

BUILDING PATHWAYS

EXPLORING CAREERS IN
NATURAL RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT





Natural Resource Management

What do a fish biologist, a forester, and a parks planner all have in common? They all work in the field of Natural Resource Management. If you like being outdoors, physical labor, technology, engineering, science, business, or policy, chances are you have a skill set that will be valuable to government agencies, non-profits, and private sector companies that work with natural resources.

There are limitless opportunities to make an impact on how the abundant natural resources in the Willamette Valley are managed.

This booklet highlights just a few of those opportunities. Our hope is that the stories presented here will inspire you to continue exploring what the field of Natural Resource Management has to offer, and perhaps take the first steps toward building your own career pathway.

Where Do I Start?

In this booklet, you will find stories and career paths from several professionals working in natural resource management here in the Middle Fork Willamette Watershed. They work for government agencies, private companies, and non-profit organizations, and perform a variety of different tasks for those groups. One thing that they share in common, however, is that they have changed their career paths at least once on their way to where they are now.

Each entrant has provided tips on how to pursue a similar position for anyone interested, but as you will find, no one featured in this booklet started out in their current position. No matter what you want your future career to be, internship experience shows employers you have real-world experience and the ability to work in a professional setting. Internships provide technical and experiential knowledge that can be hard to acquire in a classroom.

Some information about internship programs in Oregon can be found starting on page 14, and a list of companies and agencies that may offer entry positions in Natural Resource Management can be found on the back of this booklet. You can contact them directly to see if they are currently offering internships. Even if they aren't, making contact and leaving your resume gets your name out there for future opportunities. Best of luck on your exploration!

What I Do as a Senior Technician

At hatcheries, I monitor and assist fish who are intended for release into local rivers and estuaries. I also help maintain the work site by doing maintenance tasks that vary widely on a regular basis.



Doug Curtis
Senior Technician
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

About the job

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife operates approximately 30 hatcheries at any given time. Jobs include medical benefits, a government pension, and often housing on-site.

Tasks can vary greatly on a given day depending on the hatchery. Larger facilities, like the ones on the Columbia River, have large maintenance crews. Therefore more of the technicians' time is spent working with the fish. In smaller facilities, employees are tasked with maintenance of the facility, along with the managing of fish. Tasks can change by the hour, and season to season.

How do you start?

Some hatchery positions do not require a college degree. While many technicians earn an associates degree in fisheries from a community college, 18 months of internship experience will qualify you to work in some Oregon hatcheries. To explore all State of Oregon employment, you can go to the website:
https://oregon.wd5.myworkdayjobs.com/en-US/SOR_External_Career_Site

For internships, contact local hatcheries and inquire about prospective intern or volunteer work. Before committing, confirm that the time you are offering will apply to the 18-month experience rule.

What We Do at Haley Construction

Haley Construction is a private contractor that often assists in watershed restoration and hazard removal. We also work on residential and commercial renovation.

Jessica:

"The experience I gained during my apprenticeship was just as valuable as my formal schooling. Trade schools are an excellent option for those who want immediate, applicable knowledge."

Joined the family company to apply my trade knowledge

Entered post-grad apprenticeship to learn the trade

Graduated from Northwest College of Construction

Began working on projects at a young age

JESSICA

Currently working at Haley and completing bachelor's degree in Business Administration

Joined the company as a project manager while in college

ASHLEY

Grew up around the company and construction for our whole lives

Start Here!



From left to right: Randy, Ashley, Tiffany, & Jessica

Haley Construction

About the job

The family-run construction company, Haley Construction, has built its foundation on ecological sustainability despite being in an ever-shifting industry. Though they both ended up at Haley Construction, Jessica and Ashley each found their own path to fit their individual needs.

As a private contractor, Haley works on a unique combination of traditional construction and ecological restoration, including performing floodplain restoration work for the Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council. They are hired separately for each project, which also include renovation, remodeling, and maintenance of homes in the greater Eugene area.

