



Wildlife Conservation Officers are the Pennsylvania Game Commission's field officers. Applicants for these civil service-covered positions must be in excellent physical condition, have knowledge of hunting and outdoor activities and be capable of maintaining effective working relationships with associates and the general public.

Employees in this classification are selected and appointed following a competitive examination conducted by the Pennsylvania Civil Service Commission. Officers begin their careers as Cadets assigned to the Ross Leffler School of Conservation, the Game Commission's in-service training school located in Harrisburg, PA. Wildlife Conservation Officer Cadet classes are periodically recruited as necessary to maintain the complement of field personnel. Classes are normally formed every two or three years with each class consisting of 20 to 30 Cadets.

### **BASIC REQUIREMENTS AND QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Applicants must be a resident of Pennsylvania.
- Applicants must be a high school graduate or have a G.E.D equivalent certified by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Although a college degree is not required, educational experience beyond the high school level is helpful. Persons interested in entering this occupation are encouraged to take courses in wildlife management, environmental sciences, police sciences and similar fields of study.
- Applicants must be 21 years of age as of the date of enrollment at the Training School.
- Must possess a valid Pennsylvania Driver's License.
- Must have possessed a hunting license for two years as of the date the examination is announced.
- Applicants must pass a competitive written and oral examination administered by the Civil Service Commission.
- Any offer of employment is conditional upon successful completion of the medical, vision, hearing, physical, strength, stress, drug scan, agility and swimming test. A confidential psychological evaluation, pre-employment background and character investigation, credit history and criminal background check will be completed on all applications considered for employment.



### **Additionally, once appointed you must be willing to:**

- Work days, nights, weekends and holidays
- Travel overnight as assigned
- Live away from home during training period for approximately 50 weeks
- Relocate to any district within the state upon graduation

### **TRAINING:**



After being accepted for employment, Wildlife Conservation Officer Cadets are required to complete an intensive training program conducted at the Game Commission Training School.

Cadets are paid \$1,161.60 bi-weekly and receive the same employee benefits given to all Commonwealth employees. Lodging and meals are provided at the training school at no charge.

During weekdays, Cadets are required to reside at the school. Weekends are generally free of duty. On duty-free weekends Cadets must vacate the training school. Housing accommodations for the families of Cadets are not available. Absences are granted only under emergency conditions or as the training schedule permits.

## Major Subject Areas Of Instruction Include:

- Wildlife Management
- Law Enforcement Principles and Methods
- Wildlife Laws and Regulations
- Land Management Practices
- Public Relations and Conservation Education
- Firearms Training and Unarmed Self-Defense
- Agency Administration Procedures



In addition to classroom studies, the training program includes temporary field assignments with experienced Wildlife Conservation Officers. Field training provides Cadets with practical experience in law enforcement and other duties performed by Wildlife Conservation Officers. Cadets are reimbursed for authorized expenses incurred on these assignments.

Upon successfully completing the training program, Cadets are promoted to the position of Wildlife Conservation Officer and are assigned to fill vacancies throughout the Commonwealth. The current annual starting salary for this position is \$38,995.

## DUTIES OF A WILDLIFE CONSERVATION OFFICER:

Wildlife Conservation Officers are responsible for administering a wide variety of Game Commission programs within an assigned district of about 350 square miles. These activities are as varied as the day of the week or season of the year. Although officers have police authority with statewide jurisdiction, Wildlife Conservation Officers primarily enforce the Commonwealth's Game and Wildlife Code and federal laws and state regulations governing natural resource conservation.

In the course of their patrol, officers may detect violations of law, apprehend and arrest violators, conduct investigations, prepares cases for trial and ultimately presents findings and evidence in court. Accordingly, reports are written and records are kept in a manner reflecting the professionalism of credentialed law enforcement officers who have sworn to uphold the laws of the Commonwealth. Other primary duties besides law enforcement are servicing nuisance wildlife complaints, providing conservation education and administering the Hunter-Trapper Education Program. Officers are also responsible for directing and training an effective volunteer staff of part-time Deputy Wildlife Conservation Officers, and participating in wildlife management fieldwork, which includes working with and collecting samples from dead animals. In addition, an officer is a frontline employee and as such must be able to address the concerns of land-owners and other constituents in a multitude of areas relative to the mission of the agency.



The Game Commission provides all necessary equipment for Wildlife Conservation Officers to perform their duties. Uniforms are provided and are required to be worn in a prescribed manner consistent with grooming regulations. Firearms are also provided and required to be in a state of operational readiness to be utilized whenever and wherever needed. In addition, Officers are provided with a fully-equipped automobile, personal computer and office furnishings. Officers work from their residences and are subsidized for rental of office space.

Wildlife Conservation Officers work under the supervision of a Regional Director and supervisory staff. Officers generally work 40 hours per week and often work overtime under certain conditions. Hours of work vary and often include nights, weekends and holidays.



## **CAREER OPPORTUNITIES:**

Wildlife Conservation Officers are eligible for entry into the specialized field of land management when vacancies exist. Land Managers are responsible for wildlife habitat management on State Game Lands and other lands under the control of the Commission. They supervise full-time labor crews that make up the Game Commission's Food and Cover Corps.

Promotional opportunities to higher level supervisory and managerial positions are available to both Wildlife Conservation Officers and Land Managers.

## **EMPLOYEE BENEFITS:**

Medical/Hospitalization Insurance  
Dental Insurance  
Paid Prescription Care  
Vision Care  
Life Insurance  
Mandatory Membership in the State Employees Retirement System  
Paid Annual, Sick and Personal Leave  
Paid State Holidays  
Workers Compensation

## **SELF ASSESSMENT**

A career as a Wildlife Conservation Officer provides many opportunities to perform interesting and rewarding work. However, the position has inherent challenges, and the Game Commission wants you to be fully aware of them at the beginning of the selection process. Please be sure you are willing to:



- Work nights, weekends and holidays.
- Spend hours outdoors in all types of weather.
- Enter remote areas alone and confront, question and/or arrest armed persons who may be larger and stronger than you.
- Maintain your professionalism in the face of verbal abuse.
- Investigate fatal hunting-related shooting incidents.
- Take the life of a human being if needed in self-defense or the defense of another.
- Successfully complete rigorous physical and academic training.
- Relocate to another county within the state that may mean a change of school for children or a change of job for a spouse.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

If after completely assessing what becoming a Wildlife Conservation Officer entails you still believe this career path is for you, click on the Cadet Information Booklet for more detailed information about testing.

