

CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE: CAREERS IN OUTDOOR RECREATION

This guide is your trail map to outdoor recreation careers across the Redwood Region — from guiding rivers and leading park programs to restoring wild lands and teaching others to love this place. Many paths start right now, with no degree required.

PEAK HIRING: MAY - OCT



SUMMER / FALL

Peak season for guiding, parks, & outdoor education. Highest hiring window.



WINTER / SPRING

Lodging, conservation corps & forestry roles stay active. Opportunity to train for next season.



YEAR-ROUND ROLES

Park aides, rental operators, conservation workers, & recreation coordinators.



SEASONAL = MULTIPLE ENTRY POINTS

New hiring every spring. Miss one season? Another one is coming.

Look at your map. Choose your path.



Path A: Tourism & Recreation

If you're a people person who'd rather work outside than behind a desk. This is a great starting place to join outdoor recreation careers.

See Page 2



Path B: River, Coast, & Recreation

If you love being on the water, at parks, or leading people through wild places.

See Page 3



Path C: Forests, Trails, & Conservation

If you want to work the land, protect ecosystems, or do hands-on fieldwork.

See Page 4

*LABOR MARKET INFORMATION FROM CA EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT IN COOPERATION WITH THE BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

START HERE - NO EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

Path A: Tourism & Camping

May - October is hiring season

This is the busiest hiring window across all four counties of the Redwood Coast region. Parks, rivers, rental shops, and outdoor programs all ramp up — and most of these jobs don't require a degree to start.

Roles & What They Pay

Park Aide / Seasonal Interpreter **\$18-22**

Seasonal · State & County Parks

/hr

Recreation Attendant **\$17-20**

Seasonal · Parks & Rec Department

/hr

Kayak / Bike Rental Staff **\$16-19**

Seasonal · Outfitter & Shops

/hr

Camp Counselor / Outdoor Ed Aide **\$15-18**

Seasonal · Camps & Programs

/hr

Trail Crew / Conservation Corps

Year-Round option · CCC Fortuna & Ukiah · Stipend + up to \$7k AmeriCorps education awards

Scholarship Opportunity

\$2,810

/month stipend

What Helps You Get Hired

- High school diploma or GED
- CPR / First Aid
- CA driver's license
- Physical fitness & love of the outdoors

Skills You'll Build

- Emergency response
- Guest communication
- Outdoor teamwork
- Local ecological knowledge
- Physical endurance & adaptability

Workforce Services

The Job Market (Humboldt) - Resume prep, mock interviews, & career counseling. May cover trainings and certifications costs.

CareerPoint Mendocino - Free career counseling, job search & certification funding.

CareerPoint Lake - Free career counseling, job search & certification funding.

Del Norte Workforce Center - Free career workshops, resume help, job listings, & vocational advising.

Humboldt 2nd Chance - Earn to learn for justice involved individuals.

Scholarships

HAF + WRCF Universal Scholarship - One application for 200 scholarships, ranging from \$250-\$10k. Vocational, trade, & degree programs. *Humboldt & Del Norte counties only.*

Gene Whitney Forestry Scholarship - Open to high school seniors pursuing careers in forestry & natural resources.

Native Cultures Fund - Scholarships for Native students pursuing higher education.

CA Conservation Corps (CCC) AmeriCorps Award - Up to \$7k towards student loans after Corps term. Stackable with financial aid.

Path B : River, Coast & Water Sports



Guiding, parks, kayak/rental operations, and outdoor recreation work on the water and at the coast.

START HERE

Rental Staff / Camp Aide

No degree needed
CPR + First Aid

\$16-19/hr

YEAR 1-2

Raft Guide / Park Aide

Guide School + Wilderness
First Aid
CA Guide license

\$20-25/hr

YEAR 3+

Lead Guide / Trip Manager

Wilderness First Aid +
Swiftwater Technician Certs
Multi-day trip leader

\$25-35/hr

LONG TERM

Outfitter / Operations Manager

International Rafting Federation
Trip Leader Certification or 4-year
degree in Recreation

\$49K-65K+



Who's Hiring

Six Rivers Rafting - Humboldt / Del Norte
Tributary Whitewater Tours - Humboldt
Catch a Canoe & Bicycles Too - Mendocino
Humboldt Bay Aquatic Center - Eureka
Kayak Zak's and regional outfitters - Trinidad
NatureBridge - Redwood National Park
State Parks - Redwood, Humboldt, Mendocino Coast



Seasonal Tips

When to Make Your Move

- **Feb-March:** Guide schools recruit. [Six Rivers Rafting and Tributary](#) both fill spring cohorts early.
- **April-May:** State Parks posts seasonal aide jobs on [CalCareers](#). No exam needed for seasonal roles
- **Off-season:** Use winters to earn Wilderness First Responders certification or pick up lodge/rental work to stay employed year-round.

