

CHOOSE YOUR OWN FORESTRY *ADVENTURE*

This trail guide provides an overview of **Working Lands career pathways** with a focus on **fire mitigation** as a core entry point into environmental work. It highlights how seasonal fire roles connect to off-season opportunities across restoration, forestry, and related fields, creating more sustainable, year-round employment, letting you choose which options to pursue in the off-season. The document also identifies **transferable skills** and **growth opportunities that prepare you for high-demand occupations** that strengthen both the regional ecosystem and the environment.



LOOK AT YOUR
MAP!

START
HERE

Go to page 3 to
learn how to
get started!

Your Starting Point is Fire Season (June-October)



Go to page 4,5 or
6 to learn about
the paths!

CHOOSE YOUR NEXT
PATHWAY...

If you like using tools and working
with your hands pick... Path A

If you like the land, science
& data, pick... Path B

If you want to learn skills across sectors, pick... Path C



Starting Point: Fire Season (June–October)

Roles & Wages:

1. Wildland Firefighter (\$26.92/hr)
2. Forest & Conservation Worker (\$24.99/hr)
3. Forest & Conservation Technician (\$27.30/hr)
4. Faller / Saw Crew (\$29.43/hr)

Entry Training For All Roles:

- Short-term on-the-job training
- National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Wildland Firefighter Entry-Level Certifications (FFT2, S-130, S-190)
- Chainsaw & field safety training
- CPR / First Aid

Skills You're Building:

- Tool use & equipment handling
- Vegetation management
- Hazard recognition & response
- Working effectively in crews
- Land navigation & outdoor fieldwork
- Field safety practices

Local crews, tribal programs, and Fire Safe Councils provide hands-on certifications and field experience in wildfire response, fuels reduction, and land stewardship.

Fun fact! There are abundant overtime opportunities during fire season. This means you can earn more during this time.

Training Providers & Educational Institutions

- **California Conservation Corps (CCC) Fortuna Center** – Paid wildland firefighting, forestry, and fuels reduction crews with certifications
- **Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance (TERA)** – “Basic 40” wildland fire certifications and cultural land stewardship training
- **Mendocino County Fire Safe Council** – Year-round fuels reduction and defensible space crews
- **Del Norte Fire Safe Council** – Wildfire resilience and fuels crew experience
- **Lake County Fire Safe Council** – Community wildfire prevention and mitigation projects
- **Mattole Restoration Council** – Restoration, fuels work, and youth field experience
- **Lomakatsi Restoration Project** – Youth ecological forestry training and employment
- **Redwood National and State Parks Youth Conservation Corps** – Paid conservation work experience for youth
- **Southern Humboldt Fire & Rescue JPA** – A regional partnership of volunteer fire departments providing wildfire response training and hands-on experience in fire suppression and fuels reduction.
- **Mid Klamath Watershed Council** – A community organization that hires and trains crews to restore forests, rivers, and habitats while supporting fire resilience projects.
- **Northern Mendocino Ecosystem Recovery Alliance** – A nonprofit creating local jobs in forest restoration, fuels reduction, and ecological land stewardship.



- **College of the Redwoods**
 - Fire Technology (Certificate, Associate of Science)
 - Forestry & Natural Resources (Associate of Science, certificates)
- **Mendocino College**
 - Fire Science & Wildland Firefighting (certificates, Associate of Science)
 - Forestry & Natural Resources coursework
- **Cal Poly Humboldt**
 - Forestry, Fire & Rangeland Management (Bachelor of Science)

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Cal Poly Humboldt.

Growth Opportunities

- Volunteer and join a local fire department and then upskill to Cal Fire opportunities
- Advance from FFT2 → FFT1 → Crew Lead / Engine Boss
- Earn chainsaw certifications to join saw and hazard tree teams
- Obtain a Commercial Driver's License to operate fire engines and heavy equipment
- Gain experience to move into Forest & Conservation Technician roles
- Pursue an Associates Degree in Forestry, Natural Resources, or Fire Technology for technical and leadership positions

Some roles, like Forest & Conservation Technician, may prefer an Associate's Degree in Forestry, Natural Resources, or Fire Technology from regional colleges.

