



Working for the Great Outdoors

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST



Do you have an interest in corporate communications? Do you have what it takes to develop communication strategies that reach diverse audiences dealing with complex natural resource issues? Does the thought of standing in front of television cameras, answering tough questions from reporters, motivate you? Would you like to be involved in public land management? If so, a career as a public affairs specialist with the Forest Service may be of interest to you.

The Work Environment

From the seashores of the Pacific to the Atlantic coast, the Forest Service is responsible for some of the most scenic and picturesque places in the Nation. With responsibility for nearly 193 million acres of public land, Forest Service public affairs specialists play a critically important role in the management of National Forest lands.

Operating on the Job

Keeping the many people who are interested in natural resource management informed and involved is a daunting task. Our audiences range from United States Senators to County Supervisors to members of local service clubs. We tailor our communication efforts to reach different audiences depending upon the issue. And the work is seldom the same from day to day. The work of communication is challenging, demanding and fast-paced. You won't have a chance to get bored in this job! As a public affairs specialist with the Forest Service, you will be involved in a wide variety of natural resources projects and activities. Examples include:

- Briefing Members of Congress or their staff on Forest Service issues.
- Planning and implementing field briefings for a wide variety of people and groups.
- Developing communication plans and strategies to inform both internal and external audiences.
- Working on a day-to-day basis with both local and national media on sometimes highly controversial and complex resource issues.
- Advising Agency leadership on communication strategies and techniques.

- Writing articles for newspapers, writing (and delivering) speeches and representing the Agency at public events.
- Facilitating and sometimes leading public meetings.
- Writing briefing papers and developing communications plans on complex issues for a wide variety of audiences.

Career Paths and Requirements

Forest Service public affairs specialists and other agency personnel work in partnership with civic, advocacy and conservation groups; City, County, State and Federal officials; print and electronic media; industry representatives; and members of the community in developing land use plans, on-the-ground projects, and long-term resource solutions.

Public affairs specialists are hired at many different grade levels. Recent college graduates may be hired at the GS-5 or GS-7 grade level. 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 public affairs specialist in the Forest Service, you must meet the following requirements:

For the GS-5 level, completion of a 4 year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree, preferably in the communications field,

OR

Three years general experience, 1 year of which is equivalent to at least a GS-4.

For the GS-7 level, completion of 1 full year of graduate level education or superior academic achievement

OR

1 year of specialized experience equivalent to at least GS-5.

At either grade level, combination of successfully completed post-high school education and experience may be used to meet total qualification requirements.



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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