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LANE POOLE AWARD

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REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES

A. J. BRANDIS

C.E. Lane Poole Memorial Trust

The Lane Poole Memorial Trust was established to commemorate the work of Charles Edward Lane Poole, and, in particular, the connection between the former Conservator of Forests and the late Thomas Cullity.

Lane Poole was appointed Inspector-General of the Woods and Forests Department in Western Australia in 1916, and was responsible for establishing the legal framework on which the State's forestry operations have since been carried out.

That legal framework was the 1918 Forests Act. Before the Act was introduced there was no legislation to control the amount of timber cut, the place and manner of cutting, or to regenerate the forest after cutting.

When Thomas Cullity graduated from the University of Western Australia in 1918, Lane Poole offered him the newly created position of Utilisation Officer in the Forests Department, which he held for one year before leaving to start up Millars' new commercial kilns at Yarloop.

Thomas Cullity maintained an interest in forestry and timber for the rest of his life and founded Cullity Timbers in 1928 and Westralian Plywoods in 1943. From these companies WESFI was formed.

The Trust was initiated by WESFI Chairman Denis Cullity in 1983, and developed by a Board of Trustees representing the former Forests Department and WESFI.

The current Chairman of the Board is the Executive Director of the Department of Conservation and Land Management, Dr Syd Shea.

The WESFI connection resulted from a belief held by Lane Poole that forestry needed an interdisciplinary approach to cater for the needs of society.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to those people who set aside some of their time to assist with my research and for the genuine interest and professional approach of all those I was so fortunate to meet.

I am indeed indebted to Mr Dennis Cullity, who established the CE Lane Poole Award in 1983. The benefits to those given the opportunity to take part in a program funded by this award are immense and form a valuable part of one's personal development.

Finally, I am grateful for the support of officers of the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) who have given me advice and assistance, and for the provision of time and other resources to partake in this program.

Woods and Forests Department South Australia

Staff Structure, Qualifications, Promotion

Officers employed in this agency can be classified into three tiers:

- professional
- forest supervisor
- worker.

All professional officers are required to possess a tertiary qualification before being eligible for appointment. Though there are a number of increments at each level, an officer wishing to move from one level to the next must show merit, be recommended for the higher position by the Chief Executive and possess an Honours Degree or acceptable post graduate qualification. After five years at the base level no further salary increments are granted until an officer fills a higher level position that has been advertised. The evaluation of merit is carried out in conjunction with the job specification and person specification by an interview panel. This panel consists of an immediate superior, a representative from the personnel section and a union representative. The person specification clearly identifies the qualifications necessary to carry out the activities prescribed at a particular level of employment. It also defines the level of experience, knowledge and personal skills and/or abilities required. (See supporting document 1 for job specification and person specification.)

The forest supervisors (equivalent generally to WA Field Officers) are selected almost entirely from the weekly paid force. Supervisors are trained at the South East Community College, Mt Gambier. This course is a two-year part-time course, partly available on an external study basis. The achievement of this qualification allows supervisors to compete for positions at levels one and two. Supervisors wishing to be promoted beyond level two (to level three or four), or who wish to enter the research technical field, must have completed the advanced certificate in forestry technology - a four-year part-time course that is an extension of the two-year course and which is a pre-requisite for studying in the advanced certificate stream.

These certificate courses are secondary certificates offered by the SA Technical and Further Education (TAFE).

The remaining level is the worker level who carries out a range of tasks generally equivalent to a WA counterpart.

An additional (and recently identified) need for supervision and development in recreation and environment is being satisfied by the appointment of specialist forest rangers. These rangers must have Associate Diploma status (or higher) before being eligible for such positions. The role of the specialist forest ranger is in public relations and people control, but also entails environmental impact studies and recommendations, and recreation site development. These people are supervised by Forest Officers and are interacting mostly with senior staff at the head office level.

Staff Development

In-service courses are offered and are clearly identified in the annual Training and Development Manual. The Woods and Forests Department has the firm belief that training and development is the responsibility of both the supervisor and the individual officer. Members of the personnel services branch are available to give advice at any time.

The manual goes further than just identifying work-related skills training. It also offers information on external courses available through TAFE, various Colleges of Advanced Education (CAE) and Universities. Personal development through formal education is encouraged.