Community Training & Supports

Employer Training

Six Rivers Rafting Guide School - Near Willow Creek, Humboldt. Trains guides for Trinity, Smith, Klamath, Eel & Salmon rivers. Spring intake. Junior Guide School available.

Employer Training

Tributary Whitewater Tours Guide School - Trinity & Klamath rivers. Annual spring guide training. CPR/First Aid required separately.

Free / Low Cost

American Red Cross (CPR/First Aid) - Online training options. Required for most guiding roles.

Community Open

Cal Poly Humboldt Outdoor Adventures - Open to the public, not just students. Boating safety, kayak/SUP instruction, Outdoor Assistantship Program.

Career Growth

Wilderness First Aid (WFA) - 16-hr course. Minimum standard for leading overnight trips. Available through [Cal Poly Humboldt Outdoor Adventures](#).

Wilderness First Responders (WFR) - 80-hr course. Industry gold standard. \$800 (students) / \$960 (public) at [Cal Poly Humboldt](#).

Swiftwater Rescue Technician - Training for flood and river rescue, certification by Rescue 3 International or CA State Fire Marshal.

Leave No Trace Trainer - Boosts any outdoor recreation resume. Free online intro modules available.

CA Guide License - Required for paid fishing /hunting guiding. Apply through [wildlife.ca.gov](#).

International Rafting Federation Trip Leader - qualifies holder to oversee commercial river trips and guide teams (*closest authorized provider is in Oregon*)

Path C : Forests, Trails, & Conservation

Hands-on land stewardship, trail building, forestry, and ecosystem restoration

START HERE

Trail Crew / California Conservation Corps member

No credential needed
\$2,810/mo stipend

\$17-20/hr

YEAR 1-2

Forestry Aide / Apprentice

S-212 chainsaw cert
A.S. Degree or 3 months experience (CCC counts!)

\$18-26/hr

YEAR 3+

Forestry Technician

A.S. Degree in Forestry or 6+ months experience

\$53K-65K

LONG TERM

Forester

Bachelor's in Forestry + Registered Professional Forester License (RPF)

\$78K-130K+

Additional Roles

Urban Forester · Habitat Restoration Specialist · Watershed Technician · Geospatial Technician · Logging Equipment Operator · Soil Conservationist · Environmental Scientist

Certifications & Credentials

- **Chainsaw Certificate (S-212)** — often provided by CA Conservation Corps or employer
- **CPR / First Aid** — Red Cross chapters in Eureka, Ukiah, Crescent City | ~4-8 hours | \$60-90
- **S-130 / S-190 Basic Wildland Firefighter** — Free through CAL FIRE or CA Conservation Corps*
- **Forestry A.S.** — College of the Redwoods (SAF-accredited)
- **Forestry B.S.** — Cal Poly Humboldt (SAF-accredited)
- **Natural Resources A.S.** — Mendocino College
- **Registered Professional Forester License** — CA Board of Forestry (requires bachelor's + experience), Exam fee ~\$200

*not required for forestry roles, but a competitive advantage for USFS & state positions

Hands On Experience

Paid Apprenticeship

California Conservation Corps - Fortuna + Ukiah. Ages 18-25. ~\$2,810/mo stipend + ~\$7,000 AmeriCorps education award. Forestry, trail work, emergency response training.

Paid Apprenticeship

Redwoods Rising Apprenticeship - Paid summer positions for CR and Cal Poly Humboldt students. Work alongside NPS staff in forestry, roads, watershed restoration, aquatics & monitoring.

Internship

Green Diamond Opportunity Internship - 3-day job shadow in local forests. Open to forestry/natural resource students with 1+ year of college. Scholarship up to \$3,000 after completion.

Volunteer

Six Rivers/Mendocino NF Volunteer Programs - Trail maintenance, habitat restoration, campground hosting. Free chainsaw training available through some programs. Contact your local ranger district.

Who's Hiring

- Six Rivers National Forest (USFS)
- Mendocino National Forest
- Bureau of Land Management — Arcata
- Green Diamond Resource Company
- Tribal forestry programs (Yurok, Wiyot, Karuk)
- Resource Conservation Districts
- Great Redwood Trail Agency
- Redwoods Rising (Save the Redwoods League)

Great Redwood Trail

A 320-mile rail-to-trail through Mendocino & Humboldt. Creates construction, restoration, trail ops, and visitor services jobs across the region.

Did You Know?

The Restoration Economy Is Growing

\$97 million invested locally since 2019

In 2024 alone, Redwoods Rising and 'O Rew restoration programs supported 200 local jobs. The Redwoods Rising apprenticeship has trained 90+ college students.