding the current training policy to allow reimbursement and/or release time for career development that is related to DNR occupations, as well as job specific training
- Reimbursing employees' membership dues in professional organizations
- Expanding in-house training (such as supervisory training) to include employees who wish to use it for career development
- Developing a plan for career development of protected group employees
- Establishing a centralized funding source for tuition-aid
- Expanding training to include less formal modes of education such as book discussion groups, etc.

Background:

The longstanding priority of the DNR's current training policy has been to improve employee performance. The policy specifically says that it is "not intended to finance an individual's education through career development channels." It does not encourage managers and supervisors to make accomodations for employees who wish to pursue further education. Supervisory training, in keeping with this policy, has been limited to employees who now hold supervisory positions.

Training funds are now determined by individual divisions, bureaus and regions. This means that employees in one unit may have many more training opportunities than those in another.

The department does not have a career development program for protected class employees. There have, however, been some limited activities such as a 1984 all-day conference on personal power for female DNR employees and a career development conference for women in natural resources to be held in the spring of 1987.

Rationale:

We believe that the department needs to invest in career development for its employees for several reasons. First, because of the nature of its work, the department needs employees with up-to-date knowledge and skills in a variety of technical fields. Demographic data suggest that competition for entry-level employees with state-of-the-art

skills will increase substantially in the next 20 years. If we give current employees more assistance and flexibility to update their knowledge and skills, we will not have to depend as much on attracting young workers in future years.

This kind of support encourages employees to take some positive action toward obtaining the positions they desire rather than simply waiting for exam announcements. At least some of the dissatisfaction about lack of promotional opportunities in the department can be traced to a belief among employees that there is nothing they can do themselves to alter their career course. By giving employees an avenue to obtain new skills, a career development program would help employee morale and at the same time increase the quality of candidates for promotional positions.

Providing support for education could also be a useful adjunct to the Affirmative Action Program. In addition to promoting the hiring of protected class individuals, the department could offer these employees concrete assistance in reaching their career goals.

Optimally, with this kind of program employees share the benefits and costs of their on-going education with the department. The department benefits from employees' increased knowledges; the employees' education may help them obtain promotions. As long as this balance can be maintained, the program can be effective.

Refer to pages 18 & 43 for supporting information.

8) Human Resource Data

Recommendation:

That the DNR Bureau of Human Resources direct the collection and maintenance of the following computerized data:

- Comprehensive background for each DNR employee including education, training, job and volunteer experience and unique skills such as sign language skills, artistic skills, etc.
- position information and turnover rates
- organizational charts for all DNR units
- demographic information on the work force

With this data and other existing information as foundation, the Bureau of Human Resources can then:

- develop a comprehensive examination plan
- develop a pilot project to identify knowledge, skills and abilities required for each job in the department and determine how these qualifications can be attained
- develop a pilot project for an employee skills bank
- develop projections of human resource needs for the DNR (in accordance with the department's strategic planning efforts).

These activities shall be done in collaboration with DOER and the DNR Systems Unit. We propose that DNR support DOER's efforts to improve the human resource data system on a statewide basis by offering to be a pilot department for any systems redesign efforts.

Background:

The Department of Employee Relations regularly provides computer reports and employee lists but these reports contain only specific data related to pay, classification, employee addresses, etc. It does not include data on training, experience, or education of employees; nor does it include any data on turnover rates.

The need for improved human resource data is not unique to the DNR - it presents a major problem for all state agencies. Responding to the 1985 DOA study of their department, DOER has requested a budget change level to redesign their computer system. DOER has also undertaken a STEP (Strive Toward Excellence in Performance) project to evaluate the feasibility of maintaining commonly used data concerning state employees on one centralized system, with ready access by agency personnel offices.

Rationale:

Without these kinds of data, managers are handicapped in making even simple decisions about personnel matters. One of the reasons that it was impractical to do an immediate analysis of DNR career paths, for instance, was because we have limited information about employees' typical career paths. Despite the number and variety of classifications in the department, we have no computerized records about positions that we can use for purposes of comparison. Since we do not have easily accessible information about positions, we must depend instead on our knowledge of the department and the advice of managers. Within one division or bureau this process usually works well. It's more difficult to discern, however, whether the knowledge, skills, and abilities of a position in engineering closely resemble those of a position in parks, or the skills of a planning position resemble those of a wildlife position. As a result, we risk making exam criteria narrower than they need to be and unduly limit the possibilities for movement between units. If necessary, exam criteria could also be made more consistent throughout the department with this information.

Although the task of delineating the KSAs for all departmental positions would be difficult initially, it would save managers and supervisors time in filling positions that require new examinations. With the Knowledges, Skills and Abilities (KSAs) for vacant positions defined and comparable positions identified, writing the exams themselves would be a much faster and simpler task. This information could also be used as part of a strategic planning process. With it we could assess whether we have employees with the knowledge necessary for future projects or whether we need to initiate training programs.

With an established examination plan and specific and reliable information available on job requirements, employees will be much better able to make career decisions. Knowing what skills are required for positions they would like to achieve in five or ten years, they can take additional training or accept job duties that will give them the education and experience they will need. Predictability is particulary important. The more predictable and reliable we can make the examination procedure in the department, the more responsibility they can assume for their careers.

Obtaining expanded employee information is also integral to development of three other recommendations: the career resources services program, the mobility program and professional/career development.

Refer to pages 34, 35-37, & 51-52 for supporting information.

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9) Training Course on How to Keep Today's Workers Satisfied and Motivated

Recommendation:

That the Bureau of Human Resources design, develop and implement a training course, for managers and supervisors, on employee motivation and job satisfaction. This course would describe the changes that have occurred in the work force and in organizations, the problems of plateaued employees, ways to alleviate their difficulties, and tools for motivating today's work force. This would be done with the technical assistance and involvement of the DNR's training unit.

Background:

Neither the state's Department of Employee Relations nor the DNR offers this type of course.

Rationale:

Managers and supervisors are the most likely to see problems that individual employees encounter in their work. Only rarely, however, do they have the time to investigate the types of changes they can make to increase their employees' satisfaction in their jobs. By providing information on such things as job enrichment, delegation of responsibilities, and alternate organizational forms, a training course could help supervisors recognize problems in their units and take steps to adjust them. With the great number of DNR employees in the middle years of their careers, it will be very important that supervisors understand the negative effects plateauing can have on employee morale and be able to employ some remedies specifically geared to them.

Refer to pages 20, & 53-57 for
supporting information.

10) Reconciling Employees' Work and Home Responsibilities

Recommendation:

That the DNR establish alternative work schedules/arrangements for employees and make available parent education and information. This might be accomplished through the following programs:

- Poll employees to find out how much interest there is in creating flex-time, job-sharing, or part-time positions. If the level of interest warrants, expand use of the job-sharing program
- Provide opportunities for part-time employment whenever management and employee needs can be justified and met
- Provide an annual parent education seminar to help employees manage the stress of family and work
- Provide child care resource and referral information to help our department's employees locate quality child care and become well-informed consumers of child care services
- Encourage the State of Minnesota to strengthen its efforts to provide child care services for state employees in the capitol complex area. This could also include collaboration with Ramsey County, the City of St. Paul, and private corporations to provide facilities for care of sick children or children who, for a variety of reasons, need short-term day care.

Background:

The State of Minnesota has a job-sharing program that was passed into law by the 1983 session of the Minnesota Legislature. The DNR has two positions that are part of this program. The DNR does have opportunities for part-time employment, but most of these are 90 percent positions.

Some training related to managing work and family stress has been offered to DNR employees in St. Paul in 1985 as a DNR Training Break. The possibility of implementing a day care program was studied by task force representatives from various state agencies and addressed in a "Capitol Complex Child Care" report completed pursuant to 1984 Laws of Minnesota, Chapter 485 but capitol complex child care center was not initiated at that time.

Rationale:

We do not have up-to-date information on employee interest in flexible work schedules or part-time employment. Considering that 54 percent of natural resources employees have spouses who work, it seems likely that many of these employees could profit from flexible scheduling or part-time work if it were an option and would not impede their

careers. There may also be employees who would like flexible schedules in order to take courses or to cut their work hours gradually before retiring.

It would also be interesting to obtain information about the sick time employees must use to care for sick children or when they are unable to obtain day care. We believe that this might prove substantial enough to warrant urging the creation of day care facilities for these children. Parent education could also have a positive effect on employee morale, absenteeism and turnover.

Refer to pages 58-59 for supporting information.

Supporting Material

CHANGES IN THE WORK FORCE AND CHANGES IN ORGANIZATIONS

In the following pages we summarize the background material we used in preparing recommendations. Divided into seven sections, this material examines the issues affecting the careers of employees in natural resources occupations. The advantages and disadvantages of specific remedies are also discussed. Most of the issues are complex and interrelated and require more than one approach to resolve them.

Before trying to evaluate careers and career paths in the Department of Natural Resources, it is important to consider not only the last decade's changes in the work force's composition and values, but also possible future changes. Modifications in the present career structure can be made much more confidently if we have some idea of potential staffing issues.

Changes in Work Force Composition

In the past 20 to 30 years the work force of the United States has changed dramatically, both in its composition and its values and preferences. The working world of the 1980s contrasts strikingly with that of the more predictable and homogeneous 1950s. Frequently, however, organizations have adapted to these changes in such small increments that they have underestimated their cumulative significance. As a result, many businesses and public agencies rely on an uneasy mixture of 1950s and 1980s personnel practices even though these practices may be based on conflicting assumptions and facts. The changes that have taken place are neither inherently good nor bad, but they do demand that employers step back, analyze the alterations in their organizations and the workforce, and plan how to profit from these changes rather than just cope with them.

Many elements combined from 1950 to 1985 to make the work force more diverse. As one result of the country's post-war affluence, the educational level of the population climbed steadily. In 1959, 32 percent of the work force had graduated from high school; by 1977 this percentage had reached 42 percent.[1] Women entered the work force in unprecedented numbers during these years, driven by economic necessity and desire for self-expression.

The number of women working at least part-time has predictably altered the configuration of family arrangements. Fathers have assumed more responsibility for child care, making the first concerted demands for paternal leave during the 1970s. The traditional roles assigned to the sexes and races have also broken down during the last thirty years: the numbers of jobs commonly considered acceptable for either men or women has increased perceptibly; minorities have slowly acquired greater access to professional and managerial positions.

The United States also felt the effects of the baby boom during these years, first as an influx of grade school and secondary students, then, in the '70s and early '80s, as an influx into the labor force. As a result of the post-war population bulge, there will be 60 million workers in the 25-44 age bracket by the end of the 1980s, a 55 percent increase over the number of persons in that age bracket in 1975.[2] At the same time, because of the lower birthrate of the '60s, the number of 16 to 24 year olds will decline by 6 percent. This concentration of the population within a relatively narrow age range will affect both employers and employees in several ways. Having entered the job market at about the same time, the baby boomers will also be seeking promotions at about the same time. Since the number of management or supervisory positions has not increased at the same rate as the population, there will be large numbers of employees who will likely remain in lower-level jobs simply for lack of promotional opportunities.

Ironically, employers may at the same time have to recruit intensively to attract the most educated and talented of a smaller number of young workers to fill vacant entry-level positions. These young workers will be sorely needed in industries that depend on state-of-the-art technology. With the largest part of the work-force five to ten years out of college or vocational school, new skills will be at a premium.[3]

The baby boom generation is unusual in its level of educational attainment as well as in its numbers. In 1940, for instance, the median number of school years completed by individuals age 25 and over was 8.6. By 1984 this figure had increased to 12.6. The percentage of the population that had completed four or more years of college increased from 4.6 to 19.1 during the same time span. In Minnesota in 1980, 73.1 percent of the population 25 years and older had completed high school and 17.4 percent had completed four or more years of college.[4]

Although the higher level of education of the work force has many advantages, it also has its problems. With the large number of people who have completed college, a college degree no longer guarantees good jobs or automatic promotions. The financial incentive for completing a college education has in fact declined.[5] Raised at a time when society extolled education as a means of prosperity, many baby boomers are frustrated and unhappy with their inability to find jobs that fit their skills and education. Employers, given a large number of candidates with solid educational credentials, can choose those with specific work experience. Education has in many cases become a minimum requirement rather than a distinct advantage.

Education, by expanding a person's acquaintance with the world and offering a glimpse of a multitude of ideas and problems, also frequently alters a person's perception of authority and tradition. In her essay on changes in the work force, Rosabeth Moss Kanter says, "A more educated work force - as ours has become - is simultaneously a more critical, questioning, and demanding work force, and a potentially more frustrated one if expectations are not met."[6] Highly educated employees will be much more likely, for instance, to resist rigid work rules or schedules that have no intrinsic justification; they will likely seek autonomy and authority to make decisions independently. They pose, therefore, a great potential and a great threat. To use these employees effectively, organizations may have to relinquish some control to individual workers. The traditional approach of alternately cajoling and coercing will simply not work with many of the employees of the '80s and '90s.

Education will, in a different way, also be an issue for the older worker in the coming decades. In the past, the number of older workers has usually been balanced by the number of young workers, the older workers' experience and expertise complemented by the younger workers' up-to-date training. By the year 2000, however, the number of people in the United States aged 55 and over will be 20 percent greater than it was in 1980, while the percentage of younger workers will drop significantly.[7] As a result, it will become more and more important for organizations to provide training programs or educational leaves for their staff because they will likely not be able to depend entirely on an infusion of new ideas from young employees.

Cumulatively, then, the changes in the work force over the past 30 years have made it much more diverse and in many ways much richer in education and skill. Although the work force hasn't the solid predictability it had in the 1950s, the men and women working together today bring a much broader range of experience to their jobs. It has become increasingly risky to make assumptions about the needs of the "average" worker; the work force is too heterogeneous now to permit such easy generalizations.

Changes in the Values of the Work Force

Because of this diversity, it is also difficult to make generalizations about the values of the work force. Yet every society as a whole has its prevailing concerns and attitudes, its typical way of looking at the world. Unwise as it may be to make predictions about individuals on the basis of society's values, it is equally perilous for governments or businesses to ignore attitudes and sources of motivation that have so much impact on quality and productivity.

According to many theorists and pollsters, there has been a gradual but dramatic change in the values of the American work force in the last ten years or so. Daniel Yankelovich, in fact, refers to a substantial portion of the population as members of a "New Breed" whose values contrast strikingly with those of their parents.[8] This change came slowly. Even with the unrest and upheavals of the '60s, American society retained most of the work values of the '40s and '50s. Job security was a prime concern throughout this time. Men with families, who composed the largest percentage of the work force, by and large sought jobs that provided good pay and a secure base. The work itself was secondary to its financial rewards. At a time when success could be nicely measured by goods - a new car, a washer and dryer, a home in a good neighborhood - workers had good reason to overlook inadequacies in their jobs. The rewards of a steadily better standard of living were frequently sufficient.

Then, for many reasons, success became more complicated, more difficult to define. As growth of the economy slowed, employees could not see their progress as clearly; frequently it seemed as though they were standing still. Committing oneself to a boring, repetitious job is one thing when the rewards are obvious, another when they are barely perceptible. Then, too, with great numbers of women entering the job market the balance of home and family tilted precariously. Not only did these women bring different values and skills with them to the work place, but their new status as paid workers relieved their husbands of part of the financial burden of supporting a family. These men could now afford to consider inclination as well as income in choosing jobs. Increases in the level of education, changes in unemployment and retirement benefits, and alteration in the types of jobs available also took a part in forging a change in values.

Whatever the combination of factors, the emphasis of many men's and women's lives has slowly changed from obligation to self-fulfillment, from security and permanence to mobility and challenge. Although salary is still important, many workers are equally concerned that they will be able to use their skills on their job, that their work provide challenge as well as security. In a 1969-70 survey of 1,500 workers done for the U.S. Department of Labor, for instance, the factor rated highest was "The work is interesting," while the factor rated lowest was "I am not asked to do excessive amounts of work."[9] Once considered the province only of the upper echelons of organizations, creativity and self-fulfillment have become increasingly important to workers at all levels, perhaps partly because workers are better educated in general, but also because it is now somehow more legitimate to ask, "What am I getting out of this?" In contrast to the '50s, their professions seem more likely to be a matter of choice than of necessity. Even if forced to settle for an unappealing job for a time, these workers are less likely to resign themselves to the inevitability of work as an irksome, tedious necessity.