Procedure

In conjunction with their supervisor, individuals must identify their training needs. Where attendance at a training activity is agreed, it is the responsibility of an individual division to prepare and monitor its own staff development budgets. A nomination procedure requires the completion of a nomination form (see supporting document 2), which is then forwarded to the chief management services officer. Priorities and expenditure of funds are considered, after which approval may be granted and the individual enrolled in the course. It is then the responsibility of the individual's line manager to arrange travel and accommodation.

National Parks and Wildlife Service South Australia

Staff Structure, Qualifications and Promotion

There are three tiers of employment in this department. Maintenance workers and/or plant operators carry out routine day-to-day maintenance, cleaning or construction jobs under the supervision of the Park Rangers.

Rangers are the equivalent of WA Field Officers and are expected to achieve tertiary level qualifications, though at present the achievement of such an award is not essential for appointment to base grade ranger positions. South Australian rangers study at the Salisbury College of Advanced Education for an Associate Diploma in Park Management. This course is currently being expanded to a degree status course. Those who have completed the two-year Associate Diploma can continue study for one more year to complete the degree level course. These courses are registered at State level and in Canberra, and are recognised throughout Australia. The rangers are responsible to regional managers, who are also professionally trained.

Promotion for rangers and regional managers is decided on the basis of merit and vacancy. An interview panel is established to evaluate merit and suitability for promotion. This panel consists of a supervising officer, an equal opportunity officer and a union representative. People are judged for their suitability to the job and personal specifications. (See supporting document 3 - job and personal specification.)

Development

Development of functional skills is encouraged through transfers, at a particular level, to different districts where a variety of tasks may be encountered. However, there is no development plan in force just now, nor are any formal induction courses offered. No staff development advisory committee is currently in place.

Department of Forestry Queensland

Staff Structure, Qualifications and Promotion

Three employment levels are apparent:

- field workers
- field staff
- graduate foresters.

Field workers, working in gangs under the supervision of an overseer, are responsible for routine work, including pruning, thinning, fighting fires, seed collection, nursery duties and maintenance of recreation areas. Promotion beyond the basic worker level is very limited and those interested in establishing a career path are not advised to apply for these positions.

Field staff are required to complete two-and-a-half years of intensive training at the Gympie Training complex. The first six months of the course are spent developing an understanding of the work environment. This involves practical experience in a range of physical activities while working in supervised teams. The remainder of the course involves academic study of a range of general and specific forestry related units. Practical field exercises are carried out during the course with additional practical experience gained during semester breaks, when students gain employment at various centres throughout the State. On completion of the course, Fellowship Certificate in Forestry is awarded and the successful student appointed to the position of Forest Overseer Division 3. Advancement to higher positions depends on personal merit and the availability of positions.

A graduate forester (BSc For) is given a one-year induction at a large centre, during which experience in a variety of tasks is gained. A series of postings, each of about three years' duration, usually follows to provide a broad base of experience. Foresters plan their own career paths, which may be in general operations, research or in other specialist areas. There are progressive salary increments for the first ten years, after which promotional positions must be applied for with appointments based on merit and expertise.

The Queensland Department of Forestry has published a brief career guideline for the various fields in which people are employed, including field workers, specialists, clerical staff, tradespeople, cartographers, field staff and foresters. An example of one of these information pamphlets is shown in supporting document 4. Each pamphlet describes the job, the entry qualifications, the recruitment procedures and the career opportunities.

Staff Development

At present, there is no formal staff development procedure. However, a voluntary performance appraisal system does exist.

This department is currently developing a system—Staff Development and Review Scheme (SDRS)—which aims to evaluate what people are doing, to define targets for development, and to design action plans that enhance performance and satisfaction. This system is similar to that used in Western Australia. (See supporting document 5)

The Gympie Training Centre

This training complex was established (and is now maintained by the Queensland Public Works) at a cost of approximately three million dollars.¹ The facilities cater for up to 80 people. There are individual rooms for sleeping and study, a recreation room, a common room, a dining room, a conference room, lecture rooms and science laboratories.