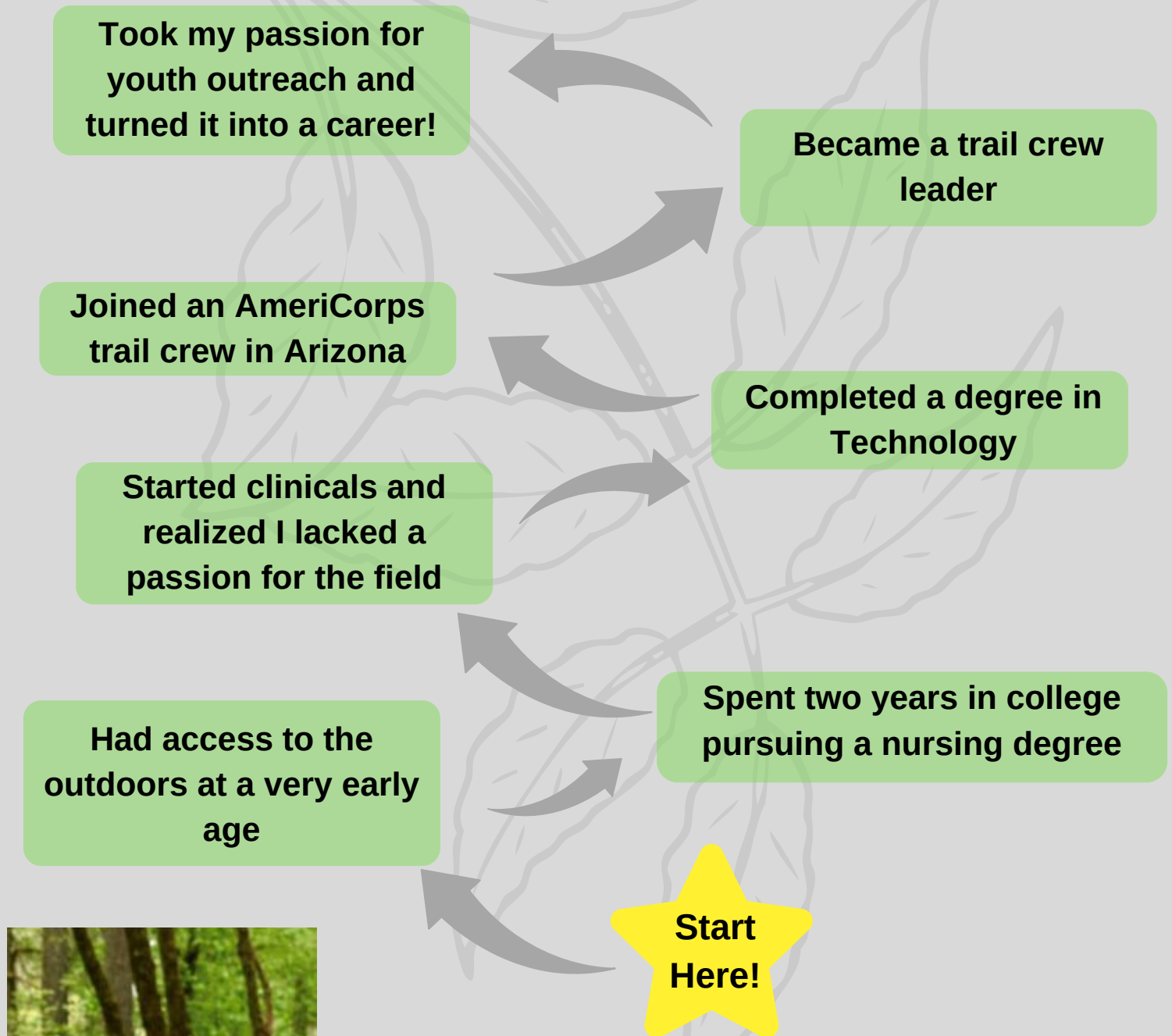
How do I start?

Haley Construction is just one of many companies that may need ecologically-minded interns and employees, but are often overlooked by potential applicants. Customers are becoming increasingly aware of environmental issues, and companies must shift their practices to meet those changing needs. While you may not think a company like this has a place for someone with your interests, they may be looking for an applicant just like you.

