



## Georgia Forestry Commission Work Ready Testimonial

The Georgia Forestry Commission is saving time and money — and making better hires — by using Work Ready assessments and job profiles to screen for entry-level openings. The commission generally hires 50 to 60 employees each year for its Ranger I position, a crucial job that involves prevention and suppression of wildland fires throughout public and private property. But in addition to responding to wildfires, Rangers also issue permits, help landowners with pre-suppression fire breaks, develop and deliver school programs, and educate the public about fire safety, fire control and forestry in general.

GFC requires rangers to live within a 30-minute drive of their service area, so the commission generally draws from localized applicant pools. And for the last 15 years, the commission has used a paper-based test to qualify applicants for Ranger I positions.

“We became interested in Work Ready as an alternative to the paper-based tests,” personnel analyst Brian Reese said. “We had to schedule paper tests where the ranger vacancy and applicants were located; someone from Atlanta would have to travel to that site to administer the test, then we had to send the test off for grading and wait for the scores. It was a long, drawn-out process.”

Furthermore, the paper tests were only given a few times per year, depending on site-specific staffing needs. Every applicant for a given location had to be available to test at a specific date and time — and some potentially qualified applicants were unable to move forward in the hiring process due to the logistical and scheduling challenges associated with the paper test.

The commission decided to profile its Ranger I position using Work Ready, then eliminate the paper test in favor of the computer-based Work Ready assessment. Now, applicants can visit an area technical college, take the Work Ready assessment at their own convenience and receive a score immediately. “Using Work Ready has been a real advantage for our applicant pool — they can go when it’s convenient for them,” said human resources director Barbara Dunn.

In addition to being more convenient for applicants and GFC staff, the new system also reduces time to hire by about four weeks. “It used to take at least three weeks from collecting applications to testing, then another week or so to get the tests sent off for grading and get the results,” Dunn said. “And we’re not having to make application copies for test scheduling and grading — this has been a tremendous workload reduction for us.”

The Ranger I position entails both physical and cognitive aspects; after intensive sessions from job profilers at DeKalb Technical College and Macon Technical College, GFC emerged with a comprehensive job profile outlining the abilities required for success. “I think the profilers did a very professional job,” Reese said. “We’ve heard a lot of positive comments from the subject matter experts we sent to participate in the profiling session. We were really pleased with it.”

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