These attitudes also alter an individual's perception of his or her role in the work place. Believing themselves to have a choice in the kind and quality of job they will hold, workers are unlikely to accept autocratic behavior by management. Yankelovich suggests, in fact, that, "Perhaps no flaw in the old value system is felt more deeply by New Breed Americans than the conviction that, for all its indisputable merits, the old value system depersonalized the individual.[10] With the belief that each worker must be treated as an individual, not as a part of a work process, these workers demand a voice in decisions made about their work and expect to be given autonomy in completing their tasks.

Obviously, the "New Breed" does not comprise the majority of the population. There are many workers who still adhere to the dictum that work is an unavoidable evil that must be tolerated with patience. Others gratefully accept better treatment at work but do not look to their jobs as a source of fulfillment. This disparity in values, however, only emphasizes the inadequacy of referring to employees as though they had a single voice and a single thought. With a work force of such complexity, organizations will not be able to depend on just one approach to wages, motivation or benefits.

Changes in Organizations

As the values of individual workers have been changing since the 1950's, so have the structures, problems, and approaches of all types of organizations.[11] The economy has been a major source of change since the 1950s. After a period of growth and ease in the 1960s and early '70s, the gradual constriction of the economy forced business to reconsider its practices and assumptions. Because the health of the economy determines the level of tax receipts, government also suffered with these economic changes. Government agencies, however, could not in most cases close their doors to reduce their financial liabilities as business could. With increasing unemployment came increasing responsibilities and costs for government. Many of the programs and initiatives that had been new ideas in the '60s were firmly entrenched by the time government agencies were asked to pare down their staffs. In many cases not only did citizens ask government to cut its costs, they asked it to retain its level of service.

Public and private organizations have become more accountable in a variety of ways during this period. In addition to intense public scrutiny of government operations, the number of special interest groups has grown phenomenally. Because these groups have not hesitated to use litigation as a form of persuasion, their influence has also increased. Interest groups have pushed organizations further along a path they were already pursuing, however. Over the last 20 years, there has been an increased recognition among executives and boards of organizations that they can no longer operate in a vacuum. The decisions they make can have unexpected effects on the environment or a segment of the population, or open up the possibility of litigation. Providing a service or product is in no way as simple as it used to be.

Business and government's conception of their role and authority has also changed in other areas. Rosabeth Moss Kantner and David Summers recently studied the citations in the Business Periodicals Index, noting changes in topics over the period 1959 to 1980. Although several concerns remained relatively stable, there were a number of changes that mirrored changes in philosophy over these years. The number of articles on management rights, work measuring, and collective bargaining diminished in number; at the same time, authors began to concentrate more and more on external pressures affecting organizations, the quality of management actions, employee rights, and human resource management. Moving away from management prerogatives, the literature now focuses on using employees' skills efficiently and making the most of scarce resources, a change in orientation that is as much the product of necessity as it is of a more permanent change in values.

Technological changes have gone a long way toward altering management's values and problems. The advent of the computer, for example, revolutionized the way routine tasks are performed in most organizations. Much of the work that had been done manually could be done much more easily and accurately by a computer. As a result, the number of jobs devoted to processing of paperwork decreased considerably and the number of discretionary jobs - those requiring advanced skills and independent analysis of data and situations - increased. The kinds of employees who work best in discretionary jobs, however, are those with a high degree of independence and creativity. They are not likely to require the intrusive style of supervision traditionally used in organizations, preferring instead to make decisions about their work themselves. Rank and file employees have therefore begun to make decisions about how they do their jobs that their supervisors would have made in the past.

Freed from the necessity for manual accumulation of data, organizations have also decreased the number of their middle managers, many of whom had previously supervised administrative and clerical functions. At a time when the pressure for promotional opportunities is increasing, therefore, the number of middle management positions has begun to decline, further limiting the future prospects for employees now in entry-level positions.

Obviously, this is a major problem for individual employees. It can also pose problems for organizations. In order to adjust rapidly to changing needs, a large number of organizations have laid off employees in one unit and enlarged another. Many employees therefore believe, rightly or wrongly, that their career progress depends on the fate of their department or unit. If their unit loses funding or favor in the organization, they stand to lose career opportunities or even their jobs. What began as an individual problem then becomes an organizational problem as one department vies with another for power or resources.

Unless economic conditions change dramatically, the challenge for organizations in the late '80s and '90s will be to balance finite resources with increasing needs, efficiency with equity. In many ways this will be easier to do now than it would have been in the past because organizations can depend on a heterogeneous, ambitious, and highly-educated work force. If business and government can ignore past truisms to seek new ways to use their employees' talents, both they and their employees will become stronger.

Changes in the Department of Natural Resources

Like other organizations, the Department of Natural Resources has changed considerably in the last 30 years, partly in response to changing issues and finances and partly in response to the public's changing perceptions of the importance and vulnerability of the state's natural resources. Some of the most obvious changes during these years have been in departmental structure. After a pilot study in Brainerd, the DNR established a regional structure with common support functions in the late 1960s; legislation in 1969 allowed the creation of regional administrator positions. This same year the department's name was changed from the "Department of Conservation" to the present title. In 1973, after the department received preliminary authorization from the legislature to make changes in structure, the Loaned Executive Action Program (LEAP) completed a major study of the department. This study proposed that in order to improve interdisciplinary cooperation and public responsiveness, the department give regional administrators line authority for divisional field staff. The recommendations were implemented in 1973 and 1974.

In 1978, an internal management task force established by Commissioner Alexander reexamined the department's organizational structure; as a result, divisional authority was restored, although the regions retained many administrative responsibilities. Another study of the department's regional and subregional structure was completed in 1983 by the Department of Administration. Most recently, Touche Ross, a private consulting firm, has conducted a study of the DNR's management and organization.

All of these studies have, in one form or another, examined the problem of decentralizing decision-making while avoiding duplication of efforts and contradictory policies and actions. Although this balance between responsiveness and efficiency is sometimes difficult to maintain, the department has taken steps to decentralize functions whenever possible.

One example of this decentralization of functions is the assumption by the regional business managers of a variety of personnel and fiscal responsibilities. Because they work closely with regional supervisors and staff, it is much more efficient for them to answer questions and handle a number of different problems then it would be for central office staff.

The department has also worked to unify its divisions and bureaus, trying to minimize competition between work areas. By creating the regional administrator positions in 1969, the department was able to better coordinate the needs and goals of its divisional field staff. Before that time these employees were often in separate work locations and their contacts were primarily limited to other staff in their division. In addition to the interdisciplinary focus provided by the regional administrators, the common regional headquarters provided a sense of unity. Instead of having regional staff located in separate facilities within the region, they were consolidated in one building with more frequent opportunities to discuss problems and issues with employees from other divisions. Although employees still tend to identify themselves with their divisions, they are more aware of the work of other divisions than they once were.

Outside forces have provoked internal changes as well. With the number of state and federal regulatory agencies concerned with various aspects of the environment, the department's work has become more complex, requiring a greater number of cooperative efforts than it had in the past. The public's growing awareness of the importance of preserving and wisely using the state's natural resources has also altered the department's methods for accomplishing its tasks. In addition to providing information about department programs, employees in the department must frequently work directly with citizen, sports and environmental groups to achieve common goals such as habitat improvement or land acquisition for a lake access.

The potential for conflict as well as cooperation has increased with the state's growing population. Because the department is so visible and its policies affect so many people, the DNR inevitably disappoints or angers some citizens or interest groups by its decisions. As a result, much more time is now devoted to public meetings and information programs. Employees whose studies prepared them for fisheries or forestry work spend much of their time in public relations work - explaining, convincing, and negotiating with individuals or groups for the best use of natural resources.

DNR jobs have changed as the department's objectives have evolved. Some positions have been eliminated, some strengthened, some changed in emphasis. Although we do not have the historical data necessary to chart changes in individual jobs, several events and trends have affected employment movement and job criteria in the past 30 years.

Undoubtedly, the most far-reaching of these changes has been the unionization of virtually all state employees, which began in 1975 and was completed in 1981 after enactment of the 1973 Public Employment Labor Relations Act. The establishment of the bargaining units affected benefits, wages, hours of work, overtime, layoff, recall, and settling of disputes. By introducing seniority rights and bidding procedures, it has also had an enormous effect on the filling of positions. In general, the bargaining units have encouraged greater definition of procedures and greater consistency in their application.

Because of the rapid increase in knowledge about the environment in general as well as about specific natural resource topics, positions within the department have become increasingly specialized over the years. It is unusual now to find an employee with broad enough experience and education to move easily from a wildlife position, for instance, to a fisheries position. Jobs have also become more specialized within the disciplines - many employees concentrate on studying one aspect of resource work in depth, specializing in groundwater, perhaps, or furbearing animals. With a growing number of colleges offering degree programs in resource specialties, younger employees have usually chosen resource work as their profession rather than coming to it by chance.

A 1911 description of Minnesota's Forest Service said that employees must have no less than an "eighth grade education or its equivalent" and a "working knowledge of fire fighting, surveying, mapping, estimating, general office work and mechanics." How many employees exceeded this minimum requirement is unknown, but it is certain that the average level of education at that time would not have approximated today's. In our 1986 questionnaire only 12 percent of employees in natural resource occupations indicated that they had not pursued formal education after high school.

College education, in turn, alters employee's expectations of their jobs in many ways. Employees now are more likely to expect their jobs to conform to the conception of their profession as it is described by colleges. They are less likely, obviously, to believe that they'll be doing whatever comes along in the way of job duties.

As the disciplines have become more specialized, the criteria for jobs have become correspondingly more specific. Not only do supervisors and managers want their new employees to have experience in their particular discipline, they also frequently wish to recruit someone within a narrow area of specialization. Because of deadline pressures, it is often essential that a new employee be able to assume job duties with a minimum of training. As a result, job classifications in the natural resources series in all of the disciplines have become more exacting. Broad skills in areas such as management and supervision have been considered less critical to the job than a particular technical knowledge and set of experiences.

This means that natural resource employees frequently have difficulty moving from one area of specialization to another, and difficulty widening their exposure to varied disciplines, techniques, and philosophies. This also proves to be a problem for the department: employees who have spent most of their work years in one discipline are less likely to have a grasp of what is necessary for the department as a whole.

This report will examine these basic issues in more detail, offering some possible resolutions or new approaches. It is important now that the department define its needs for the future and agree on one direction or a variety of approaches.

Because the pressure from employees for more promotional opportunities and fewer restrictions on mobility will undoubtedly increase in the next decade, the department will be able to accomplish its goals more easily if it has an equitable, consistent means of filling promotional positions, changing job content, and offering other information and opportunities.

THE PLATEAUED EMPLOYEE

The Issue

The statistics on changes in the work force's composition and values quoted previously can give only a general indication of trends in the United States today. Minnesota state government, and the DNR in particular, will have its own variations on these trends. At least one of the issues facing workers - career plateauing - transcends state boundaries and employment classifications. It will likely prove an important issue for DNR employees for many years to come.

A plateaued employee is one who has been in the same job for five years or more with no immediate prospect for promotion. Yet employees are only considered to be plateaued if their lack of job opportunities frustrates or angers them. If their jobs are challenging enough, some individuals may be content to remain in them indefinitely.

Although career plateauing has existed throughout the industrial era, it has become a significant problem with the entry of the baby boom generation into the work force. Traditionally, American workers have expected that hard work will eventually lead to job promotion. Although the economic climate has changed, the baby boom generation shares previous generations' faith in education and hard work as a means to success. And baby boomers have obtained good educations in record numbers - 19 percent of Americans had completed at least a Bachelor's degree in 1984 compared to 10 percent in 1959.[12] In the DNR the percentage of natural resource employees with college degrees is even more striking than the national figures. According to the 1986 DNR Career Path Study Questionnaire, 51 percent of the natural resource employees had completed a bachelor's degree and an additional 17 percent had completed graduate degrees.

Because of the pyramidal structure of most American companies and government agencies, however, only a limited number of high-level jobs are available. Even in the best of times employees have remained at one level on the promotional ladder because the positions above them were inaccessible. With the influx of men and women entering business and government employment in the '70s and '80s, the competition for responsible positions has increased considerably. As a result, many more well-qualified and hard-working employees will be plateaued than in the past. Because of the sheer numbers of applicants for promotions, hard work and skill may not automatically assure promotion.

In the DNR, as elsewhere, there are a disproportionate number of employees in the middle years of their careers. Sixty-six percent of DNR employees in the natural resources occupations are now between the ages of 26 and 40; many, if not most, may be ready for promotion. The vast majority, in fact, responded affirmatively when asked in the survey whether they were qualified for a promotion. Because the department does not have an unlimited number of supervisory and management positions, most of these employees will stay in their jobs much longer than they wish. Considering the years of preparation most of these people have devoted to their careers, this plateauing could generate problems in morale and productivity. Although 57 percent of employees say they are very satisfied in their jobs today, for instance, 40 percent perdict that they will be very dissatisifed if they are still in the same job in ten years.

Because of the baby boom generation's investment in education and, therefore, their greater career expectations, they may feel the impact in greater numbers and intensity than their older colleagues. Organizations, in turn, will feel the pressure of demands from plateaued employees and will need to work creatively to ensure that they don't lose the support or productivity of their employees because of lack of promotional opportunities. In businesses, plateaued employees are commonly found at the middle management level, the point where the number of positions begins to dwindle. However, stagnation at any point in a hierarchical organization affects all the positions below it.

Whether or not plateauing has deleterious effects depends on the individual, the job, and the organization. If employees remain in their jobs for long periods of time because they enjoy the work and find it continuously challenging, the plateau poses no problem. Individuals may also realistically appraise the chances of promotion, accept the plateaus in their careers, and seek challenge and novelty in areas outside of work. In her study of plateaued managers, Janet Near found that most managers were able to adjust adequately to their career plateaus.[13] They were also, however, significantly more likely to be absent from their jobs and to spend fewer hours per week working than non-plateaued employees. Interestingly, the managers interviewed by Near were more disconcerted by the lack of change in their job duties than by lack of advancement opportunities.

There are a significant number of plateaued employees who are unable to revise their career expectations and accept a lower status than they had anticipated. (Janet Near estimated that 10 percent of the plateaued employees in her study fell into this category.) These individuals may become disenchanted with the organization, blaming their supervisor for their predicament. They may also blame themselves for failing to work hard enough or for lacking talent. These kinds of doubts make it extremely difficult for these employees to perform well in the jobs they have. Feeling disappointed and rejected, they are unlikely to put enthusiasm into their work. Even if they continue to perform adequately, they will lack the drive and self-confidence to make changes and improvements. At worst, as James Wolf points out in his study of plateaued employees in public service, they may "stifle new and competent subordinates who may be seen as threats, engage in destructive office intrigues, or simply drop out."[14] The energy that the employee had once mobilized for working may be transferred into hostility, anger, and self-doubt.

The organization as well as the employee suffers in these situations. Many individuals who have adjusted to career plateaus have done so by cultivating interests outside of work. Although this may give their lives a necessary focus, it may also diminish their aggressiveness within the organization. Employees whose bitterness toward the company grows with each additional year plateaued pose another, greater problem. Not only are these individuals likely to be ineffective, but their negativity filters through their staff and co-workers. This is particularly critical among plateaued employees in supervisory positions who feel disenchanted about their own lack of opportunities. Since these individuals expect little profit or pleasure from their efforts, they cannot foster enthusiasm among their employees. J. Sterling Livingston, a professor of business administration at Harvard, maintains that an employee's first supervisor greatly influences the course of his or her career.[15] If this is accurate, unhappy plateaued supervisors can inhibit their subordinate's performance for many years to come.

Possible Resolutions

Encouraging Lateral Movement:

Lateral tranfers, permanent job changes without change in status or pay, can provide both movement and career growth to plateaued employees by expanding their knowledge of the organization and their specialty. Transfers may also renew plateaued employees' flagging interest in their jobs and increase their motivation.

Movement between divisions and work locations can also help organizations by creating a pool of job candidates that have viable cross-functional experience to fill future promotional or lateral vacancies. In many cases, organizations that promote lateral movement across functional lines become more unified; they may also profit by the fresh options and ideas of individuals whose careers have not been limited to a certain work area with its habitual way of problem solving.

Although some workers, frustrated by insufficient promotional opportunities, have sought transfers simply for a stimulating change, most American workers still exclusively work toward upward career movement. From this perspective, lateral movement is at best a change of scenery, at worst a failure to progress. One result of this country's strong emphasis on progress and individualism has been an obsession with upward mobility; backward - even sideways - steps, no matter how they advance one's knowledge of skills, suggest defeat.