Note that private companies and non-profit organizations like our next entry offer a different set of benefits than government employment. It is always important to look at the full benefits package associated with a position, not just the salary.

What I Do as a Community Engagement Manager

I spend a lot of time talking to people - whether it's going out into the community and recruiting youth in the spring, or relaying information between crews and their loved ones during the summer and fall. I can be very talkative, and I know my way around an office just as well as I do the field.



Hannah Baskin
Community Engagement Manager
Northwest Youth Corps

About the job

The Northwest Youth Corps is an innovative non-profit organization that has been providing environmental education and conservation job-training to diverse youth in the Pacific Northwest for over 30 years. They do this through community partnerships and conservation corps crews where students age 15-26 have the opportunity to work on conservation and recreation projects, earn professional certifications, and camp as a team in some of the wildest places throughout Oregon, Washington, and Idaho.

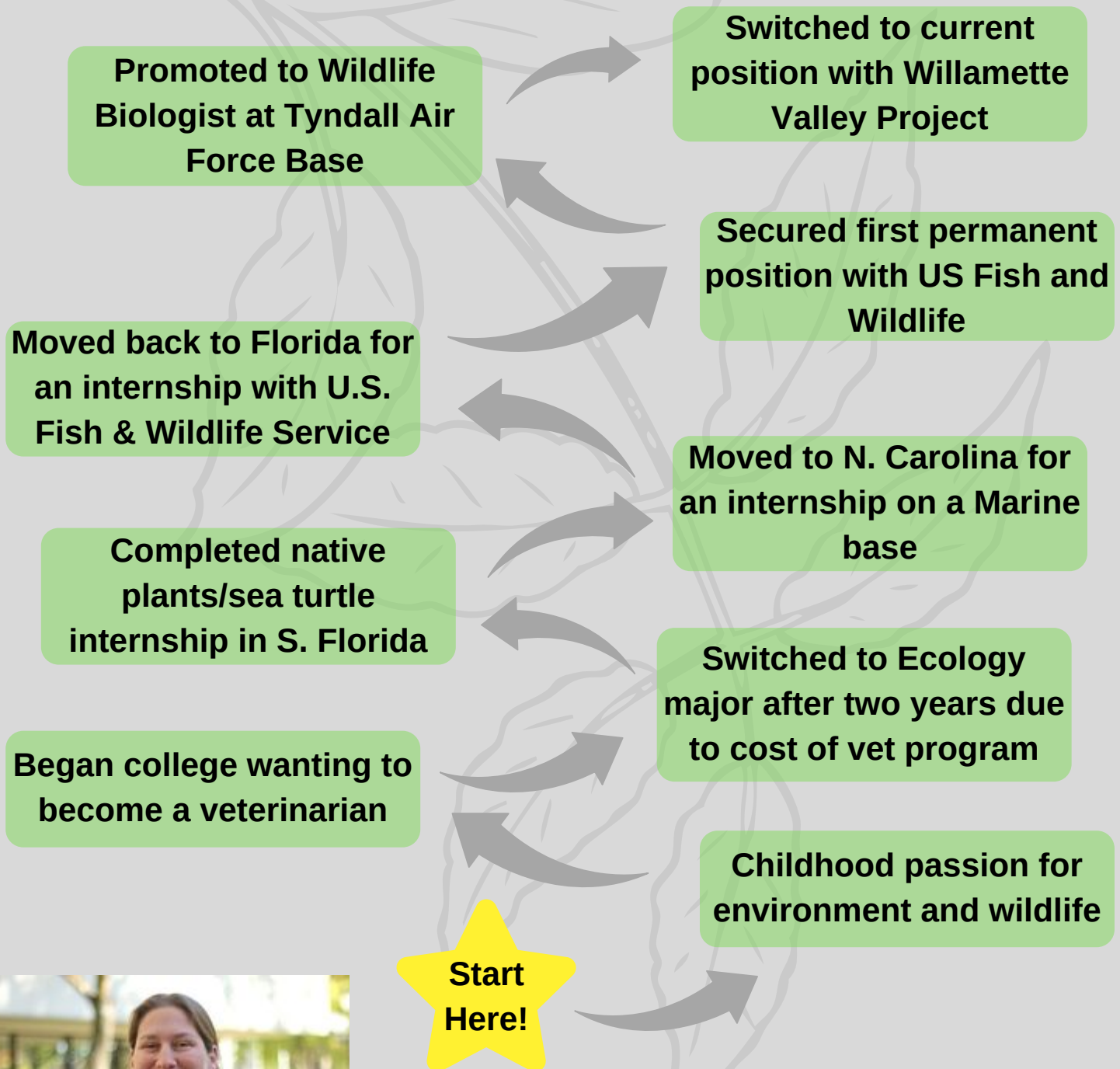
As a community engagement manager, Hannah had open doors in many different career sectors. Having spent a lot of time "playing in the dirt" as a child, she believes strongly in providing access to the outdoors for everyone, and is particularly proud of her organization's work with local organizations such as Girls, Inc., who sponsors an all-women trail crew, and Out There Adventures, who assists with LGBTQ+ programming. Hannah is easily inspired by others and advises students to be open to new challenges and try new things as they begin to create their career plans.