Gain Hands-On Experience

- **Wildland Firefighter Apprenticeship** (U.S. Forest Service)
- **California Conservation Corps** – Wildland Fire & Forestry Corps
- **Student Conservation Association** – Fire & Recreation Internship
- **Fire Safe Council** crew opportunities

Employers

- **CAL FIRE** (wildland firefighting & fuels crews)
- **U.S. Forest Service** (Mendocino & Six Rivers national forests)
- **Bureau of Land Management** (fire & fuels projects)
- **County fire departments & fire protection districts** (seasonal and fuels work)



Path A: Physical, Outdoor, Equipment-based Positions

Roles & Wages:

1. Fuels Reduction Technician / Forest & Conservation Worker (\$24.99/hr)
2. Faller / Saw Crew – Hazard Tree & Saw Teams (\$29.43/hr)
3. Landscaping & Groundskeeping – Vegetation Management (\$22.69/hr)
4. Outdoor Power Equipment / Small Engine Mechanic (\$28.49/hr)
5. Heavy Equipment / CDL Operator (\$27.60/hr)

Entry Training For All Roles:

- Chainsaw and field safety certifications
- CPR and First Aid
- Commercial Driver's License (CDL) or equipment operation training (for some roles)
- Short-term or moderate-term on-the-job training (OJT)

Skills You're Building:

- Chainsaw and hand tool operation
- Vegetation and fuels management
- Equipment and vehicle operation
- Hazard tree and debris removal
- Trail and land restoration work
- Field safety and crew coordination

Many of the same skills you've already built during fire season roles get solidified and expanded upon here!

Training Providers & Educational Institutions

- **California Conservation Corps (CCC) – Fortuna** – Forestry, fuels reduction, and land crews
- **Mendocino County Fire Safe Council** – Fuels reduction and defensible space crews
- **Mattole Restoration Council** – Restoration and land stewardship field work
- **Lomakatsi Restoration Project** – Youth forestry training and restoration crews
- **Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance (TERA)** – Land stewardship and forestry training



Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance



- **College of the Redwoods**
 - [Forestry & Natural Resources \(Associate of Arts/Associate of Science, certificates\)](#)
 - [Heavy Equipment / Construction Technology courses](#)
- **Mendocino College**
 - [Fire Science & Wildland Firefighting certificates](#)
 - [Forestry / Natural Resources coursework](#)
- **Cal Poly Humboldt**
 - [Forestry, Fire & Rangeland Management \(Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science\)](#)
 - [Environmental Resources Engineering \(Bachelor of Science\)](#)

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These same training providers often times overlap with the hands-on experience providers and prepare you for leadership in this field!

Growth Opportunities

- Earn advanced chainsaw certifications to become a hazard tree or saw specialist
- Obtain a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) to operate engines and heavy equipment
- Move into equipment maintenance or small engine mechanic roles
- Advance into crew lead positions on fuels, forestry, and restoration crews
- Pursue an A.S. in Forestry or Natural Resources to step into technician or supervisory roles

Gain Hands-On Experience

- **California Conservation Corps** – Fortuna: Trail work, fuels reduction, restoration crews
- **Lomakatsi Restoration Project**: Prescribed fire, thinning, native planting
- **Mattole Restoration Council**: River restoration, planting, watershed projects
- **Mendocino County Fire Safe Council**: Defensible space, home hardening, outreach
- **Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance (TERA)**: Cultural burning, land stewardship

Employers

- **United States Forest Service (Mendocino & Six Rivers National Forests)** – Fuels, forestry, trail, and restoration crews
- **Bureau of Land Management** – Vegetation, fuels, and land rehabilitation projects
- **County fire departments & Fire Protection Districts** – Vegetation management and mitigation crews
- **Vegetation management and forestry contractors** working on public lands and Fire Safe Council projects



Path B: Science, Mapping & Environmental Positions

Roles & Wages:

1. Forest & Conservation Technician (\$27.30/hr)
2. Environmental Science & Protection Technician (\$29.43/hr)
3. Surveying & Mapping Technician (\$28.79/hr)
4. Conservation Scientist / Forester (\$33.72/hr)

Entry Training For All Roles:

- Field safety and outdoor work training
- Basic GIS and mapping skills
- Environmental data collection and monitoring practices
- Short-term or moderate-term on-the-job training

Skills You're Building:

- GIS and mapping skills
- Vegetation and forest health monitoring
- Data collection and environmental assessment
- Understanding fire behavior and land recovery
- Field research and reporting
- Land restoration planning

Some roles may start with on-the-job training, while others prefer coursework or a degree in forestry, environmental science, or natural resources.

