Unit-supervisor Visits

When the unit supervisors visit units to attend annual coordinating committee meetings, the supervisors may perform several functions. Formal performance discussions in conjunction with the coordinating committee meeting are not always appropriate, but informal conversations about performance between the unit leader and the unit supervisor are often desirable.

Dinners, luncheons, or other associated meetings or social gatherings are frequent when the unit supervisor and cooperators are present for the annual coordinating committee meeting. Supervisor visits are appropriate times for award presentations, for official praise of local cooperators, and for pointing out unique local offerings that match national priorities.

Organization and Function of a Unit

Professional Staff

All units function somewhere between the opposite ends of an organizational scale. At one end, one or more U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (or combination of federal and state) employees in an office on a university campus perform the range of tasks of any Service field station. At the other end, federal employees (unit leaders and assistant unit leaders), who conduct tasks of the unit, function as university professors. Unit biologists are integrated into the university system, respected as teachers and researchers, and acknowledged as contributing members of the graduate faculty—biologists who perform all the expected functions of state and Service researchers and function as program administrators, research supervisors, and office managers. The success of the program for these many years is largely attributable to the functioning of most units in accordance with cooperator wishes, the cooperative agreement, and the coordinating committee policies.

Unit leaders and assistant unit leaders are expected to act in the interest of the cooperator organizations. Effective unit leaders or assistant unit leaders develop programs and conduct business with constant consideration of the individual and collective interests of the cooperators.

Administrative and Support Staff

Cooperation requires positive efforts by all cooperators. Much of the success of any unit is usually attributable to university and state-agency employees who are either with the unit or closely associated. Administrative assistants, secretaries, clerks, and biologists who are hired by cooperators contribute to the productivity of a unit and to the unit program.

When research or other schedules preclude the daily presence of a Service biologist in the office, the unit administrative and support staff of the university maintains the flow of unit business. A challenge for support personnel is dealing with multiple-agency requirements. Each cooperating

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1 In the early years of the unit program, an assistant leader was often an employee of the cooperating state agency.