The course offered to the field staff is a comprehensive one and includes the following units:

- Administration
- Aerial Photography
- Botany
- Chainsaw Operation
- Communications - written (4 parts)
- Ecology and Dendrology
- Fire Protection
- First Aid
- Genetics and Tree Breeding
- Geology and Geomorphology
- Marketing Practice 1 and 2
- Mensuration
- Meteorology
- Native Forest Silviculture
- Plantation Silviculture
- Policy
- Protection 1 and 2
- Recreation
- Road Engineering
- Soils
- Supervisor Training
- Surveying
- Utilisation 1 and 2
- Wood Technology

Each of these units is taught for one semester, with a pass in all units being required for progress to the next semester. I have a copy of the course syllabus and would be pleased to discuss this with anyone interested. I believe this testing and rewarding course to be highly relevant to field staff within CALM. The forestry subjects are taught by staff drawn from the professional ranks.

¹ Peter Byrne, Principal, Gympie Training Centre, Pers comm.

National Parks and Wildlife Service New South Wales

Staff Structure, Qualifications and Promotion

National Parks and Wildlife Service Rangers are responsible for activities within a national park, such as public supervision, search and rescue, fire and weed control, assessment of natural resources, planning, law enforcement, identification management and protection of Aboriginal sites, and the identification and management of historical sites. They are also responsible for a large amount of administrative and clerical work. A ranger's duties may also include dirty and generally unpleasant jobs, such as collecting rubbish and cleaning toilets.

The essential academic requirement for appointment to the position of a ranger is the successful completion of an Associate Diploma (or equivalent) in natural sciences. In addition, routine requirements, such as physical fitness, the possession of a current driver's licence and a willingness to work anywhere in the State, are similar to the Western Australian situation.

It appears likely that in the near future the minimum academic requirement will be a Bachelor Degree in natural resources.²

Rangers are able to progress, by promotion through various levels, to senior positions in protection, planning, scientific research and management of resources. These positions are advertised vacancies. Appointments are based on merit and relevant academic qualifications.

Park workers assist rangers in a variety of routine tasks, such as machinery maintenance, track clearing, rubbish removal, mending fences, weed control, etc. No formal qualifications are required for these positions.

The NSW service employs natural science graduates in a range of positions broadly termed professional and administration. These people are generally based in central or regional offices and are involved in planning, management and investigations into natural resources.

Staff Development

This service has prepared a succinct statement of the individual's, the supervisor's and the regional administrator's responsibilities for staff development (see supporting document 6). This approach clearly identifies what the department expects from its employees, while at the same time defines the departmental role in training and development. The staff development program includes a wide range of activities, such as:

- job-based development (on the job experience, job rotation, relieving and secondment opportunities)
- in-service training courses
- external training courses
- external study with academic institutions
- conferences, workshops and seminars.

² Arthur Willis. *Pers comm.*

All staff are encouraged to participate in regular performance appraisals and to negotiate development agreements with their superiors.

Commitment to staff training and development is expected from all levels of the service, ranging from senior management's commitment to providing financial resources to the individual taking an active interest in their own development.

This service has an active Staff Development Committee with the same sorts of responsibilities as CALM's Personnel Training and Career Development Committee. These are to:

- maintain communications between vocational groups
- review policy
- ensure provision of adequate resources
- monitor attendance at training activities
- liaise with academic institutions with regard to course content
- ensure access to information about training and development opportunities.

The service has developed a comprehensive policy and procedure to be followed in the provision of secondments and relieving opportunities. This provides a fair and equitable approach to offering such opportunities in the context of personnel development.

In addition, policy and procedure have been developed for the induction, orientation and initial training of all new staff. The service recognises the importance of the first 12 months of work and sees the need to provide each new recruit with the maximum opportunity to:

- develop a sense of belonging
- know, understand and personally identify with the corporate goals
- develop safe, healthy and effective work practices
- cultivate a personal commitment to his or her own growth and development.

All new staff are required to attend an orientation program within the first six months of employment.

Staff Training and Development Guide

Agencies in other states are preparing staff training and development guides for annual distribution. The information presented in this type of document is much more comprehensive than the Training Calendar prepared by CALM.

Target Audience and Content

The document is prepared with the aim of providing information to professional and supervisory (field) staff. It includes a comprehensive listing, divided by topic, of all available courses, e.g. people management, fire fighting skills and legislation, vehicle driving, supervisory techniques and so on. In addition, information about courses available at institutions such as Universities, Technical Colleges, Colleges of Advanced Education is provided. These are courses that will be of direct benefit to those wishing to develop their careers.

