

Caroline Cone  
Chief of Staff and Deputy Director



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Assistant Deputy Director

## Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

Pat Fitts  
Director

May 31, 2018

The Honorable Senator John Cooper  
The Honorable Representative Les Eaves

In accordance with Act 219 of 2018, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission respectfully submits our compensation differentials for your review. The following is a detailed report of the differentials.

- Shift Differentials  
6% (Evening Shift 14:00-22:30)  
12% (Midnight Shift 22:00-06:00)  
Eligible Positions- AGFC Telecommunications Specialist (Q333U)

Annual Costs - \$15,720.07

- Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy/Commission on Law Enforcement Standards and Training Certifications  
2% each for Intermediate, Advanced and Senior Certificates  
Eligible Positions - AGFC Wildlife Officer (Q309U)  
AGFC Wildlife Officer 1<sup>st</sup> Class (Q299U)  
AGFC Corporal (Q288U)  
AGFC Sergeant (Q284U)  
AGFC Lieutenant (Q276U)  
AGFC Captain (Q267U)  
AGFC Major (Q261U)  
AGFC Colonel (Q256U)

Annual Costs – \$320,347.36

- Law Enforcement Additional Duties  
Up to 6% for K-9, Dive Team, Special Operations and Hazardous Duty  
Eligible Positions - AGFC Wildlife Officer (Q309U)  
AGFC Wildlife Officer 1<sup>st</sup> Class (Q299U)  
AGFC Corporal (Q288U)  
AGFC Sergeant (Q284U)  
AGFC Lieutenant (Q276U)  
AGFC Captain (Q267U)  
AGFC Major (Q261U)  
AGFC Colonel (Q256U)

Annual Costs - \$68,977.38

- National Association of Interpretation Certification  
2% each for Certified Heritage Interpreter, Certified Interpretive Planner and Certified Interpretive Manager  
Eligible Positions - AGFC Nature Center Manager (Q277U)

Annual Cost - \$2,472.43

- American Fisheries Society/The Wildlife Society/Society of American Foresters Certifications  
6% for Certified Fisheries Professional, Professional Wildlife Biologist or Certified Forester  
Eligible Positions - AGFC Conservation Program Technician (Q337U)  
AGFC Senior Technician (Q310U)  
AGFC Biologist (Q294U)  
AGFC Biologist Specialist (Q287U)  
AGFC Biologist – Assistant Regional Manager (Q286U)  
AGFC Assistant Hatchery Manager (Q290U)  
AGFC Biologist Supervisor (Q275U)  
AGFC Biologist Program Specialist (Q274U)  
AGFC Hatchery Manager (Q280U)  
AGFC Conservation Program Manager (Q270U)  
AGFC Conservation Division Assistant Chief (Q260U)  
AGFC Conservation Division Chief (Q257U)

Annual Costs - \$174,903.60

- Prescribed Fire Crew  
2% each for Fire Support, Fire Boss and Fire Burn Boss  
Eligible Positions - AGFC Conservation Program Technician (Q337U)  
AGFC Senior Technician (Q310U)  
AGFC Biologist (Q294U)  
AGFC Biologist Specialist (Q287U)  
AGFC Biologist – Assistant Regional Manager (Q286U)  
AGFC Biologist Supervisor (Q275U)  
AGFC Biologist Program Specialist (Q274U)

Annual Costs - \$92,014.29

- Second Language Certifications  
10% - Advanced Proficiency  
7.5% - Fluent Proficiency  
5% - Intermediate Proficiency  
2% - Basic Proficiency  
Eligible Positions – As needed upon approval of the Director

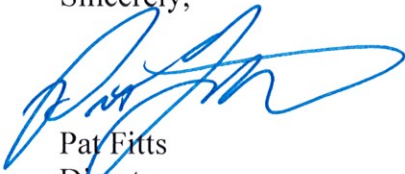
Annual Costs - \$6,142.53

- Fiscal Professional Certifications  
6% for Certified Public Accountant and/or Certified Government Financial Manager  
Eligible Positions – AGFC Fiscal Division Manager/Fiscal Division Assistant Chief (Q259U)  
AGFC Conservation Division Chief/Chief Fiscal Officer (Q257U)

Annual Costs - \$10,147.20

The total annual costs for all compensation differentials is \$690,724.86. We believe that our compensation differentials add value to the services that we provide to the public and are consistent with our agency mission and stewardship of the natural resources of this state.