How do I start?

Hannah would love to see students interested in a natural resources career come work for the Northwest Youth Corps, and stresses that little formal education is needed to join. See page 14 for more information about the Northwest Youth Corps' programs.

What I Do as a Cultural Resource Manager

I work closely with cultural archaeologists and tribes. At the local level, I attempt to identify significant cultural landmarks, artifacts, or landscapes so that tribal needs are met by Willamette Valley Project regulations and tribal voices are heard.



Gwendolyn Jones
Cultural Resource Manager
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

About the job

The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) operates in over 50 countries and employs 32,000 people. The Corps' Willamette Valley Project operates 13 separate dams, effectively controlling the entire flow of the Willamette River. In conjunction, these dams manage flooding in the Eugene-Springfield area.

Within USACE, Gwendolyn works with tribes and local land owners to identify important native landmarks and locations. She is also the environmental stewardship manager for the Willamette Valley Project. Working closely with the people within a project area gives her the opportunity to understand and integrate many aspects of land management and culture.

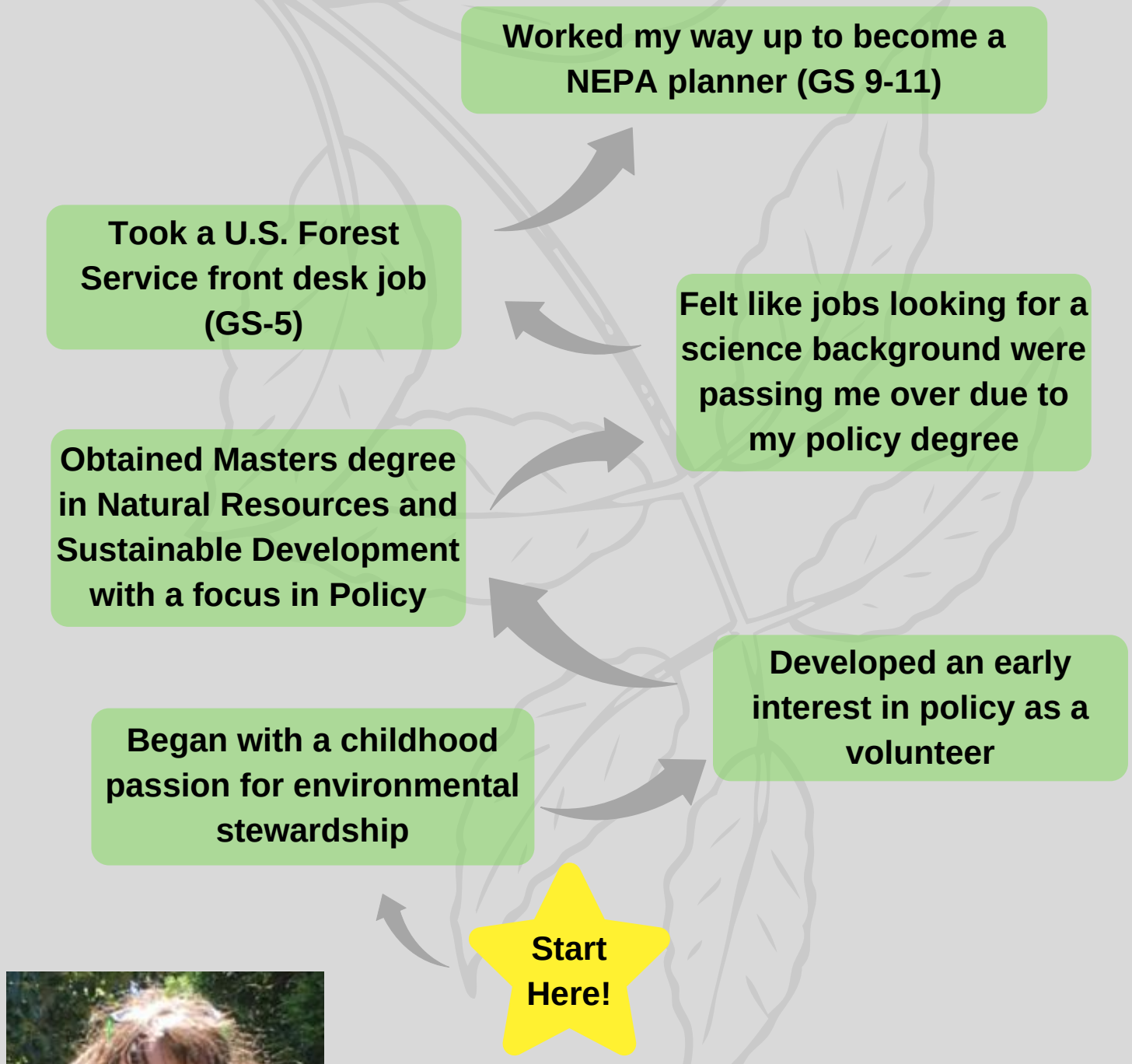
How do I start?

USACE also employs engineers, mechanics, educators, archaeologists, and biologists. Biologists analyze the impact of dam operations on water quality, flow rate, habitat, and fish health in the river. There are also a variety of endangered species that the Corps is working to protect.

To learn more about job opportunities with USACE, go to USAjobs.gov and apply, or reach out to the Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council and inquire about getting in touch with USACE directly.

What I Do as a NEPA Planner

I manage teams of specialists completing Environmental Assessments for any project that may have an impact on natural processes.



Katie Isacksen
NEPA Planner
U.S. Forest Service

About the job