This emphasis on vertical career movement is reflected in the DNR employee questionnaire. When asked how willing they were to pursue several career advancement routes, natural resources employees were most willing to take supervisory positions (58 percent) and accept additional job tasks (48 percent). Although enthusiasm for lateral transfers was uniformly low, some employees (24 percent) were willing to consider transfers within their division. Few were willing to consider transfer between St. Paul and field positions. Outstate employees were much less interested in any type of lateral transfer than metro employees. Part of this unwillingness is no doubt because of financial concerns since employees cannot be reimbursed for relocation costs on lateral transfers. Unfortunately, the questionnaire results cannot determine why support for lateral transfers is so low.

Because its operations are diverse, the department needs supervisors and managers with experience in a broad range of situations and locations. It is particularly important, both for unity and efficiency, that at least the employees in management and supervisory classifications have both field and central office experience if the department is to work as a single entity.

Given the questionnaire responses to transfer, it will probably be a challenge to motivate employees to make lateral career moves. The department can, however, encourage transfers by providing brochures and lectures describing the advantages of transfers and mobility assignments. Managers might also make sure that breadth of experience is included in the final selection criteria for promotion. If employees can see concrete benefits to lateral moves, they will be more likely to consider them.

Employee Involvement:

Employee involvement in organizational decision-making, unlike lateral transfers, lets employees broaden the scope of their existing jobs. Used discriminately, delegation of authority or employee membership on task forces and other groups may give plateaued employees a sense of productivity and challenge that their jobs may be lacking. Although organizations have traditionally assigned decision-making to upper echelon employees, more and more public and private firms are initiating programs to involve rank and file employees in management decisions. They have found that employees perform much more efficiently on their jobs if they have some decision-making responsibility.

The importance of being able to make decisions in a job is emphasized in answers to the DNR employee questionnaire. Seventy-seven percent of DNR employees said that involvement in decision-making is important for job satisfaction; at the same time 10 percent of those employees are very dissatisfied with their current level of involvement in decision-making. This dissatisfaction could reflect a variety of problems - individual supervisors who fail to delegate enough authority to their employees, centralized decision-making for projects and programs, or the encumbrance of forms and procedures indigenous to state government. More research would be required to ascertain the most prevalent problems before designating a specific solution.

The department frequently uses task forces to complete short-term special projects. Employing the talents of individuals in a variety of work areas, these task forces have allowed employees to work with individuals from other work units or disciplines and to broaden their knowledge of the department. Because task forces are used both within divisions and bureaus and on an interdisciplinary basis, there hasn't been any formal procedure for choosing participants. There may, therefore, be many more employees who are willing and able to serve on task forces but who are not asked for one reason or another. According to our survey, about half of natural resources employees would be willing to participate in task forces.

Although the purpose of participative management is to heighten employee morale, employee involvement programs should also improve the overall performance of the organization. If the organization cannot meet its goals or fulfill its mission using this technique, participative management will also fail.

Therefore, it is important for an organization to adopt formal employee involvement programs gradually, allowing time to work out problems and gain acceptance from employees. Successful results in pilot or introductory programs are essential. Failures diminish the enthusiasm of employees as well as their trust in their own abilities. Changes may be made within an existing hierarchical structure or organizations may adopt new structures.

Promotion from Within:

With the number of promotional opportunities in government and business decreasing, more and more emphasis has been placed on promoting current employees to available positions rather than recruiting from outside the organization. This approach has the obvious advantage of increasing morale and loyalty among employees. By offering positions to current employees, management shows, in a concrete way, its approval of their work. This public expression of approval may in fact mean more to the employee than the new job itself.

Promotion from within may also be safer and more efficient, especially in the short run. Familiar with the procedures and personnel of the organization, current employees require less training time than new employees. They are also better candidates for positions that require extensive knowledge of the organization. Finally, organizations have much more information about current employees than they can obtain about outside applicants. Current employees' skills and ability to work with other people have been tested in several positions in the organization; the outsider must usually be judged on the basis of credentials and interviews.

Critics of promotion from within maintain that its efficiency is illusory. Although current employees may not require as much training time as new workers, neither may they have as much to contribute. Employees who have been with an organization for a long time may grow too accustomed to the way things have been done in the past, ignoring possibilities for change that an employee new to the organization would notice immediately.

In a study of managers working for New York city, for instance, Wilbur Rich found that while 67.5 percent of his sample had worked in the civil service for more than 20 years, 75 percent had worked for only one or two agencies.[16] Because public agencies usually promote from within, employees tend to remain in one place rather than moving from agency to agency to gain a broader knowledge of city government. Rich blames this promotional system for "inhibit[ing] innovation, dissent and creativity." He contends that because they are rewarded more for loyalty than flexibility and broad experience, city managers are likely to be unimaginative, parochial, and poorly trained.

At least one study, on the other hand, suggests that conformity may not be a serious problem for organizations that promote from within.[17] Analyzing the attitudes and interests of employees promoted into managerial positions in the Bell system, the authors found that identification with the organization was uniformly high. The employees' interests and experiences, however, were diverse. The promotion policy seems to have increased the employees' loyalty to the organization without molding them into a predictable pattern. This conclusion assumes of course that if employees have varied interests they will also have varied approaches to decision-making.

Of the seven companies and one government agency providing us information about promotion in their organizations, six had established policies encouraging promotion from within. This varied from general encouragement to prohibitions against interviewing outside candidates before all internal applicants had been interviewed. The Merit Policy of the federal government, unlike most policies of private organizations, emphasizes its option to seek outside applicants when there are few internal candidates or the position "demands fresh viewpoints and new ideas." In practice, however, this is also likely to be a prime consideration for business.

In one form or another, organizations have always used promotion from within to encourage and retain capable employees. With the growing numbers of competent workers seeking promotion, a policy of promotion from within may help organizations reduce the numbers of plateaued employees, giving them a better chance for the few opportunities that do exist.

Mobility Assignments:

Even if organizations promote exclusively from within, a number of talented plateaued employees will remain. Mobility assignments can help provide these employees a change in job routine and an opportunity to learn new skills. We are using mobility in this context to signify temporary movement to positions within or outside the work unit. This temporary assignment may be at a higher, lower, or equal classification level.

Temporary mobility assignments can be both rewarding to the participating employee and beneficial to the organization. These assignments can occur in a variety of situations - special projects, coverage for employees on leave, or temporary vacancies. The benefits to the organization would include:

- Enhancing the knowledge, skills, and abilities of participating employees
- Creating a pool of well-qualified candidates for filling future job vacancies in the organization
- Increasing employee satisfaction, thereby reducing employee absenteeism, increasing retention, and increasing productivity
- Promoting "team work" among individuals and units
- Improving recruitment by providing attractive opportunities for increasing employees' skills
- Aiding affirmative action objectives by offering protected group employees opportunities to gain experience.

The benefits of mobility assignments for employees are also varied. At a time when many employees feel that they have been in their jobs too long and have no opportunities for advancement, mobilities offer the challenge and stimulation of a new assignment. Although mobilities do not have the prestige of promotions, they do provide a change of pace and encourage employees to develop skills that they may not use frequently on their own jobs. This in turn may give employees a better chance for promotion. Employees on mobility assignments also have a chance to view their organization from a different perspective, establish new work relationships, and understand the objectives and procedures of other work units. Because they have a chance to participate in many projects within the organization, employees who accept mobility assignments frequently have a greater sense of identification with the overall organizational goals.

Japanese companies frequently use temporary mobility assignments. As William G. Ouchi states in his book, Theory Z, "mobilities allow employees to circulate across jobs within an organization, but without hierarchical promotion, retain their enthusiasm, their effectiveness, and their satisfaction at a level almost as high as [those] who continue to move up in the organization."[18]

The state's Department of Employee Relations has developed an employee mobility procedure for state agencies to implement within their own agency or between agencies. The DNR has taken advantage of this program, but to a very limited degree. In the employee questionnaire, however, many of our natural resource employees expressed interest in mobility assignments, especially for mobilities that do not require relocation.

Career Resource Services:

Career planning is the underlying logic for all the types of employee movement that we have discussed. Without active planning by the employee, job movement may be random and undirected, giving the employee neither added experience nor significantly increased knowledge. Until recently, career planning was not considered a priority for either employees or organizations. With plentiful promotional opportunities, employees could usually plan on moving in a simple, vertical direction. Their effort would consist of hard work and dedication; the steps in their career were left to their organization or to chance. The promotional picture is much different today, however. Employees must take a more active role in planning for their career, whether they are seeking advancement or career satisfaction.

Career planning assistance is available in many organizations through a career resource service, which enables employees to explore various career possibilities or strategies. Although many organizations have implemented various pieces of a career resource program such as training and development or tuition-aid, a few have initiated comprehensive programs in employee career matters. Some of the service's components include:

- Identification of Career Paths:
  A logical career chart of various occupations and positions within the organization. This includes descriptions of jobs as well as desirable training and experience for particular positions.

- Individual Assessment:
  Testing to help employees identify their values, interests, and facets of their personality that would affect their careers.

- Career Counseling Service:
  Assistance and guidance for employees who want to plan career strategies or strengthen their knowledge and skills with coursework.

- Career Reference Center:
  A reference library of material on career planning, college and vocational school programs and community resources.

- Retirement Planning:
  Group workshops to address topics related to retirement such as life changes, time, work, health, finances, and relationships. Individual counseling helps employees decide when to retire and then prepare for retirement.

- Mentoring:
  A program in which seasoned workers share their knowledge of the organization and their professional expertise with new employees. The program contributes to development of the organization's future leaders.

- Career Growth Workshop:
  Classroom training for employees in assessing their job or career satisfaction and developing a plan for career development. Classes may also be given to teach supervisors how to assist their employees in making career decisions.

Career resource services benefit the organization as well as the employee. They increase retention of present employees, and help recruit new workers by demonstrating the organization's concern for its employees. Because employees with career goals tend to be motivated and possess high performance standards, career resource services can also improve morale and motivation.

Employees benefit, on the other hand, by receiving help in assessing:

1) what their skills, interest and potential are for various work roles
2) where they are in their career
3) what they really want in a career
4) what personal investment is required to reach a particular career goal.

With this information, employees will be able to develop realistic career plans and accept responsibility for their own careers. Equally important, they may discover a wealth of choices and opportunities, both within and outside of work. Ironically, by offering career resource services, organizations can actually diminish rather than increase their role as caretaker of their employees' careers.

A successful career management program considers employees' careers within their lives as a whole. The traditional concept of a career as the focus of an individual's life is much too narrow to be useful. In order for employees to prepare for future career changes and possibilities, they must continually reassess their interests and needs, both inside and outside of work. If they can establish a balance between professional and personal life rather than relying exclusively on their careers for satisfaction, they will be better able to make changes when necessary. Workers whose careers define their lives are more likely to lose their equilibrium and self-esteem when organizational changes force alterations in their careers. The self-awareness of individual workers is therefore an asset to organizations, making it easier for the organizations to alter work procedures or make innovations.

In the DNR, possibilities and encouragement for career development vary from division to division and between the divisions and bureaus. One division may make continuing classroom education a priority for its employees, for instance, while others concentrate on on-the-job experiences.

In virtually all divisions and bureaus, however, employees obtain career path information informally, by discussions with co-workers and supervisors. Although this provides a general base of information, it does not give employees enough facts to make long-range career plans or to construct a series of alternatives. It likewise encourages natural resources employees to think exclusively of vertical movement rather than of development of knowledges and skills. Because employees are more likely to discuss career movement with colleagues in their own work area, they also frequently fail to recognize opportunities in other areas.

Although the state does not have a formal career resource service, its Employee Assistance Program works with several employees each year who are having career-related problems. This has not been a large percentage of their clientele, however - perhaps partly because employees don't know that they offer this service, but also because many employees would feel reluctant to seek help from a program that also offers mental health services. In any case, the Employee Assistance Program cannot offer advice specific to careers in the department.

More than half of natural resources employees answering the questionnaire indicated that they already have a specific position targeted as a career goal. However, 43 to 49 percent said that they would be very interested in obtaining information about career paths and job requirements and receiving career advice and training in career planning. Interest in career services was predictably most pronounced among employees in technical and professional positions rather than among those in supervisory or management positions. Perhaps the degree of interest in career services reflects some uncertainty about promotional possibilities, since less than 20 percent of those with a specific goal in professional, technical and law enforcement areas believed they had an excellent chance of obtaining a desired position within five years.

Job Enrichment:

Plateaued employees may suffer as much from a lack of new job duties as from a lack of promotional opportunities. Performing the same tasks year after year, they have fewer chances to grow than they had when they were working their way up to their present position. Job enrichment, by offering the employee new duties or authority, may relieve the boredom and repetition of the job. Introduced in the 1960s, job enrichment has been debated in the managerial literature through the '70s and into the '80s. Although much of the initial enthusiasm for it seems to have waned because of difficulties in reorganizing work structures, it remains an important tool for enhancing employees' job commitment. The controversies of the '70s provoked a number of studies that describe the benefits and pitfalls of job enrichment programs.

Job enrichment theory emphasizes work content, rather than pay or benefits, as a motivator for employees. Frederick Herzberg, in his seminal investigations of work behavior, found that although poor pay will make employees unhappy with their jobs, good pay will not necessarily make them happy in the job or motivate them to work harder.[19] The content of the job itself, its autonomy and degree of responsibility, will determine a worker's level of motivation. Herzberg's theory contradicts the principles of "scientific management" advanced by Taylor in the 20s and used widely for the next 50 years. According to the advocates of scientific management, the most efficient operation is one broken into small parts, each component done by a different worker. Job enrichment theory, by contrast, hypothesizes that employees are most efficient when they have responsibility for a whole task or at least a discrete portion of a task. Scientific management implies that workers are as interchangeable and unvariable as machines; job enrichment insists on motivation of individual workers as an essential part of efficiency.

In an article outlining the most effective methods of job enrichment, Hackman and colleagues cite three job factors that contribute to an employee's satisfaction: 1) the work seems meaningful to the employee; 2) the employee believes that he or she is accountable for a particular product or outcome; 3) the employee receives regular information about the quality of his or her work.[20]

In practice, these criteria may be met in a variety of ways. The management of a British chemical firm, for instance, decided to restructure the jobs of laboratory technicians in order to help resolve debilitating morale problems in their laboratories. Before the job enrichment experiment, laboratory technicians had set up and supervised experiments that were designed by the firm's scientists. Although they were responsible for monthly reports, the technician had little discretion in scheduling the work or making changes in procedures. Designating two groups of technicians in different locations as control groups, the investigators of the project gave the technicians in an experimental group responsibility for writing reports of all their own projects, training and assessing their staff, and for requisitioning lab materials. The lab technicians also began to participate in planning projects, work schedules, and goals. Gauging the growth of these employees by the quality of their monthly reports, the investigators found a dramatic increase in the level of knowledge, comprehension, and originality. The control groups' work briefly increased in quality, then reverted to its original level, where it remained. The experimental group primarily gained in accountability. Given more control over how the experiments were conducted, they could identify them as their work, rather than as the scientists' work. Instead of having a narrow area of responsibility, the technicians could use their skills in a variety of ways and contribute much more than they had before.[21]

According to advocates of job enrichment, these programs are beneficial to both the employee and the organization. The organization profits by decreased employee turnover and absenteeism as well as better quality work. For employees, job enrichment may provide greater stimulation and satisfaction, allowing them to grow and learn. Although employee satisfaction is a much less tangible notion than turnover or absenteeism rates, it is extremely important to an organization. Employees who are happy in their jobs work more easily with other employees, present a more positive image of the organization, and are less likely to engage in divisive office politics.

Several critics of job enrichment theory dispute the idea that all people need to find fulfillment in their work.[22, 23, 24] Hulin and Blood, for instance, contend that the need for self-fulfillment is part of a middle-class norm that may not be applicable to other groups of workers. In their view, fulfillment is a value, not a need, that is not necessarily universal. This raises the difficult question of whether workers' behaviors can be attributed to values or simply to learned responses. In other words, do some employees work only for their paycheck because they don't need to find satisfaction in their work or because they've been in unfulfilling jobs so long that they can't imagine anything else?