Training Providers & Educational Institutions

- **California Conservation Corps (CCC)** – Forestry, monitoring, and restoration crews
- **Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance (TERA)** – Land stewardship and forestry training
- **Mattole Restoration Council** – Restoration and monitoring projects



Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance



MATTOLE RESTORATION COUNCIL

- **College of the Redwoods**
 - Forestry & Natural Resources (Associate of Science, certificates)
- **Mendocino College**
 - Forestry & Natural Resources coursework
- **Cal Poly Humboldt**
 - Forestry, Fire & Rangeland Management (Bachelor of Science)
 - Environmental Resources Engineering (Bachelor of Science)

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Notice that some of these same training providers for the starting point of fire season roles and Path A roles are the same... this means you can gain comprehensive experience!

Growth Opportunities

With experience and education, you can advance into technical, planning, and forestry leadership roles.

- Move into Forester or Conservation Scientist roles
- Specialize in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and land mapping
- Work in forest planning and restoration design
- Pursue a Bachelor of Science in Forestry or Environmental Resources Engineering
- Advance into technical and supervisory positions in forestry and restoration

Gain Hands-On Experience

- **Mattole Restoration Council** – Monitoring and restoration field work
- **Lomakatsi Restoration Project** – Forestry and ecological restoration crews
- **California Conservation Corps** – Forestry and land monitoring crews

Employers

- **United States Forest Service** – Forestry technicians, GIS, restoration
- **Bureau of Land Management** – Land assessment and monitoring
- **California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection** – Forestry and resource management
- **Restoration and environmental consulting firms** working on public lands

Path C: Working Lands & Blue Economy Positions

Roles & Wages:

1. First-Line Supervisor of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Workers (\$33.72/hr)
2. Forest & Conservation Technician (\$27.30/hr)
3. Environmental Science & Protection Technician (\$29.43/hr)
4. Farmworker & Nursery / Greenhouse Worker (restoration plants) (\$21.42/hr)

Entry Training For All Roles:

- Field safety and outdoor work training
- Basic plant, soil, and land stewardship practices
- Documentation and reporting skills
- Short-term or moderate-term on-the-job training

Skills You're Building:

- Crew coordination and leadership
- Project and site organization
- Environmental monitoring and reporting
- Communication and documentation
- Understanding multiple types of land-based work

Take advantage of these opportunities to expand your career portfolio and employability!

If you want to dive in deeper into these roles and earn degrees, see your options below!

Training Providers & Educational Institutions

- **California Conservation Corps (CCC)** – Team lead roles, land stewardship, and project experience
- **Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance (TERA)** – Restoration, plant care, and land stewardship training
- **California Department of Fish and Wildlife** – Fisheries, habitat restoration, and aquatic resource training
- **Local Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs)** – Watershed, farming, and restoration project training
- **Mattole Salmon Group** – A community nonprofit restoring salmon habitat through stream restoration, watershed monitoring, and fisheries conservation



- **College of the Redwoods**
 - [Agriculture & Natural Resources coursework](#)
 - [Forestry & Natural Resources \(Associate of Science, certificates\)](#)
- **Mendocino College**
 - [Agriculture and Natural Resources coursework](#)
 - [Forestry & Environmental studies coursework](#)
- **University of California Cooperative Extension – Humboldt, Del Norte, Mendocino, Lake**
 - [Farming, soil health, irrigation, plant production, and watershed training programs](#)

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MENDOCINO COLLEGE

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Growth Opportunities

- Advance into crew lead and first-line supervisor positions on farming, nursery, forestry, restoration, and fisheries crews
- Gain experience in environmental monitoring and reporting to move into technician roles in land and aquatic habitats
- Build skills in plant production, soil health, irrigation, and native species care to manage nursery and restoration sites
- Develop knowledge of watershed health, stream habitat, and fisheries restoration to support aquatic resource projects
- Strengthen project coordination and documentation skills for multi-site land and water restoration efforts
- Pursue an A.S. in Natural Resources, Forestry, or Agriculture to step into technical and supervisory positions

If you love these roles and want to specialize and upskill, learn more here!

Gain Hands-On Experience

- **Resource Conservation District of Humboldt County** – Watershed, soil health, and restoration projects
- **Mendocino County Resource Conservation District** – Farming, irrigation, and land stewardship projects
- **California Department of Fish and Wildlife** – Fisheries habitat and stream restoration field work

Employers

- **California Department of Fish and Wildlife** – Fisheries habitat restoration, environmental technicians, and stream monitoring
- **United States Fish and Wildlife Service** – Aquatic habitat, watershed, and salmon recovery projects
- **Yurok Tribe Fisheries Department** – Local salmon habitat restoration and river monitoring on the Klamath
- **County Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs)** – Farming, watershed, soil health, and land restoration project staff