

Career Opportunities in Pennsylvania State Parks and Forests

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Can you imagine a job working in the great outdoors?

Would you like a job working in the great outdoors? The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) seeks individuals who want challenging and rewarding careers in conservation, recreation, and environmental protection. You may qualify to become part of a team responsible for overseeing the state park system, managing state forestlands, or expanding outdoor education and recreation opportunities throughout the state.

DCNR maintains 120 state parks, manages 2.2 million acres of state forest land, and provides support for the state's ecological and geological resources, plus community conservation, and education and recreation programs. To do this, it employs about 1,400 full-time and 1,300 seasonal employees. Most of these are covered by the Pennsylvania Civil Service Act. Here's a look at some entry-level positions you may be interested in:

Entry-level Jobs and Requirements

PARK RANGER: Perform public safety work and promote recreation in state parks. They answer questions about park facilities and environmental features; explain and enforce park regulations; patrol park grounds, buildings and waterways; and in emergencies, administer first-aid or cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) to injured park visitors. This is a seasonal position.

Required: Two years of public contact work involving public information, plus first-aid and CPR certification.

DCNR RANGER TRAINEE: Participate in formal and on-the-job training in public service, conservation, environmental education, public safety and law enforcement, including classroom and physical training required to obtain authority to exercise the power of arrest.

Required: Completion of 15 credits in natural or environmental sciences, natural resource management, park management, outdoor recreation, forestry, environmental education, ecology, wildlife management, or related courses, plus first-aid and CPR certification.

DCNR RANGER: Perform technical work involving public education and service, public safety and law enforcement at state parks. They explain state park and forest resources, facilities, rules and regulation; patrol parks and forest lands; investigate complaints, accidents and suspected crimes; and handle emergencies. They perform the full range of law enforcement services.

Required: Completion of the DCNR Ranger Trainee program or 15 credits in natural or environmental science or related natural resource or recreation courses AND completion of a department-recognized police training course or certification program that allows eligibility for commissioning as a police officer.

GEOLOGIC TRAINEE: Participate in on-the-job training to perform geological work in connection with the study, charting, use, development, preservation and protection of geological features or mineral resources such as groundwater, natural gas, coal and oil.

Required: Bachelor's degree in geology or a related field that includes 30 credits in geology courses.

PARK MANAGER TRAINEE: Participate in on-the-job and formal training on how to direct the operation, maintenance and recreational activities of a state park.

Required: Bachelor's degree in parks and recreation, forestry, engineering, natural sciences or landscape architecture OR an associate's degree in any of these fields and two years of experience in the administration, operation, or maintenance of the physical plant, visitor services and safety, or environmental education in a park or outdoor recreational program.

ENVIRONMENTAL INTERPRETIVE TECHNICIAN: Present environmental programs for park visitors, organizations and the public. They conduct field studies, guided walks and campfire sessions to identify and discuss park plants and wildlife. This is a high-demand, seasonal job typically lasting three months.

Required: High-school education or equivalent and at least two college-level courses in botany, ornithology, ecology, wildlife, mammalogy, entomology, or related courses.

Contacts

For more information, contact:

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ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION SPECIALIST: Develop and implement environmental and park education programs. They design materials, conduct tours and serve as trail guides or naturalists for educational institutions, government agencies, civic organizations and the general public. These positions may be seasonal or permanent.

Required: Bachelor's degree in natural sciences, social sciences, environmental education, interpretive service or park management OR four years of professional experience in environmental education.

NATURAL RESOURCE SPECIALIST: Perform field work and conduct technical natural resource studies. They collect and analyze data, design and implement environmental studies and provide technical guidance and training programs.

Required: Two years of natural resource management experience AND a bachelor's degree in parks and recreation, environmental resource management, wildlife biology, wildlife management, forestry, ecology or a related natural resource major; OR equivalent experience and training.

FORESTRY TECHNICIAN: Perform technical assignments in timber sales, fire prevention, insect and disease control, forest-tree nursery development and recreation projects. They assist in timber-stand analysis, surveying, map preparation for timber sales, forest disease and insect control, and forest fire prevention and suppression. This is a seasonal position.

Required: Associate's degree in forest technology or equivalent formal education in forestry.

FORESTER: Plan and implement programs designed to manage, protect and preserve forest resources. Work includes landscape examination and timber-stand treatment, forest fire prevention and suppression, and forest pest suppression activities.

Required: Two years of technical forestry experience AND an associate's degree; OR a bachelor's or master's degree in forestry, forest technology, forest management, forest ecosystem management, urban forestry, forest science, agroforestry or related forestry degree.

Other DCNR Positions

OUTDOORS: Additional positions that involve working outdoors are available in the Trades and Maintenance categories. These include mechanics, equipment operators, semi-skilled laborers, maintenance repairmen, water and sewage treatment plant operators, lifeguards and forest patrolmen.

INDOORS: Still other jobs support DCNR in the Administrative, Clerical and Computer Science categories. Jobs include administrative assistants, clerk typists, human resource assistants/analysts, budget analysts, information technology specialists and application developers.

How to Apply

CIVIL SERVICE: Most of DCNR's positions require Pennsylvania residency. The State Civil Service Commission conducts examination programs for these positions. For information on how to apply, visit www.spsc.state.pa.us.

INTERNSHIPS: Paid and unpaid positions are available to full-time college students. For more information and to apply online, visit: www.dcnr.state.pa.us/humanresources