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) became effective in 1970 and changed the way government agencies handled new development projects. NEPA requires any government-funded project to go through a process to prove it will not cause significant environmental damage. A NEPA planner works with an assortment of agencies and stakeholders to mediate discussions around land usage.

With large projects, a NEPA planner must have patience and the ability to work with many different teams to facilitate a wide range of natural resource specialists who often have different priorities and ideas for project design.

How do I start?

Work in this field requires a certain amount of legal knowledge but does not require a law degree. A master's degree is preferable, but a bachelor's degree can get you an entry level position, and job experience can advance your position within the agency.

Northwest Youth Corps



The Northwest Youth Corps operates camping and community-based conservation crews for both youth and young adults, as well as a fully accredited outdoor high school and a 2-acre organic farm. Whether you're still in school, a non-traditional student, or a recent graduate, you are encouraged to check out positions in the programs below. Applications can be found at www.nwyouthcorps.org

Youth Programs

Youth Corps Community (ages 15-18): During this non-residential program, members spend 5 weeks working on service projects within their community. This includes 6 hours of work per day and an hour-long educational lesson. Members earn high school credit and a \$250/week stipend.

Youth Corps Camping (ages 16-19): During this program, members camp and move from site to site for up to 6 weeks, working on conservation, reforestation, and restoration projects. This program also helps members to develop job skills such as team work and leadership. Members earn high school credit and a \$300/week.

Young Adult Programs

Northwest Service Corps (ages 19-24): Members work on high-priority conservation projects for 11-19 weeks while gaining paid job-training experience. Members earn professional certifications as well as AmeriCorps living allowance and education award.

