



Working for the Great Outdoors

Forester



Are you interested in challenging work that supports managing this country's precious public lands and natural resources? Would you find satisfaction in caring for the land and working with people from many different backgrounds and perspectives? If so, a career as a forester with the USDA Forest Service may be of interest to you!

The Work Environment

The power and excitement of history lies in its diversity. As a forester, you may work at sites that vary from glaciers to laboratories, tropical rain forests to grasslands, from offices to mountainsides. Your responsibilities may span the full spectrum of natural resources – waters, soil, air range, fish, wildlife, wood, minerals, recreation, and wilderness.

With nearly 200 million acres of National Forest System lands to manage, Forest Service foresters directly affect the environment through a multitude of activities that range from work on forest lands, to partnerships with owners of private forest lands and State foresters. Still others are engaged in researching various aspects of forestry and in providing assistance to foreign countries. All are men and women who care for the land and serve the people, and want to – and do – make a difference.

Operating on the Job

Foresters are called upon to manage a multitude of resources for the benefit of many different segments of the public. You may work closely with specialists in various fields – archeology, botany, chemistry, computer science, electronics, engineering, entomology, geology, hydrology, soil science, wildlife and fisheries biology, and many others. Foresters share ideas and develop plans with other agencies, as well as with citizens' action groups.

As a forester, the scope of your work might span a variety of duties or be more specialized. You could be involved in planning for, maintaining, using, or preserving the forest and its resources to meet the needs of the 21st century. You could develop, implement, or administer plans that span a wide range of mission responsibilities that include:

- Wilderness protection
- Timberland improvement

- Forest habitat analyses and enhancement
- Timber sales
- Tree nursery operations
- Recreation
- Prescribed fire management and wildfire suppression

Career Paths and Requirements

Foresters are hired at many different grade levels. 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. Others with advanced degrees and experience may be hired at higher grade levels. Most research forester positions require advanced degrees. A substantial number of forester positions in the Forest Service go to the GS-11 grade level, with opportunities for higher grade levels, particularly for those who are willing to relocate to different Forest Service duty stations across the country. To meet entry level requirements as a forester in the Forest Service, the following is required:

A 4 year degree in forestry, or in a related field that includes a total of at least 24 semester-hours in forestry coursework, and at least 6 semester hours in any combination of biological, physical, mathematical sciences or engineering. Your curriculum must be sufficiently diversified to include courses in each of the following areas:

- **Management of Renewable Resources:** Creditable courses include silviculture, forest management operations, timber management, wildland fire science or management, utilization of forest resources, forest regulation, recreational land management, watershed management, and wildlife or range habitat management.
- **Forest Biology:** Creditable courses include dendrology, forest ecology, silvics, forest genetics, wood structure and properties, forest soils, forest entomology, and forest pathology.
- **Forest Resource Measurements and Inventory:** Creditable courses include forest biometrics, forest mensuration, forest valuation, statistical analysis of resources data, renewable natural resources inventories and analysis, and photogrammetry or remote sensing.

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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