



Working for the Great Outdoors

HYDROLOGIST

The Work Environment

Water, the essential element of life. Do you have an interest in water quality, stream flows, sensitive stream channels, aquatic ecosystem restoration, municipal watershed protection, water rights and water resource management? Would you enjoy working outdoors? Would you like to be involved in a natural resource career? If so, a career as a hydrologist in the Forest Service may be of interest to you.

Operating on the Job

Whether it's in a cold, rushing mountain stream, alpine snowfield, laboratory, marsh, lake, or office, Forest Service hydrologists perform important work essential to the stewardship of water resources. From mountain peak to estuary, you will work in some of the most scenic places in the Nation, places set aside and protected.

Hydrologist, working alongside foresters, biologists, engineers and other resource specialists play an important part in evaluating proposed forest management activities. Careful administration and application of conservation practices ensure the high quality of surface and ground water. Over 70 percent of the surface water supply in the western United States originates in the National Forests. With over 300,000 miles of perennial streams, 2.2 million acres of municipal watersheds –, supplying 173 trillion gallons of water annually – and a variety of other land management activities requiring hydrologic analyses, hydrologists play an important part in the management of our National Forests and woodlands.

Career Paths and Requirements

Hydrologists are hired at many different grade levels. Recent college graduates may be hired at the GS-5 or GS-7 grade level. They spend their first year or two in training and developmental positions, and then may be promoted to the GS-9 grade level. Most research positions require advanced degrees. Others with advanced degrees and experience may be hired at higher grade levels, and there is substantial opportunity for advancement! To begin a career as a hydrologist in the Forest Service, you must meet the following requirements:

Have a degree in physical or natural science, or engineering, which includes at least 30 semester hours in a combination of courses in hydrology, the physical sciences, geophysics, chemistry, engineering science, soils, mathematics, aquatic biology, atmospheric science, meteorology, geology, geomorphology, oceanography, or the management of conservation of water resources. The course work must include at least 6 semester hours in calculus (including both differential and integral calculus), and at least 6 semester hours in physics. Calculus and physics, as describe above, are required for all grades.

OR

A combination of education and experience-course work as shown above, plus appropriate experience, or additional education.

Acceptable experience must include performance of scientific functions related to the study of water resources, based on and requiring a professional knowledge of related sciences and the consistent application of basic scientific principles to the solution of theoretical and practical hydrologic problems. Acceptable experience includes: field or laboratory work that would require application of hydrologic theory and related sciences such as geology, geochemistry, geophysics, geomorphology, physical geography, or civil engineering to making observations, performing stream surveys, taking samples, operating instruments, assembling data from source materials, analyzing and interpreting data, and reporting findings orally and in writing. In some cases, professional scientific experience was preceded by appropriate education in hydrology or by professional hydrology experience.



These qualification requirements have been summarized for convenience. Full details are available at www.USAJobs.gov or the www.opm.gov subject index under "Qualifications."

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