Other critics, accepting the theoretical basis of job enrichment, maintain that in practice job enrichment programs have been implemented without adequate study, preparation, or cooperation from management. Seeing job enrichment as a cure-all for a multitude of problems, some managers have used it indiscriminately, then assigned the subsequent failures to job enrichment itself. Another common problem has been that supervisors have given employees greater responsibility without giving them the authority to fulfill their duties. Simply adding duties to a position does not constitute job enrichment. In their analysis of a job enrichment project that failed, Frank and Hackman discovered several of these problems in its implementation.[25] Although employees were supposed to be trained in the new aspects of their jobs, the training was never done. As a result, the workers slipped back into their old specializations in order to get the work completed. Management's lack of commitment to the change was also disastrous. Theoretically agreeing to give their employees more autonomy, in practice supervisors intervened whenever there was a problem and resolved it themselves. The authors of the study contended that the project failed because in reality there was virtually no change in the jobs.

In general, carefully designed job enrichment projects that are supported by management seem to be very effective in improving employee morale and productivity. A well-conceived job enrichment project, in fact, can have reverberations throughout the organization. Supervisors of the enriched position, having delegated some authority to their employees, can concentrate on more important and gratifying tasks. Lower level employees may also benefit by receiving tasks from the enriched jobs.[21] Although undertaking job enrichment may seem risky at first, it may be more conservative a strategy for motivating employees than primarily relying on increasing salaries and benefits.

With its emphasis on job content rather than outside factors such as promotional opportunity, job enrichment theory may provide a valuable basis for examining careers in the Department of Natural Resources. Agitation for promotions may just as likely express dissatisfaction with the structure and authority of the department's jobs. The employee questionnaire suggests, for instance, that promotability may not be as important to some employees as fundamental changes in their present jobs.

Fifty-five percent of employees in natural resources occupations indicated that preparation for promotion would be an important component of their ideal job. By contrast, 87 percent marked effectiveness of work efforts as very important, 85 percent marked interest in work subjects and use of skills and ability, and 81 percent marked challenge. On the average employees judged only one item out of 19 to be both very important to an ideal job and very dissatisfying in their current job. The five items listed most frequently were: involvement in decision-making (10 percent), meet people outside DNR (10 percent), promotability within DNR (10 percent), decision making authority (9 percent), and supervisor's awareness of skills (7 percent). Although promotability seems to be important, it is not the only issue affecting employees' job satisfaction. Any changes made in the department's career structure should reflect this diversity of values and dissatisfactions.

Job enrichment has been done on an individual, informal basis within the department, not as a concerted effort to change the level of authority or duties of a series of jobs. Many employees have at least some latitude in choosing additional projects that particularly interest them; they may also ask for assignment to task forces or other work groups. The degree of independence an employee has in choosing work assignment depends on the supervisor, however, as well as on the volume of duties already assigned to the job. If a position has a burdensome work load, additional work assignments, no matter how interesting, will probably be unwelcome. By increasing the work volume for present employees, funding cuts have also compromised employees' ability to make their jobs more interesting and gratifying.

Alternative Organizational Structures:

Since it is often the hierarchical structure itself that produces plateaued employees, some changes in organizational design may alleviate the problem. In the last ten years much has been written about restructuring business and government to make them more effective, responsive and innovative. Removing the strict hierarchy of control, these proposals tend to blur the distinctions between organizational divisions and between jobs. Most of these changes also increase employee participation and control. Although the alternative systems may not produce more promotional opportunities, by diminishing the importance of the pyramid they diminish employees' perception of being caught in unchanging, unchallenging positions. With greater fluidity of divisional lines and job functions, positions may be less predictable or repetitious; an individual may not need a promotion to gain new duties or responsibility.

New approaches to organizational structure range from dismantling the traditional hierarchy to using talent innovatively within the existing structure. Some business analysts suggest that the only way to make bureaucratic structures more responsive is to drastically alter them; adjustments within the structure, these critics maintain, will be only cosmetic. Pointing to the proliferation of middle managers in government, Shan Martin says that "the very real need for direction and conceptual ability from a few people in public organizations has been expanded to an imagined need for increasing numbers of people at all levels called managers." Using a city parks and recreation division as an hypothetical example, Martin proposed reducing the managerial staff to one director. The remaining employees, working as a team, would rotate responsibilities for planting, trimming, cleaning, and building maintenance and repair among themselves. All these employees would have the same classification; artificial and unnecessary distinctions between jobs would be eliminated. Martin regards cooperation in the groups as the "key energizer" and believes that employees would have greater incentive to perform in his theoretical system.

Many critics favor less controversial and far-reaching changes, however. Several of the most popular new approaches use teams of employees for temporary or ongoing projects. In project management, for instance, a project manager has responsibility for a particular assignment that cuts across divisional lines. Drawing staff from several different areas, the project manager assigns and schedules work and controls the project budget. A similar approach, matrix management, has been used by several organizations. In the matrix system, employees have two distinct supervisors, a functional manager who provides technical direction and training and a project manager who supervises the employee on particular projects. A third work group concept, quality control circles, does not disturb the basic supervisory structure of the organization but allows more employee participation in decision-making. In quality control circles, employees in a certain work area voluntarily meet on a regular basis to discuss work problems and devise solutions. They are responsible for convincing management that their strategies will work.

Easing the rigidity of the pyramidal structure, these kinds of work groups offer several benefits. First, they reduce the barriers between different areas of an organization. In most traditional organizations there is little interaction between different divisions or work areas. As a result, the divisions use the employees they have at hand to solve problems, although a particular problem might be more easily solved by an employee with special expertise from another area. These severe demarcations between work areas inhibit the organization from taking full advantage of its human or material resources.

Second, work groups that cross division lines promote innovations. In a system with clearly defined borders, employees see only a small part of a problem or issue. Describing the traditional organizational structure as a "segmented system," Rosabeth Kanter contends that "Organizational cultures that favor sorting issues into preexisting categories - e.g., the array of boxes in the organizational chart - and stress precedent and procedures are not likely to encourage anyone to look beyond what already exists to find a novel solution."[27] Work groups, drawing on expertise from a variety of areas, look at problems from a more global perspective. Because they are by nature temporary, they need not expend as much energy defending themselves and preparing justifications.

Work groups may also allay some of the detrimental effects of specialization. Because specialists working in isolation tend to become parochial about their portion of a project, in a large work group they are forced to view the work as a whole and assess how they can use their expertise to make the entire project better. Specialists can do their jobs much better if they understand how their work will be used. Some managers advocate establishing routine contacts between an organization's decision-makers, research staff, and its customers. In essence, this kind of ad hoc work group integrates the specialist into the day to day necessities of the organization's work.

Because these new structures depend on greater interaction between employees and greater fluidity of boundaries, they can alleviate repetition and provide a sense of challenge to employees who have been in their jobs for some time. Slowly, organizations seem to be evolving from rigid hierarchies whose level of control is akin to that required by children to arenas where mature individuals can unstintingly use their talents.[28]

Tuition-Aid Program:

Many organizations offer tuition-aid as a part of their career resource services. Tuition-aid assists employees in furthering their training and development beyond that offered within the organization. An employee who participates in the program attends a university, college or vo-tech institute and is reimbursed by the employer for his or her tuition costs.

Program policies tend to be similar in organizations. Tuition-aid benefits are available to help employees function better in their current jobs or prepare for transfer or promotion. Although a few organizations require three months to one year of employment before tuition-aid will be granted, most do not require a length of service for eligibility. Generally any courses given by an accredited school or college will be approved but degree programs must be within occupations relevant to the sponsoring organization. The dollar amount of tuition reimbursement varies, one hundred percent reimbursement is the rule rather than the exception. Employees are usually reimbursed following the completion of a course with a grade of C or better, although the number of courses per quarter or semester that can be reimbursed is limited. This prevents overload for the employee/student which would interfere with job performance. Employees generally maintain a regular, full-time work schedule. In addition to tuition-aid, many organizations also pay fees for employees' membership in professional groups.

The majority of employers offer and staunchly defend their tuition aid program's contribution to employees and the organization, citing the following benefits:

1. Helps the organizations cope with scientific/technological changes that can make job skills and knowledge obsolete.

2. Gives the employer an easily administered method of providing a broad scope of employee training without having to develop courses.

3. Helps identify highly motivated employees who are good prospects for career development and promotion.

4. Helps recruitment.

5. Provides a test of employee interest in formal education before attempting to broaden in-house training programs.

6. Allows employees who work far from the organization's main offices to take courses closer to their homes.

Although the advantages are significant, there are also several compelling reasons why firms do not establish tuition-aid plans. First, some organizations believe that the advantages of tuition-aid programs do not justify the cost; because the knowledge employees acquire frequently cannot be directly applied to their work, the benefit to the organization may seem negligible. Second, and corollary to the first reason, many organizations can easily recruit personnel who already have the education needed in their jobs. Organizations may also choose to pay other, more widely used benefits, or to consider requests for tuition aid informally on a case by case basis.

Although the DNR does not have a formal tuition-aid plan, 42 percent of natural resources employees said they would be willing to supplement their education at DNR expense. The percentage fell to 8 percent however, when they were asked if they would take classes at their own expense. The reluctance of most employees to pay for additional classes may mean that at this point knowledge gained by experience is as valuable to employees as formal education or that the cost of further education exceeds its benefit to their careers.

For the most part, DNR employees in natural resource occupations are remarkably well-educated. There are employees, particularly at the technician level, however, who might take advantage of a tuition-aid program to complete their bachelor's degrees; other employees may be interested in pursuing graduate coursework. A formal tuition-aid program would be especially beneficial in offering employees assistance in switching specialties or in helping employees gain special skills necessary for promotional positions. It is also important for the department that employees have an opportunity to update their scientific and technical skills or to take coursework in organizational management. Currently, opportunities for training vary from one work unit to the next - a department tuition-aid plan would ensure equity in training.

Although the number of organizations initiating tuition-aid programs has increased in the last few years, the number of employees participating is minimal. The average participation rate is five percent of the total employees per organization.

In other organizations employees have not taken advantage of tuition-aid plans because of lack of encouragement by the organization, lack of information about available courses, indications that further education could not promise a better job or a promotion, inflexible work schedules, too many family responsibilities, or inability to pay the initial cost of courses.

Tuition-aid programs that are used for training purposes and not simply as an employee benefit should be evaluated by how readily employees can apply their newly gained knowledge to their jobs. In many cases, supervisors will not be able to discern immediate changes in work effectiveness because the employees' coursework is too complex to be assimilated in one quarter or even one year. Over time, however, employees who pursue additional training in areas related to their jobs should be able to use this knowledge in a practical way--to solve more difficult problems, for instance, or analyze situations in a more penetrating way. If employees frequently do not show increased ability in their jobs after taking college courses, the tuition-aid program may be too broad. On the other hand, it is also important that tuition-aid programs not be unduly restrictive. Individuals learn in different ways; one approach, or one particular course, will not work for everyone.

The needs of the organization and the needs of the individual employees intersect in tuition-aid programs. At minimal cost, organizations demonstrate their concern for their employees' growth and reap the benefits of employees' increased expertise or up-to-date knowledge. Because employees request the tuition-aid and plan their own coursework, they have a greater investment in using the time fruitfully than they might if they were attending in-house training courses. This kind of cooperation between employers and employees, with employees taking responsibility for planning their own education and career course, is the basis of efficient career resource services.

Cultivating Outside Interests:

With fewer opportunities for job promotion, many people seek challenges outside the work place. Employee satisfaction often correlates with achieving a balance between work and private life. This balance involves actively pursuing an organizational career and community and personal interests. This is not to suggest that an employee's outside activities should become an issue of concern for the employer. However, ignoring the rewards that participation in an outside activity can bring to employees would mean ignoring an important factor that can contribute to more satisfactory careers.

Cultivating outside interests will also lead to rewards in employees' retirement years. Speaking of men in particular, Janet Hagberg, author of Real Power suggests, "The sad thing about men and retirement is that many men identify so strongly with their work that they die within a few years after they cease to work. As the adage goes - if you are what you do, then when you don't you aren't. If there is no interest or identity within oneself or outside work, the gap that retirement brings is too wide to bridge."[29] People who cultivate outside interests during their working years usually make more successful transitions from the daily work routine to retirement. Encouraging employees to become interested in community activities can be part of an effective employee pre-retirement service. By the time employees retire, they have a diverse set of activities to occupy their time; they need not face the prospect of years of empty days. Because the self-esteem of these retirees has not always depended entirely on work, they can derive a sense of satisfaction and importance from less organized and perhaps more playful activities.

Organizations can play a supportive role in encouraging their employees' involvement in outside activities by recognizing employee contributions to community organizations or achievement of significant personal goals, such as educational or athletic accomplishments. Many organizations recognize employee contributions to the community by giving public service awards. Not only do these awards support employees' endeavors, but they also bring the organization closer to the community it serves.

INCREASING SPECIALIZATION

The Issue

Like plateaued employees, workers with specialized expertise may find their promotional opportunities limited and their job duties increasingly repetitive. Concentrating their experience and education in a single, frequently narrow, area of work, technical specialists have particular problems and needs within organizations. Traditionally, specialists have gained expertise in a series of positions on a technical career ladder. Because the technical ladder has ended at a relatively low level, they have been forced to accept administrative or supervisory positions if they wished to be promoted. The decision to promote a specialist into a management position is frequently made as an acknowledgement of the individual's technical contributions to the organization, not their administrative talent or even interest in management. Accepting the jobs because they have no other promotional opportunities, specialists may find themselves frustrated and bored in formulating policy, managing budgets, and supervising staffs. The skills that they have acquired through years of experience lie dormant as they work to obtain accounting or supervisory skills. Specialists promoted out of their area of expertise may, in the long run, lose motivation and energy; others may simply disregard their adminstrative duties and concentrate on the technical aspects of their jobs while their staff functions without leadership.

Although some specialists may have innate human relations and administrative abilities and may welcome the chance to use these skills, many others may find their managerial positions burdensome. Organizations lose as much as individual specialists in these cases; they have not gained the effective manager or supervisor they needed and they have lost the technical specialists' valuable contributions in their area of expertise.

A particularly important problem in the DNR because of the technical nature of resource work, specialization has increased dramatically in the past 20 years. Although only 38 percent of DNR employees in natural resources occupations consider themselves specialists, DNR employees are highly specialized indeed compared to employees who worked in less complex eras. Wildlife area managers, for instance, may not consider themselves specialists because they have a variety of duties - habitat development, land acquisition, public relations, and supervision. In fact, however, the specialized knowledge they have obtained about wildlife through education and experience cannot be taught in a reasonable length of time; it requires long preparation. Yet the very attributes that make wildlife managers, hydrologists, or foresters invaluable in their divisions makes them less attractive to supervisors hiring employees in other work areas. Their experience is too narrow to be readily applicable to another variety of resource work.

The problems faced by engineers and scientists in accepting supervisory and management positions apply equally well to resource specialists. Frequently these men and women have entered resource fields partly because they enjoy the outdoors and like seeing the results of their work first hand. In supervisory and management positions, this link with nature becomes increasingly abstract--the subject of studies, conferences, and reports.

Although resource managers frequently visit work sites, administrative and supervisory duties are their primary focus. Unless resource specialists have a particular interest in administrative tasks, promotions to supervisory or management positions will be of dubious value to them. On the one hand, these positions promise greater power and influence; on the other, they promise greater distance from fundamentally important and interesting work. At least some of the problems the department has with supervisors who fail to complete administrative and personnel tasks can be related to this ambivalence toward adminstrative work.

Possible Resolutions

Dual Career Track:

Many companies with a large number of technical experts have adapted dual career tracks to avoid channeling ambitious specialists into management positions for which they are unsuited. In dual career track systems, technical specialists have a career ladder specifically designed for them. Jobs in the technical series are usually parallel to those of the non-technical series with the highest technical jobs equivalent to all but the highest managerial jobs in pay. Although it may be a complicated system to build, it has the advantage of attracting and retaining technical specialists as well as giving technical employees the assurance that their skills are important enough to the organization to warrant a separate pay scale. Perhaps the most important benefit of a dual career track is that it clearly distinguishes between administrative and technical skills without valuing one more than the other. The organization need not penalize its productive specialists by leaving them at lower salary levels or hurt itself by promoting them beyond their expertise and skill.