Sincerely,



Pat Fitts  
Director

Caroline Cone  
Chief of Staff and Deputy Director



Chris Colclasure  
Assistant Deputy Director

## Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

Pat Fitts  
Director

May 31, 2018

The Honorable Senator John Cooper  
The Honorable Representative Les Eaves

In accordance with Act 219 of 2018, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission respectfully submits our new compensation differentials for your review. The following is a detailed report of these new certification differentials.

### New Certifications:

- American Fisheries Society/The Wildlife Society/Society of American Foresters  
Certifications

3% for Associate Fisheries Professional or Associate Wildlife Biologist

Eligible Positions - AGFC Conservation Program Technician (Q337U)  
AGFC Senior Technician (Q310U)  
AGFC Biologist (Q294U)  
AGFC Biologist Specialist (Q287U)

Annual Costs - \$22,676.03

- Geographical Information Systems Professional Certification  
6% GISP certification

Eligible positions - AGFC GIS Lead (Q258U)

Annual Costs - \$ 4,483.27

- Certified Public Manager Certification

6% for CPM certificate

Eligible positions - Assistant and Chief of Divisions and Assistant Deputy Director and above

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*The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission's mission is to conserve and enhance Arkansas's fish and wildlife and their habitats while promoting sustainable use, public understanding and support.*

Currently there are seven employees that would be grandfathered into this certification. Moving forward only upper level leadership positions will be approved.

Annual Costs- \$25,179.50

The total annual costs for all compensation differentials for new certifications is \$52,338.80. We believe that our compensation differentials add value to the services that we provide to the public and are consistent with our agency mission and stewardship of the natural resources of this state. Because this is a new request, we understand that there is a need for additional information and discussion in the future.

Sincerely,



Pat Fitts  
Director

## ALETA/CLEST Enforcement Certifications

Wildlife Officers with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission are law enforcement professionals certified by the Commission on Law Enforcement Standards and Training (CLEST). As outlined in CLEST procedures all law enforcement professionals in Arkansas can progress through a certification process that takes into consideration 3 factors which are education, training and experience. Throughout an officers career he/she is able to achieve 5 certification levels which are Basic, General, Intermediate, Advanced and Senior. Each level requires a minimum level of training, education and experience to qualify. The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission pays a differential of 2% per certificate to officers who reach the level of Intermediate, Advanced and Senior for a total differential of 6%.

Experience, education and training needed to reach these certifications are essential in the development of law enforcement professionals. This bolsters the skills needed by officers to perform their day to day tasks in a professional and safe manner. Some of these skills include:

- **Leadership:** These qualities are important, not just for leading fellow officers, but for helping the civilian population in times of need. Wildlife officers must be able to assess the situation and instruct others in what to do to keep them safe. The requirements to achieve these certificates increase the professional development of our officers. This increases efficiency for the agency and a level of transparency that is expected from the citizens of Arkansas.
- **Judgment:** There are many problems faced by Wildlife Officers that have no easy solution. The right thing to do may require a deep level of problem solving which sometimes involves pragmatics and semantics. This is conducive to inter-agency communication and problem solving. Good judgment and creative thinking is needed to address the many hurdles that Wildlife Officers face on a daily basis.
- **Interpersonal Communication:** Wildlife Officers interact with ordinary citizens every day. They must be able to communicate with the citizens of our State on a multitude of topics in a wide variety of settings, in different venues under complex conditions. Our officer's ability to communicate highlights our agency's desire to serve the public. The training that is received through these different certificates equips our officers with the skills required to effectively communicate the agency's mission and its value to the citizens of Arkansas.
- **Mental toughness:** Wildlife Officers will see things that many people can't imagine. If they don't have coping skills to handle what's seen on the job, they may not be able to continue the work.

The skills provided by this higher level of training, experience and education not only make the officers safer while they perform their duties, but they also provide a service to the agency in the realm of public relations, recruitment, public outreach and community outreach. Through these activities we engage both the hunting and non-hunting public.

These are just a few examples for the skills Wildlife Officers need to provide the services expected by the citizens of Arkansas. A way for Officers to be motivated to seek training, continue their education and stay on the job is to reward them with the differential pay. This is a practice many law enforcement agencies throughout Arkansas and the nation exercise to reward officers for being diligent in providing the best services they can for the people in their communities. The Arkansas State Police, Arkansas Highway Police, many municipalities and County Sheriff's utilize certificate (Differential) pay to ensure they have the highest quality professionals among their ranks.