Seasonal Stewardship Program (ages 19-26): This 8-week program may be of interest for members who are pursuing employment with resource management agencies. Members receive conservation training and experience, develop their technical skills, and earn AmeriCorps living allowance and education award.

Leadership Development Program (ages 20+): This program allows members to spend 6-8 weeks developing their outdoor leadership skills through team-based conservation and recreation projects, education, and on-site vocational training.

Conservation Internships

Conservation Internship Program (ages 20+): During this program, interns work directly with organizations such as the National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service for up to 10 months to accomplish a critical project for the host site. Due to the wide range of hosting organizations, projects, and sites, support elements such as housing and food can vary greatly. College coursework is generally required to participate in this program.



AmeriCorps in Oregon

What is AmeriCorps?

Similar to the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps is a network of national service programs within the U.S., with members committing their time to critical community needs in many different areas of our society. In the field of natural resources, there are positions available for trail maintenance, habitat restoration, environmental education, and many more.

Who can join AmeriCorps?

Anyone over 17 years of age who is willing and able to commit between three months and one year to serving their community.

Why should someone join AmeriCorps?

In addition to a wealth of experiences, AmeriCorps members receive a living stipend, trainings related to their field of service, healthcare coverage, and a Segal Education Award that can be put towards school, paying off student loans, or a variety of training programs. Check the opposite page to see why others like you have joined!

Where can someone find an AmeriCorps position?

Some organizations that provide natural resources AmeriCorps positions within Oregon are the Student Conservation Association, the American Conservation Experience, Heart of Oregon Corps, the Confluence Environmental Center, Friends of Trees, and Northwest Youth Corps. More information on how to apply can be found on their websites or at www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ameri-corps.



Austin Pratt & Sierra Dymond-Smith Student Conservation Association

Austin is currently preparing Sierra to take over his role as a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) intern for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Both are now in their second position with the Student Conservation Association. Austin got started as a Wilderness Ranger intern for the U.S. Forest Service in 2017 while still a student at Michigan State University, and Sierra became an ecology intern for the Bureau of Land Management in order to gain more hands-on experience in conservation after graduating from Willamette University in 2018.



Although their positions are the same, it has helped them to achieve divergent goals. Austin has steadily added more responsibility in promoting recreation and conservation for a federal agency, leading him into a position as a wildlife technician in his current office at Fern Ridge Reservoir upon completion of his current S.C.A. term. Sierra appreciates that the positions have allowed her to gain experience in a diverse range of areas, from plant identification to wildlife monitoring to mapping and GIS data management. With a special interest in herpetology, she now hopes to get involved with as many reptile and amphibian projects as possible before her term ends in 2020.



Job Boards & Potential Internships

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers -

- U.S. Forest Service -

- <https://www.usajobs.gov>

- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife -

- <https://www.dfw.state.or.us/hr/>

- Oregon State Parks -

- <https://www.oregon.gov/oprd/JOBS/pages/jobs.aspx>

- https://oregonstateparks.org/index.cfm?do=getinvolved.dsp_volunteer

- Oregon Chapter of the American Fisheries Society -

- <http://www.orafs.org/jobs1.html>

- City of Eugene Parks and Open Space Division -

- <https://www.eugene-or.gov/111/Jobs>

- Lane County Parks -

- <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/lanecountyor>

- Willamalane Parks and Recreation Department -

- https://www.willamalane.org/district_info/employment.ph

- Middle Fork Willamette & other watershed councils -

- <https://www.middleforkwillamette.org/>

- Northwest Youth Corps -

- <https://www.nwyouthcorps.org/m/OurPrograms/>

- Student Conservation Association -

- <https://www.thesca.org/serve/internships/browse>

- The Nature Conservancy -

- <https://www.nature.org/en-us/connect/careers/>

- TAMU Fisheries & Wildlife Science Job Board -

- <https://wfscjobs.tamu.edu/job-board/>

- Timber harvest and manufacturing companies -

- Habitat restoration and contracting companies -