If the technical career ladder is to be a viable alternative to an established management route, it must be well-designed and carefully implemented. George J. Sacco Jr. and William N. Knopka from Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company describe six criteria that should be met in building a dual career structure: 1) commitment of management; 2) credibility with employees; 3) flexibility in the design of the structure so that it can be changed when necessary; 4) defined levels of technical contribution so that the ladder remains purely technical; 5) standards of quality that are enforced by screening and review; and 6) publicity.[30] Although dual career ladders have been used very effectively in many organizations, these authors emphasize the importance of maintaining strict criteria for promotion on the technical career ladder. Companies who use the technical ladder "as a dumping ground for ineffective managers," which in effect lowers the status of the technical ladder, have subverted the purpose of establishing the ladder in the first place.

At Goodyear, employees at the "Associate Scientist" level may be promoted through either the management or technical career ladder. Both contain three steps. The top level of the technical ladder "Research Fellow," is equivalent to "Department Manager," the top of the managerial ladder. Research Fellows consult or direct major research programs and advise management on technological developments. Honeywell has a similar dual career system with a consistent ratio of high-level technical specialists, called Fellows, to managers. To enter the four grades of Fellow, employees must have "indepth multidisciplinary technical skills for problems and projects of exceptional technical complexity and difficulty."[31] As at Goodyear, the Fellows are usually chosen by a review committee.

Goodyear, Honeywell and IBM's career path systems are relatively simple compared to that at BDM Corporation in Virginia.[32] BDM offers five separate tracks - technical, technical with leadership option, management, administrative with leadership option, and administrative. The two leadership options offer employees from the technical or administrative ladders a chance to assume some management responsibilites. In this way, individuals who have interests in both a technical field and in management, for instance, can obtain some management experience without committing themselves irrevocably to management. Because the leadership options do not extend as far as the technical, management and administrative ladders, employees who wish to progress must eventually choose one of the three main tracks. More flexible than the dual career track, this system benefits those with a variety of talents and encourages employees to seek experience in several areas.

The companies we surveyed that had established dual career tracks all emphasized the high caliber of employees in the technical track. 3M is typical of these firms in describing its technical specialists as showing a "high degree of proficiency in a technical field and a record of solid contributions to important and challenging programs." Most of these programs allow employees to switch from one track to another as their career objectives change.

Most of the literature on dual career tracks focuses on the benefits of this system; perhaps companies that have had problems with dual career tracks do not wish to advertise their failures. Changing from a traditional pyramidal system to a dual career ladder would inevitably pose some problems. In order to attract the most capable employees, for instance, the technical ladder must have the same benefits and salary levels as the management ladder. Although the technical specialists may not supervise anyone, they should be included in management decisions that affect the course of their work. If these employees have no control or say over how their organization uses the technical information or research they produce, their titles will be hollow and their skills misused. Giving due consideration to these problems, organizations that have many technical specialists may gain a great deal by instituting a dual career ladder. They will be able to reward technical employees for doing the work they know best, giving them the assurance that their efforts are valued.

Increased Movement Between Specializations:

Dual career ladders concentrate on keeping specialists within their area of expertise by giving them incentives to use the skills they have mastered rather than encouraging them to accept administrative positions. This approach assumes that specialization is in itself necessary--the question is not whether it should exist, but how it can best be handled. In many areas, specialization undoubtedly is essential. But it also creeps into areas where it is unnecessary and may in fact be detrimental to the organization by limiting opportunities for movement.

Many positions in the DNR acquire an aura of specialization by tradition rather than innate necessity. Either one person has been in the job so long that everyone assumes that the replacement must have exactly the same qualifications as the incumbent, or the position has been filled several times by individuals with similar credentials. If the skills of previous incumbents define a position rather than its requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities, the position may develop a veneer of specialization. This may also occur when the workload of a position is so pressing that a supervisor does not have time to train a new person and looks instead for someone who has done virtually identical work somewhere else. Not only does this limit the supervisor's options, it constricts employees' opportunities to try positions in related fields.

One way to decrease this pseudo-specialization is to examine the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) of positions regularly. If the KSAs are determined before vacancies occur, there may be less likelihood to write them with the last incumbent in mind. There is also greater opportunity for consistency across divisional lines when the KSAs are set in advance. After the KSAs have been described for all positions, managers should examine the present class options to see whether they are necessary.

If KSAs were established for all positions, it would also be easier to determine what training classes would be useful to employees preparing for promotion. It may be worthwhile, for instance, to offer training classes in esoteric areas (such as specialized computer experience or knowledge of specific laws or agency requirements) for positions that are typically hard to fill. Instead of automatically recruiting outside the department to fill these positions, supervisors could then draw on the talents of present employees.

Another approach might be to identify positions in each of the divisions and bureaus that do not require in-depth knowledge of that particular discipline and target them for interdisciplinary transfer. In order for this to be effective, all of the divisions and bureaus would have to participate equally--any suggestion that these positions are less important for being less specialized would doom the effort to encourage movement between disciplines. The criteria for these designated positions could then be established and distributed to all resource employees.

Several plans might be adopted to decrease the specialization of positions if managers agree as a group that this is necessary. Consensus on this issue is essential, however, because, put into practice, any of these plans will seriously affect the filling of vacancies, both in terms of the number of candidates and in terms of the candidates' relevant experience. A general statement that exam criteria should be broadened would likely not suffice. Practically speaking, decisions made about exam criteria on a case by case basis tend to emphasize the unique features of positions, not the elements that link them with other positions in the department.

INEFFECTIVENESS OF TRADITIONAL REWARDS

The Issue

In 1983, the Public Agenda Foundation conducted a study of the values of workers in the Puget Sound area of Washington.[33] Presenting them with a list of 46 possible qualities in jobs, they asked the respondents to rate these qualities by their importance. The ten items considered important to most people were, in order:

- Working with people who treat me with respect
- Interesting work
- Recognition for good work
- Chance to develop skills, abilities, and creativity
- Working for people who listen if you have ideas about how to do things better
- Having a chance to think for myself rather than just carry out instructions
- Seeing the end results of my efforts
- Working for efficient managers
- A job that is not too easy
- Feeling well-informed about what is going on

Although among the first 20 qualities, pay was less important than factors intrinsic to jobs themselves. Workers may have rated salary lower because they believed themselves to be adequately paid; the less adequate the paycheck, the more importance it would assume. Even taking this into account, however, the survey demonstrates an amazing change in values over the last 30 years, the 1950s emphasis on tangible rewards replaced by a 1980s concentration on growth and self-fulfillment.

Part of the change can be attributed to the attitudes of the baby boom generation which, raised in an era of affluence, has had both the education and the wherewithal to challenge the long-cherished cultural devotion to work as self-sacrifice. Unlike their parents, most of the men and women of the baby boom generation do not intend to trade their independence for a salary. Believing their own development to be important, they demand challenge in their work; work itself provides a meaning, not just a salary. This generation emphasizes the organization's responsibilities to its employees rather than the employee's adjustment to the organization.

This change extends to employees' expectations of treatment at work. For instance, in a study of changes in employee attitudes in several companies over a 25-year period, Cooper and colleagues found a significant alteration in the treatment employees expect from their companies.[34] Although clerical and hourly employees now consider their salaries adequate, they increasingly express dissatisfaction with their company's fairness, willingness to respond to employee complaints, and respect for individuals. One measure, the number of managers and clerical employees who rated their companies as "very good" or "good" in dealing fairly with employees, plummeted in 1975-77 to half its 1950-59 value. The authors emphasize the ratings reflect a change in the values of workers: "All parts of the work force are beginning to overtly articulate their needs for achievement, recognition and job challenge." In past years, ordinary workers were believed, correctly or incorrectly, to be primarily concerned with pay, not achievement. Clearly employees' interests can no longer be defined so easily.

This change in values has had little effect on the rewards structure of business and government, partly because of inertia and partly because of the very real obstacles to altering reward structures. Because it is simpler, employers usually assume, as they did in the past, that all workers desire the same rewards for their work, namely increased pay. One union leader stated this idea more succinctly: "If you want to enrich the job, enrich the paycheck."[35] With the changing composition and values of the labor market, this proposition seems increasingly unrealistic.

If they are to be used as incentives, rewards must be specific to the individual. A person who thrives on intellectual challenge, for instance, may accept a length of service award, but be motivated by assignment to a particularly intriguing project. Another person, working primarily for a paycheck and reserving a large part of his or her enthusiasm for outside interests, may not be interested in job enhancement, but might find flexible hours a great inducement in a job. The more closely an organization can match incentives to the individual, the more motivated their employees will probably be.

In their papers on employee motivation, Nadler and Lawler caution that rewards must be significant if they are to provide motivation; trivial and half-hearted gestures by an organization will undermine rather than increase performance.[36] Describing an "expectancy" theory of motivation, they also maintain that employees must discern the relationship between their performance and their rewards. Pay raises tied to seniority, for instance, actually decrease motivation since there are no sanctions for poor work nor any particular benefits for good work. Agreeing with Nadler and Lawler on this point, Yankelovitch calls these kinds of indiscriminate rewards "disincentives" and blames them in part for apathy in some groups of workers.[37] He bolsters this assertion with the results of a survey showing that only 22 percent of American workers believe that there is a connection between the quality of their work and their pay. When pay is not tied to performance, it obviously cannot be a motivator. In constructing a system of rewards, therefore, an organization must be careful to distinguish between satisfactory job performance--getting the work done in a acceptable way--and truly exceptional work. Otherwise, its rewards system will imply that minimally acceptable work is the standard.

In designing rewards systems, organizations also need to analyze the kinds of attitudes and behavior they are rewarding.[38] An organization may emphasize quality in its meetings and memos, for instance, while day-to-day decisions reward cost-cutting that actually infringes on quality. If cost-cutting is rewarded by raises, promotion or praise, employees will seek to cut costs, not enhance quality. Only a very imperceptive or altruistic individual would ignore rewards to adhere to a dusty company policy. This also extends to less tangible circumstances--a company may say that it wants its employees to be innovative, yet object when new ideas are proposed. Although they favor innovation in the abstract, they reward conformity by making it easier.

Organizations have traditionally emphasized rewards such as pay raises, fringe benefits and promotions that they give rather than rewards inherent in the job itself. In many cases, however, the challenge or possibilities that a job poses may be more important than any benefit that the company can bestow. This is particularly true of high-discretion jobs that require education and an ability to work independently. In discussing the rewards that encourage innovation, Rosabeth Kantner says,

> People tackle innovative projects because they have finally received the go-ahead for a pet idea they have always wanted to try, or they feel honored by the organization's trust in them implied in such a big assignment, or they simply want to solve a problem that will remove a roadblock to something else they want to do, or they take pride in their company and cannot sit still while a problem continues. They do not take on this kind of effort because a trinket is dangled in front of them that they can win.[39]

In the employees Kantner describes, the challenge of the job is its own reward. This is not to say that pay is unimportant; but, for many people, it is only part of the satisfaction of working. Kantner points out that most organizations reward individuals for past performance; she advocates instead "investing" in employees by giving them the money and authority to tackle new projects.

Possible Resolutions

In addition to pay increases, there are other ways organizations can recognize outstanding employee achievements. Although its pay structure is determined by bargaining unit negotiations, the DNR can offer lump sum achievement awards to employees who have been exceptionally productive (in most of the bargaining units). Other rewards vary by division, ranging from length-of-service awards to plaques recognizing outstanding contributions. Many employees have also received awards from outside organizations for their efforts in protecting and managing Minnesota's natural resources.

Like the DNR, most of the organizations we surveyed provided length-of-service awards to their employees. The kinds of gifts varied somewhat from company to company but the time sequences were more uniform--usually five - year intervals of service. To complement service awards, some companies have established clubs for long-term employees and provide annual banquets or newsletters.

In addition to suggestion programs offered by the federal government and other states, several public agencies offer honorary awards to employees. The IRS, for instance, gives a "Commissioner's Award" for outstanding service in the public interest. The Department of Interior offers a series of awards for different aspects of outstanding performance. Their Distinguished Service Award and Meritorious Service Award are based on a career of achievement; their Superior Service Award, by contrast, is granted for specific contributions to the department. They also award groups for their collective work and give a "Valor Award" to employees who show exceptional courage on or off the job. To recognize employees' accomplishments outside of work, the H.B. Fuller Company publishes a brochure describing its employees' contributions to their communities, including such projects as house-painting and participation in Special Olympics. They also choose an employee for an "Outstanding Volunteer" award. Whatever form it takes, recognition of employees' efforts is crucial to their productivity and sense of commitment to the organization. It may also enhance their pride in the organization.

None of the organizations we polled gave us information on such informal practices for increasing employee satisfaction as job enrichment, task force membership, or mobility assignments. In general, these practices are more difficult to discuss because they are so individual to the employees' and work unit concerns. They might be especially effective in the department, however, because DNR employees have a particularly strong interest in their work. Employees who are exceptionally capable, for instance, might be temporarily assigned to a special project or allowed to give up some of their work for a period of time while they pursue a research interest. A small Nevada firm incorporates its rewards program into its research objectives by awarding two to five grants for innovation each year.[40] Although the grants are less than $10,000 each, they give employees a chance to work on a project that is especially interesting to them; the projects may also prove to be beneficial to the organization.

These grants also show employees that the company recognizes their creativity and skill. Frequently underplayed as a source of motivation, recognition can be a powerful stimulus. Sixty-nine percent of DNR employees who responded to the questionnaire said that their supervisor's awareness of their skills and abilities was important or very important to them; only 1.5 percent believed it to be unimportant.

An employee award may be in the form of a certificate, a plaque, a letter of commendation, a trophy, time off work, etc. An important aspect of recognition is the way in which the award is presented. Choosing the right occasion may be as important for employee motivation as choosing the award itself. The occasion for presenting the award should be the decision of both the supervisor and employee. Some possible formats are one-on-one manager and employee luncheons or dinners (if the employee prefers, this may include his or her spouse); a larger fanfare occasion with co-workers in attendance; or, if the organization has an in-house news publication, a news release citing the award.

Broader attention may be given the award presentation by coverage in a local community newspaper. Because one of the purposes of large-scale awards programs is to motivate other employees, it is important that the audience know what achievements deserved special recognition. It is important for management to be certain the contribution was that of one employee and not the effort of two or more employees. If the contribution was not an individual effort, all employees involved in the contribution should be recognized. Group recognition will make working in teams more attractive to employees.

EFFECTS OF DUAL CAREER FAMILIES ON ORGANIZATIONS

The Issue and Possible Resolutions

One of the most dramatic changes in the United States in the last 20 years has been the surge of women into the work force. In the 1950s most households consisted of a husband, a wife who did not work outside the home, and their children. The number of these "traditional" families has gradually dwindled to the point where, in 1985, only 14 percent of American families would be described in this way. The composition of households has, in the intervening years, become much more diverse. In addition to greatly increased numbers of married women with children who are working, there are many more single-parent families. Unmarried men and women are also much more likely to live alone rather than with their parents.

The traditional division of household duties certainly had its advantages--with only one member of the household, usually the man, working full-time, the other person could take care of most of the day-to-day business of running a household and handling the children's activities. Because most of today's families lack a stay-at-home spouse, married workers must, like single workers, handle these tasks themselves, finding time at the end of the day or on the weekend for such time-consuming necessities as going to the bank, having the car fixed, and picking up dry-cleaning and groceries. Sick children and problems with day care providers add additional stress to parents' already busy schedules.

The large number of working spouses also complicates attempts to relocate employees. Although relocation is always a disruption, it is much more difficult when it entails finding a new job for a spouse and obtaining day-care in addition to buying a house and moving furniture and belongings. With greater equity between marriage partners, it is also difficult to decide whose career needs have priority. One partner's promotion may prove to be the other's demotion.

With increasing demands on their time, many employees need more flexible work hours than they did in the past. A person who works 7:00 to 3:30 instead of 8:00 to 4:30, for instance, has at least one hour a day for errands that can't be completed in the evening. Alternate work schedules also enable some workers to gain further education, others to pursue an interest unrelated to their job. To varying extents, companies and governmental agencies have altered work schedules to fit their employees' needs by initiating job sharing and flextime programs and creating permanent part-time jobs. In 1978, the U.S. Congress passed the Federal Employees Part-time Career Employment Act requesting all federal agencies to create part-time career positions. Stating that "many individuals in our society possess great productive potential which goes unused because they cannot meet requirements of a standard work week," the act points to the needs of parents to balance work and family obligations as one of several compelling reasons for creating part-time positions.

In the Department of Natural Resources, 54.3 percent of natural resources employees have spouses who work; 51 percent of these spouses work full-time. Although we did not inquire whether these employees have children, this obviously would substantially increase their obligations.