## National Association for Interpretation Certifications

The goals of NAI certification are to inspire leadership and excellence to advance natural and cultural interpretation as a profession. In accordance with that mission, the goals for the certification program are:

- to provide an educational program that improves technical competency of interpretation professionals;
- to create incentives for individuals to continue their professional development and excel in the field of interpretation;
- to provide a standard that identifies professionals in the field who have demonstrated a thorough knowledge of interpretive principles, practices, and skills;
- to implement a high level of skill, competency, and education that enhances opportunities for growth, encourages new interpreters and serves as support for professionals in the field.

### *Certified Interpretive Manager*

The Certified Interpretive Manager must demonstrate a basic knowledge of:

- history of the interpretive profession
- principles of interpretation
- current literature in the interpretive field
- sound business practices
- and demonstrate the following skills and abilities:
  - leadership
  - supervision of subordinate staff
  - meeting management
  - budget development and administration
  - business planning
  - writing measurable objectives
  - use of interpretation to accomplish management objectives

### *Certified Interpretive Planner*

The Certified Interpretive Planner must demonstrate a basic knowledge of:

- history of the interpretive profession
- principles of interpretation
- current literature in the interpretive field
- marketing, management, and maintenance of interpretive programs and facilities
- and demonstrate the following skills and abilities:
  - meeting facilitation
  - cost estimating
  - business and strategic planning
  - assessment of natural, cultural, and operational resources
  - development of thematic guidelines
  - writing measurable objectives
  - formative and summative evaluation
  - development of media guidelines and descriptions
  - market analysis

### *Certified Heritage Interpreter*

The Certified Heritage Interpreter must demonstrate a basic knowledge of:

- history of the interpretive profession
- principles of interpretation
- current literature in the interpretive field
- techniques for delivery of personal programs
- techniques for development of non-personal media
- group dynamics
- and demonstrate the following skills and abilities:
  - development and delivery of thematic interpretive presentations
  - effective interpersonal communication
  - writing measurable objectives
  - development and conceptual design of publications, signs, exhibits, and other non-personal media
  - interpretive writing

### Fisheries Certifications

Certified Fisheries Professionals must show their competency in their field through a number of subjects. These include requirements for completing certain college courses in fisheries subjects as well as biological sciences, physical sciences, mathematics and statistics, communications and human dimensions. In addition, there are requirements for completion of full time job experience, as well as requirements that show a contribution to the field of fisheries science including publications, presentations at scientific meetings and administrative reports. Finally, there are requirements for participation and service in professional sciences. This requires a well-rounded and active fisheries professional to attain certification and to keep it. The American Fisheries Society professional certification process information can be found on this website (<https://fisheries.org/membership/afs-certification/>).

1. Fisheries and Wildlife professional certification differentials have been around since 1991.
2. When constituents ask for technical guidance from AGFC staff regarding farm pond and lake management, they can count on many of the staff having a professional certification similar to those required of electricians, engineers and other professionals.
3. Professional development and continuing education is required for staff to maintain professional certification through the AFS. This ensures that staff are continuing to become more knowledgeable and innovative over time.
4. There is an ethics portion of the certification and recertification processes. Ethical behavior of state employees is critical for maintaining public trust. Certification of staff elevates ethics within state government.
5. Other state fish and wildlife agencies across the country have asked me within the last 3 months what our process is because they see the value in having more of their staff professionally certified and recognized by the state.
6. Fisheries certified professionals are dedicated to high-quality service and the achievement of specific goals and objectives. They promote conservation-through research, education, management, and administration. Fisheries professionals strive for high standards of competence and integrity to

establish mutual confidence and respect and to bring credit to their profession, employers, and community.

7. As defined by the American Fisheries Society, the specific objectives of certification are as follows: 1) to provide governmental and nongovernmental agencies and organizations, private firms, courts, and the general public with a definitive minimum standard of experience and education for fisheries professionals; and 2) to foster recognition of fisheries professionals as well-educated and experienced, acting in the best interest of the public.

8. The certification process ensures that biologists engage in professional development throughout their career. A state career is around 28 years. Fisheries science is constantly evolving with new research discoveries, new technology, etc., and if biologists aren't continuing their education, they will not be serving the citizens of Arkansas. The certification process holds them accountable for continuing their education.

9. Professional certification allows employees to maintain a higher level of knowledge within the field in which they are certified.

10. Professional organizations reward certified persons that serve on regional and/or national committees and serve as officers in professional societies, which creates better managers and leaders at AGFC.

## Wildlife Certifications

There are two professional differentials available to employees in WMD. Those are Certified Wildlife Biologist offered by The Wildlife Society and Certified Forester offered by The Society of American Foresters.

