***Common Interview Questions:***

*This list was compiled by Dave Kangiser, MES 2012, who spent the summer and fall of 2012 interviewing for state agency wildlife-related positions. Please read his great advice regarding interviews with state agencies. Good for people applying for non-state jobs, too!*

Citizen / Government Interactions-

*What should you do when going onto private property? What if the property owner is angry?*

A: Stay positive about the situation and **educate** the property owner on the research you are conducting. Speak to the significant findings of the research. Offer the data or analysis or the publication as a token for their cooperation. If a property owner realizes some important data or research needs to be done on their property, they are more likely to grant permission and feel included.

GIS-

*How much experience do you have with GIS?*

A: You need to know the basics. GIS is a tool used to support an analysis, but there are often GIS specialists who can be used as a resource at the agency / company.

Conflict Resolution-

*How do you deal with an angry coworker or person in general? How do you keep your team motivated?*A: Talk yourself up here. "A positive attitude is contagious. My positive attitude or personality rubs off on people and I rarely encounter someone who is negative towards me." If in a leadership role, take the person aside and talk to them one on one in a friendly way. Offer to help if you can. Lastly, use the chain of command.

Don't make a situation a big deal. It is only a big deal if you make it one.

MAINTAIN PROFFESSIONALISM!!!

Data Collection-

*Describe your level of data collection.*

Be specific about recent projects but recall some previous projects from as long ago as you can. Show a range of time to demonstrate a genuine interest in a certain area/discipline. Say that you are *eager, not passionate* about something. Supervisors often think of babysitting someone who is passionate.

Permits-

*What is your level of experience with the permitting process?*

A: Be aware of how to apply for a permit. What conditions are required for a permit to kick in? What agencies regulate what? Who enforces the permit? Is there assistance with the permitting process? Say that you are resourceful and not afraid to take on new challenges if you have no experiences, but if you ever applied for any kind of permit, the process is the same: From construction to taking of endangered species.

Be aware of the safety question-

A: These are often situational questions where the interviewer puts you in a mock situation that is fairly extreme. Try to recognize unsafe situations and say you would only do the task if you felt safe doing it. They would rather pay you for lost time trying to find help than to pay you for lost time due to an injury.

Beware of the trick question-

A: These questions are usually very specific and you shouldn’t know the answer to. Don’t be afraid to say “I don’t know.” Try to follow it up immediately with “but, the graduate program at Evergreen has taught me to use what resources are available to me to find out the answer.”

***Interview Tips***:

Be prepared to sit in front of six people. Most of the time 4-6 people.

Try to name drop. "I watched Hugh Shipman at the S4 Conference talk about shoreline management and how it applies to Puget Sound" or "I've read Kelly McAllister's Report on Habitat Connectivity and applied it to my thesis research." Use known local people in common.

But that means you must **research the position!**

It helps to keep a job description portfolio so when you do get called for an interview you can refer back to what the job is and if any laws, initiatives, or grants need to be looked at so it at least looks like you know what you are talking about.

Apply a lot. Spring and early summer are the start of field season. There are lots of fun jobs out there.

Follow the money. Research recent grants awarded and expect to see some project positions come out of that money.

Seek out lesser known agencies: WA Dept. of Health, Counties, Cities, Tribes, Engineering firms, medical labs. Don't rely on big search sites. There are a lot of people looking for work and job postings on larger search engines often result in 80-100 applications for a supervisor to sift through. Supervisors want 20-30 max, so they will post a job on their website for a week or less to try and get people who are showing they really want a job.

Choose an interview time when you are at your best. For me it is about 9:00 am. I've had a few cups of coffee and a light breakfast and have reviewed my notes about the position for a half hour or so.

Bring a notebook for note taking and a few copies of your resume.

Shake hands with everyone in the room and tell them your name even if they know it. Ask for their names and **write them down. Get contact info!**

When they ask you at the end if you have any question, don't act like you are trying to think of something at the last minute. It is better to say no and ask if you think of some can you contact them later.

Be prepared for the unexpected. "What wild animal would you be and why?"

All the jobs I have applied for have been outstanding jobs that anyone could be proud of. They are all fun, exciting, and what we were trained to do!

GOOD LUCK!!!!

Dave Kangiser

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