About 20 percent of the employees are single. Interestingly, many of the individuals who said that their spouse does not work are in the 41 to 60 year age bracket. As these older workers retire, it is likely that a large percentage of the married employees in all age brackets will have working spouses. If this happens, conflicts between responsibilities for work and home will become an increasingly important issue.

The department could alleviate the problem somewhat by examining and possibly expanding its opportunities for part-time work or flexible scheduling. Although the State of Minnesota has a formal job-sharing program, the DNR has used it very infrequently; there are only two job-sharing positions in the department now. The number of part-time career opportunities, aside from 90 percent positions, is also limited and could possibly be increased. Because the questionnaire did not ask whether employees in the natural resources occupations would be interested in flextime or part-time positions, we do not know whether this is a pressing issue for DNR employees. The needs of current employees should be investigated more thoroughly before any plan is adopted as policy.

EMPLOYEE RELOCATION

The Issue and Possible Resolutions

Even though promotional opportunities are few, employees are increasingly reluctant to accept promotions that involve relocation. This is partly because a majority of employees have working spouses who must also find employment in the new city or town. Although spouses may be able to find jobs similar to those they are leaving, disruption to the family is doubled by both partners starting jobs in a new place. Finances may also pose a problem for employees accepting a promotion in another location; relocation costs may, especially in the short run, exceed the amount of salary increase accompanying the promotion.

If the costs of relocation are too great, so may the benefits be too meager. Because employees today tend not to think exclusively in terms of what they owe to their organization, they are less likely to make a move out of loyalty to their firm or to demonstrate a desire for advancement. Other factors such as family harmony or stable relationships in their community may be more compelling to employees than upward movement in their company.

Because management encourages employees to accept transfers, employees who are reluctant to move may be justifiably concerned with the possibility that deciding against relocation will stall their careers. These employees may not express their reluctance to relocate, however, feeling obligated to accept management's offer of a promotion. In the long run, this decision may pose problems for the individual and the organization; few people can work very effectively in a place that does not suit them. It is in management's best interest to discuss the problems of relocation with employees they wish to promote, being honest and forthright about the drawbacks as well as the opportunities in the new locale.

Organizations can help their employees resolve the relocation dilemma. For a long time, employers have offered assistance with housing relocation costs. With employees' increasing reluctance to change their locations, employers have developed incentives to encourage employees to accept transfers, including helping spouses find jobs, assuming the cost of renters' lease breaking penalties or the cost of housing or mortgage differential. To minimize the problems that relocation can cause the homeowner, for example, Honeywell, as well as other firms, contracts with a national relocation company that specializes in the purchase and resale of transferred employees' homes. This allows employees to sell their residence at the old location promptly and with a minimum of involvement on their part. Market values of the employees' homes are determined by appraisals conducted by independent fee appraisers. If the seller receives a higher offer (from a real estate broker or individual) for their home during the 45-day offer period, the relocation firm amends their contract to match the higher offer.

In addition to assisting with the financial and logistical matters involved in relocation, some organizations also provide their employees with information on coping with "relocation stress." Marsha Sinetar, partner in a California relocation firm, describes a predictable cycle of relocation as "Anxiety mixed with excitement, psychological disorientation, and finally (for almost everyone) readjustment to the new place." By providing such information, the organization alerts its employees to the stresses inherent in making major life changes. When employees realize that feelings of uncertainty often accompany relocation, adjustments are easier to make.

The DNR, like several Minnesota agencies with employees in all parts of the state, has difficulty encouraging employees to accept promotions that require relocation. Because relocation expenses are determined by negotiation with the bargaining units and are limited to promotions, the DNR has little flexibility in offering added incentives to employees who might be willing to move if it were most feasible for them financially.

The employee questionnaire confirmed managers' assessments of the reasons why outstate employees are reluctant to move to St. Paul. Sixty-eight percent of employees said that the price of homes in the Twin Cities would discourage a move; in addition, the sale of their present home, and the population of the metro area and its higher cost of living were discouraging factors. Many employees who now live outstate also believe that the metro area offers fewer opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Although the responses of metro employees were much more ambiguous then those of outstate employees, these individuals as a group said that the price of homes, the cost of living, and the opportunities for outdoor recreation in outstate work sites would be inducements to relocation. There was no consensus on factors that would prove discouraging; the possibility of finding a job for a spouse in the outstate area was, surprisingly, considered to be encouraging by 36.6 percent of the respondents and discouraging by only 23 percent. Taking the responses of these two groups together, it appears that there are two specific kinds of concerns - finances and interests (or perhaps values). The financial concerns are straightforward and realistic--by any assessment it is cheaper in many ways to live in small towns in rural Minnesota than it is to live in the Twin Cities. These concerns could be alleviated by providing more relocation assistance. The other factor is less tangible and less easily remedied. It is likely that many employees prefer living in the outstate areas because the population is smaller, the pace slower, and the possibilities for outdoor recreation greater.

RETIREMENT

The Issue and Possible Resolutions

Retirement frequently creates dilemmas for both employers and their employees. Employees have generally assumed that their employees want to retire at a certain age and that they will be financially able to do so. Management's typical involvement has been limited to providing retirees with information on their retirement pension plan and acknowledging their work and dedication with an appropriate farewell. Although employees sever their links with the organization on their retirement date and enter a more leisurely phase of life, the transition may not be simple for either employees or the organization. Many retirees feel that they are no longer contributing and valued members of society. And the organization may suddenly recognize its loss and face the problem of replacing the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the retired employee.

In a 1981 survey conducted for the National Council on Aging, almost half of the workers surveyed said that they do not look forward to retirement. Of the retirees polled, 37 percent said that they were "forced to retire."[44] These statements suggest a pervasive uneasiness about retirement by workers and retirees alike. If retirement amounted to a few restless, unhappy years as it might have earlier in the century, this uneasiness would be an insignificant problem. With Americans now spending 10 to 25 years of their lives in retirement, however, it is important that they plan their retirement just as carefully as they planned their careers.

While retirees grapple with a sudden surplus of time, their former employers try to fill the gaps in their ranks. Frequently the breadth of knowledge and experience that older workers have gained in the course of their careers cannot be duplicated when they retire. In the past, the loss of these experienced workers was balanced by an infusion of young workers with state-of-the-art technical training. Because of the sharp decline of the birthrate following the baby boom years, however, the competition for able, well-educated young workers will be keen in the next two or three decades. In fact, according to a report entitled "The Graying of the Twin Cities Area" published by the Metropolitan Council, about 80 percent of the people who will be working in the year 2000 are already in the work force.[45] The smaller number of young employees will force many organizations to use the skills of their current staff more efficiently; older workers will likely be encouraged to continue their service on a part-time or consulting basis after retirement.

The needs of organizations may therefore work to the advantage of employees, giving them a chance to ease gradually into retirement. By working part-time, retirees can retain their sense of purpose while they adjust to increased leisure time. Organizations might also profitably employ their older workers and retirees as mentors. As mentors, these individuals can provide informal counseling and guidance to less experienced workers, ensuring continuity of program objectives in the process.

Organizations can also benefit by offering older employees the chance to participate in retirement seminars dealing with the issues retirees frequently encounter in the areas of finances, health, and leisure.

Individual sessions with a career counselor might also be considered for employees who cannot decide whether they should retire or continue working. Ideally, employees should begin planning for retirement at least four or five years in advance. This will allow them time to take a measured look at their career, discern its importance in their lives, and investigate leisure activities they might find fulfilling. Because they are considering retirement thoughtfully and rationally, these employees will be less likely to feel that they've been forced to retire or to become increasingly less effective while they are still working.

If it is best for employees to ease into retirement, it is also best for organizations to take a slow, comprehensive approach to the task of replacing retiring employees. This process, called succession planning, entails comparison of the skills required of positions and the skills of current employees. Key or difficult positions should be examined several years before older workers are due to retire in order to delineate the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) for the positions. Using the KSAs as a basis, managers can then decide whether current employees will qualify for the position (perhaps by obtaining extra training) or whether the position is so unusual that a search for qualified candidates will need to be made outside of the organization. This is a much easier process when soon-to-retire employees are still employed and contributing to the organization. After they leave, the emphasis shifts to filling the position quickly. If KSAs are designated well in advance of vacancies, current employees can usually acquire the specialized knowledge or skills necessary to compete for positions. As a result, the quality and number of candidates will probably be greater and employees will understand that they can work toward promotions by specific means.

According to the employee questionnaire, about 7 percent of DNR's natural resource employees are 56 years of age or older. Although many DNR retirees possess a life-long dedication to preservation of natural resources and retain strong ties with the department after retirement, there is no particular plan for using their talents after they retire. There is also little in the way of informational retirement classes to offer older employees. The Department of Employee Relations training classes include a workshop for retiring employees, but this deals primarily with finances, skimming over more personal issues. The DNR is a unique state agency in that so many employees find their work very satisfying and may therefore feel a greater loss on retirement than the typical retiring employee.

Perhaps one of the ways that we can avoid, in Commissioner Alexander's words, losing "sight of the lessons [retirees] have learned through countless hard-fought battles" is to develop a range of ways that retiring employees can work part-time or provide consulting services after retirement. Many retiring employees could also be given a large part in determining their successor, perhaps by providing information to be used in developing exam criteria or by serving on the selection interview panel. As simple a task as keeping an up-to-date mailing list of retirees in order to send them copies of the DNR Resource Review and other department newsletters might also be welcome to retirees. These individuals can be a firm source of support for the DNR in their communities if they are informed of the department's actions.

CONCLUSION

A number of problems and possibilities converge for organizations at the end of the 80's. With the early wave of baby-boomers well into their careers and the youngest of them just entering the work force, we are only now beginning to see how the knotting of the promotional ladder affects employee satisfaction. Complaints about job opportunities are increasing in frequency and ardor, an indication of a very real frustration with the discrepancy between younger employees' expectations and their actual prospects. Their complaints must be considered within the parameters defining work in the 80's and 90's - rapid changes in technology, increasing specialization of jobs, and a well-educated, independent, and diverse work-force.

These issues become denser and more complex when examined in a specific organization such as the Department of Natural Resources. When we began this study, we postulated that lack of promotional opportunities was an important source of dissatisfaction and would account for much of the discontentment expressed by employees. The results of the employee questionnaire both confirm and dispute this presumption. On the one hand, 9% of natural resource employees who said that promotability within the DNR was important to them also said that lack of promotional opportunities was a dissatisfying aspect of their present jobs. Of the 19 factors, promotability ranked third as a source of dissatisfaction. Although dissatisfaction was expressed by a small percentage of employees, it is nonetheless important to consider.

Yet promotability within the DNR, promotion to other state agencies, and promotion to other government institutions were ranked 17th, 18th and 19th of 19 factors in terms of importance to DNR employees. Fifty-five percent of natural resources employees consider "the degree to which my job is preparing me for promotion within the DNR" to be important or very important. By contrast, 87% consider effectiveness of work important, 85% interest in work subjects, 84% use of skills and abilities, and 81% challenge of work. Virtually every aspect of their jobs was accorded more importance than promotability by DNR employees.

These results do not alter the importance of considering measures for increasing the possibilities for employee movement across divisional lines. They do suggest, however, that it would be a mistake to concentrate exclusively on promotion as a way of alleviating career problems in the department. The problems seem to be both more complex and more individual than a simple plateauing phenomenon. A rather sizeable proportion of employees indicate, for instance, that recognition for their work is important to them and seems to be lacking in their present job. Others (or the same individuals) indicate that they are not given the decision-making authority they desire or that their skills are not acknowledged by their supervisors. Although natural resources employees are remarkably similar in their degree of satisfaction and the emphasis they place on interest and challenge in their jobs, their sources of dissatisfaction seem to be more diverse. A single approach emphasizing promotional opportunities or recognition would, therefore, address some but by no means all of DNR employees' concerns.

Some aspects of DNR careers concern management much more than employees. Although managers have reportedly asserted that they need candidates for supervisory and management positions who have a broad base of experience within the department, employees are reluctant or unwilling to relocate or to consider lateral transfers. Many employees believe, moreover, that formal training is more likely to increase their chances of promotion than lateral job transfers. This difference in perception is puzzling and suggests that either managers do not state their preference strongly or openly enough to employees or that they do indeed favor education over broad experience in making hiring decisions. In order to resolve this problem, DNR managers will need to first emphasize the importance of lateral career moves then prove their assertion by giving it weight in selection decisions.

By emphasizing the discrepancy between the needs of individual employees and those of the organization, the issue of relocation brings up the larger issue of employee satisfaction. However concerned the department may be about the career satisfaction of its employees, there is a limit to what it can do to make them happy in their careers. It can - and should - provide information about career possibilities, give praise for work well-done and constructive criticism for errors and lapses, eliminate artifical barriers to movement, and ensure equity in hiring and promotions. Decisions about focus and direction of careers should rest with the employees themselves, however. As DNR employees indicated in the questionnaire, there are a variety of sources of career satisfaction. The department can do best by allowing employees to choose their own goals and pursue them in their own ways.

Notes

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[4] Statistical Abstract, p. 134.

[5] Richard B. Freeman, "The Work Force of the Future: An Overview," in Work in America: The Decade Ahead, ed. Clark Kerr and Jerome Rosow (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1979), p. 61.

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[10] Yankelovich, "Work, Values and the New Breed," p. 15.

[11] The information on organizational changes in this section has been drawn from Rosabeth Moss Kanter's analysis in The Change Masters: Innovation and Entrepreneurship in the American Corporation (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), pp. 37-55.

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Appendix A

DNR Managers' Concerns about Career Paths

Relocation:

It's very difficult to persuade field staff to take central office positions because various factors make compensation for moving inadequate. One factor is the higher cost of living and higher real-estate prices in the metropolitan area. It is also sometimes difficult to sell homes in outstate areas because the number of home buyers is limited. Finding appropriate employment for spouses also frequently poses problems for employees transferring to new locations.

Mobility between Positions and between Classifications:

Pointing to existing barriers to movement between divisions and between divisions and bureaus, many managers said that they believed transfer opportunities between classes are too limited. Bureau employees are unlikely, for instance, to move into jobs within divisions and vice-versa. Movement may be impeded, in part, by exam criteria that concentrate on narrow, specialized experience. Many managers believed that exam criteria should be broadened so that employees could compete for a wider range of positions. More chances for mobility would also increase employees' knowledge about several divisions or bureaus rather than just one or two, possibly increasing their chances for promotion.

Employment Development:

Several possibilities for aiding employee development were discussed. In general, these suggestions presupposed a greater management role in fostering employment development. Many managers believed that a department-wide emphasis is needed. They suggested using a wider variety of developmental tools and more on-the-job training. They also said that formal training and affiliation with professional organizations should be encouraged throughout the employee's career in the department.

Job Enhancement:

Managers had several suggestions for job enhancement in the department: special projects from other agencies, neighboring states, or Canada; involvement of more employees in task forces; and rotation of employees between similar positions. They also thought that the number of paraprofessional positions could be expanded to free the professional staff of some tasks and create a link between the professional series and the clerical or technical job series. Increased delegation of duties or authority was suggested in some cases.

Recognition:

Managers suggested that a formal recognition program is needed to acknowledge excellent work by employees. This program might take the form of assistance with educational expense, provision of work release time, exchange of positions with the private sector, attendance at conferences, or appointment to task forces.

Career Counseling:

Current employees frequently lack the information to prepare for promotions. To alleviate this problem, a listing of qualifications for various positions in the department could be compiled and distributed along with information on DOER's procedures for job application and establishment of lists. Managers said that they think the department should emphasize the broad experience that is required for management positions so that employees who are interested in these positions can plan accordingly. A career path guidance course was also suggested.

Appendix B

Research Objectives and Highlights of the Employee Questionnaire

As stated earlier in our report, our project plan included gathering information from employees through a questionnaire. (See attached questionnaire.) After establishing twelve research objectives, the Bureau of Human Resources and the Natural Resources Data Systems Unit developed the "Career Paths Study Employee Questionnaire." The questionnaire was designed to elicit information from our natural resource employees regarding their satisfaction with their current job and career growth and to identify factors they considered important to career advancement. The questionnaire was sent to all department employees in natural resources occupations at the Natural Resources Technician level and above on April 14, 1986. Of the 1296 questionnaires sent, 1076 were returned for an 83% return rate.

The Data System Unit analyzed the resulting data and prepared a report after consultation with the Bureau of Human Resources. A portion of that report follows. It identifies research objectives, highlights important results, and explains how employee occupation, work section and other factors affect responses to various questions.