Procedure for Participation

Instruction in the procedure to be adopted in defining a developmental program, applying to attend a training or development course and evaluating courses attended is provided for those who are interested. In most cases, a nomination form is required from the nominee. This should be countersigned by the branch supervisor after identifying and discussing needs that might be met in attending a particular course. The form is registered with the central training body, which then has a permanent record and control over which and how many people attend a course. Likewise, expenditure is also controlled. A copy of the nomination form is included in the document. Also included is an official form for the evaluation of the course and course material, and an explanation of how the information presented at the course will benefit the attendee. This is forwarded to the central training body, which has direct and detailed feedback as a basis for course review and improvement. It also provides hard copy evidence that a trainee has attended the course and thus forms the basis of the training records.

Certification

A certificate, indicating that the course objectives have been achieved by the attendee, may be presented at the successful completion of a course (see supporting document 7). Adequate assessment of an individual's achievement relative to the course objectives must be carried out in a thorough and professional manner for the award to have some standing.

Comment on Forest Ranger Training

Perspective

Field staff (term used generically) perform tasks under the guidance and direction of professionally qualified foresters. Their role is mostly one of supervision of maintenance workers, plant operators and general forestry activities. They handle the clearly defined day-to-day maintenance. Field staff in the State agencies I visited are trained generally at about the same level - the Secondary Certificate level. In the main, it is not considered necessary to offer these people tertiary training, as they are not required to fill a management, research or developmental role.

Course Availability and Access

South Australian field staff are trained at the South East Community College at Mt Gambier (TAFE), and Queensland field staff are trained at the departmental training facility at Gympie (TAFE accreditation). WA field staff are trained at a similar level at the SW College at Bunbury (TAFE) for one year, and at the departmental training centre at Dwellingup for a further year.

Limited numbers of positions are available and most are filled by candidates selected by departmental selection panels.

Conclusion

While the role of field staff remains a supervisory one, there seems little need to change the entrance requirements or course status. Courses offered at the TAFE institutions are reviewed from time-to-time to ensure relevance to forest rangers is maintained.

There appears to be a fairly widespread desire by field staff - at least in WA - to achieve diploma status and have this status recognised. At present, there is little that can be done about this, given their role and level of training.

Comment on National Park Ranger Training

Perspective

Agencies in all States except WA expect rangers to perform at a professional level and, therefore, require all staff to have relevant tertiary qualifications before being appointed, or to gain such qualifications soon after. This need for professional training reflects recent trends in public attitude towards natural resource management and the degree of accountability of the ranger. Moreover, rangers have clearly signalled their desire to attain such knowledge and status.

Course Availability

Suitable tertiary courses at the Associate Diploma and Degree level have been developed by Riverina College of Advanced Education, in conjunction with the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). Salisbury CAE, in South Australia, has developed similar courses. Salisbury CAE is now using the Riverina courses and paying for the course and lecture materials. Other suitable courses are available through various State Universities and CAEs.

Access to Tertiary Courses

The courses run by Riverina are available on an external basis to those who qualify for entrance. There is a requirement to attend the campus for a short period of intensive work in most units. This means that rangers are able to study in their own environment, at their own pace, though at present there is a commitment to attend campus - at say Salisbury College.

Conclusion

If rangers are required to manage parks in a professional manner, interact with the public, plan interpretive material for the public, and be accountable for expenditure within parks, they should be professionally trained and assisted by park maintenance workers. In WA, resident rangers are not well prepared to manage the natural resources within parks and, being remote from professionally trained staff, they are unable to develop all the necessary skills. In fact, rangers in parks within 'forest regions' may be guided or supervised by foresters with tertiary qualifications in forestry science, not in park management.

List of Supporting Documents

1. Job and person specifications. Woods and Forests Department, South Australia.
2. Nomination Form Training & Development Manual. Woods and Forests Department, South Australia.
3. Job and person specifications. National Parks and Wildlife Service, South Australia.
4. Careers Information Pamphlet. Department of Forestry, Queensland.
5. Staff Development and Review Scheme. Department of Forestry, Queensland.
6. Responsibilities in Staff Development. National Parks and Wildlife Service, New South Wales.
7. Example of Certificate offered by National Parks and Wildlife Service. National Parks and Wildlife Service, New South Wales.

(All supporting documents are available from author)