Certified Wildlife Biologist – The Wildlife Society - <http://wildlife.org/learn/professional-development-certification/>

- **Certified Wildlife Biologist®** - Individuals who have met both the education requirements and obtained at least 5 years of professional-level wildlife experience in the previous 10 years. CWB® certification must be renewed every 5 years to remain valid.
- 1. Wildlife and Fisheries certification differentials have been around for decades.
- 2. The Wildlife Society is the only organization to provide the peer-reviewed wildlife biologist certification process that bestows the title of Associate Wildlife Biologist® and Certified Wildlife Biologist®.
- 3. An individual with the educational background and demonstrated expertise in the art and science of applying the principles of ecology to the conservation and management of wildlife and its habitats, and is judged able to represent the profession as an ethical practitioner, will be designated as a Certified Wildlife Biologist®. The CWB® certification is valid for 5 years and may be renewed.
- 4. CWB® renewal is required every five years for all CWBs® who were not grandfathered in under the certification requirements prior to 2000. In order to attain certification renewal, professionals must log 80 Continuing Education Units within five years by participating in activities such as seminars, symposia, short courses, distance learning courses, workshops, training sessions, and technical sessions at professional meetings and conferences. By renewing CWB® certification, professionals demonstrate their commitment to excellence through

continued learning and professional development. Renewal encourages the maintenance and advancement of high technical and social skills needed by today's wildlife professionals.

5. The Wildlife Society has consistently been committed to the ongoing career development of wildlife professionals through a wide variety of programs, resources and activities that help members expand their knowledge, stay up-to-date on new developments in wildlife research, management, and conservation, and advance in their careers.
6. When private landowners/constituents seek guidance from the AGFC staff regarding wildlife management on their property, they can count on our staff that has certification similar to engineers, electricians and other professionals. Essentially, this provides some level of assurance that our staff is professional and knowledgeable in the field of wildlife management as seen by high level peers in this field.
7. Management of our Wildlife Management Areas is a responsibility entrusted to the AGFC by all our public. Certification of our biological staff helps to ensure that this trust in appropriate and scientific management of these public lands is carried out with by professionals that are committed to excellence and utilization of the most up-to-date wildlife management science.
8. Professional development and continuing education is required to maintain certification through TWS. This helps to ensure our staff is up to date on the latest in wildlife management and is pushing toward innovation and our field. Wildlife Management is an evolving field that requires our staff to stay up-to-date on the latest innovations to best serve the public and wildlife of Arkansas. This is important when considering a wildlife biologist's career at the AGFC is often very long (up to 28+ years).
9. Professional certification allows employees to maintain a higher level of knowledge within the field in which they are certified.
10. Involvement in The Wildlife Society allows the development of leadership skills through serving on committees and in officer positions. This development of leadership skills helps the WMD maintain a high level of leadership as leaders retire or move up in the organization.
11. Certification requires adherence to a high level code of ethics. This high level of ethics is important to the agency and the public in maintaining public trust. This helps elevate ethics within state government.

Certified Forester – Society of American Foresters -

[https://www.eforester.org/Main/Certification\\_Education/Certified\\_Forester/Main/Certification/Certification\\_Home.aspx?hkey=53f11286-5500-4c13-a371-251dd0df0d7a](https://www.eforester.org/Main/Certification_Education/Certified_Forester/Main/Certification/Certification_Home.aspx?hkey=53f11286-5500-4c13-a371-251dd0df0d7a)

- **Certified Forester** – Individual who have met the education requirements and have five or more years of qualifying professional forestry experience within the past 10 years in of four experience areas. Each Certified Forester must complete 50 CFE hours within a three-year period to remain certified.
1. SAF certification is the gold standard for forest management professionals, recognized by the forest industry, government officials, and landowners.
  2. Management of our Wildlife Management Areas is a responsibility entrusted to the AGFC by all our public. Having a Certified Forester helps to assure our AGFC-owned Wildlife Management Areas are managed by professionals with that are appropriately trained and up-to-date through continuing education on managing our forested lands.

3. All Certified Foresters agree to a "Standards of Professional Practice". This helps to ensure a high level of ethics that is important to our agency and public trust. This helps elevate ethics within state government.
4. Maintaining certification requires obtaining 60 Continuing Forestry Education (CFE) credit hours within a three-year period. This continuing education helps to ensure our Habitat Biologists are up-to-date on the latest in forestry practices and science. Forestry is an evolving field that requires our staff to stay up-to-date on latest innovations to best serve the public and wildlife of Arkansas. This is important when considering a wildlife biologists career at the AGFC is often very long (up to 28+ years).
5. There are many advantages to SAF certification:
  - Professionalism — Commitment to sustainable forest management.
  - Knowledge Base — Continued Forestry Education can help you maintain your status.
  - Reduced Liability — Credentialing demands the highest level of ethics and professional principles.
  - Investment — Establish your personal credentials in forest management for years to come.
6. Professional certification allows employees to maintain a higher level of knowledge within the field in which they are certified.

## Burn Crew Certifications

### Burn Differential – 3 Levels – 2-6% pay differentials

- Ignition and Holding (Support Specialist) – 2% pay differential
  - 120 hours in prescribed fire during a fiscal year
  - Required training completed
  - Completion of physical health standard
  - Attend yearly refresher
- Firing Boss – 4% pay differential
  - 120 hours in prescribed fire during a fiscal year
  - Required training completed
  - Completion of physical health standard
  - Perform position a minimum of 2 times yearly
  - Attend yearly refresher
- Prescribed Fire Burn Boss – 6% pay differential
  - 120 hours in prescribed fire during a fiscal year
  - Required training completed
  - Completion of physical health standard
  - Perform position a minimum of 2 times yearly
  - Attend yearly refresher
- Physical Health Standard – prescribed fire is recognized by the AGFC to be a physically demanding task and as such personnel shall complete a yearly pack test in conjunction with a refresher. Before taking the pack test, employees will be required to obtain a physician's approval. Pack tests will be valid for a period of 13 months from date of completion:
  - The Pack Test measures:

- Aerobic capacity
  - Muscular strength
  - Muscular endurance
  - Current employees must pass a walk test of 1 mile in 16 minutes (no jogging or running allowed).
  - New employees and current employees starting July 1, 2019 must pass a field test of a 2 mile walk with 25 pounds in 30 minutes (no jogging or walking).
1. Prescribed fire has been recognized as a hazardous job that requires additional continuing education coupled with physical health standards.
  2. This standard of education and fitness ensures the appropriate and safe use of fire on the Arkansas landscape to benefit our wildlife and the citizens.
  3. Required education ensures that staff that take on these roles have the appropriate knowledge to apply fire appropriately for ecological benefits in appropriate weather/environmental conditions and how to contain any rare escapes of fire from the prescribed unit.
  4. Physical Fitness requirements helps to ensure the safety of our employees on this hazardous duty. This fitness helps ensure those working on the fire will be able to do the job of fighting escapes if they happen. This helps to ensure better protection of the public in the rare cases of escapes.
  5. The higher the position on the fire, the higher the level of responsibility to ensure a safe and effective fire. Therefore, with more responsibility overseeing a hazardous activity, the more an individual needs a higher level of training, experience, and compensation.

## Second Language Certifications

Certification for Spanish Language skills is needed in several divisions. It is used in our Enforcement Division for all Public Service Announcements such as boating safety, recruitment, hunter education, boating education, tree stand safety, etc. This individual works Hispanic fishing derby's. He is also assigned to Polk County and south Polk has a heavy concentration of Hispanics. He has also been used several times across the state for interpreting for officers by using speaker phone. It is used in our Education Division targeting the Hispanic population with educational programs, community fishing, tackle loaner program and interviews with Hispanic media promoting AGFC programs. It is used in our IT Division by providing written translations for documentation on our website, pamphlets, and providing translation at AGFC events.

### CPA/CGFM Certifications

Certified Public Accountant is a professional certification that requires demonstration of accounting knowledge and competence by meeting high educational standards, passing the CPA exam and completing a specific amount of general accounting experience. A Certified Public Accountant license is a high standard recognized by employers and their clients, governments and the public as an assurance of skill, dedication and quality. Continuing professional education in accounting and ethics is required for CPAs to maintain their professional competence and highly skilled and specialized accounting knowledge and judgment.

Certified Government Financial Manager is a professional certification that demonstrates competency in governmental accounting, auditing, financial reporting, internal controls and budgeting at the federal, state and local levels. There are ethical, educational, and professional experience requirements prior to sitting for the examinations. This certification requires continuing professional education development in related areas of government financial management and ethics. This professional certification and the required continuing professional development provide relevant news and information regarding governmental accounting, finance, and budgeting. The Certified Government Financial Manager is a respected credential that recognizes the specialized knowledge and experience needed to be an effective government financial manager.

Both of these certifications help ensure that the licensees have knowledge of generally accepted accounting principles and governmental accounting standards coupled with state and federal accounting regulations and practices for monitoring, budgeting, and management of public funds.