It is important from a statistical perspective to note that there was a high degree of commonality among standard groupings of employees (e.g. occupation and work section). In other words, dramatic differences of response across employee groupings are more the exception than the rule.

Research Objective 1: How satisfied are employees with their jobs? (Response to question 1)

- Department-wide, 57% of employees are very satisfied, while only 5% are very dissatisfied.

- Employees higher in the organization had greater job satisfaction. Managerial employees were the most satisfied (74% very satisfied); they were followed by supervisory (60%), professional (54%) and technical employees (53%). Law Enforcement had 69% very satisfied.

- For work sections, Trails and Waterways (81%) and Enforcement (68%) had highest job satisfaction; Waters (28%) has the lowest proportion of very satisfied employees.

Research Objective 2: How satisfied are employees with their DNR career growth? (Response to question 5)

- Department-wide, 56% of employees were very satisfied, while only 6% were very dissatisfied.

- Employees higher in the organization had greater satisfaction with their careers: managerial (83% very satisfied), supervisory (59%), professional (52%) and technical (50%). Law Enforcement had 69% very satisfied.

· For work sections, Trails and Waterways (69% very satisfied) and Law Enforcement (67%) had the highest proportion of employees very satisified. Waters (22%) had the least.

Research Objective 3A: How satisfied do employees expect to be if they remain in the same job for 3, 6, or 10 years? (Response to questions 2, 3, & 4, respectively, plus question 1 for current job satisfaction)

· Department-wide, the percent of employees who are very satisfied falls from a current level of 57% to 35%, 23% and 17% if employees remain in the same job for 3, 6 and 10 years, respectively. In parallel, very dissatisfied employees climb from a current level of 5% to 16%, 31% and 41%.

· Self-predicted job satisfaction -- 3, 6 and 10 years hence in the same job -- drops for all occupations and work sections; groups tend to preserve their relative job-satisfaction positions during the drop.

Research Objective 3B: How many years do employees want to remain in their job? (Response to question 7)

· Department-wide, the median number of years employees want to remain in the same job is between 3 and 5 (a median separates the distribution of employees into halves).

· Law Enforcement employees, as an occupation or work section, are different, for their respective median is over 10 years.

Research Objective 4: In what areas are employees' jobs satisfying and in what area is there improvement needed? (Response to questions 9 & 10).

· For the department as a whole, the following generalization applies: if an employee judged an item to be very important in an ideal job (responded 6 or 7 to question 10), he/she did not judge that same item as very dissatisfying in the current job (responded 1 or 2 to question 9).

· Employees, on the average, judged just one item (out of 19 possible) both very important to an ideal job and very dissatisfying in the current job. Top five very important/very dissatifying items are:

- involvement in decision making (10% of employees)
- meet people outside DNR (10%)
- promotability within DNR (10%)
- decision making authority (9%)
- supervisor's awareness of skills (7%).

· Among occupations, the average number of items judged very important in an ideal job and very dissatisfying in the current job increases as occupational level falls in the organization: .4 for managerial employees, .7 for supervisory employees, 1.0 for professional employees, and 1.4 for technical employees. Law enforcement had .9 per employee. All groups generally ranked the same items in the top 5.

- Among work sections, the average number of items judged very important in an ideal job and very dissatisfying in the current job varied from .2 for Trails and Waterways to 1.4 for Commissioner's Office-Planning-special programs and Waters. There was little commonality among work sections.

Research Objective 5: In what ways is the department providing career growth and in what ways are we not? (Response to questions 11, 12, 13, & 14)

- Department-wide, the percent of employees who strongly agree that opportunities exist along four avenues of career development are:

  - new knowledge on the job (35% of employees)
  - new skills and abilities on the job (32%)
  - new knowledge through formal training (22%)
  - new skills and abilities through formal training (19%).

- Strong agreement that opportunities exist, whether on the job or through formal training, was higher for managerial and supervisory employees than for professional and technical employees. Law enforcement employees were in the middle.

- Little consistency was found among work sections. Waters employees consistently ranked lowest in terms of strong agreement that opportunities exist.

Research Objective 6: Do employees believe broadening jobs to make them more generalist in nature would increase career opportunities and/or job satisfaction? (Response to questions 17B & 17C)

- Department-wide, 26% of employees responded that becoming more of a generalist would greatly increase both career opportunities and job satisfaction.

- Self-classified specialists indicated that becoming more of a generalist would increase career opportunities, but slightly decrease job satisfaction.

- Self-classified generalists indicated that becoming more of a generalist would increase both career opportunities and job satisfaction.

Research Objective 7: What are employees most willing to do to advance their careers and what are they least willing to do? (Response to question 18)

- What employees are most willing (or most unwilling) to do to advance their career is largely the mirror image of what they are least unwilling (or least willing) to do.

- Each employee found, on the average, 5 actions (out of a possible 19 actions) he/she was very willing to take to advance their career. Over 40% of employees were very willing to take the following actions:

- take supervisory position (58% of employees)
- accept additional job tasks (48%)
- go to school on DNR time (46%)
- serve on task forces (43%)
- go to school at DNR expense (42%).

· Going to school at DNR expense and DNR time ranked well above going to school at one's own expense and time.

· Among occupations, there was a high degree of consistency in the ranking of actions employees were very willing to pursue to advance their careers. Managerial and law enforcement employees were the most unique, compared with the department as a whole and with the other professions.

· A good deal of commonality was exhibited among work sections in the ranking of actions employees were very willing to pursue to advance their careers. Commissioner's Office-Planning-special programs had the lowest relationship with the overall department, followed by Bureaus-Regional Administration, then by Trails and Waterways. Each of these also had relatively low commonality with other work sections, although Law Enforcement had the least in common with other areas.

Research Objective 8: Do employees have DNR career goals? If yes, do employees expect to reach their five year career goal?
(Response to question 19)

· The majority of employees (57%) have a specific position in DNR that they would like to obtain within the next five years. And 82% of the employees who desire a specific position have a course of action planned to prepare for that position. The most frequently mentioned courses of action included more experiences in their current job (82%) and formal training or education (54%). The majority of employees (50%) were neutral in describing their chances of obtaining their desired position in five years; one-third indicated that they had no chance of obtaining their desired position, while nearly one-fifth indicated they had an excellent chance.

· More managerial (27% of employees) and supervisory (31%) employees believed they had an excellent chance of obtaining their desired position in five years than professional (17%), law enforcement (12%) and technical employees (10%).

· For work sections, Parks and Recreation employees (33% of employees) had the highest proportion of employees who believed they had an excellent chance of obtaining their desired position in five years; Forestry (11%) had the least.

Research Objective 9: Do employees desire more career planning services? If so, specifically what would be helpful? (Response to question 24)

- For the four types of career planning services in question 24, high interest was expressed in each by 43 to 48 percent of department employees.

- The frequency of high interest falls, on the average, as occupation rises from technical (2.0 career services judged as high interest per employee) to professional (1.9), supervisory (1.6) and managerial (1.0). Law enforcement (1.7) differed little from the department as a whole (1.8).

- Among work sections, the frequency of high interest was largest, on the average, for Commissioner's Office-Planning-Special Programs (3.0 career services judged as high interest per employee). Next largest was Trails and Waterways (2.5). Smallest frequency of high interest was found for Fish and Wildlife (1.6) and Minerals (1.6).

- Women expressed a slightly higher overall interest than men.

- Employees in racially protected classed had a higher overall interest.

- Employees with disabilities ordered their interest in career planning services differently than the rest of the department. They had a higher interest in "want training on career services" compared with the rest of the department.

- Vietnam era veterans differed little from the rest of the department.

Research Objective 10: What most inhibits and what most encourages willingness to move to a new location? (Response to question 22)

- Metro employees responded differently than outstate employees.

- The ranking of factors that encourage moves is not the mirror image of the ranking of factors that discourage moves.

- Top five factors that encourage metro-employee moves:
  - outdoor recreation in new location (76% of employees)
  - cost of living in new location (64%)
  - department paid moving expenses (60%)
  - price of houses in new location (59%)
  - find new friends with similar interests (42%).

- Top five factors that encourage outstate-employee moves:
  - art and entertainment in new location (54% of employees)
  - department paid moving expenses (53%)
  - quality of schools in new location (47%)
  - jobs for spouse in new location (46%)
  - find new friends with similar interests (44%).

- Top five factors that discourage metro-employee moves:
  - art and entertainment in new location (28%) of employees
  - jobs for spouse in new location (22%)
  - population of new location (21%)
  - house resale market in current location (20%)
  - quality of schools in new location (12%).

- Top five factors that discourage outstate-employee moves:
  - price of houses in new location (66% of employees)
  - population of new location (60%)
  - cost of living in new location (56%)
  - outdoor recreation in new location (50%)
  - house resale market in current location (50%).

Research Objective 11: Are employees willing to pursue temporary assignments and what are the most popular and least popular?
(Response to question 21)

- Nearly 90% of the employees indicated they would take a temporary assignment. Temporary assignments requiring relocation were of least interest. Temporary assignment to field locations were of greater interest than St. Paul assignments. Assignments that involved the least movement within the organization were of more interest than those involving more movement ("temporary job-same discipline-same division" ranked higher than "temporary job-other discipline-same division" which ranked higher than "job in another division").

- Metro and outstate employees had nearly the same ordering of interest in assignments. Metro employees, on the average, expressed an interest in more of the temporary assignments than outstate employees (3.7 vs. 3.0 temporary assignments per employee).

- Among occupational groups there was commonality in the ranking of interest in temporary assignments. Managerial and technical employees had the least commonality with the department.

- Among work section groups there was a good deal of commonality in the ranking of interest in temporary assignments. Bureaus-Regional Administration and Trails and Waterways were most unique.

Research Objective 12: Do employees feel DNR offers advancement opportunities?
(Response to question 15)

- Department-wide, 14% of employees believed they had plenty of opportunity to advance to a supervisory position, and 14% believed they had plenty of opportunity to advance to an non-supervisory position.

- Department-wide, 42% of employees believed they had no opportunity to advance to a supervisory position, and 35% believed they had no opportunity to advance to non-supervisory position.

- Employees at higher occupational levels in the organization believed, in greater proportion, that they had plenty of opportunity to advance to a supervisory or non-supervisory position than employees at lower occupational levels.

- Parks and Recreation employees were highest (25% of employees) in their belief that they had plenty of opportunity to advance to a supervisory position (department average is 14%). Waters employees were lowest (4%).

- Parks and Recreation employees were highest (19% of employees) in their belief that they had plenty of opportunity to advance to a non-supervisory position (department average is 14%). Waters employees were lowest (4%).

Appendix C

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CAREER PATHS STUDY
EMPLOYEE QUESTIONNAIRE

DEPARTMENT OF
MINNESOTA
NATURAL RESOURCES

Dear Survey Recipient:

This questionnaire has been designed to gather information about your current job and career growth satisfaction, and to identify factors that are important to career advancement. Your responses will be kept anonymous and will only appear in summary form. When you have completed the questionnaire, please return it in the attached envelope. *Thank you for your participation.*

SECTION A

First of all, we want to know about your general satisfaction with your current DNR job. Please answer the following questions by circling the appropriate number on the scale or checking the appropriate box.

1. Overall, would you say your current job is:	**Very Dissatisfying**	**Neutral**	**Very Satisfying**	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	**No Opinion** 8
2. How satisfied will you be if you are doing the same job 3 years from now?	**Very Dissatisfied**	**Neutral**	**Very Satisfied**	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	**No Opinion** 8
3. How satisfied will you be if you are doing the same job 6 years from now?	**Very Dissatisfied**	**Neutral**	**Very Satisfied**	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	**No Opinion** 8
4. How satisfied will you be if you are doing the same job 10 years from now?	**Very Dissatisfied**	**Neutral**	**Very Satisfied**	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	**No Opinion** 8
5. Would you say your CAREER within DNR to date is:	**Very Dissatisfying**	**Neutral**	**Very Satisfying**	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	**No Opinion** 8

6. Check the box to the right if you have NEVER been promoted within the DNR. ☐

7. How many more years would you like to remain in your current job?
   - ☐ Less than 1 Year ☐ 1 to 2 Years ☐ 2 to 3 Years ☐ 3 to 5 Years
   - ☐ 5 to 7 Years ☐ 7 to 9 Years ☐ More than 10 Years

8. In your opinion, how qualified are you for a promotion at this time?	**Not At All Qualified**	**Neutral**	**Very Qualified**	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	**No Opinion** 8

SECTION B

We want to know how important each of the following items is to making your job satisfying.

9. How well does **YOUR CURRENT JOB** provide you with satisfaction on the items listed below? Please circle the number that **best reflects how well YOUR CURRENT JOB satisfies you.** For example, if learning satisfies you and the position you are in today regularly requires you to learn, then circle one of the higher numbers on the scale provided.

	Not At All Satisfying			**Neutral**			**Very Satisfying**	**No Opinion**
My opportunity to use my skills and abilities is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
My supervisor's awareness of my skills and abilities is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The opportunity I have to do things a new way is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
My freedom to do the job my way is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
My opportunity to be involved in decision making is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
My opportunity to do new and different things is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
My level of interest in the subjects I work on is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
My opportunity to set my own work priorities is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The new things that I learn are:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
My control over my own work is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The degree to which my job is preparing me for promotion in DNR is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The degree to which my experience in my current job will qualify me for jobs in other state agencies is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The degree to which experience in my current job will qualify me for jobs in other government institutions is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
My freedom to schedule my day as I see fit is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The exposure I am getting to knowledgeable people outside DNR in my resource management field is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The exposure I am getting to knowledgeable people inside DNR in my resource field is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The effectiveness of my work efforts is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The challenge of the tasks I work on is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The authority I am given to make decisions, without having to clear them with my supervisor, is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

10. Now that you've rated the satisfaction of your current job, please circle the number that **best reflects how important each of the items listed below is to making YOUR CURRENT JOB YOUR IDEAL JOB.**

	Not Very Important to Me			**Neutral**			**Very Important to Me**	**No Opinion**
My opportunity to use my skills and abilities is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
My supervisor's awareness of my skills and abilities is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The opportunity I have to do things a new way is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
My freedom to do the job my way is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
My opportunity to be involved in decision making is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
My opportunity to do new and different things is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
My level of interest in the subjects I work on is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
My opportunity to set my own work priorities is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The new things that I learn are:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
My control over my own work is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The degree to which my job is preparing me for promotion in DNR is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The degree to which experience in my current job will qualify me for jobs in other state agencies is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The degree to which experience in my current job will qualify me for jobs in other government institutions is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
My freedom to schedule my day as I see fit is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The exposure I am getting to knowledgeable people outside DNR in my resource management field is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The exposure I am getting to knowledgeable people inside DNR in my resource field is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The effectiveness of my work efforts is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The challenge of the tasks I work on is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The authority I am given to make decisions, without having to clear them with my supervisor, is:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

SECTION C

Career growth means increasing your knowledge, skills and abilities in your current job, as well as advancement to a higher level. With this definition in mind, we want to know how you feel about your current opportunity for career growth in DNR. Please circle the number that reflects how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your career growth while in your current job.

11. I have sufficient on the job opportunities to develop new knowledge.

Strongly Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	No Opinion
1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8

12. I have sufficient on the job opportunities to develop new skills and abilities.

Strongly Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	No Opinion
1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8

13. I'm given sufficient opportunity to develop new knowledge through formal training.

Strongly Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	No Opinion
1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8

14. I'm given sufficient opportunity to develop skills and abilities through formal training.

Strongly Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	No Opinion
1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8

15. How much opportunity for advancement do you feel that the DNR currently offers you:

	No Opportunity	Neutral	Plenty of Opportunity	No Opinion
To a supervisory position?	1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8
To a non-supervisory position?	1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8

16. How much opportunity for movement between different positions do you feel the DNR offers you? Circle the appropriate number for each of the categories listed below.

