

Make a Difference

Challenge Yourself with a Forest Service Career



Range Conservationist

Are you interested in challenging work managing precious public land and natural resources? Would you find personal satisfaction in caring for this land and working with people from many different backgrounds and perspectives? If so, a career as a Range Conservationist may be for you!

The Work Environment

As a Range Conservationist with the USDA Forest Service, you will have the opportunity to be on the cutting edge of implementing innovative vegetation management practices. From livestock management to big game habitat improvement, endangered species protection to riparian restoration, the range conservationist is in a position to develop and implement creative solutions to extremely complex problems.

The environment and the world's natural resources are of major concern to the American people. With nearly 200 million acres of land in the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's National Forest system, the Forest Service rangeland manager has the unique opportunity to make a difference in the health of our nation's natural resources.

Operating on the Job

The Range Conservationist main duties involve working with livestock producers. In order to carry their work a Range Conservationist must also work closely with other resource specialists such as foresters, hydrologist, and wildlife biologists. In addition, the Range Conservationist must coordinate with other disciplines such as planners, engineers, community leaders, special interest groups, and computer specialists to accomplish the land management objectives.

Rangeland management includes planning and implementing grazing systems to meet resource objectives. Livestock grazing is one of the oldest uses of rangelands and serves an important role as one of many multiple uses. Grazing serves as a management tool to bring about desired changes in plant communities to achieve watershed, wildlife and fire management objectives. Grazing is often the most practical means to harvest the renewable forage resources. Working in rangeland management you will be involved in developing, implementing, or administering plans for:

- Livestock grazing operations.
- Rangeland habitat analyses and enhancements.
- Rangeland improvements.
- Wildlife habitat protection and improvement.
- Watershed protection and improvement.
- Prescribed fire management and wildfire suppression.
- Land exchanges or purchases.
- Special permits for mineral exploration, ski areas, and other land uses.
- Wilderness protection.

Career Paths and Requirements

Range Conservationists 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. Others with advanced degrees and experience may be hired at higher grade levels. To begin a career as a Range Conservationist in the Forest Service, you must meet the following requirements:

1. Have a degree in range management or a related discipline, which includes at least 43 semester hours in a combination of the plant, animal and soil sciences and natural resources management, as follows:
 - Range Management. At least 18 semester hours of course work in range management, including courses in such areas as basic principles of range management range plants, range ecology; range inventories and studies, range improvement; and ranch or rangeland planning.
 - Directly Related Plant, Animal and Soil Sciences. At least 15 semester hours of directly related courses in the plant, animal and soil sciences, including at least one course in each of these three scientific areas, i.e., plant, animal and soil sciences. Courses in such areas as plant taxonomy; plant physiology; plant ecology; animal nutrition; livestock production; and soil morphology or soil classification are acceptable.
 - Related Resource Management Studies. At least 9 semester hours of course work in related resource management subjects, including courses in such areas as wildlife management; watershed management natural resource or agricultural economics; forestry; agronomy; forages; and outdoor recreation management

OR

2. Have a combination of education and experience--at least 42 semester hours in a combination of the plant, animal and soil sciences and natural resources management, as shown in A above, plus appropriate experience or additional education.

For more Information Contact

There are a number of colleges and universities that offer curricula in range management. If you are interested in identifying the right school for you, contact the Society for Range Management, 1839 York St., Denver, Colorado, 80206. Another good reference is the Conservation Directory that contains a list of colleges and universities in the United States and Canada, as well as a list of national, state and regional natural resources agencies, and is available in most libraries. High school guidance counselors may also be a source of information on this subject.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is an equal opportunity employer and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, or physical or mental disability.

July 1992

Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Occupational Fact Sheet