	No Opportunity	Neutral	Plenty of Opportunity	No Opinion
Movement between sections within your division, bureau or individual unit?	1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8
Movement between divisions, bureaus and individual units?	1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8
Movement between state agencies?	1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8

17. A specialist is a person with detailed skills in a specific branch of study, research or work. A generalist is a person with broad skills in several areas. Please consider the variety of job duties and the breadth of knowledge, skills and abilities that your current job demands of you. Would you say that your job requires you to be more of a specialist or generalist? (check only one)

☐ Specialist ☐ Generalist ☐ No Opinion

If the variety of job duties and the knowledge, skills and abilities required by your job were broadened to make you more of a generalist, how would that change your **CAREER OPPORTUNITIES?** (circle the appropriate number)

Decrease My Career Opportunities	Neutral	Increase My Career Opportunities	No Opinion
1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8

If the variety of job duties and the knowledge, skills and abilities required by your job were broadened to make you more of a generalist, how would that change your **JOB SATISFACTION?** (circle the appropriate number)

Decrease My Job Satisfaction	Neutral	Increase My Job Satisfaction	No Opinion
1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8

18. How WILLING ARE YOU to pursue each of the following to advance your career? (circle the appropriate number)

	Very Unwilling	Neutral	Very Willing	No Opinion
A supervisory position?	1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8
A non-supervisory position?	1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8
An unclassified* political appointment?	1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8
An unclassified* non-political position?	1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8
A lower level position to get experience in another division, bureau or individual unit?	1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8
A lateral transfer into another division, bureau, or individual unit?	1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8
A lateral transfer to another discipline in your current division, bureau or individual unit?	1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8
A lateral transfer from a central office position to a field position?	1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8
A lateral transfer requiring relocation of your residence?	1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8
A promotion requiring relocation of your residence?	1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8
A lateral transfer to another state agency?	1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8
A promotion to another state agency?	1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8
Return to school at MY OWN expense?	1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8
Return to school at DNR expense?	1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8
Return to school on MY OWN time?	1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8
Return to school on DNR time?	1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8
Serve on task forces?	1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8
Accept additional job tasks?	1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8
Accept a temporary assignment to another discipline?	1 2	3 4 5	6 7	8

*An unclassified position differs from a classified position in that an appointee to an unclassified position is not hired through the competitive examination process. Unclassified positions are not permanent and therefore do not have the same longevity and/or security as an appointment in the classified service.

19. Is there a specific position in DNR that you would LIKE TO OBTAIN within the next five years? (check the appropriate box)

☐ NO (IF YOU ANSWER NO, GO DIRECTLY TO QUESTION 20)
☐ YES (IF YOU ANSWER YES, PLEASE CONTINUE WITH THIS QUESTION)

19a. Have you identified a course of action to prepare you for that job?

☐ NO (IF YOU ANSWER NO, GO TO QUESTION 19d)
☐ YES (IF YOU ANSWER YES PLEASE CONTINUE)

19b. Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do to prepare you for that position? (check all that apply)

☐ Obtain formal training or education
☐ Acquire experience in a lower job classification with different duties
☐ Get more experience in your current job
☐ Gain experience in the same classification at the same salary with different duties
☐ Obtain experience in a different classification at the same salary with different duties
☐ Obtain experience in a higher salary job in DNR
☐ Other (please specify) ______________________________

19c. What do you think are your chances of acquiring the position in the next five years? (circle the appropriate number)

No Chance **Neutral** **Excellent Chance** | **No Opinion**
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |

19d. Please list the code from the classification list included with this questionnaire that corresponds to the classification you want to obtain in the next five years.

☐ CODE ☐ Check here if the position is missing from the list

20. Which of the following steps would most increase your qualifications for a promotion you might desire? In the boxes provided below, place the number of the step that would most increase, second most increase and third most increase your qualifications for promotion:

☐ MOST INCREASE
☐ SECOND MOST INCREASE
☐ THIRD MOST INCREASE

1. Obtain formal training or education
2. Get experience in a LOWER JOB CLASSIFICATION with different duties
3. Acquire more experience in YOUR CURRENT job
4. Obtain experience in the SAME CLASSIFICATION at the SAME SALARY RANGE with different duties
5. Get experience in a DIFFERENT CLASSIFICATION at the SAME SALARY RANGE
6. Obtain experience in a HIGHER SALARY RANGE job in DNR
7. Other (please specify) ______

SECTION D

We are concerned about your interest in pursuing a variety of actions that may result in career growth. The following questions will help us measure your interest in some of those actions:

21. I would be interested in a TEMPORARY assignment to: (Check all that apply)
    - ☐ A field position within commuting distance of my current residence
    - ☐ A central office position requiring me to temporarily relocate my residence
    - ☐ A field position requiring me to temporarily relocate my residence
    - ☐ A central office position within commuting distance of my current residence
    - ☐ A position in my current discipline in my division, bureau or individual unit
    - ☐ A position in another discipline in my division, bureau or individual unit
    - ☐ A position in another division, bureau or individual unit

22. We want to know how a number of factors might affect your decision to take a position requiring a move to a new work location. Listed below are factors commonly mentioned by employees considering a position requiring a move. Please read the list over, add any factors important to you. Then, in the boxes provided below each statement, tell us if that statement would encourage or discourage you to accept a LATERAL TRANSFER from your current location to a work location **OUTSIDE THE METRO AREA** by checking the appropriate box.

	Would Encourage Me	**Would Discourage Me**	**No Opinion**
The amount of moving expenses that will be paid by the department: .	☐	☐	☐
The current home resale market where I **now** live:	☐	☐	☐
The price of housing where I **will be** living:	☐	☐	☐
The ability of my spouse to get a job where I **will be** living:	☐	☐	☐
The population of the place where I **would be** living:	☐	☐	☐
The art and entertainment available where I **will be** living:	☐	☐	☐
The outdoor recreation available near where I **will be** living:	☐	☐	☐
The cost of living where I **will be** living:	☐	☐	☐
The number of DNR employees where I **will be** living:	☐	☐	☐
That my supervisor will be in the same location where I **will be** working: .	☐	☐	☐
The likelihood of developing new friends with similar interests where I **will be** living:	☐	☐	☐
The availability of state housing where I **will be** living:	☐	☐	☐
The quality of the school system where I **will be** living:	☐	☐	☐
Other (please list) ______	☐	☐	☐
______	☐	☐	☐
Other (please list) ______	☐	☐	☐
______	☐	☐	☐

23. In your opinion, how important are each of the following factors in restricting movement between divisions, bureaus and individual units. Circle the number that best reflects how you feel about each statement.

A lack of people qualified to move between divisions, bureaus and individual units makes movement difficult.

Strongly Disagree **Neutral** **Strongly Agree** | **No Opinion**
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 8

The examination rating system makes movement difficult.

Strongly Disagree **Neutral** **Strongly Agree** | **No Opinion**
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 8

Hiring authorities select people from their own division, bureau or individual unit rather than people from another division, bureau and individual unit and this makes movement difficult.

Strongly Disagree **Neutral** **Strongly Agree** | **No Opinion**
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 8

24. How interested are you in receiving each of these career services? (circle one)

	Not At All interested			**Neutral**			**Very Interested**	**No Opinion**
Training on career planning	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Career advice	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Information about career paths	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Information about job requirements	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

25. How much do you know about career opportunities for you in DNR? (circle one)

Almost Nothing **Neutral** **A Whole Lot** | **No Opinion**
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 8

26. How much do you know about career opportunities for you in state service? (circle one)

Almost Nothing **Neutral** **A Whole Lot** | **No Opinion**
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | 8

CONTINUED ON BACK SIDE

SECTION E

In order to use this information we need some data about DNR's work force. This will allow us to find out if attitudes, opinions and levels of satisfaction are related to things like classification, age, location, length of career and other historic factors.

All of your responses will be kept anonymous. The answers you provide will be used to summarize the attitudes and career plans of department employees. Your answers will always be grouped with the answers of others so that no employee can be identified.

27. Circle the category that includes your current age:
    25 OR LESS 26 THRU 30 31 THRU 35 36 THRU 40 41 THRU 45 46 THRU 50 51 THRU 55 56 THRU 60 OVER 60
28. Please check the one category below that best represents your highest level of education.
    ☐ Less than 12th Grade
    ☐ High School Diploma
    ☐ Technical School Diploma
    ☐ 2 Year College Degree
    ☐ 4 Year College Degree
    ☐ Masters' Degree or Equivalent Degree
    ☐ PhD
29. Is your spouse currently employed? ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ I DON'T HAVE A SPOUSE
    If YES, is it full or part time employment? ☐ FULL TIME ☐ PART TIME
    Does your spouse work for DNR? ☐ YES ☐ NO
30. Please fill in the blank below with the code of your current civil service classification as shown on the listing enclosed with this questionnaire. __________ CODE
31. Fill in the blank with the number of years you have been in your current position. __________ YEARS
32. Check your bargaining unit.
    ☐ AFSCME (Craft, Maintenance & Labor) . . . . (202)
    ☐ AFSCME (Service) . . . . (203)
    ☐ AFSCME (Clerical) . . . . (206)
    ☐ AFSCME (Technical) . . . . (207)
    ☐ COMMISSIONER'S PLAN (Confidential) . . . . (217)
    ☐ COMMISSIONER'S PLAN (Nonrepresented) . . . . . (219)
    ☐ LAW ENFORCEMENT . . . . (201)
    ☐ MANAGERIAL PLAN . . . . (220)
    ☐ MAPE . . . . (214)
    ☐ MGEC . . . . (212)
    ☐ MMA . . . . (216)
    ☐ COMMISSIONER'S PLAN (Insufficient Work Time) (218)
33. Check the division, bureau or individual unit in which you **currently** work. (check only one)
    ☐ Citizen Participation
    ☐ Commissioner's Office
    ☐ Enforcement
    ☐ Engineering
    ☐ Field Services
    ☐ Fish and Wildlife
    ☐ Forestry
    ☐ Lands
    ☐ Licenses
    ☐ Minerals
    ☐ Minnesota Environmental Education Board
    ☐ Parks and Recreation
    ☐ Planning
    ☐ Regulatory and Legislative Services
    ☐ Regional Administration
    ☐ Special Programs
    ☐ Trails and Waterways
    ☐ Waters
    ☐ Youth Programs
34. Check each of the DNR divisions, bureaus and individual units you have worked for: (check as many as apply)
    ☐ Citizen Participation
    ☐ Commissioner's Office
    ☐ Enforcement
    ☐ Engineering
    ☐ Field Services
    ☐ Financial Management
    ☐ Fish and Wildlife
    ☐ Forestry
    ☐ Internal Audit Unit
    ☐ Lands
    ☐ Licenses
    ☐ Management Information Systems
    ☐ Minerals
    ☐ Minnesota Environmental Education Board
    ☐ Parks and Recreation
    ☐ Personnel
    ☐ Planning
    ☐ Records and Office Services
    ☐ Regulatory and Legislative Services
    ☐ Regional Administration
    ☐ Special Programs
    ☐ Trails and Waterways
    ☐ Waters
    ☐ Youth Programs
35. How many different agencies of Minnesota state government have you worked for? __________ AGENCIES
36. How many years, in total, have you worked for DNR? (Please include all years, whether or not they are part of your current continuous service.) __________ YEARS
37. How many consecutive years have you worked at your present work location? __________ YEARS
38. How many consecutive years have you lived in the community in which you currently live? __________ YEARS
39. How many total years of work experience have you had in the DNR central office? __________ YEARS
40. How many total years of work experience have you had in DNR field offices? __________ YEARS
41. How many years, in total, have you worked for the state of Minnesota? __________ YEARS
42. How many years, in total, have you worked in similar areas of specialization for government employers other than the state? __________ YEARS
43. How many years, in total, have you worked in similar areas of specialization for private employers? __________ YEARS

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION RELATED DATA:

44. Are you male or female? ☐ MALE ☐ FEMALE
45. Are you a member of a racially protected class? (AMERICAN INDIAN, BLACK, ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER or HISPANIC)
    ☐ YES ☐ NO
46. Do you have a disability that substantially limits one of life's major activities such as walking, caring for yourself, seeing, hearing, speaking, performing manual tasks, breathing, learning, working? Do not answer "YES" to this question if, for example, you have a visual problem corrected by glasses. ☐ YES ☐ NO
47. Did you serve in the military service of this country during the period from August 5, 1964 to May 7, 1975 and separate under honorable conditions from any branch of the armed forces of the U.S. after having served on active duty for 181 consecutive days or by reason of disability incurred while serving on active duty? ☐ YES ☐ NO

SECTION F

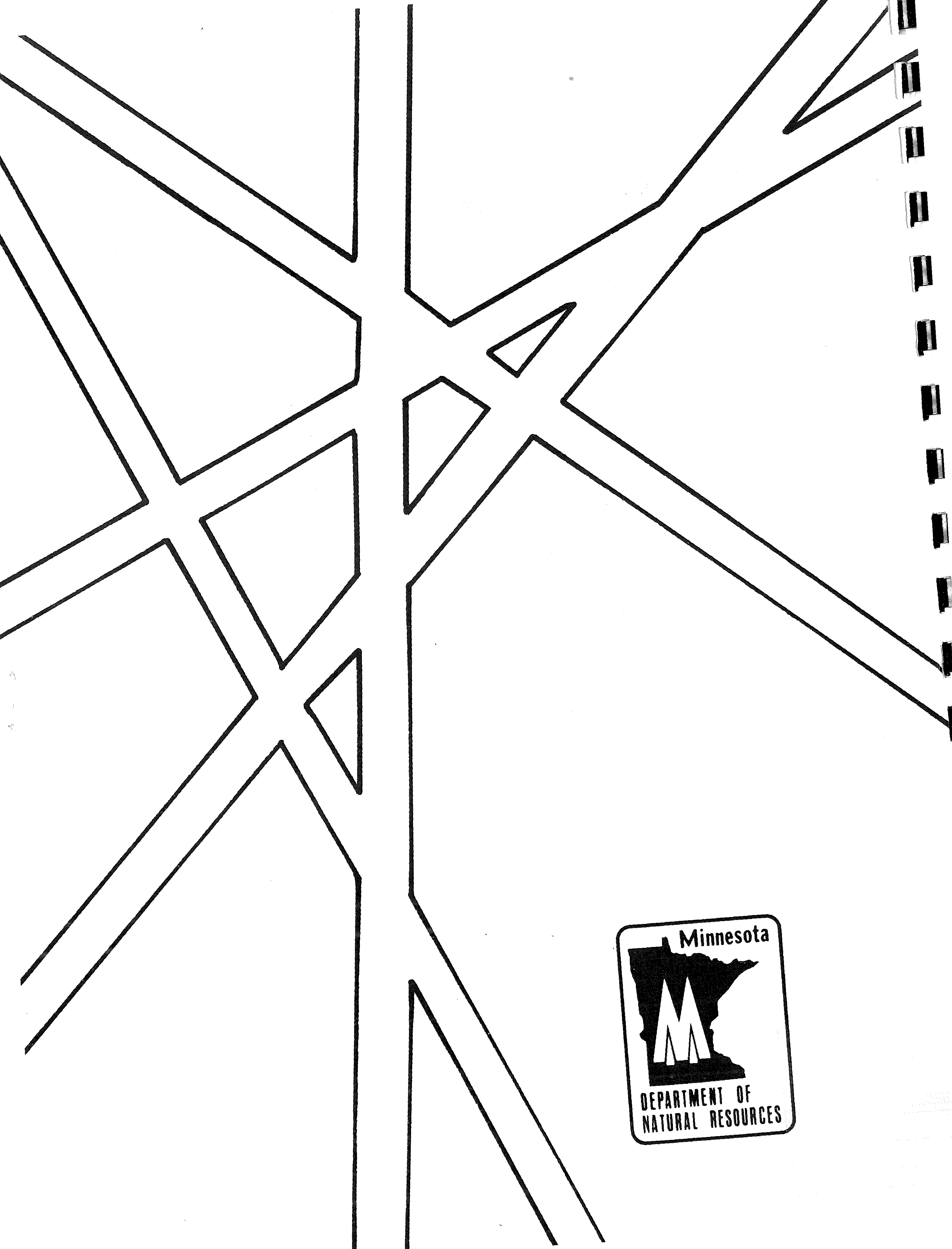
FOR YOUR COMMENTS:

Please use the following space (and additional pages if necessary) to describe what you think about career advancement opportunities in the DNR to date, and what you want to see the DNR do in the future to increase opportunities for career advancement.

RESPONDENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER:

This respondent identification number is for the use of the Research Section in the Office of Planning only. The number will be used to mail additional questionnaires to you if you have not returned the questionnaire after one week. When you have returned your questionnaire, the Office of Planning will destroy your respondent identification number. The number will not be used to connect you to your responses. If you have any questions about this number or the temporary use of it, please call Bill Becker at 296-3093.

Place in return envelope and drop in mail.



Minnesota

DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES